PART THREE

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

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Chapter 5

The Legacy of the Christian Socialist Movement in England

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There are many different understandings of socialism. In 1924 Angelo Rappoport referred to thirty-nine definitions of it, and in 1975 R. N. Berki[1] found four major tendencies, in different proportions, in major socialist writings: (1) Egalitarianism and Communitarianism; (2) a Christian moralism of high ideals; (3) a Rationalism, deriving from the Enlightenment, involving expertise and a meritocracy; (4) a Libertarian and Romantic strain of an individualistic, and partly anarchic, type. The second element receives scanty treatment in Berki's book—too scanty—but at least his analysis warns us against exaggerating the legacy of the Christian Socialist movement to socialism. It may well be that it had more, if diffused, influence on the churches. Berki in fact refers only to St. Paul at Philippians 2 verses 3 and following, a passage which I have never before seen mentioned in this connection, and to Thomas More's *Utopia* of 1516. Those of whom I am now writing might never have existed. It is not clear what the qualifying term "moralism" means to him. He confines himself to saying that for Christian moralism the chief values are "social justice, peace, co-operation, and brotherhood," and that for it "capitalism is a fundamentally unjust system of society," it is "cruel and inhuman in that it sets man against man, extolling selfishness and mutual enmity in the guise of 'free competition.'"[2] We shall look more closely at this judgement in due course.

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What was it that made Morgan Phillips say a generation ago, when he was Secretary of the Labour Party, that the Labour Movement owed more to Methodism than to Marx? The British Labour Party is the product of three movements, the Co-operative Movement, the Trade Unions, and the Independent Labour Party. Phillips was referring in a succinct sentence to the large number of pioneers in all three who came from a Christian background. Most of them were Primitive (not United or Wesleyan) Methodists or Baptists. Many of them, in the days before a national educational system was established, learned to read and write in a Sunday School; and even into the twentieth century it was a Sunday Bible Class in which they learned to speak in public. They carried this Christian background, sometimes considerably diluted into an ethical humanism, into the Labour Movement.[3] This was not due to the policy of the central organs of the denominations, far from it, but to the ethos of some local congregations. The result is that there has been a different ethos about the Labour Movement in Britain from that of the Social Democratic parties on the continent of Europe, such as the French or German Socialist parties. Continentals tended to talk in the language of a bowdlerized Marxism; the British in that of an ethical idealism with Christian undertones. This situation is now practically dead; an ideological vacuum is left, as neither language retains its power. The Christian concepts faded because the churches never succeeded in maintaining strong enough links with working-class life to maintain them. For a brief period there were "Labour Churches," pioneered by John Trevor of Upper Brook Street Free Church in Manchester in 1891. At one time there were nearly thirty, almost all in the industrial north of England. But all had died out by 1910 for lack of theological content, which had become lost in their socialism. Their story has never been told.

The origins of Christian Socialism in Britain

So far we have been considering Christians, mostly Nonconformists, who were active pioneers in the building up of the Labour Movement. Some Anglicans also were active, but their contribution was more theoretical and it is here that the Christian Socialists pioneered. The movement's origin can be precisely dated to the evening of April 10th, 1848. That afternoon a large Chartist march to Parliament from Kennington Common in South London had dissolved in a rainstorm.

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In the evening J. M. Ludlow, who had been in Paris in February at the uprising which overthrew Louis Philippe, met with Charles Kingsley in Frederick Denison Maurice's house. They stayed up till 4:00 a.m. on April 11th writing a manifesto "To the Workmen of England," urging Chartists to join those who favoured non-violent reform, and signed "A Working Parson." The Chartist movement was not in fact violent in its aims or methods, and indeed everything it worked for has since been achieved except for annual Parliaments. The manifesto also sought to turn Chartists away from demands for political reform. Its whole tone seems condescending. It was not until 1850 that Maurice and his friends used the term "Socialist." It was a comparatively new word which had come to be used in the period of intense political and economic argument and social change after the Napoleonic wars, appearing in print in English for the first time in the Owenist *Co-operative Magazine* of November 1827.[4] Because of its Owenite origin it was associated with atheism, whereas Communism at this time had strong religious overtones. All the bolder, therefore, of the Christian Socialists to use it as (to quote Maurice) they sought to influence "the unsocial Christians and the unChristian Socialists."[5]

The Christian Socialist Movement was important because it meant the recovery of a theological critique of the assumptions behind the social order which had died out with the collapse of traditional Anglican and Puritan theology at the end of the seventeenth century. From the time of the early Fathers, Christian theology had included such a critique, though it is scarcely found in the New Testament, chiefly because of the expectation of an imminent *parousia* (return of Christ). Anglicans and Puritans continued the tradition after the Reformation, the last notable exponent being Richard Baxter.[6] The tradition probably died out because the dynamic forces of capitalism were too much for a Christian social theology which was tied in its assumptions to a static society. However the effect of its absence can be seen in John Wesley. He attacked particular abuses, and instigated some voluntary social improvement efforts, but his social theology was merely individualism writ large.[7] So it came about that the social and economic upheavals which we call the Industrial Revolution produced inchoate protest and nostalgic regret for the past, but no theological critique; and that at a time when an atomistic social and economic theory was regarded as a law of God. The Christian Socialist movement only lasted from 1848 to 1854, was unsuccessful in its prac-

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tical experiments and unformed in its theories, but it did go to the root of the matter in this fundamental point, as we shall see.

Diverse socialists

The leaders were a diverse group. J. M. Ludlow had lived in Paris, and been open to the ideas of Saint-Simon, Blanc and Fourier.[8] Some of Blanc's social workshops (*ateliers nationaux*) had been set up in Paris in 1848, and all failed. To a lesser extent he was influenced by early English socialists like Robert Owen. However he was a staunch Anglican, and the doctrine of the Incarnation was more decisive for him than any of these sources. Charles Kingsley was an upper class Burkeian clergyman with a paternalistic concern for the working conditions of the poor, of which he acquired some knowledge. He it was, before Marx, who said that the Bible had been used as a book for the rich to keep the poor in order.[9] But he had few constructive ideas. E. V. Neale was a wealthy latitudinarian Christian, primarily interested in co-operation. It was his money that financed the Producers' Co-operatives which the Christian Socialists set up from February 1850, for Tailors, Builders, Shoemakers, Bakers and others.[10] They had failed by 1854, or soon after, because of quarrels with the managers, dishonesties, or the individualism of the workers.[11] It was these disasters that led the Christian Socialists to the too easy—and Pelagian—conclusion that middle class people often came to: that the workers need to be educated before they are fit to govern themselves. However Ludlow and Neale turned to give practical help to the burgeoning Labour Movement, in Friendly Societies and in the Co-operative Movement. There was early legislative fruit from their activities in the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852 which, among other things, gave legal security to Producers' Co-operatives. It was F. D. Maurice who was to turn particularly to education in founding the Working Mens' College in Camden Town.

Everyone has agreed at the time and since that F. D. Maurice (1805–1872) was the leader, and that for him his theology is the key to all he did. From his Unitarian upbringing onwards Maurice is the archetype of the theologian who endeavours to hold together the many-sided mysteries of life in one comprehensive view. In his intellectual formation he absorbed influences from Julius Hare, his tutor at Cambridge, S. T. Coleridge, Erskine of Linlathen, Edward Irving, and many others, but by 1838 he had reached what in most respects was

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his permanent position in the best known of his voluminous writings, *The Kingdom of Christ*. He had no sympathy for the kind of socialism advocated by the early English and French "socialists,"and indeed was suspicious of all organizations for concrete change, so it was uncharacteristic of him both to advocate the use of the term socialist in 1850 and to support the Working Men's Associations. His general position was that social change must be achieved by religious means. Hence the Churches must be induced to look outwards because Christ had redeemed *all* men, and his new order is already in being whether they realize it or not. The infinite love of God and the Lordship of Christ, not human sin, are the starting points of Christian theology. Christ has redeemed men in and for community with one another in God. Men seek to possess for themselves what they can only have in a community of giving and receiving. Maurice resisted all attempts to narrow the thought or boundaries of the Church. It was to him the equivalent of the Kingdom of God. Theology harmonizes the truth in every school or system of thought. He was a leading example of one who holds that men are usually right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny. To him socialism meant the principle of co-operation in society. The various classes, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Trading, must carry out their function for the benefit of all, and a Fourth Estate is needed. Long established institutions, such as the Monarchy or the Aristocracy, are divinely intended, and social reform must be an organic growth. The *Christian* Socialist's task is to declare that the universal moral order of fellowship, which secular Socialists want to build, already exists.

What was new about Christian Socialism?

Much of this does not seem very far from Disrael's *Sybil*. Could he equally have talked of Christian Toryism? It is tempting to think so. However Toryism is partly made up of an hierarchical view of society with a stress on the duty of the higher orders of society to care for and uplift the lower orders, and partly of another element which is increasingly prominent. The latter is *laissez-faire* liberalism which stands, at least in theory (though often not in practice), for competition and a free market as the basis of the economic order, and of such social order as it is necessary for the State to organize. To this Maurice was entirely opposed. By the middle of the nineteenth century the ideology of *laissez-faire* was dominant. The theory of the free

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market had ideological overtones from the time of its classic adumbration by Adam Smith, taking to itself elements from Hobbes and Locke, some Christian elements derived by several removes from certain strains in Calvinism, and more recently from Utilitarian philosophy. Its over-all interpretation of life has been called a philosophy of "possessive individualism."[12] Many Christians regarded what they called the "laws" of economics as the "laws" of God, in much the sense of the "laws" of the Newtonian Universe. This is expressed in two lines from an eighteenth century hymn.

> Laws which never shall be broken
> For their guidance He hath made.

The laws of supply and demand are akin to the law that fire burns. This was expressed particularly clearly in some Noncomformist circles, though it was widely held by Anglicans too. The Congregational journal, *The British Quarterly Review*, for instance, declared in 1846 that "Economical truth is no less divine than astronomical truth. The laws which govern the phenomen of production and exchange are as truly laws of God as those which govern day and night."[13] It was to this view that Maurice was implacably opposed. He wrote to Kingsley on 2nd January, 1850 "Competition is put forth as a law of the universe. This is a lie. The time has come for us to declare that it is a lie by word and deed. I see no way but associating for work instead of strikes."[14] And in the first of the *Tracts on Christian Socialism* later in the year he says on the first page, "Anyone who recognizes the principle of co-operation as a stronger and truer principle than that of competition has the right to the honour and disgrace of being called a Socialist." It is here that the legacy of Christian Socialism lies. The philosophy of possessive individualism, revived in recent years both in Britain and the U.S.A., is less and less appropriate to an advanced industrial society. Morevover it is an unChristian view. It has some emphases which are congenial to Christianity, a stress on personal responsibility for instance. But these are outweighed by the falseness of its overall view of life, which ignores the fact that structures of society are prior to the individuality of persons and affect their formation profoundly, for good or ill, from infancy, and that men and women are meant to live in communities of mutual giving and receiving and not in trying to be as independent of everyone else as possible.

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How this is to be expressed in social and economic institutions is another question, and capitalism may well have developed some, such as the free market, which it would be folly to throw away altogether. Maurice had no grasp of the fundamentals of an economic policy, nor of its details; nor did the group get far with them in these years. Their writings are full of vague and imprecise reflections on a wide range of issues—Trade Unions, education, health legislation, the renewal of village life, the reform of the House of Lords, and many more. Maurice indeed soon parted from Ludlow on the issue of political democracy, and they went their different ways, though maintaining contact.

The Christian socialists tended too simply to favour Producers' Co-operation and education of the workers as a way of securing co-operation, instead of competition, in the process of production. It remains one serious alternative system of production which has been chiefly successful in agriculture. But it does not solve all problems. It forgets that producers have together a vested interest, an entirely proper one which needs the power of organization and representation behind it, but which also needs balancing by the organized power of the vested interests of consumers. For the rest the Christian Socialists' wider and subsequent activities provide excellent examples of how Christian insights can be, and need to be, built into the structures of social and economic life, where Christians work with their fellow-citizens of different faiths or of none. Together they need to make these structures operate in better and more human ways, and to devise new ones. Intellectually the Christian Socialists were eventually to have a long-lasting effect, mainly on a series of small groups, but partly on the Church at large. It is to this that I now turn.

Late-Victorian Christian Socialism

At first there was an interval during which the new ideas made little way. The pause was occasioned by the years of mid-Victorian self-confidence, heralded by the Great Exhibition of 1851. Later in the century things changed. 1877 saw the foundation of the Guild of St. Matthew by Stewart Headlam, with Thomas Hancock as its leading thinker; both were Anglican priests. Its aim was to "study social and political questions in the light of the Incarnation," and to stress "the social significance of the sacrament of the Eucharist." It claimed the influence of Maurice, though in practical terms it interpreted his

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thinking differently, seeing not co-operative production but the State as a "sacred" organ of reform. There is probably some influence of Oxford Hegelianism here. Headlam agreed with the Fabians on the role of the State. He was a member of the Executive of the Fabian Society, and in 1892 gave a lecture on "Christian Socialism" which was published as Fabian Tract 42. By 1899 the influence of the Guild was lost, though it continued until 1910. Part of the loss of influence was due to its advocacy of Henry George's Single Tax (on land values), which George had propagated in a tour of Britain in 1885. Headlam was also a child of his time in regarding the Kingdom of God as something we are to build on earth, an idea common among Liberal Protestants which also influenced Catholic-minded Anglicans. The journal of the Guild, *The Church Reformer,* was good though its peak membership in 1894-95 was no more than four hundred. At bottom it was *elitist,* as was shown by its opposition to the Independent Labour Party.

Beside the Guild of St. Matthew there was another group, led by J. L. Joynes and H. H. Champion, who began in 1883 to issue a paper called *The Christian Socialist,* influenced by Stewart Headlam and Henry George. The Guild was too Anglican for them. In 1886 their paper became the organ of an inter-denominational Christian Socialist Society, which had faded by 1892. However in 1894 another inter-denominational body, The Christian Socialist League was founded, with the prominent Baptist Minister Dr. John Clifford as President. It lasted only four years. The Quakers also had a society akin to the Guild, The Socialist Quaker Society, which lasted from 1898 to 1919. It published *Ploughshare* as its journal, and S. G. Hobson was one of its leading figures.

1889 saw the London Dock Strike, the publication of *Fabian Essays* and of the Catholic Anglican essays *Lux Mundi,* and also the founding of the Christian Social Union (C.S.U.). This last was definitely not a Socialist movement, but because of its debt to Maurice and the influence of some of its members who were socialists it must be mentioned. Bishop Westcott of Durham was the first President and Henry Scott Holland the Chairman. Westcott's social thought was inclined to be cloudy. At times he would appear to be saying that the extension of family love would be the means to sweeten (structurally unchanged) social and class relationships. The C.S.U. took from Maurice the stress on co-operation rather than

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competition, in other words his criticism of individualism and his denial that capitalism represented a divine ordinance for the economic order. In this it was sufficiently influential to influence the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops of 1897, who spoke favourably but in very general terms of socialism. The C.S.U., like Kingsley, campaigned against sweated industries, especially in the tailoring trade. It organized a Sweated Industries Exhibition in 1907, and influenced the Trade Boards Act of 1909 which produced machinery for setting minimum wages in industries where the workers were too scattered and poor to be easily organized in trade unions. The journal of the C.S.U., *Commonwealth* was edited by Scott Holland from 1897 to his death in 1918. Two years later the C.S.U. joined with the Navvy Mission to form the Industrial Christian Fellowship, with Studdert Kennedy ("Woodbine Willie" of the first World War) as its prophet. It still exists in a minor way. The C.S.U. did not achieve much after 1909, though in comparison with other groups we are concerned with it had a much larger membership, about six thousand at its maximum, including quite a number of bishops. It was purely Anglican. And it had no working class or trade union members. The Quakers had a parallel body to the C.S.U. from 1904, the Friend's Social Union, with Seebohm Rowntree and George Cadbury among its members.

It was this lack, together with the flurry of excitement after the 1906 election which saw the landslide to the Liberals and the arrival of fifty-three Labour Members of Parliament, that led in that year to the foundation of the first Anglican society specifically committed to socialism, the Church Socialist League (C.S.L.). It was much less London-centred than most of what I have been describing, with many church radicals from the North of England as members. Conrad Noel was its paid organizer. The socialism it favoured was Guild Socialism, which by then was being discussed in some sections of the Labour Movement as an alternative to the wage system. There would be a Guild for each industry, each member would have the same status and the division between employer and employee would be overcome. The C.S.L. also continued the preference of Maurice and most of his friends for Producers' Co-operatives. At its peak in 1912 it had about one thousand members. The Socialist Quaker Society was also attracted to Guild Socialism. Once again there was a Noncomformist parallel to an Anglican society, the Free Church Socialist

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League, founded in 1909. Philip Snowden, who was to be the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924, was a member. It soon faded.

The first Free Church book on Socialism came from the Wesleyan Methodist minister, S. E. Keeble in 1907, *Industrial Daydreams*. He was to live to write *Christian Responsibility for the Social Order* in 1922, and play a considerable part in the C.O.P. E.C. Conference of 1924.[15]

Christian Socialism since the Russian Revolution

In 1916 Conrad Noel split from the C.S.L. to form the Catholic Crusade on the basis of "the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the sacramental principle," another interesting example of Catholic Anglicans being influenced by Liberal Protestantism. The Crusade was to welcome the Russian revolution of 1917, and then itself split after Stalin had ousted Trotsky. Those who supported Trotsky formed the Order of the Church Militant. A theological weakness is revealed in the lack of political judgement in evaluating the Soviet Union. The same defect was to be revealed by Hewlett Johnson, the "Red" Dean (of Canterbury) in his speeches and writing, and in a secularised form by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. In no case was it due to a slavish following of Marxist theory.

The remaining members of the C.S.L. split again in 1924. Another section of High-Church Anglicans formed the League of the Kingdom of God to seek a "specifically Christian Sociology." They became closely associated with an annual Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology ("Christian" Sociology) which took place from 1925 for nearly forty years. V. A. Demant was its leading thinker. Behind it was the Christendom Trust which published the journal *Christendom* from 1931 to 1950 under the editorship of Maurice Reckitt. An early book *The Return of Christendom* in 1922 foreshadowed it, and another *Prospect for Christendom* was a herald of its downfall. In its desire for a distinctive social theology it distanced itself from all that was going on, indeed from all social reality. It is too simple to say that it hankered after a return to the Middle Ages, but the mediaeval strain in its thought led it to advocate a return from industrialism to rural life, the reversal of urbanization and even barter rather than a financial system. It liked neither capitalism nor the adumbrations of the Welfare State under the Attlee Govern-

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ment of 1945, nor did it favour State socialism, but sought for something different and distinctively Christian. It was vague as to the "natural" order to which we should return and was perhaps rather more informed on cultural than on economic and political issues. For a time its leaders advocated the Social Credit scheme of the engineer Major C. H. Douglas (as did Hewlett Johnson), which is based on a simple economic fallacy. Its activities were absorbed by the Industrial Christian Fellowship in 1957. The Christendom Trust was refounded on a new basis in 1971.

The other section of the Church Socialist League became in 1924 the interdenominational Society of Socialist Christians, changing its name in 1931 to the Socialist Christian League. It, too, talked of building the Kingdom of God on earth and of the sacramental principle. It generated some activity in local groups, notably in Stepney by John Groser, an Anglican priest who became widely known throughout the country, and a number of M.P's were members, including George Lansbury, for a time leader of the Labour Party. It continued until a re-grouping of Socialist Christian forces in 1960.

The 1930s was a decade of economic recession, the growth of Fascism and rise of Nazism, and of deepening international crisis. It was the time of the influential Left Book Club. There grew up under the same influences a group of Christian Socialists called the Christian Left. It contained a number of academics, of whom the best known was the philosopher John Macmurray. This was the first group not at all in the Maurice tradition. It took Marxism seriously in its philosophy and social analysis, unlike Conrad Noel and his associates. It seemed indeed to be Marxism with religious overtones, affirming much of what Marxism affirms but insisting that Jesus saw it first.[16] The Christian Left hardly survived the Stalin-Hitler pact. In this same decade there was an informal group, centred on the staff and senior friends of the Student Christian Movement and influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr, who believed with him that it was necessary to move to the Right theologically and to the Left politically. Rejecting the utopianism of both Liberal Protestantism and Liberal Catholicism with regard to the building of the Kingdom of God, the group sought a socialist but not Marxist political position on the basis of what seemed the most urgent events of the decade. The work of New Testament scholars on the nature of the Kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus was a key factor in this position.[17]

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Stumbling block

Then came the war. In the middle of it William Temple, who had been Archbishop of York since 1929 called a conference in 1941 at Malvern on "The Life of the Church and the Order of Society." It was a confused affair. Those on the political left tried to get a resolution passed to the effect that private ownership of the principal industrial resources of the community is a stumbling block which makes it harder for men to live Christian lives. But they could only get the phrase "*may be* a stumbling block" passed. So next year they formed the Council of Clergy and Ministers for Common Ownership, with Bishop Blunt of Bradford as President and Sir Richard Acland and Sir Stafford Cripps as influential members. The Bishop resigned in 1947 because of its uncritical support of the Soviet Union (thus recalling the Catholic Crusade, the Order of the Church Militant and the Christian Left), and was succeeded by Hewlett Johnson. In 1952 it changed its name to the Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers, and in 1960 merged into a new Socialist Christian group, including the Socialist Christian League, after discussing with the latter its attitude to the U.S.S.R.[18] Out of these discussions came a pamphlet in 1959 *Papers from the Lamb*, and on its basis the new movement was called The Christian Socialist Movement, with the veteran Methodist minister, Dr. Donald Soper (later to become a Peer) as chairman.[19] Its journal was first called *The Christian Socialist Movement News* and later *The Christian Socialist;* it continues to be published. The Movement has some nine hundred members, with some M.P.s and some local activity

In the mid-1960s a Roman Catholic, semi-Marxist group, Slant, flourished briefly. Its impetus was the opening given by Pope John XXIII to a more constructive attitude to Marxism instead of the previous total opposition. Hitherto Roman Catholics had played little part in Christian Socialist movements (as distinct from the Labour Movement) largely because of the condemnation of Socialism in Papal teaching from *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. John XXIII deftly modified the previous blanket condemnation of Marxism by these artless words in the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of 1963: "Who can deny that these movements (*sc*. false philosophical teaching regarding the nature, origin and destiny of man and the universe) in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are posi-

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tive and deserving of approval?" These words were a prelude to a new *Ostpolitik* on the part of the Vatican. There had been a Catholic Social Guild since 1909 which published *The Catholic Worker* and established Plater College at Oxford, a counterpart to Ruskin College, but it was not socialist. The Slant Manifesto was published in 1966. In the next decade Christians for Socialism took its place, influenced by Latin-American Liberation Theology in its Marxist tones, but it did not flourish.

The year 1975 saw three initiatives. A Quaker Socialist Society restarted, with about two hundred and fifty members. There was the launching among Anglican Catholics of a society reviving in late-twentieth century terms the concerns of the Guild of St. Matthew, the League of the Kingdom of God and the Catholic Crusade. And in reaction to the perceived inadequacies of the "Call to the Nation" of the two Anglican Archbishops a group called Christians for Socialism began to meet, based in Manchester. Its energies have chiefly gone into a bi-monthly journal *Christian Statesman* (a title modelled on the left-wing *New Statesman*), which has a circulation of between one and two thousand. In 1980 these groups and several others of varying degrees of radicalism began to collaborate in a loose organization called COSPEC (Christian Organisations for Social, Political and Economic Change). Indirectly related to this a symposium, *Agenda for Prophets* appeared in that year.[20]

Three father-figures

After this survey of a hundred years of small Christian socialist groups there are three men to whom it is well to refer specifically. The first is Bishop Charles Gore. He was the greatest disturber of the Church of England establishment because he would not allow awkward questions to be passed by. He was a radical social reformer rather than a socialist, though he produced a sympathetic lecture on Christianity and Socialism to the Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908. In 1913 he edited a symposium *Property, Its Rights and Duties*, which remains a fundamental treatment of Christian teaching on property. Gore was alert to the moral perils of wealth, especially the idleness of the rich, and agreed with Roman Catholic teaching in regarding a living wage as the first charge on industry.[21]

William Temple as a young man in 1908 wrote a celebrated article in *The Economic Review* which covers many of the standard themes

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of Christian Socialists.[22] Commenting on Ephesians 4 verse 10 he says it articulates the fullest "scheme of evolutionary socialism, so far as all fundamental points are concerned, that has yet been achieved by man." He goes on to say that the Church must be concerned with the material world because (i) the doctrine of the Incarnation means that Spirit demands bodily expression, (ii) Jesus healed without enquiring into the spiritual attitude of sufferers, (iii) the Church owns property and employs persons. The Church needs the Labour Movement and the Labour Movement needs the Church—for its inspiration and rituals. There is the need to replace the competitive basis of society by a co-operative basis, for competition is inherently a spirit of selfishness, even of hatred. It is the interest of every man against his fellows. "There is no middle path between the acceptance of Socialism and the declaration that the Gospel cannot be applied to economics. The alternative stands before us—Socialism or Heresy; we are involved in one or the other." In 1918 he joined the Labour Party, but left it some time between 1921 and 1925 (it is not clear when or precisely why). At the end of his life, however, in *Christianity and Social Order* he said "I do not simply advocate Socialism or Common Ownership," and writes of the necessity to get the best out of socialism and individualism.[23]

R. H. Tawney was a similar yet different figure. He was similar in that his social, educational and theological formation was like that of Gore and Temple; he was different in that in addition to being an academic he was intimately connected with the Labour Movement all his life. Not only did he concern himself with its educational side in the Workers' Educational Association but also in its political and industrial side, and was at times involved in policy formation.[24] No one quite like Tawney exists in the Labour Movement now, but his spirit lives on. In the malaise which has come over the Movement since the General Election of 1979 there are often appeals to recover the essence of what he stood for. The tutor of Ruskin College, Oxford, has recently produced a pamphlet from which I quote. Tawney believed "that economics raised issues of fundamental principle which could only be resolved by moral choice. History was a moral drama too, in which rival systems of belief contended for supremacy and irreconcilable interest clashed. In his (writings)... we are offered, in essence, a secular version of the Fall, a reverse Utopianism in which commercial forces accomplish the destruction of communal solidarities, and society as a spiritual organism gives way to the notion of society as an

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economic machine."[25] Although standing for a fundamental change in the philosophy of society, which in turn would lead to a new structure of economic organization, and always unwilling to conceal or evade this for temporal electoral advantage, Tawney was a moderate in Labour political terms. His fear lest it be corrupted was a fear of moral corruption rather than of semi-Marxist theorists who wanted to bind it to a programme derived from an over-simplified analysis.

Christian Socialism today

What does the "mainstream" Christian Socialist movement stand for these days? At the 1960 union it was (i) the common ownership of the major resources of the world; (ii) a classless and just society; (iii) human and racial equality; (iv) the unity of Christian people (a new note); (v) friendship between East and West (this reflects the "soft" line towards the U.S.S.R.;) (vi) abolition of nuclear weapons (a post-1945 element); (vii) disarmament and world peace. Much of this is as general as being against sin and in favour of fellowship. Discussions of common ownership have been more detailed. Here the Scott Bader Commonwealth, founded in 1963, has had a lot of influence. It is a Northamptonshire firm in the specialist chemical industry, employing about four hundred and thirty. There is a maximum wage-differential of seven to one, 60 per cent of the profits are ploughed back into the business, and as much as is distributed in bonuses to employees is given to charities. More recently the Mondragon Co-operative in the Basque region of Spain has attracted notice. An Industrial Common Ownership Movement began in 1971, and in 1976 an Act of Parliament facilitated it; and in 1978 a Co-operative Development Agency was created. But it remains small.

COSPEC also stressed five points in 1980. (i) Equality of opportunity; (ii) Workers' Ownership; (iii) Community control of wealth; (iv) A planned socialist economy; (v) Full participation in decision-making.[26]

There is a vacuum both of faith and of policies in the Labour Movement today. The reformist elements—Christian and secular— lost impetus after the creation of the outlines of a Welfare State after 1945. Now there is the defensive task of defending it against a right-wing backlash, but merely to advocate a return seems unsatisfactory, and there is doubt about ways of developing it and the nature of the economy needed to sustain it. The working class is not homogeneous.

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A generation of relative affluence has increased the gap between the haves and the have-nots within it, especially between those in work and those unemployed. Trade unions and professional associations are very conservative in their attitudes. On the radical side the "idols" of the U.S.S.R. and more recently China have fallen and nothing has replaced them. Short-sighted economic nationalism is growing. Electorates do not want to be disturbed in their relatively recent affluence, and demand incompatible things; and since no government can provide them they tend to react against the one in power. It is doubtful whether governments are given enough manoeuvring room or enough time to handle the economy effectively. A question is raised as to whether our advanced industrial economies are becoming ungovernable. A further complication is caused by the powerful and often frenetic international commercial and financial forces which can shake even the largest economy. What in this situation is the legacy of the Christian Socialist movement?

Polarization

First it should be honoured for its boldness as a pioneer in grappling with the qualitatively new society which industrialism and urbanization created, and for bringing theology to bear upon it. Sometimes a debate arises as to how far intellectual developments genuinely arise out of the discipline in question and how far they arise from external factors. I do not think this is a very profitable polarization. There are many conditioning factors in thought, and the development of psychology and of the social sciences has made us more aware of them, though we can never be completely aware. We can now see that amidst their many acute internal disagreements the Victorians held in common many pre-suppositions of which they were imperfectly aware. Economic factors are the most pervasive of social influences. But conditioning factors are not determining factors. Just as we are firmly convinced that to some extent each of us can be an originator of his own decisions, so we can assume that theology has some independent influence on the thinking of those who take it seriously. It was a legitimately theological insight of Maurice to condemn the erection of competitive *laissez-faire* into a law of God and a philosophy of individualism. But the Victorian era was on the whole a confident one, and Christian Socialists tended to share the belief in the perfectibility of man rather than to counterbalance the utopian

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strain in socialist thought. That left Conservatism to claim that it was the "realistic" party, understanding the concept of Original Sin; although a moment's thought will reveal that it tells equally against the hierarchical and paternalistic elements in Conservatism, since no-one is good enough to exercise authority over others unchecked. This is particularly apposite in the era of multi-national companies. The Christian Socialists were often "soft" utopians in terms of building the Kingdom of God, and more recently those who owed nothing to Maurice have been "hard" utopians in accepting too simply the Marxist claim to be a "scientific" analysis of the development of society. It is the utopian element which has been one of the main reasons why Christian Socialist groups have been as fissiparous as left-wing groups in general, splitting over disputes about the "purest" form of socialism. It is the recovery of the eschatological note in the understanding of the Kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus which has undermined the Christian basis for the utopianism. Those Christians most actively involved in the Labour Movement tended to be the least theologically-minded and the most prey to secular assumptions.

Sectarianism

The other source of fissiparousness has been sectarianism. Christian Socialist groups have been slow to learn from the Ecumenical Movement. They have had other limitations. Sociologically they have been too clerical, too middle-class and in practice too paternalistic. Politically they have been too theoretical, too suspicious of political processes. Nor has theory always come to grips with difficult issues. Christian Socialists have not seen that conflicts of interest are inherent in any society, including socialist ones; and that it is necessary to create structures which can handle them creatively and which will harness individual and group self-interest in the cause of social justice. Conflicts of interest between consumers and producers and between managers and managed are endemic. Also there are problems of government control over nationalized industries which were never appreciated in the talk of common ownership.

It is perhaps in the economic field that the Christian Socialists have been weakest. It is not just the tendency to run after popular, ephemeral and erroneous nostrums like Henry George's Single Tax or Major Douglas' Social Credit or—less fanciful—Guild Socialism, but

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the inability to grasp the distinction between competition and the free market erected into an overall philosophy, and the market in a properly controlled social environment as one of mankind's most useful devices for deciding a basic problem in any society, the allocation of scarce resources between alternative uses. The talk of "production for use" and not "for profit," which frequently recurs, obscures this. The assumption that there is something necessarily sinister in profits, moreover, obscures the distinction between profit as a directive and profit as an incentive, and the role of an entrepeneur in the economic order.

Nevertheless, in spite of these defects the fundamental point remains. In the Christian view the economic order is made for persons and by its effect on persons it must be judged. If its philosophy requires the treatment of labour (persons) as one factor of production just like land and capital (things) it must be condemned. Moreover in the Christian view what each person has in common under God is much more significant than any empirical differences between them; the expression of this in the social order tends towards a communal and egalitarian outlook for the sake of social fellowship. The visions of most of the Christian Socialists were on the right lines; much more practical wisdom is needed to translate them into social, political and economic policies.[27]

NOTES

The place of publications of books is London, England, unless otherwise specified.

1. *Socialism*, R. N. Berki (1975) Ch. 2. He refers (p. 10) to *A Dictionary of Socialism*, Angelo Rappoport (1924).

2. Op. cit. p. 26.

3. Cf. *Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes 1850–1900*, R. F. Wearmouth (1954) and *Churches and Working Classes in Victorian England*, K. S. Inglis (1963), which modifies Wearmouth on the influence of Methodism.

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4. Cp. *Keywords,* Raymond Williams (1976).

5. In *The Christian Socialist, A Journal of Association,* 25th July, 1851.

6. *A Christian Directory or a Summ of Practical Theologie and Case of Conscience*, Richard Baxter (1673).

7. His famous Sermon 44 "on Money" is a good illustration.

8. J. M. Ludlow (1821–1911). Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Louis Blanc (1815–1822), Charles Fourier (1772–1831). Ludlow was to become from 1875–1891 Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies; cp. J. M. Ludlow, *The Builder of Christian Socialism,* Neville Masterman (1963).

9. Charles Kingsley (1819–76). He exposed rural conditions in his novel *Yeast,* and sweat shops in another, *Alton Locke,* and in a pamphlet *Cheap Clothes and Nasty;* cp. *Charles Kingsley and His Ideas,* Guy Kendall (1946). The quotation is from his *Three Letters to the Chartists* (1848).

10. E. V. Neale (1810–1892). The Co-operatives were set up by The Society for Promoting Working Mens' Associations, which was closed by Maurice in 1854. Neale later became Secretary of the co-operative Union, and together with Tom Hughes (author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*) produced the first text book on co-operation, *Manual for Co-operators* in 1881. Hughes was suspicious of Consumers' Co-operation and the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Neale encouraged them; cp. *Christian and Socialism Co-operation in Victorian England,* P. N. Backstrom (1974).

11. The Tailors lasted until 1860, when it collapsed because of a fraudulent manager; and early in the 1860s the Shoemakers were taken over as a private firm. It is thought that Neale lost 40,000 to 60,000 on them. cp. *Christian Socialism (1848–1854)* C. E. Raven (1920).

12. I have dealt with this more fully in the Maurice Lectures, *Religion and the Persistence of Capitalism* (1979) pp. 69–82, 88ff.

13. Quoted in *The Nonconformist Conscience,* H. F. Lovell Cocks (1944) p. 35.

14. Quoted in *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* by Frederick Morris (his son) (1885), Vol. 2 p. 32.

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15. Details of these various societies and individuals can be found in *The Churches and the Labour Movement,* S. Mayor (1967). The C.O.P.E.C. conference, or Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship at Birmingham in 1924, with William Temple in the Chair, with 1400 members was the first large Christian conference on the social order in Britain, and to some extent prepared for the first Ecumenical Conference on the matter at Stockholm in 1925. See *The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C.* ed. W. Reason (1924) and the reports of its twelve Commissions.

16. John Macmurray's *Creative Society* (1935) was one expression of the Christian Left. His Gifford Lectures of 1953 and 1954 *The Form of the Personal* were to strike a rather different note.

17. I was a member of this group. The quarterly journal of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians (U.S.A.) edited by Reinhold Niebuhr circulated among us, and I was for a time the English agent. It began in 1935 as *Radical Religion* and changed its name in 1940 to *Christianity and Society.*

18. Canon Stanley Evans of Southwark Cathedral epitomized the outlook of the Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers in his book *Return to Reality* (1955).

19. The Lamb was the name of a Public House where the group met. I reviewed *Papers from the Lamb* in an article in *Theology* for April 1960, "The Christian Left Still Lost." Lord Soper's opinions are expressed in *Christian Politics* (1977). Stanley Evans wrote another book, *The Social Hope of the Christian Church* (1965) which expresses the general outlook of the C.S.M.; the Kingdom of God is still a corporate society on earth.

20. Edited by R. Ambler and D. Haslam. I reviewed it in *Theology*, March 1981 in an article "Not Out of the Wood Yet?."

21. Gore succeeded Westcott as President of the C.S.U. His social theology is most conveniently found in an Essex Hall Lecture of 1920, *Christianity Applied to the Life of Men and Nations*, and in his book *Church and Society* (1927).

22. Vol. XIII pp. 190–202.

23. In 1917 a private group of which Temple was a member, the Collegium, produced a book *Competition. Christianity and Social Order* was a

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war-time paperback; the quotation is from the 1976 reprint (p. 99f), with an introductory essay by me.

24. I have written about him as a Christian Moralist in the Maurice Lectures pp. 83–110 (note 12 *supra*).

25. *Tawney and the S.P.D.*, Raphael Samuel, a pamphlet published by the Socialist Society (1982)

26. Cp. an essay "Christianity and Self Interest" by Gerard Hughes S. J., in *Christianity and the Future of Social Democracy*, ed. M. H. Taylor (1982).

27. The sources for the Christian Socialist Movement are primarily a large number of pamphlets and periodicals. Among the useful general surveys not already mentioned are *The Social Catholic Movement in Great Britain*, A. P. McEntee (New York, 1927); *The Church of England and Social Reform, since 1854*, D. O. Wagner (1930); *The Christian Socialist Movement in England*, G. C. Bunyan (1931); *The Church in the Social Order*, C. K. Gloyn (Pacific University, Oregon, 1942); *The Church and Social Order: Social Thought in the Church of England, 1918–1939*, J. K. Oliver (1968); *The Christian Socialist Revival 1877–1914*, P. D'A. Jones (Princeton, 1968); *The Origin and History of Christian Socialism*, T. Christensen, (Aarhus, 1962). *Church and Society in England 1770–1970*, E. R. Norman, (1976) needs to be read with caution, particularly on the twentieth century.

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Comment

Arthur A. Shenfield

Professor Preston offers us an extremely interesting, and for the most part truly excellent, historical survey of the development and influence of the English Christian Socialist Movement. Every character of any consequence in the Movement, major or minor, is given his place in the story, with a wealth of interesting detail. Some of these characters, though not without prominence or public recognition in their day, have now become almost completely forgotten, even amongst socialists and students of socialism in Britain. Viewed as a pure historical narrative, Preston's paper is a substantial contribution to knowledge. It deserves, perhaps, only one criticism. It ignores the influence upon Christian Socialists of some other important leading socialists or critics of capitalism whose teaching was not specifically religious—though not non-religious or anti-religious—such as Carlyle, Ruskin, Blatchford and Morris. The influence of the Christian Socialists would have been considerably less if their teaching had not meshed with that of these others. Some observations on the place in the historical record of the social Catholicism of Chesterton and Belloc would also have been to the point. Preston does bring Tawney into the record, but there were others on the socialist side who were not members of the Christian Movement whose influence assisted that of the Movement at least as much as did Tawney's.

Since he has himself had affiliations with the Christian Socialist Movement, Professor Preston is also to be commended for his awareness of the intellectual weaknesses and confusions, the naivete and mental fuzziness, which have been prominent in it. Thus for example,

> Maurice had no grasp of the fundamentals of economic policy, nor of the details, nor did the group get far with them in these years. Their writings are full of vague and imprecise reflections on a wide range of issues—trade unions, education,

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health legislation, the renewal of village life, the reform of the House of Lords—and many more.

.....

Westcott's social thought was inclined to be cloudy.

.....

For a time its (ie. the League of the Kingdom of God's) leaders advocated the Social Credit scheme of the engineer Major C. H. Douglas (as did Hewlett Johnson), which is based on a simple economic fallacy.

.....

There is a vacuum of both faith and policies in the Labour Movement today.

.....

They (ie. Christian Socialist groups) did not see that conflicts of interest are inherent in any society, including socialist ones.

.....

It is perhaps in the economic field that the Christian Socialists have been weakest. It is not just the tendency to run after popular, ephemeral and erroneous nostrums like Henry George's Single Tax or Major Douglas' Social Credit or—less fanciful—Guild Socialism, but the inability to grasp the distinction between competition and the free market erected into an overall philosophy, and the market in the properly controlled social environment as one of mankind's most useful devices for deciding a basic problem in any society, the allocation of relatively scarce resources between alternative users. Talking of 'production for use' and not 'for profit', which frequently occurs, obscures this.

Nevertheless, viewed as more than a historical narrative, Preston's paper is in my opinion unsatisfactory. The quotations set out above certainly show that he is a man of strong common sense, and is to a large extent aware of the problems which are inherent in the human condition and of the constraints which they impose upon us. But to him, as to many other observers, the confusion, naivete, even silliness, displayed by Christian Socialists are only warts upon what is in essentially a respectable face. Thus he concludes: "The visions of most of the Christian Socialists were on the right lines; much more practical wisdom is needed to translate them into social, political and economic policies."

The facts, in my opinion, are otherwise. The errors of the Christian Socialist Movement are not merely incidental. The Movement's

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ideas have been founded on myth, superstition, and ignorance. Its visions are not on the right lines, and no amount of practical wisdom could translate them into intelligent social or economic policies. Of course an accusation of intolerable arrogance may be invited by such a judgement on a movement in which there have been numerous men of moral or intellectual distinction, even eminence. I shall face this probable accusation below but first let me draw attention to what I perceive as errors in Preston's exposition.

1. Of John Wesley. "But his social theology was merely individualism writ large." Why "merely" individualism? Because individualism is supposed to be opposed to, or destructive of or oblivious of, the bonds which ought to tie men together in society. In fact individualism, properly understood, is not merely aware of the cement which binds men in a good society but actually strengthens it. The good society, its principles and practice, had nothing to fear from Wesley's life or teaching. It ought to be understood that it is precisely when the fundamental principle of society is respect for the individual, that social bonds are naturally strongest. Compare the cohesion of British and Dutch society in the nineteenth century with the fragility of other European societies which emphasized social unity. See how individualistic America could weld a united society out of disparate immigrants (the rift caused by slavery excepted), and see how that social unity is subjected to stresses and strains now that the Social Gospel urges Americans to take care of the supposedly "underprivileged" minorities. See how centrifugal forces have arisen, or if already there have been strengthened, in the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium and elsewhere once the Social Gospel has induced the people to deride individualism and to seek their welfare from the power of government.
2. "When an atomistic social and economic theory was being treated as law of God"; and "The Christian Socialist Movement did go to the root of the matter in this fundamental point." Here is another example of the fly-blown notion that the so-called atomistic theory is incompatible with social cohesion. Of course the animus against what is envisaged as an atomistic doctrine rest not merely on a misunderstanding of the forces producing social cohesion, but also upon the simple feeling that it must favour human selfishness, contrary to overwhelming evidence of the superior moral behaviour of people living in "capitalist" societies.

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3. "He (Kingsley) said that the Bible had been used as a book for the rich to keep the poor in order." Clearly Preston agrees with Kingsley on this, as do millions of other Britons who have been indoctrinated on the matter for many years. Though extremely common it is an odious slur on the best nineteenth century divines. In a free society the most destructive and counter-productive policy the poor can pursue is to seek to relieve their poverty by expropriating the rich; and the worst demagogues are those who urge the poor to do so. It was therefore correct exhortations of religion to seek to divert the poor from such temptation. The notion that this was simply a way of inducing the village labourer to tug his forelock to the squire, and the town labourer to behave submissively to his employer is a travesty of the facts. Of course the rich are naturally pleased when the poor do not assail them, and the pleasure will often be mixed with obtuseness and selfishness, but this is not the same, in a free and open society, as a desire to hold down the poor in poverty and misery. Of course it may be said that Kingsley's England was hardly a free or open society, but this is based either on ignorance of the facts or on the false notion that freedom is measured by the extent of material power or of access of material opportunities, which, if true, would mean that poverty is slavery. It is true that in Kingsley's England the working class was wholly without the franchise until 1867 and partially without it until 1884 (not to mention the exclusion of women of all classes from the franchise until 1918), but this is decisive only if the franchise is itself a decisive test of freedom. (Ask the Hong Kong Chinese if they feel unfree without it, or pose a like question to the shades of the millions of unenfranchised Britons of long ago who proudly sang "Britons never shall be slaves.") Furthermore within a generation after 1884 the working class vote began, however gradually, to be used for the self-destructive process of the expropriation of the rich.
4. "Many Christians regarded what they called the laws of economics as the laws of God in much the sense of the laws of the Newtonian universe... The Congregational journal, the *British Quarterly Review*... declared in 1846 that 'Economical truth is no less divine than astronomical truth. The laws which govern the phenomenon of production and exchange are as truly laws of God as those which govern day and night.' It was to this view that Maurice was implacably opposed." No doubt this view appears to

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Preston as preposterous as it did to Maurice. Yet at best Maurice only half understood it. If God made the world, economic laws, supposing that there are any, are as divine in origin as physical laws. Unfortunately the mid-nineteenth century's understanding of economic laws was partial and imperfect, contrary to the opinion at that time. Even John Stuart Mill thought that no fundamental propositions of economics were left to be discovered. Hence there was hubris in declaring the contemporary exposition of economic laws to be an expression of divine law, which stands as a warning to our generation and all succeeding generations. But what Maurice and his friends objected to were those propositions of contemporary economics which were not far off the truth. Thus the contemporaries whom he criticized were to that extent closer to the "laws of God" than he was.

5. "The philosophy of possessive individualism... is less and less appropriate to an advanced industrial society." Here we have the popular notion that policies which may have been suitable for the early capitalism of (supposedly) simple and small-scale enterprises become unsuitable for the late capitalism of (supposedly) complex and large-scale enterprises. This is a superstition, partly induced by the fact that there are indeed some differences in the application of policy. But the principles of policy are not affected by industrial change and development. Hence the truth or untruth of "possessive individualism" is also not thereby affected.
6. One may fairly assume that Canon Preston approves of the influence of the C.S.U. on the British Trade Boards Act, 1909, which produced machinery for setting wages in the so-called sweated industries. The truth is that all minimum wage legislation, whether applied under the British Trade Boards Act, 1909 or the American Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938, has injured, not benefited, the poor; and the poorer the poor, the greater has been the injury.
7. "(Bishop) Gore was alert to the moral perils of wealth... and agreed with Roman Catholic teaching in regarding a living wage as the first charge on industry." Gore was right in the first part. There are indeed moral perils in wealth, as the divines who approved of capitalism well knew (especially Wesley). But the second part is claptrap. What is a living wage? On whom should the first charge fall, the individual employer, all employers together, or all taxpayers together? What are the effects of maintaining such a first charge? What should be done about those whose labour prod-

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uct is not worth the "living wage"? These are vital questions, to which Gore and those with him had no answers which did not raise even more difficult questions.

8. "Here the Scott Bader Commonwealth... has had a lot of influence." Perhaps it has on Christian Socialists, but its influence on the public has been as close to nil as possible. Preston might also have mentioned the John Lewis Partnership, Taylors of Batley, and the few other cases of common ownership, co-partnership and profit-sharing which are all that a hundred and fifty years of preaching and example can show. This is one of the great will-o-the-wisps which men continually pursue. There is nothing in capitalism which forbids or hinders the establishment of such arrangements. If it were really true that they benefited the workers better than the more common forms of business, they would long ago have conquered the industrial field. Similarly every Briton may shop at the non-profit making co-ops if he or she wishes. But most do not, because the leading profit-making chains give better value for money. Hence private profit costs the consumer less than nothing. It is the consumer's Santa Claus, a fundamental economic fact which no Christian or other socialist has ever been able to grasp.
9. "First of all it should be honoured for its boldness as a pioneer in grappling with the qualitatively new society which industrialism and urbanisation created" (page 14). The boldness of ignorance deserves no honor. Despite the errors of the classical economists, which were to be expected in pioneers, there simply is no comparison between their level of discourse and that of the Christian socialists; and this applies even to the minor figures in classical economics, such as Torrens, Tooke, Fullarton and others.
10. "... no one is good enough to exercise authority over others unchecked. This is particularly apposite in the era of multi-national companies" (page 15). It is sad to see Dr. Preston descend to the level of the popular animus against the multi-nationals. For the most part the multi-nationals are the victims of unchecked power, not its wielders.
11. "In the Christian view the economic order is made for persons and by its effect or persons it must be judged. If its philosophy requires the treatment of labour (persons) as one factor of production just like land and capital (things) it must be condemned." Of course the economic order is made for persons and must be judged accordingly. This is exactly how economists have always viewed

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it, but they see it with more informed and trained eyes than the Christian Socialist. As for the treatment of Labour, what confusions can arise here! The economic order does not treat labour "just like" land and capital. There are aspects of labour which are indeed like those of land and capital (which is why the declaration of the U.S. Clayton Act that labour is not an article of commerce is so fatuous), and there are aspects which are not: and the economic order treats labour accordingly. But the Christian Socialist cannot see that labour is in *any* aspect like land or capital, and thus his view is blinkered.

Reply

Ronald H. Preston

My paper had four purposes. The first was to summarize the history of the various Christian Socialist groups since 1848. I chose this theme partly because they have had a diffused but significant influence on Christian social thinking and were therefore relevant to a conference on "Religion, Economics and Social Thought"; partly because whilst the early history of these groups has often been told, that of recent years has not been put together before.

The second purpose was an appraisal of their weaknesses which I thought overdue. I found three. They shared too much the prevailing Victorian optimism in the perfectibility of man. They were too clerical in composition and ecclesiastically sectarian in attitudes. They did not understand the fundamental problems of any economic system arising out of the need to allocate relatively scarce resources which have alternative uses; hence their attacks on profit as immoral and competition as inherently anti-human were too simple.

Thirdly, I wanted to stress that they put their finger on one central

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issue, when they criticized the erection of the competitive free market into an overall philosophy of life or ideology, best called that of "possessive individualism," instead of regarding it as a useful tool for particular human purposes.

In the fourth place I wished to suggest that Christianity is *always* in search of a political and social expression, and that the radical nature of its ethic means that it will never be satisfied for long with *any* particular social order and its associated political philosophies. A stress on human imperfection is related only to one doctrine, that of "Original Sin," which is not the central one in Christian faith. (It is unfortunate that the terminology is so unsatisfactory, for it stands for what many have thought the most evident of all Christian doctrines, that there is a gulf in human lives between what *is* and what they themselves think *ought to be*, and this entail of "sin" infects all social structures, from the family upwards; so that human beings are born into human relationships which are to some extent perverted, and to some extent pervert them from infancy, long before they are able to make a personal judgement themselves. We do not start from scratch, but inherit an entail of "original" wrongdoing.) The more positive doctrines of the Christian faith concern the possibilities of renewal through life in the Christian community, created by the liberating ministry of Jesus in letting loose the power of the Kingdom (or Rule) of God, focused in his life and teaching, and continuing in the world as "leaven" in a lump. That community is one of giving and receiving in mutual support as each helps the other in growing to maturity. Because we live in two Kingdoms at once, that of the Kingdom of God and that of the Kingdom or structures of the world, we do not expect the life of the latter to be simply based on the former (and indeed it is only very imperfectly embodied in the Church itself). But it does provide criteria for a critique of political and economic philosophies. From this point of view the philosophy of the free market when turned into an overall interpretation of life, can be criticized as an inadequate understanding of what it is to be human, because it stresses the atomic and individualist aspect of life to the neglect of the prior organic and corporate aspects.

Fabian socialism

Mr. Shenfield approves of the way I have discharged the first of these

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aims, except that he would like some reference to the social Catholicism of G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. This is summed up in Belloc's book *The Servile State* (1912). He and Chesterton were reacting against the state "gas-and-water" socialism of the Fabian Society, epitomized by the work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb and their famous Minority Report to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law which laid the intellectual foundations of the modern welfare state. Belloc argued that state action of this kind would turn the masses into a servile caste. Rather there should be the widest possible distribution of small-scale property, on the basis of the classical Christian defence of it found in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. This thinking was called Distributism. It was allied to the Guild Movement, and the weekly *New Age* founded and edited in 1906 by A. R. Orage, a dissident Fabian, but it is hardly part of the Christian Socialist tradition. It faded away in the 1929 Depression.

Mr. Shenfield's vigorous polemics are concerned with the other three aims of my paper. In detailed dissection of what I had written he makes six points, with rather more emphasis than evidence:

1. Individualism, properly understood, actually strengthens the bonds which tie men together in society. I wish he had spelled out how "properly understood" is to be taken. Instead he quotes the examples of the cohesion of the British and Dutch in the nineteenth century compared with other European societies, and that of the U.S.A. (apart from slavery) in absorbing masses of immigrants. The references are so brief that there is nothing to counteract one's astonishment.
2. The poor need to be diverted from attacking and trying to expropriate the rich. It would be to their own disadvantage, and religion should help to restrain them from doing so. Poverty is not slavery. He does not explicitly say why, but the inference is that in a free and open society the poor have the best chance of escaping poverty. Presumably some will always be rising out of it as others are falling into it. This ignores the fact that, contrary to what Adam Smith expected, wealth tends to lead easily to more wealth (particularly because of laws of inheritance), and the economic order gets more and more unequal (unless the free market mechanism of distribution is interfered with). Since it also moves erratically in booms and slumps men and women get caught in disasters which they could not guard against, and if their well-being is left to the in-

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constant whims of private benevolence they could be in dire straits. To what extent and by what means the rich should be "expropriated" to deal with this is a different question.

3. Economic laws are as "divine" as the laws of physics, since human beings are faced with the inescapable necessity of choosing between scarce means with alternative uses. This seems indeed to be a brute fact of human life and part of the divine creation. But the social mechanism by which we make these choices is not determined by divine law, but rather by free human decisions. The *free market* is not a divine or "natural" institution, but a human construction for human purposes. Human beings can vary the range within which it works and decide the legal and social structure within which it is allowed to operate.
4. Minimum wage legislation harms the poor; and overlooks the fact that the economic product of some is not worth the "living wage." The first part of the statement is only true on the assumption that the free market is working on completely *laisser-faire,* atomistic assumptions; otherwise it can help the poor if we choose that it should. The second part raises the question of what we are to do with the minority who are barely employable. The living wage is one solution; a second is creating a social minimum level of benefits which are given to citizens as of right, a level beyond which they will not be allowed to fall, which is the aim of the welfare state; a third way is leaving it to private charity. The third is inhuman, and some combination of the first two seems necessary.
5. The multi-nationals for the most part are the victims of unchecked power, not its wielders. This is too big a subject to discuss thoroughly. Because they are conspicuous they are an easy target for attack, and can be made scapegoats for all social ills. But they *are* very powerful, and there have been enough scandals connected with them to serve as a warning. At their best they transcend the often petty and short-sighted nationalism of particular governments; at their worst they can be more powerful than many national governments, who find it hard to control them. In both cases they are irresponsible, in that shareholders usually have little influence, and public scrutiny is difficult.
6. There are aspects of labour which are like those of land and capital and there are aspects which are not, but the Christian Socialist cannot see that there is any aspect in which they are alike. As I acknowledged in my paper, this criticism is true of a number of

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Christian Socialists who possessed a weak and often an erroneous grasp of economic realities.

I see no reason to alter the general burden of my paper. The history of the various Christian Socialist groups shows grave weaknesses, but a correct insight into the central issue. The "spirituality" which characterizes the ideology of free-market capitalism is unsatisfactory. It finds success in terms of personal rather than corporate achievements. It holds that unless everyone bears all the consequences of his own actions it is feather-bedding; that unless virtues have their personal rewards they will not be practised; that there is no place for solidarity; that public provision is only a last resort when voluntarism has failed; and that compassion, faithfulness and generosity are leisure-time activities. In their zeal to expose this outlook the Christian Socialists overlooked the value of the free market as a human institution for deciding many issues, provided it is put into a strong institutional framework and not turned into the key to all human economic relationships and to the divine ideal for man.

Discussion

Edited by: Irving Hexham

Ted Scott: Ellis Rivkin referred on several occasions to "historical baggage." Now when you talk about historical baggage or historical reality, it seems to me you have to look at the fact that risk-taking, which has been a term used and related to capitalism, never takes place in a vacuum.

Risk-taking took place in North America in the context of the de-

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velopment of European technology coming into a new situation that was wide open. There is a whole different context to that reality when risk-taking is imposed upon South America with a vastly larger population in another historical context or to the question of risk-taking by external groups moving in Africa, in terms of the situation there.

Issues relating to capitalism tend to focus on development within North America. But North American economic growth is part of a particular historical context and social reality. Can the North American example be transplanted to another part of the world?

It's the development of the ability to respond to those realities in the new situation that is incumbent upon those who give real support to capitalism. How do you continue a developmental situation that enables you to cope with the new realities that arise out of your actions, rather than just defend a principle from a past situation as though it is applicable in every context. I think we've tended to make that assumption much too easily in some of our discussions.

Imad Ahmad: I didn't say economics, I said "politics." I said *politics* for a reason. Economics is a science that tells you what will happen if you do certain things. As such, it's not going to be influenced by your values.

However, given that economics says, if you interfere with the marketplace, this will happen, and if you don't, that will happen, your values decide whether, once you have that knowledge, you are going to interfere or not. Those values are related to ethics. So once economics tells you what certain courses of action will lead to, you then have to make the choice as to whether you want that course of action.

So the choice we're talking about is: do we want to have socialism, or do we want to have capitalism, or do we want a third way? That's where religion comes in, at least, where ethics comes in. I would argue that religion says a lot about ethics. It definitely does in Islam.

Jim Sadowsky: I am in favour of justice but not in favour of the myth called social justice. Of course justice enters into questions of government intervention. These actions have to be judged as "just" or "unjust." The operation of the market itself cannot be just or unjust.

So justice hasn't been thrown out of the window in capitalism. But it isn't what is called "social justice." When you use the phrase "social justice," you are calling upon the mechanism itself to be just, which it cannot be, by its very nature.

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Clark Kucheman: I should also like to discuss the concept of social justice. I think it does make sense to talk about social justice, if by that you mean the functioning of social institutions in accordance with human rights. When people have talked about capitalism being unjust they don't mean that it is a conscious agent. They mean that its functioning is not in accordance with the rights of human beings.

Walter Block: Once upon a time, there was a concept of justice—plain, old ordinary justice. And it meant something. I think the creation of the concept ''social justice'' is improper. It is merely an attempt to smuggle into the idea of ''justice'' something very different, while capturing the honorific element long enjoyed by this term. ''Social justice'' is commonly used as a synonym for ''equality.'' Instead of favouring ''social justice,'' it would have been more honest to come out on behalf of ''equality.'' But this would not have worked too well public-relationswise, hence the invention of ''social justice.''

The analogy that comes to my mind is ''rights.'' Once upon a time, there were things called ''rights.'' In the classical sense rights were negative rights: i.e., the right not to be interfered with. All of a sudden, people claimed so-called ''positive rights'': the right to food, clothing and shelter, etc. This analogy is perfect. In both cases, ideologues attempted to latch onto a highly respected concept (e.g., rights, justice) in order to push their own agenda (e.g., income redistribution, equality).

For clarity and honesty, it would have been better, to use other terminology instead of ''social justice'' or ''rights.'' But at present, the dialogue is clouded as ''income redistribution'' and ''equality'' try to hide behind the skirts of ''justice'' and ''rights.''

Imad Ahmad: The real problem is not with a concept of social justice, the problem is that the words themselves are very confusing and misleading for the reasons Walter Block has stated. That does not mean that everyone who has ever used the term social justice was not talking about a concept. I used it in my paper because there are people who use the term to mean a concept. I was referring to those people and the definition they use, but I would rather give it a new name, myself.

Gregory Baum: Schools of social thought define the term ''social justice'' in different ways. It is important to distinguish these dif-

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ferences. Otherwise we make all sorts of generalizations about "social justice" which have no basis in reality. In Catholic social teaching, we used to speak of "legal justice," "commutative justice," and "distributive justice." Pope Pius XI wanted to deal with a new form of justice, not contained in the preceding three, a new form which he called "social justice." If persons find that the existing social order does not allow them to observe the requirements of justice as previously defined, then they must engage themselves with others to change the existing order so that they may observe the requirements of legal, commutative and distributive justice. This he defined as "social justice." If a factory owner, Pius XI argued, finds that he cannot pay a just wage to his workers, then he must organize with other citizens to struggle for a transformation of the social and economic order so that just wages can be paid to workers.

Hanna Kassis: Islam has never abandoned the thought that it was a total way of life concerned with all departments of living. In fact, society can be described as just or unjust in a number of ways. This is not to say that the total society is just or unjust, but that the individual in society can be treated justly or otherwise.

In some cases, the total society can be accused of injustice. When the whole society fails to observe its duty, then the total society will be involved in sin, and will be responsible. For example, when something horrible is done and society keeps quiet, like the holocaust.

I'm in favour of keeping the term social justice if we mean by this term that the individual enjoys justice in society, is treated equally and is given equal opportunities, and so forth.

Ellis Rivkin: The religious roots of the idea of social justice really derive from such prophetic teachings as Amos, who specifically referred to a "total society" that was being brought under God's just judgement. He said that unrighteousness and evil will bring doom to the total society.

Irving Hexham: Arthur Shenfield put forward the view that a contract or market society is a good thing. One flaw with this is that people have a "folk memory." This folk memory involves a view of life where people envisage society as being like a large family. This vision of society as a family has important implications.

The point raised about Amos is relevant here. The view of society

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as a large family is reinforced and embedded in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. From the viewpoint of a market society this is unfortunate because if you are going to be religious you are going to keep returning to the image of society as a family.

My question to Arthur Shenfield is what do you do with Christianity, Islam, or Judaism? And what belief or religious system will replace the folk memory which is built into our religions?

Arthur Shenfield: Religion will have to be divested of that element of its folk memory. But religion must still pursue justice. There is nothing higher in the world than the pursuit of justice. If you don't understand it, you will pursue evil, and that's the real trouble.

The great insight of the philosophers and economists of the Enlightenment was that they saw that once you came to the "Great Society," the way to pursue justice could no longer be the way in which a loving father looks after his children or the chief of a clan looks after his clansmen.

The way to justice can only be the establishment and maintenance of impersonal rules. That is why we say that justice must be blind. Justice must not be a respecter of persons. A judge must not seek justice only. He must seek justice according to law. And only according to law. We all understand that. A ruler must be subject to certain impersonal rules. And a market is the best example of what this means.

But naive observers have never grasped that. And so they hate these impersonal rules. As Walter Block said yesterday, under the system of impersonal rules, we use other men as means. Critics of capitalism can never understand that that is entirely compatible with justice, because justice arises from the maintenance of impersonal rules. Once a society is properly subject to these impersonal rules the ability of individuals to be just becomes greater than in any other known society.

That is why in a society like America, slavery becomes uneconomic. It is the explanation of the fact that in the nineteenth century when there were disasters in India, Africa, or Latin America, subscriptions were always, immediately, and bountifully raised to help the victims. This did not occur in Imperial Russia, Germany, Austria, or France, but it did in America. In individualist, capitalist, America and Britain, the behaviour of people becomes more just once they understand the nature of the rule of law.

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James Sadowsky: Perhaps a reconciliation is possible. The society we are dealing with in the old Testament is not the "great society." There, the situation is much closer to the family where people knew each other.

But when you go into a different situation, new occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth. When you have this "great" or "modern" society, if you are going to avoid tyranny and favouritism you are forced to use the rule of law impartially.

Susan Feigenbaum: I'd like to suggest that the notions of family and of impersonal rules and law are not necessarily exclusive. Arthur Shenfield need not have put himself on the chopping block and thrown the family out of religion as quickly as he did. The establishment of such rules may be based on the notion of family and a willingness to forego one's individual rights or benefits in certain circumstances.

So I think that the establishment of impersonal rules—the initial allocation of property rights—from which the game begins can be consistent with the notion of family. But I agree that once such impersonal rules have been developed, according to these ethics and norms, they must be applied in an impersonal and objective manner.

John Berthrong: If you bring up such science fiction notions of law and the use of contracts and things like that, then I would simply suggest looking for an impersonal religion based upon causality. Should we convert to Buddhism? If we want an impersonal religion, let's junk the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, embrace the four noble truths and analyze co-independent origination. Then happily we will go off into a market future. (laughter)

Clark Kucheman: A lot of traditional Judaic, Christian, and Islamic thought is very paternalistic in character. The images are always of the great father, not mother, but a commanding father who passes out favours every now and then, and treats us all like God's children—or sheep. It's the shepherd and the sheep. And I think that whole mentality is incompatible with the libertarian view.

Hanna Kassis: I want to take issue with the metaphor itself, and the subsequent discussion that resulted from it, in that I think it is blasphemous to speak of the fatherhood of God in Islam or in Judaism. I stand to be corrected by Muslims and Jews here. God fathered no-

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body in Islam. The metaphor of family does not exist as a foundation in Islam or in Judaism. What exists is not a metaphor, but a reality from the point of view of the Muslim and the Jew.

God's law has been made manifest to mankind, here on earth in time and space; and whether a man likes it or not, he is stuck with it. That's what he has to live by. He has no other option. The family metaphor is not involved here.

In other words we are dealing with "despotic leadership." I don't use the term despotic pejoratively at all. I mean it in the sense that the law of God is no longer in heaven. It is here. There is no role for fatherhood, family, love, etc., in this kind of language. There is only total obedience.

Stephen Tonsor: People ought to distinguish between a set of rules which enable men to live together in civil society and the demands of God on the individual for perfection. The justice that a Christian demands of himself always exceeds the demands of civil society. This often brings him into conflict with the civil society.

Anthony Waterman: I take issue with the metaphor from a Christian point of view. More significant than the concept of the family for Christian social thought is the concept of the Body of Christ. It seems to me that Christians are stuck with the notion that somehow or other the faithful, at any rate, are unified with Christ sacramentally in a way which in some very fundamental sense transcends their atomism—their individualism. It doesn't destroy it; but it means that they are joined with Christ and therefore with each other in a way which is quite incompatible, I think, with Arthur Shenfield's view of the just society.

Imad Ahmad: Arthur Shenfield made a mistake in thinking that Islam relates to a father figure of God, but I agree with his point about impersonal rules. The great achievement of Islam was that, long before the American Constitution, the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* provided a set of impersonal rules that people were expected to abide by.

Richard Neuhaus: In various ways we are talking about the role of virtue, and its possible economic ramifications. Justice is a virtue. Hayek's work is a needed corrective, because people begin to speak about society as an actor, that is capable either of virtue or vice. That is simply fuzzy thinking.

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Perhaps we can talk precisely about justice as an act in which there are indeed actors, individuals and groups. We can say that in some societies, the incidence of justice, or of injustice, is greater or less.

We can even go so far as to use expressions such as "a virtuous society," "a more or less virtuous society." But I agree that there is danger in this. The best we can probably do is to keep emphasizing that by justice we mean "virtue" which requires a degree of voluntarism, in which people are held as responsible actors.

The idea of virtue relates to some of the points that Ronald Preston was making. But he talked about a market leading to an atomistic rather than communally responsible society. As a matter of empirical fact, I would suspect that the virtue of community is higher in its incidence in a society that is marked by the exercise of free economic choice.

In the metaphors of judgement, fatherhood, accountability, familial attachment and responsibility, it is the Church, the believing community, that represents the exemplary degree of virtue. Therefore, the role of the Church is to stir up the capacity for exemplary virtue in society.

Let me conclude on the question of virtue. We touched on the issue of how we had gotten beyond the idea of the deserving and the undeserving poor. I'll say something that will sound terribly quaint. I think it is very unfortunate that we have dropped this terminology. For most of my adult life I have worked among the black poor in Brooklyn. These were the poorest of the poor as far as New York city goes and perhaps in all America. It strikes me as one of the greatest injustices done to these people, is that in social policy, no distinctions were made between deserving or undeserving poor. Rather, everybody was classified simply as "victim." This made them the object of abstract social policies, and those very policies reduced their initiative and incentive. They were encouraged to become irresponsible and dependent. It is one of the great indignities we do to people when we withhold discriminatory judgements.

Walter Block: I want to address myself to the distinction between cooperation and competition. Many people think that the marketplace is dog-eat-dog, vicious and competitive, in contrast to other institutions such as socialism, which exhibit cooperation. Now I agree that meaningful cooperation *can* take place in socialistic oriented institutions. But this is provided that they are *voluntary*. For example, the kibbutz in Israel, the monastery, the cooperative, the

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various experiments in "utopian" communal living. But even these have to be very small to succeed, and they have a long history of failure. The nuclear family is another case of non-market cooperation. Although my four-year old son and two year old daughter are sometimes not very good examples of this. They don't always cooperate with me. (laughter) Maybe what we need is more of the marketplace, even in my little tiny family. (laughter)

But certainly, the only way to get cooperation in a large society, any cooperation whatsoever, is to have a marketplace. Consider the example of this pencil I am holding in my hand. There were numerous people who cooperated to manufacture this pencil. They didn't know each other. If they ever saw each other, they might cut each other dead, or fight with each other, for all I know. And yet, through the magic of the marketplace, and I use that phrase advisedly, they were able to cooperate with each other in a way impossible had orders been coming down from on high. Large scale central planning is perhaps the *least* cooperative economic system known to man. My point is that people can, paradoxically, cooperate with each other *through* the competitive system, and that when it comes to large scale enterprise, this indirect or decentralized cooperation is actually more efficient than the supposed direct cooperation of central planning.

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Chapter 6

Religious Commitment and Political Judgements: A Contextual Connection

Roger C. Hutchinson

Contributors to this symposium were asked to explore:

> the extent to which Christian (or other religious) commitment to a particular political and economic programme can be given an 'internalist' explanation (that is, can be said to be based upon a coherent *theological* and/or *political-economic* position), rather than an 'externalist' explanation as argued by Bryan Wilson, E. R. Norman and others (that is, it is the result of sociological pressures upon the clergy to be 'trendy').[1]

As requested, I will address that question to the North American Social Gospel. I must confess at the outset, however, that the question is formulated in a way that makes it almost certain that one's destination can be predicted from one's starting point. Since I am sympathetic to the Social Gospel, I obviously believe that the link between the Christian faith and radical social reform or socialism can be based on a coherent theological foundation. A critic of the Social Gospel or of Liberation Theology, on the other hand, could be expected to accuse social gospellers and social-justice advocates of being "trendy."

My aim is to help to move our discussions beyond stereotyped defences and criticisms of the Social Gospel and of the link between Christianity and socialism. Rather than focusing on how social

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gospellers have *linked* Christianity and socialism, I will explore the implications of Reinhold Niebuhr's *rejection* of his earlier Marxism. As Beverly Harrison has argued, there has been a tendency to assume that Niebuhr thoroughly explored Marxism and found it lacking *on theological grounds.*[2] A more useful approach, represented for example by Martin Marty's 1974 discussion of Niebuhr's "public theology," emphasizes the impact of his empirical observations on his theological and political statements.[3] This reversal in emphasis will help us to see that the manner in which we interpret economic and social factors deserves as much attention as how we articulate or explain the theological or philosophical foundations of our differing interpretations. Compared with the sophistication and tolerance with which Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, etc., discuss one another's views of salvation, we are amazingly crude and dogmatic in our attempts to understand one another's interpretations of economic conditions and political realities.

Niebuhr's changing view of political reality

The Social Gospel movement emerged in the nineteenth century as a response to economic and social problems accompanying industrialization and urbanization. It also represented the extension of evangelical zeal from the conversion and salvation of individuals to the transformation of social structures. As a pastor in a working-class congregation in Henry Ford's Detroit, Reinhold Niebuhr both identified with the Social Gospel critique of capitalist society, and experienced the conditions which demanded a more radical solution. In 1930, he helped to launch the Fellowship of Socialist Christians (F.S.C.). According to its membership folder:

> The fellowship is committed to the belief that the social ownership and administration of natural resources and of basic means of production is a primary requisite of justice in our technological age. It affirms and supports the efforts of those who seek a cooperative society along socialist lines and it opposes those who seek to maintain the dominant contemporary system known as capitalism, which is characterized by private ownership of natural resources and the instruments of production. Capitalism... destroys the opportunity of increasing numbers of people to earn a livelihood adequate for physical health, mental and moral development, and personal freedom. It thereby corrupts both culture and religion.[4]

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The Fellowship believed that "the workers of the world, who suffer most from the injustices of the present society, have a peculiar mission to be the instruments and heralds of this new society." Its aim, therefore, was to build a political alliance between workers and morally concerned people who themselves were not engaged in manual labour, thus creating "political forces in which human need and moral decision will be united to bring in a new economic order." It resisted both the optimistic liberalism of those who thought persuasion alone would produce the new society, and "the optimism of those Marxists who imagine that a new mechanism of social ownership will eliminate all conflict in the world and solve all the problems of the human spirit." With a Niebuhrian flourish, the F.S.C. statement concluded that, "On the basis of its Christian convictions it recognizes the inevitability of the conflict of interests in society as one of the forms in which human sin will always express itself."[5]

By the early 1940s Niebuhr's assessment of different economic systems and political philosophies had changed. According to Ronald Stone, Marxism had failed where it had been tried, especially in Russia. It was inadequate as a political philosophy since "it granted one group an absolute monopoly of power and also exaggerated the inevitable self-righteousness of man by claims of scientific rationality for its social theory." As a force for social change, the Marxist myth that utopia would follow catastrophe provided useful motivation for revolutionary action. However as a religion which absolutized its view of the dialectic of history it was dangerous:

> The illusions of Marxism . . . reinforced the tyrannical tendencies of Communism. The primary illusion was its utopianism. Great evils were approved on the grounds that every act was justified which would realize the classless society. . . . The criticism of Marxism was in essence the same as the criticism of liberalism; both creeds were blinded by utopian illusions to the need for resolute political action for achievable ends.[6]

Stone then reiterates the view expressed in earlier comments by interpreters such as John Bennett and Kenneth Thompson: "Marxist realism had exposed the illusions of liberalism, and Augustinian realism exposed Marxist illusions." Thus, although he points out

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that "an understanding of (Niebuhr's) thought is based upon grasping both the historical situation and his philosophical generalizations," he ends up implying that Niebuhr's criticisms of Marxism flow primarily from "an Augustinian-inspired theology."[7] This underestimates the importance of Niebuhr's empirical observations of the changing world scene, and in particular of his American context.

Contextual judgements

Martin Marty has drawn attention to the tendency of Niebuhr's interpreters to focus on "his theological and philosophical ideas on an almost entirely literary base of reference." Perhaps, he suggests, this reflects the influence of "historic European theology." Or, "Niebuhr's interpreters may be dismissing his circumstantial thought as being the ephemeral context out of which the permanent more abstract philosophical work emerged."[8] This emphasis on his abstract thought and religious convictions overlooks Niebuhr's own claim that "the gradual unfolding of (his) theological ideas (had) come not so much through study as through the pressure of world events."[9]

In an article called, "Reinhold Niebuhr: From Marx to Roosevelt," William H. Becker also shifted the emphasis from Niebuhr's theological ideas to his contextual judgements. He pointed out that, although other interpreters recognized in a general way that events influenced Niebuhr's thought, he wanted to give a more precise account of how this had occurred in relation to Niebuhr's rejection of Marxism. His main argument is that Niebuhr "gave up his Marxist radicalism as he came to believe that social justice could be achieved within the American system." He insists that, "the change in Niebuhr's thinking is directly attributable to his changing view of the New Deal."[10]

Becker claims that until late in the 1930s Niebuhr believed that capitalism "was unjust by its 'very character' and democracy... was incapable of reforming it." In the 1939 spring issue of *Radical Religion,* Niebuhr admitted that some of Roosevelt's programmes represented real "social gains." This prompted Niebuhr to re-examine his earlier assumptions about democracy, the role of the proletariat, and the relations between classes.

In 1932, Niebuhr had agreed with Marx and Lenin that capitalist

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democracy meant that every few years the oppressed are allowed "to decide which particular representative of the oppressing classes are to represent them and repress them in politics."[11] By 1939, "he showed an appreciation of Roosevelt's role as leader which revealed his new understanding of democracy." Niebuhr admitted that a "political cause depends upon leadership to a greater degree than (he) had . . . supposed." This changed his attitude toward the role of the proletariat.

> He had believed that . . . they were to be the instrument to bring about a socialist society. But a resolute leader moving society, by steps, to socialism demotes the proletariat to a position of encouragers and supporters of the president; no longer are they the instruments of the new order, for the battle is to be eliminated.[12]

Niebuhr's belief that a class war could be averted did not mean that he abandoned his view of society as a sea of conflicting interests. In the 1940 election, "Wilkie was unacceptable because he failed to understand that government was at the center of a conflict of interests." Roosevelt deserved support for his domestic policies, as well as for his foreign policies, because he had actually brought about a degree of reconciliation between classes.[13]

Niebuhr's support for Roosevelt in 1940 was also based on his assessment of the options. If Roosevelt was not encouraged to seek a third term, "the only recourse would be the formation of a farm-labor party. Unfortunately it would take this party years to gain enough strength to win." Meanwhile, reactionaries would undoubtedly replace Roosevelt and lead the society back towards class war. "A genuine battle would probably mean the disintegration of the economic system and severe social conflict."[14] Developments in Germany and Italy prompted Niebuhr to worry that a fascist dictatorship rather than a classless socialist society would likely emerge from such a battle.

Feuds between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, a lack of labour union concern for unorganized workers, and the failure of labour to support Roosevelt's proposal for "an excess-profits tax on all profits six percent above those before the war," increased Niebuhr's disenchantment with labour politics. It also prompted him to conclude that "the

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Roosevelt administration had more sense of justice than labor unions." By 1943 he no longer qualified his support for American economic and political institutions with the hope that socialism would eventually be achieved. In an article called "They Died for Capitalism," Niebuhr claimed that enough social control could be applied within the American system to guarantee a decent life for all without "the destruction of 'free enterprise.'"[15]

What did Niebuhr reject?

This emphasis on the extent to which Niebuhr's political judgements were related to his assessments of concrete conditions and options has a number of implications. On the one hand, it prompts us to ask again, not only why Niebuhr rejected Marxism, but whether or not he rejected all forms of socialism. As a Canadian, it heightens my interest in Niebuhr's reaction to Canadian Christian socialists in the 1930s. How seriously did he take their context? Finally, this analysis should make us more attentive to the basis upon which we decide what is going on in our own contexts and how this relates to our religious commitments. Do we assume that our understanding of the facts requires interpretation or that the disciplines we use or practice simply reflect rationality and empirical rigour? If we make this assumption, Niebuhr's ghost will haunt us!

According to Ronald Stone, "Niebuhr's critique of Marxism is a thorough-going indictment." In his view, "Niebuhr recognized that the evils of Stalin's dictatorship were partially due to contingent historical factors, but he emphasized the mistakes in Marxist theory which made such a development likely."[16] Becker, on the other hand, claims that Stalin's persecution of the kulaks and the Moscow trials did not drive Niebuhr away from Marxism as it did many intellectuals. Niebuhr "recognized the possible brutality that excessive power could beget and so was not shocked into rejecting Marx by what happened in Russia."[17] It is clear that Niebuhr did reject Stalinism and Communism, and that he roundly criticized all theories and political movements which seemed utopian or which exaggerated the human ability to know and to do what is right. It does not seem accurate, however, to assume that he rejected all forms of socialism.[18] It is also illegitimate to appeal to the authority of his theology to condemn socialism or Marxism.

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Niebuhr in relation to Canadian and feminist contexts

In the 1930s a group of Canadian Christians formed a movement closely related to Niebuhr's Fellowship of Socialist Christians. The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order (F.S.C.O.) existed between 1934 and 1945. It was:

> An association of Christians whose religious convictions have led them to the belief that the Capitalist economic system is fundamentally at variance with Christian principles; and who regard the creation of a new social order to be essential to the realization of the Kingdom of God.[19]

In his review of the Fellowship's 1936 collection of essays, *Towards the Christian Revolution*, Niebuhr criticized the authors for failing to deal adequately with "the more difficult issues of the relation of Christianity to radicalism."

> These issues are not discussed because it is simply assumed that the socialist commonwealth for which the authors are striving is somehow or other identical with the Kingdom of God of Christian hopes. Is it not a little late in the day to maintain this illusion, so characteristic of the older Social Gospel?

According to Niebuhr:

> The crucial problem of every religious radicalism is how to relate the proximate goals of politics and the relative values of history to the unconditional demands of the gospel. If these unconditioned demands are merely reduced to a demand for increasing mutuality (after the fashion of John Macmurray, to whom most of the authors express their indebtedness) the result is not only a corruption of the historical meaning of the gospel but also an evasion of the actual human situation.[20]

Niebuhr's hostile reaction to the Canadians' emphasis on mutuality reflects his own convictions that the highest form of love is self-sacrifice and that the most insidious form of sin is self-assertion.[21] Although his pronouncements always reflected his own experience, Niebuhr's polemical, homiletical style often obscured the extent to

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which his judgements incorporated an interpretation of his own context. Langdon Gilkey points to the contextual character of Niebuhr's theology when he claims that:

> Niebuhr held to a theology of atonement, justification, and reconciliation as opposed to a messianic theology of a divine victory over evil men and evil orders, because he felt the former was a better *political* theology than the latter—and, note, better in terms of its possibilities for achieving justice, freedom, and humanity in history.... His theology... was not designed to eradicate hope for the future but precisely to eradicate the nemesis of self-destructive fanaticism and the despair that arises therefrom.[22]

In Niebuhr's context it seemed more fitting to worry about too much rather than too little pride, and about fanaticism rather than loss of hope. Feminists have observed that Niebuhr's stress on self-sacrifice and on the need to restrain prideful self-assertion is a very masculine preoccupation.[23] Women have been too passive and too reluctant to be self-affirming. In an analogous fashion, Canadians may have been too passive and lacking in self-affirmation as their nation drifted from being a British colony to an American satellite. Our main sins, it could be argued, are passivity and bad stewardship, not pride and self-assertion.

In feminist and Canadian contexts it is necessary to re-examine Niebuhr's assumption that a tolerable level of justice has been achieved within existing economic and political institutions. Niebuhr, no doubt, would agree. This would not, however, mean that he simply wanted to be trendy. It would reflect his conviction that all truth-claims are made in concrete contexts. Nor would it necessarily invalidate the central insight embedded in his theology.

Linking faith and politics in the Modern Age

Underlying Niebuhr's preoccupation with the anxious, isolated self is an insight into the nature of human existence which need not be denied in order to challenge the authority of his dogmatic utterances about sin. The spiritual condition Niebuhr was diagnosing with his emphasis on sin and anxiety has been talked about in different ways. Don Browning has pointed out that Niebuhr's position resembles William James's understanding of "twice-born" religion. In the reli-

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gion of the twice-born, "one finds individuals haunted by a deep sense of risk, danger, and pervasive moral evil which runs through the world." These "divided selves" are "examples par excellance of *homo duplex*. They seem to have no natural sense of unity and coherence to their lives." Browning notes that, on the basis of his "pragmatic test of religious truth" and his "general philosophical psychology," James could have affirmed the fact that man is *homo duplex* "just as easily as could St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther, or Kierkegaard."[24]

However:

> Under the influence of Kierkegaard, most post-liberal, twentieth-century theology has retrieved the Pauline-Augustinian vision of the ambiguity and dynamic duality of the human will. But the Niebuhrs, Tillichs, and Bultmanns of the neo-orthodox period could have turned to James as easily as to Kierkegaard or Heidegger. And had they done so, they would not have separated themselves from a modern world-view so profoundly as they did.[25]

Niebuhr was closer to James and to Whitehead than most of us who studied theology in the 1950s or 1960s were led to believe. Stone reports that Niebuhr "confirmed that the following quote from James represents his approach to the epistemological question":

> It matters not to an empiricist from what quarter an hypothesis may come to him: he may have acquired it by fair means or by foul; passion may have whispered or accident suggested it; but if the total drift of thinking continues to confirm it, that is what he means by its being true.[26]

Stone's further example of Niebuhr's affinity with James also illustrates similarities with Whiteheadian thought. Both Niebuhr and James

> abandoned traditional natural theology because of dissatisfaction with the arguments for the existence of God and an antagonism toward rational systems which they thought prematurely closed a developing world.[27]

It is unfortunate that these Jamesian and Whiteheadian themes in Niebuhr's thought were eclipsed by his tendency to invoke Christian

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beliefs dogmatically and to imply that everyday judgements about justice and political choices were secular and pragmatic.[28] It would have been more in keeping with his preferred position to have acknowledged that his religious beliefs and his political judgements were *both* either secular and pragmatic, or fraught with religious meaning. The distinction between the two ways of knowing and valuing was more important for his interpreters than it was for Niebuhr himself. In his intellectual autobiography he confessed:

> De Tocqueville long since observed the strong pragmatic interest of American Christianity in comparison with European Christianity; and that distinction is still valid. I have been frequently challenged by the stricter sects of theologians in Europe to prove that my interests were theological rather than practical or "apologetic," but I have always refused to enter a defence, partly because I thought the point was well taken and partly because the distinction did not interest me.[29]

Pragmatism

In his later years Niebuhr continued to hold different sub-communities and interest groups accountable for their behaviour, but he gained a greater appreciation for the "genuinely historical differences" of religious, ethnic and national communities. This led him to place even more stress on the importance of dealing concretely and pragmatically, rather than abstractly and dogmatically, with different communities. He pointed out that members of dominant groups, in particular, had to be aware of the tendency to make their "own standards the final norms of existence and to judge others for failure to conform to them."[30] It might be going too far to say that Niebuhr moved from polemics to dialogue, but proponents of interfaith dialogue can claim him as an ally.

My concluding suggestion is that the experience gained in the dialogue between communities of faith should inform future attempts at dialogue between Christians of differing political views. Respecting genuinely historical differences, resisting the temptation to equate one's own standards with the final norms of existence, and being accountable for one's behaviour, are aspects of the Niebuhrian heritage worth retrieving. We should not, however, underestimate the difficulties in the way of such conversations.

One of the ironies of the modern age is that whereas religiously-grounded beliefs have become increasingly relativized, people

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claiming to base their views on science have become increasingly dogmatic if not, to use Niebuhr's term, fanatical. We are comfortable with religious pluralism, yet often hear appeals to the authority of scientific experts, or of economists, as if pluralism did not exist within the empirical disciplines.

In 1966, Gibson Winter analysed the debate within the sciences and established the importance of discerning the underlying assumptions informing the differing styles.[31] The present challenge is to deal concretely with conflicting interpretations of such issues as publicly funded health care, rent control, public ownership of resources, and the impact of particular economic policies in particular contexts, for example, of monetarist policies in Chile. Out of such encounters will emerge a clearer understanding of what one's religious commitments really are and how they relate to particular political and economic programmes. This, in my view, would be more fruitful than asking who has an "internalist" and who has an "externalist" explanation of the link between their religious commitments and political judgements.

NOTES

1. Letter from A. M. C. Waterman, October 19, 1981.
2. Remarks at the American Academy of Religion Meeting, Dallas, 1980.
3. Martin Marty, "Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience," *The Journal of Religion,* 54: (October, 1974), 332–59.
4. Undated membership folder.
5. Membership folder.
6. Ronald Stone, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Prophet to Politicians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), pp. 61, 63 and 66.
7. Stone, op. cit. pp. 66, 10, 52.

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8. Martin Marty, op. cit. pp. 335–36.

9. Niebuhr, "Ten Years that Shook My World," cited by Martin Marty, p. 335.

10. William H. Becker, *The Historian*, 35: (August, 1973), 539–50.

11. Becker, op. cit. p. 542: Lenin's observation was cited by Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

12. Ibid, pp. 546–47

13. Ibid, p. 548.

14. Ibid, p. 546.

15. Ibid, p. 549–50.

16. Stone, op. cit. p. 62.

17. Becker, op. cit. p. 540.

18. See Massimo Rubboli, "The Fellowship of Socialist Christians," Paper presented at the II International Congress of North American History, (Milan, Italy, June 14–17, 1979).

19. Membership Folder. For a history of the F.C.S.O. see my unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "The Fellowship for a Christian Social Order: A Social Ethical Analysis of a Christian Socialist Movement," (Toronto: School of Theology, 1975).

20. "Review of *Towards the Christian Revolution*," *Radical Religion* (Spring, 1937), 42–44.

21. For analyses of the debate between Niebuhr and Gregory Vlastos, one of the Fellowship's chief spokesmen, see my "The Canadian Social Gospel in the Context of Christian Social Ethics," in Richard Allen, (ed.) *The Social Gospel in Canada;* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975) and "Love, Justice and the Class Struggle," *Studies in Religion*, 10; (Fall, 1981).

22. Langdon Gilkey, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Theology of History," *The Journal of Religion*, 54: 4 (October, 1974).

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23. See Barbara Hilkert Andolson, "Agape in Feminist Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 9: 1 (Spring, 1981), 69–83.

24. Don Browning, *Pluralism and Personality: William James and Some Contemporary Cultures of Psychology* (Louisberg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1980), p. 249.

25. Browning, loc. cit.

26. Stone, op. cit. 149.

27. Ibid. p. 149.

28. Franklin I. Gamwell, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Theistic Ethic," *The Journal of Religion*, 54: (October, 1974), 387–408.

29. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, *Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 3.

Comment*

John H. Berthrong

After his short introduction, the bulk of Professor Hutchinson's paper deals with his analysis of the shifting views of Reinhold Niebuhr on Marxism and various other socialist options. It is well known to

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*This Comment is an edited version of a longer article which appeared in *This World* No. 6, 1983.

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anyone within Christian theological circles that Niebuhr moved from an early acceptance of Marxism to a rejection, at least in part, of Marxist theory and socialist praxis. Hutchinson finds the key to Niebuhr's theoretical rejection of Marxism or socialism not in a profound systematic theological critique of these positions, but rather in his observation of American reality. Niebuhr did not become disenchanted with Marxist theory, but rather became more impressed in the 1930s and 1940s with the seeming flexibility of the political system of the United States, which provided a tolerably just society which he could provisionally affirm.

The really key point is the question of how Niebuhr's observations of American reality helped modify his theological and political statements. This is what Hutchinson has aptly labelled a "contextual connection." In fact, the idea of a contextual connection is essential for Hutchinson's analysis of Niebuhr's changing ideological commitment. And I think it forms another common ground for ethical discussion between differing Christian theological perspectives. Hutchinson urges that we must be extremely attentive to our own context before any theoretical elaboration. This is certainly a point which a Whiteheadian Theologian can enthusiastically affirm. Whitehead once took exception to a statement by Bradley to the effect that "wolf eats lamb." Whitehead acidly noted that it was a case of *that* wolf in *that* place eating *that* lamb, and *that* lamb certainly feeling and knowing it. The context for the lamb and the wolf speaks volumes for their situation.[1]

Throughout his entire analysis of Niebuhr's evolving thought, Hutchinson continually returns to the position that Niebuhr's empirical observations always corrected his theoretical elaborations. Some scholars have argued that Niebuhr's theology is inspired by a very Protestant appeal to St. Augustine. While this may be correct, Hutchinson wants us to note how the actual transformation of Niebuhr's thought is intimately involved with the contextual connection. Niebuhr himself clearly indicated that his theological ideas came about not so much through systematic reading of the Christian texts as through pressure of world events. Hutchinson is therefore in full agreement with contemporary Niebuhr scholars who wish to emphasize the shift from a purely systematic theology to contextual judgements in Niebuhr's evolving theological reflections.

The fact is that Niebuhr clearly noted that the political structure of the United States could reform itself without transforming its eco-

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nomic system from a capitalist to a socialist form. Hutchinson sums up his interpretation of Niebuhr's thought when he says: "Niebuhr claimed that enough social control could be applied within the American system to guarantee a decent life for all without 'the destruction of free enterprise.'" This seems to be Niebuhr's final comment on the American social system, at least in Hutchinson's view. However, Hutchinson is not convinced that Niebuhr would have made the same judgement regarding the present Canadian situation.

Self-assertion

This is a rather interesting twist to the argument and I think we need to dwell on it for a moment. Basically, Niebuhr seems to have felt that the highest form of love, which he regards as the highest Christian virtue, is that of self-sacrifice, and that the "most insiduous form of sin is self-assertion." Hutchinson intimates that Americans have good reason to worry about pride and self-assertion, whereas Canadians should have been more self-assertive. Americans, on this reading, have seized destiny by the tail whereas Canadians have been wagged at the end of this tail. Is Hutchinson making literal claims about Americans and Canadians as individuals? Is he talking about the difference between American and Canadian contexts at the present time as well as in the 1930s? What implications does this reference to American assertiveness and Canadian subservience have for the present context of Canadian theologizing?

At this point in his paper Hutchinson moves to the question of what indeed did Niebuhr reject in terms of socialist or Marxist theory. He concludes that, "It does not seem accurate...to assume that he rejected all forms of socialism. It is also illegitimate to appeal to the authority of his theology to condemn socialism or Marxism."

We have an appeal here to an ideal of socialism without any indication of the empirical evidence of the particular context which might justify it. Some evidence ought to be provided, if nothing more than the claim that there now seems to be a relatively successful socialist, or quasi-socialist, governmental system. For example, the least controversial case may be Sweden. Sweden may not be the dream of libertarians, but it is foolish to argue that it is not a democratic state. I suspect that this is indeed the kind of social organization which Hutchinson would appeal to for empirical evidence.

In terms of Hutchinson's discussion of love as self-sacrifice,

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Niebuhr himself seems to have denied at least one outstanding feature of much socialist thinking, namely the radical egalitarian strain informing a great deal of such thought. Niebuhr discussed this matter in terms of the idea of increasing "mutuality," where mutuality clearly means some kind of radical egalitarian theory. This is quite clearly linked to the concept of self-sacrifice. Carried to extremes, this ends in a radically egalitarian vision of society. A Whiteheadian can clearly affirm equality, but not perhaps on such a radical reading of social systems. For a Whiteheadian, or at least some Whiteheadians, equality must be appropriate to form. Observation of our actual context indicates that we are not all equal, in terms of being endowed either with similar talents or similar positions in the social scale.

With respect to our own country Hutchinson remarks: "Canadians may have been too passive and lacking in self-affirmation as their nation drifted from a British colony to an American satellite. Our main sins, it is said, are passivity and bad stewardship, not pride and self-assertion." I find it fascinating how Hutchinson has here linked the concept of social activity with bad stewardship. The whole concept of stewardship has become increasingly important for many Christian theologians. Here too the contextual connection is obvious. Taking one's context seriously probably demands a greater sensitivity to what Charles Birch and John Cobb have stressed as "ecological thinking."[2]

"In feminist and Canadian context," Hutchinson concludes, "it is necessary to re-examine Niebuhr's assumption that a tolerable level of justice has been achieved within existing economic and political institutions. Niebuhr, no doubt, would agree. This would not, however, mean that he simply wanted to be trendy. It would reflect his conviction that all true claims are made in a concrete context. Nor would it necessarily invalidate the central insights imbedded in his theology." This is an extremely important point, both for Hutchinson's own argument and for an emerging theological consensus reflected in the publications of the member churches of the World Council of Churches.

If any consensus seems to be emerging in W.C.C. theological circles these days, it is methodological rather than dogmatic. It asserts that theological statements must reflect the concrete context in which they are made. The widespread appeal of Liberation Theology is therefore not hard to understand. It most certainly arises out of a very specific and concrete context, and is therefore very welcome on

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methodological grounds. The difficulty, quite obviously, is that one is then driven to ask how the insights of that particular context are applicable to the North American and more specificaly Canadian reality. The implication, no doubt, is that both Canadians and South Americans find themselves structurally dominated by the United States. Although the situations are quite different, this one salient fact informs any analysis of the Canadian situation.

Empirical methodology

Later in his paper Hutchinson speculates on the possible relation of Niebuhr's thought to that of William James and A. N. Whitehead. While I can certainly see why he evokes the spirit of James in things empirical, I am a bit puzzled by his reference to Whitehead's noted empirical method in philosophy. He could be referring to Whitehead's own rejection of Marxism, although Whitehead himself hardly ever discussed these matters, especially during his philosophic period at Harvard. The whole Whiteheadian movement has often been rightly criticized for lacking an adequate political theory to go along with its well-defined metaphysical theory. One wit noted that you could say as much about Whitehead's ethics, political or personal, as you could about the snakes of Ireland. But even if this was a justified criticism of Whitehead's own corpus, the lack of a political commentary has certainly been remedied in the last few years within Whiteheadian circles.

For the remainder of his essay, Hutchinson continues to hammer away at the crucial importance of contextual concern within Niebuhr's evolving theological position. Quite admirably, Hutchinson contends that we too need to make the contextual situation more important for our own theological enterprise. Here again, he invokes the experience which modern theologians have gained in interfaith dialogue as an important part of learning how to do this contextual theology within the Christian faith community. He rejects any strain of dogmatism and urges us to recognize the "relative" truths of our particular context. Here a Whiteheadian must applaud Hutchinson's conclusion. A Whiteheadian thinker is always intrigued by the relative nature of truth-claims, though this does not demand that either he or she become paralyzed by the incipient relativism implied by the relational context. As with all excellent presentations, Roger Hutchinson's paper raises more questions than it answers.

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But given a Whiteheadian theologian's affirmation of the radically pluralistic nature of our modern world, this cannot but be applauded. We need questions and we desperately need dialogue. Research concerning our Western religious tradition must be brought to bear on the present debate. It may be platitudinous to say so, but I firmly believe that the present political debate is too important to be left to bureaucracies and elected officials. Those of us who are in one way or another part of religious institutions must become engaged in this dialogue.

NOTES

1. Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, corrected edition, eds., D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne, (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 43.

2. Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Jr., *The Liberation of Life: From the Cell to the Community*, (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Reply

Roger C. Hutchinson

My emphasis on the relation between Niebuhr's shift to the right (or to the centre!) politically and his changing assessment of his Amer-

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ican context was in part a reaction against the tendency of other interpreters to stress the role of his "deepening grasp of Augustinian theology." I wanted both to stimulate a rethinking of Niebuhr's rejection of socialism and to draw attention to the ideological implications of assuming that it was primarily for *theological* reasons that he had abandoned his earlier commitment to socialism. In particular, I was, and continue to be, concerned that Niebuhr's stature as a theologian gave the political judgements he arrived at in an American context more authority than they deserved when applied to a different Canadian situation.

Niebuhr's broadsides against socialism created the impression that all forms of socialism had fallen under the scrutiny of his theologically-informed realism. We will never know, of course, whether Niebuhr would have remained involved in socialist politics if his colleagues had been J. S. Woodsworth, Tommy Douglas, David Lewis and the others who managed to launch a successful, politically relevant, democratic socialist movement in Canada. What is clear to me is that the CCF/NDP tradition of democratic socialism deserves to be assessed on its own merits in its own context. It should not be rejected on theological grounds because a theologian operating in a different context arrived at a negative appraisal of the socialist options available to him.

I am also concerned, of course, about the fact that the same thing is happening in our own day. Theologians of stature are invited by missionaries for free enterprise like the Fraser Institute to inform Canadians about the relative claims of capitalism and socialism. They do not always make it clear that their attitudes towards socialism reflect their American context. My aim is not to protect innocent Canadians from foreign missionaries, but to encourage all of us to become more self-conscious about the extent to which our political and theological judgements are shaped by our particular contexts.

Dr. Berthrong wonders what kind of socialism Niebuhr might not have rejected. The way he phrases the question is coloured by his assumption that socialism and mutuality entail a radical egalitarianism. Rather than speculating on Niebuhr's final attitude towards different kinds of socialism, I will simply observe that equality has a different meaning in different philosophies.

According to Berthrong, "mutuality clearly means... self-sacrifice." As a Whiteheadian, he prefers a notion of equality which includes appropriateness to form. Vlastos insisted that the characteris-

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tic feature of mutuality and socialism is sharing, not sacrifice. He started with the fact of community and the essential relatedness of human life and understood liberty and equality in the context of fraternity. Personal life in community is characterized by what Alfred Schutz called the "tuning in" relationship. It is not a Hobbesian co-ordination of isolated individuals.[1] As Patrick Kerans, C. B. Macpherson and others have persuasively argued, liberalism mechanized and depoliticized the relationships among persons by positing an equal opportunity to pursue individual interests which could not be assessed in terms of differential moral worth. Not all human needs, wants and goals, however, have equal claim on the community's resources or on the loyalty and respect of individuals. The kind of socialism which interests me treats this fact of differential worth as an ethical and political rather than an administrative, managerial problem. Relativizing the role of the market in allocating resources does not require a retreat to a fixed, hierarchical ordering of society, on the one hand, or the adoption of mindlessly bureaucratic management techniques, on the other. Determining priorities and making decisions involves moral and political discourse. It is no coincidence that Liberation Theologians stress participation as well as social justice.[2]

NOTES

1. Gregory Vlastos, "The Religious Foundations of Democracy: Fraternity and Equality," *The Journal of Religion*, XXII, 2 (April, 1942), p. 146.

2. Patrick Kerans, "Philosophical Barriers to Equality," in Allan Moscovitch and Glenn Drover, eds., *Inequality: Essays on the Political Equality of Social Welfare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

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Discussion

Edited by: Irving Hexham

Roger Hutchinson: I'll try and clarify some of the assumptions that were at work in my paper, particularly in the way I am reading Niebuhr.

First, a word about why I re-framed the question given to me about internal or external links between faith and politics. I was suggesting it was more useful to talk about contextual linkages, and to deal concretely with how faith and practice are related in concrete places rather than to debate philosophical issues.

I did that, not to escape from the discipline of rigorous analysis, but as one of the pre-conditions for dialogue. It is important to know whose context is being taken for granted in order to discuss issues on a point by point basis. So that was the main structure of my paper. The question I want to address now is: "Why did I choose to deal with Niebuhr for this seminar?"

Whether we like it or not, Niebuhr is an authority figure in the tradition of political and social ethics. I've gone through periods of feeling very unhappy about that influence. But lamenting the influence doesn't help. Niebuhr is a dominant figure in that tradition. He's an authority in the sense that his thought has influenced, and continues to infuence, many people. He's an authority in another sense: he is a vehicle for discourse about how we presently relate our religious convictions to our practical judgements.

It's in that sense that I look at Niebuhr. I certainly agree with Paul Heyne that great caution should be used by anyone who invokes Niebuhr to justify this or that point. In this context, Niebuhr shouldn't be invoked, authoritatively, to undergird an unquestioned link between freedom and responsibility of individuals and limited government intervention in the economy. That's a contextual judgement that Niebuhr would have made or rejected on the basis of an

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empirical assessment of what was going on.

Let us return the question to the political realm, so that we can have a political discussion about whether the freedom of individuals is best preserved through maximizing the operation of the market system, or whether it's in moving in the other direction. Such questions cannot be answered in abstract terms apart from a particular context.

My concern about Niebuhr's influence on the Canadian social gospel was that, on the basis of his stature as a theologian, his conclusion was accepted that the way Christians in the 1930s linked the Christian faith with a socialist program was based on a faulty theology.

My first thought was that I had to get rid of Niebuhr. But that didn't seem to be a practical scheme. (laughter) I then thought that the next best thing was to reread Niebuhr to see if one could somehow or other claim him as an ally. (laughter) My strategy was to return Niebuhr to his context and to stress the contextual character of his political judgements.

To be contextual in the United Church of Canada, is to realize that we have capitalists and socialists in the same organization. Therefore, unless we are prepared to read one another out of that fellowship we simply must relate to one another. But that doesn't mean that you forget that one person is a capitalist and the other is a socialist. There is a struggle going on over how the symbols of the tradition should be interpreted and applied to social issues. Socialists don't go to sleep and let the capitalist take over the symbols and capitalists aren't going to sleep either. The Fraser Institute says in its program brochure that their mission is to remind people that the capitalists have been asleep while the churches have collapsed the symbols into the socialist project.

Walter Block (Moderator): That will be enough of that. (laughter)

Roger Hutchinson: I recognize the diversity of my own faith community, and that tends to lead to a recognition of the ambiguity of our Christian symbols. So, it doesn't scandalize me that one group of people are using my symbols to justify a political program with which I disagree. I simply think it's not the most fitting way to appropriate that tradition. My main claim, however, is that it is more useful to discuss concrete issues than it is to debate the different perspectives

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underlying our approaches.

My plea, then, is that we become more self-consciously contextual. I don't find anything contextual about how the Fraser Institute describes its mission. It's simply announcing that the position churches have been taking is wrong. Economic dogmas now play the role Niebuhr's theological dogmas played in the 1930s and 1940s.

Gregory Baum: I am uncomfortable with the conversation about interdisciplinary studies, including the intersection of theology and social science. What offends me particularly is the claim of economists (and other scientists) that there is a single orientation in their discipline, which they in fact represent. They claim to speak for all serious economists. It is hard to believe that such people speak in good faith. In Canada, for instance, there are several economic research institutes, all of which make use of the scientific method, but they come to quite different conclusions. They follow different approaches in the same discipline.

Thomas Kuhn's work on revolutions in the sciences has shown that even in the natural sciences there are different approaches and conflicts of paradigms. In the social sciences, including economics, these conflicts are of course much greater. Here they are related to the various value-perspectives which researchers consciously or unconsciously adopt.

Obviously there is also plurality of method in theology. What is of interest to me is that in interdisciplinary studies, the approaches used in the various disciplines must have a certain coherence or affinity. Otherwise interdisciplinary study will break down or lead to contradictory results.

In my view positivism in the social sciences exercises a deadly cultural power. I define positivism as the attempt on the part of the social sciences to be assimilated as far as possible into the natural sciences. Reliance is on the scientific method alone, hence on measurement, quantity and mathematical logic. If this approach is applied to human beings, all qualities are translated into measureable quantities and all people become things or objects because their own self-understanding adds nothing to measurable science. And this applies to the dehumanizing impact of positivism whether it be adopted by mechanistic Marxism on the Left or by scientism and vulgar functionalism on the Right.

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Imad Ahmad: Roger Hutchinson commented that we don't like to admit a connection between faith and politics. I'm not sure that this is a general principle. It's certainly not true in the Muslim tradition. I don't see that it should necessarily be true in any other tradition.

I think there is a necessary connection between faith and politics. Certainly our political views are in some way connected to our ethical views. Politics and political conclusions come from ethical premises. On the other hand, our ethical views are related to our religious views. Therefore, we should acknowledge this issue and deal with it explicitly.

Obviously, there are differences between the social sciences and the natural sciences, but I don't think the differences Gregory Baum is talking about are really valid. The idea seems to be that somehow it's all right to approach a social science with biases and prejudices that are allowed to interfere with your conclusions.

I've seen this in psychology where I saw a debate once over the issue of whether or not there's a statistical difference in IQ's between people of different races. People enter the discussion with the desire to believe a particular conclusion. Therefore they allow their examination of the subject to be coloured by their beliefs.

In this debate, the fellow who was arguing against the existence of an IQ difference between the races went so far as to say, "Well, ultimately, it's not a question of whether the evidence is good or not. We don't want this to be true." And, therefore it is argued that it is the duty of a sociologist if he comes across evidence that an undesirable conclusion is true, to cover it up.

This is terrible. It's terrible not just because it's bad science, but because it results in sloppy thinking in other areas. The debator had determined to defend a particular belief. His sloppy thinking had allowed him to accept the very poor concept that if there is an IQ statistical difference between the races, somehow this necessitates some difference of treatment in terms of political rights.

Regardless of what statistical differences between the races may or may not be, certainly we know there are differences of IQ's between individuals. But we must all realize that individual rights have nothing to do with IQ.

As soon as you make the distinction between the attitude that we bring to social sciences as opposed to the attitude we bring to natural sciences, you leave the door open for that kind of sloppy thinking. And no good can come of it.

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Steve Tonsor: I want to consider the word "dialogue." Arthur Lovejoy suggested that in every generation there are words and phrases filled with what he called "metaphysical pathos." (laughter)

In the last generation, the generation of Niebuhr, these words were "ambiguity" and "paradox." In our generation, one of the favorite words filled with metaphysical pathos is "dialogue." I suggest that the life of the mind is not the life of dialogue. It is the life of combat. Combat! And it is true, as in a medieval tourney, there are certain rules to this combat. That constitutes its civility. We've gone beyond the point where the combat is mortal. We don't kill our opponents. But, it is combat. And to describe it in any other terms is silly.

Sartre said that the great teacher was a man who raised up successful combatants to himself. Anyone who has lived the intellectual life knows that he, the intellectual, if he is honest, carries on with himself a constant running battle, in which he continually questions his most fundamental premises. That's what intellectual life is about. It's not a nice dialogue—a tea party.

Finally, if you're going to be a successful combatant, you must, as Lord Acton said, make out a better case for the opposing side than they can make out for themselves. Unless you do that, you will never win. And I want to win. (laughter)

Ellis Rivkin: The nation state is capitalism's greatest barrier. It's a heritage from the middle ages. It's not something that capitalism brings to humankind. Quite the reverse. Capitalism is barred from being fully what it could become precisely by this inheritance from an earlier time.

Consider for a moment that Canada had actually been incorporated within the United States back in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. What would have been the consequence for the industrial phase in the United States?.

Now if that had occurred, we would not at this point be worrying about Canada-United States relationships. Nor would we be concerned about the problem of being a hinterland, which is so understandably a matter of concern for Canadians. There would simply have been a free movement of capital and labour.

One of the issues that we really have to focus on is values. The ultimate value that one is committed to, takes precedence over all other values, including economic ones. The national value is for many people an end in itself. But must we have a sovereign nation

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state? Must it have a set of barriers that bar it from the free interflow of capital?

Is the feeling that one must have a sovereign nation state a good one? Is it possible for ethnic and other kinds of feelings of this type to have autonomy? To have freedom? Even more freedom, perhaps simply because it does not involve the problem of two powers coming into conflict with each other, and therefore violating ethnic rights, which presumably can exist within the larger kind of framework.

Much of our problem has to do with ultimate values. If our ultimate values are a commitment to the individual then nationalism is a major barrier.

Irving Hexham: There is nothing so dangerous as underestimating one's enemy, or opponent, as Stephen Tonsor pointed out. You've got to understand their position better than your own.

In our discussion, we've been talking about a move from theoretical ideas to empirical examples. And yet the empirical examples suggested are being used as a substitute for coming to grips with beliefs that are under fire. The big issue here is socialism or, maybe more directly, Marxism and our reaction to it.

Quite a lot has been said about the failure of Marxism. But it's been said in the framework of empirical failure. Now I would like to submit that if we're going to have a fruitful discussion along these lines, we've got to recognize that in purely empirical terms perhaps Marxism can be extremely successful. I was reading Roger Munting's book *The Economic Development of the USSR*, where he argues that the Soviet economy is in fact a phenomenal success. It doesn't provide freedom and certain liberties but there are reasons to believe it has done better in the twentieth century than the American economy.

Similarly, there is an article in the *Harvard Business Review* (Vol. 60, No. 2, March/April 1982) "Tapping Eastern Block Technology" by John Kiser III, where it was argued that contrary to common American belief, the Soviets are in fact very innovative. The author of this article looked at the patents of various goods and said that many Japanese successes are, in fact, Soviet patents.

So the Soviets can't be dismissed so easily, either for economic failures or lack of innovation. We just reject them for intellectual reasons—questions of belief. This is what we need to get down to—unless we do we're going to paint a false picture and attack the wrong enemy.

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I'd like to suggest that a lot of the debate about empirical success is very misleading because it is a two-edged sword. We've got to be very careful on this one. Or else, somehow, someday, a lot of young Americans may wake up and find that the Soviets aren't so unsuccessful as they thought.

In the future perhaps, the standard of living in the Soviet Union may become higher than North America. What do we do then if our anti-communism is based solely on an appeal to material welfare?

Anthony Waterman: I want to disagree with Dean Ahmad. I agree with Roger Hutchinson who does, in fact, maintain that Niebuhr's political beliefs could be detached from his theology, in the sense that they could be based upon empirical judgements about a particular context.

I want to assert, even more strongly than that, that it is actually impossible in principle to proceed from religious belief to unique political judgements. I think all political judgements necessarily involve empirical questions. And, theology, by definition, is incompetent to pronounce upon empirical questions. Therefore it is entirely possible, and frequently is in fact the case, that two persons of identical religious beliefs, and identical ethical principles formed upon those religious beliefs, will differ over some political question, precisely because they differ about the facts of the case. This point was recognized by William Temple, towards the end of his life, after having said much earlier that if one was a Christian one would have to be socialist. Temple recanted.

Christians can and may legitimately differ over political questions, because the facts of the case are not amenable to theological analysis.

Clark Kucheman: I would like to pursue that same point. It may be true that a lot of people "do" economics theologically in the sense that they have in fact a value orientation which influences their analysis.

But I would say that that is not what they ought to do. In principle, economic analysis is independent of theology.

I think ethics is also, in principle, independent of theology. You can know all about God and what God wills but still not know what you ought to do.

It seems to me, you have to make judgements independently of religious faith about what one's rights and duties are.

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PART FOUR:

OTHER CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

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Chapter 7

Christian Social Thought in the Dutch Neo-Calvinist Tradition

Bob Goudzwaard

''Neo-Calvinism'' is an expression which was first used by Max Weber in his contributions to the sociology of religion. He used it to describe the revival of the social and political teachings of John Calvin which took place, especially in the Netherlands, during the last part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The roots of that revival lie mainly in the so-called *Reveil* movement, which had its origin in the first half of the nineteenth century in Protestant—not only Calvinistic—circles in Switzerland. That movement stressed the significance of a living Christian faith: biblical studies, and prayer for the reformation of the Church and the renewal of society. The most important Dutch representative of that *Reveil* was Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–1876). Deeply influenced by German thinkers Von Haller and Julius Stahl, who were primarily within the Romantic tradition, Groen gradually developed his own approach to the social and political problems of his time, although he always remained a true ''son of the *Reveil*.'' His main published work was a major study of the spirit of the French Revolution, *Unbelief and Revolution*. He saw the Revolution and its ideals as the driving force behind the modern unbelief of his age.

However, Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) must be seen as the founding father of Dutch neo-Calvinism. As a theologian, philosopher, journalist and statesman, he elaborated van Prinsterer's princi-

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pal ideas, but also refined them—giving them specific accents. On the one hand, he emphasized a Reformed—and especially Calvinistic—doctrine; on the other, he passionately taught the necessity of a practical—and especially organizational—implementation of those ideas.

For example, he founded the Free (Calvinistic) University of Amsterdam, the Anti-Revolutionary Party (the first democratic political party of the Netherlands), and took the lead in the formation of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands. He also deeply influenced the Dutch Christian labour movement in its formative stage. For more than thirty years he wrote daily and weekly columns in the Christian daily newspaper, *De Standaard,* which he himself founded. In addition to his prodigious academic output and his many other activities (political, social, academic and ecclesiastical), he served for many years as a member of Parliament and as prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901–1904.

More than sixty years after his death, one can undoubtedly say that the Netherlands today would be a markedly different nation had Abraham Kuyper not lived. As an illustration, my own life reflects the extent of his impact on Dutch society. Since my birth, I have been a member of one of the Reformed churches; in the sixties I was a Member of Parliament for "his" Anti-Revolutionary Party; and from 1971 to the present, I have been a professor in "his" university. I am an advisor to the 300,000-member Dutch Christian labour movement; if I publish in newspapers, I usually do so in *Trouw*—the direct successor of "his" *Standaard.* A great part of my personal life can therefore be seen as participation in Kuyper's heritage. At the same time, this personal note makes it clear that I cannot give an "objective" view of Dutch neo-Calvinism and its social thought—although I am very aware of the necessity for a critical appraisal or reappraisal of some of its features. Even in my critique, I stand in that tradition, and feel myself co-responsible for it. This is also true of the heritage of the so-called Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, which was born in the inter-war period on the basis of Groen's and Kuyper's thought. This philosophy, developed primarily by D. T. Vollenhoven and Herman Dooyeweerd, can be considered as the dominant scientific tool of Dutch neo-Calvinism, although its contribution has not always been honoured in that way by the practical-institutional wing. Notwithstanding disagreement however, there is a similarity in colour and fla-

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vour—even today—between this philosophy, and the many organizations and institutions that sprang from the van Prinsterer-Kuyperian initiative.

In this paper, however, not the entire breadth of the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition is under scrutiny, but only its contribution to Christian social thought. For this purpose, I want to distinguish between three themes in Dutch neo-Calvinism which in my opinion are not only essential for understanding that movement, but are also the most influential in the formation of its social thought: a) the theme of vocation or calling; b) the theme of antithesis and common grace; and c) the theme of an architectonic critique of society.

My plan is to discuss each of these themes. In the concluding pages, I will add some notes about their relevance for a Christian appraisal of our present bewildering, progress-oriented society.

The theme of vocation or calling

The words "vocation" or "calling" (*Berufung* in German) are used often in the teachings both of Martin Luther and John Calvin—more in the former than the latter. In vocation, one notes a reference to someone calling, addressing one "vocally." For both Calvin and Luther, He who calls is the living God.

In medieval times, vocation was also used in and by the Catholic church, but then usually restricted to God's calling of a person to leave his daily work, to enter a monastic way of life or a holy office, for instance. Luther and Calvin, however, did not hesitate to identify very common jobs in daily life with God's calling or vocation, as the "way" in which one is serviceable. Both reformers held that Christ's crucifixion and resurrection from death was a *total* victory and included the salvation of both life *and* nature. In their opinion, natural work is thereby already sanctified—holy—and does not require the prior or additional sanctification dispensed by the institutional church through sacraments. Everywhere in natural life, human beings stand and live *coram Deo*—directly before the face of the living God—who summons them to be serviceable to Him and to their neighbours, by simply doing what they must do as farmers, craftsmen, kings, housewives, or merchants. Daily work is vocation; it is giving an answer to the living God and requires no additional "spiritual dimension." Even today, the common words in Germany and Holland for one's

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job are *beruf* (German), *beroep* (Dutch), both of which mean "being called to."

Although Luther uses this concept more frequently, Calvin more generally points to the fact that calling also has an institutional dimension. Persons are addressed *as* bearers of an office. This means that a government as such, a church community as such, and a family as such are separate objects of God's calling. Precisely this element in Calvin's thought has inspired Dutch neo-Calvinism's unique view of institutional relations in society, characteristically expressed by Kuyper and Dooyeweerd in the principle of "sphere-sovereignty."

I now turn to a discussion of this principle. To understand its real meaning, its origins must be kept in mind. Two religious insights are at the root of this concept. The first is that because of the universal significance of Christ's redemptive work, there are no longer different degrees of holiness in natural reality. In principle, a basic *equality* exists among the different "spheres" of life in which human beings live and work together. In every "social" sphere of life—the family, state, church, school, also the business enterprise (what I prefer to call the "production-household"), the voluntary associations, such as labour unions—people are allowed to see themselves as directly responsible to God. That insight precludes any institution (whether church, state or any other) from seeing itself as the encompassing institution of society, to which the other "spheres" of life are hierarchically or spiritually subordinated.

The second religious insight is that *within* each sphere of life not only human will, but also God's calling, prevails. This gives the sphere-sovereignty principle a genuinely normative colour. The word "sovereignty," for instance, does *not* point primarily to the significance of "authority" in a specific sphere of life, and it does not point at all to the automony of the human will. It points to the sovereignty of God, who has called and still calls upon human beings to be serviceable to Him and to their fellow-men in a variety of ways. Progressing through various "spheres of life," one sees this service typically as follows: in the way of loving care for children within the family and in the schools; in the way of truthful love between husband and wife in marriage; in the way of economic serviceability and stewardship (the characteristic calling of production-households); in the way of providing just, fair treatment of workers in the case of unions; and in the way of bringing public justice to society as a whole as the characteristic norm for the state.

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Moderate interventionism

Only if one keeps in mind this double foundation of the principle of sphere-sovereignty can one understand, for instance, the reason why Abraham Kuyper was in favour of some types of intervention by the state in social-economic life, though never acquiescing in the socialist programme of central, state-controlled planning of society. For state socialism would imply the elimination of the specific responsibilities of unions and production-households. Nevertheless, the first type of governmental action (carefully-planned government involvement) becomes necessary and fully justified if a business enterprise is not loyal to its *own* calling to be a steward of its resources; or if it behaves improperly toward people or groups, or abuses nature. If the state intervenes for these reasons, it does not violate the sphere-sovereignty of the business enterprise. Quite the opposite, the state would then honour the business's sovereignty. For, in those cases, governmental action obeys the mandate to bring justice back into public life. There is, therefore, no room for unrestrained license in Dutch neo-Calvinism. For the business enterprise there is only a normatively-bound liberty within the context of its calling.

What does this approach imply, when dealing with questions of authority and democracy within the state or other spheres of life? What will be the way of dealing with phenomena like political revolution, democracy, or social and economic co-determination by workers in a business enterprise? There is ample and interesting historical material here.

In relation to questions of *authority* and *revolution*, Dutch neo-Calvinism has usually stressed the obligation of respect for all God-given authority. Without such respect, society falls into anarchy, and to the idolatry of *ni Dieu ni maitre* of the French Revolution. From the beginning, the movement was anti-revolutionary in character, and, although it has maintained a deep awareness of the necessity of political democracy until today, it rejected fully the idea of a people's sovereignty, as proposed by Jean Jacques Rousseau for instance. But it has to be said that this is only one side of Dutch neo-Calvinism. There is also another side.

Revolutionary

That side can be illustrated with the help of a distinction made by

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Groen van Prinsterer himself, between "anti-revolutionary" and "counter-revolutionary." "Counter-revolutionary" stands for the attitude of the Bourbon Restoration—of resistance to all the fruits of the French Revolution, and a glorification of authority by *droit divin.* "Anti-revolutionary" means being opposed to the *spirit* of the French Revolution. That spirit neglects the fact that for a state as for those in government, there is a divine call to do justice. The consequence of this neglect is that citizens and governments can become "revolutionary" in the deepest meaning of that word! A state becomes a revolutionary state when it systematically resists the will of God to use its power in a just, non-discriminating way. If, for instance, a government misuses its power by exploiting a nation or by denying its citizens freedom of religion, then it has become a revolutionary government in this sense of the word. Incidentally, this also implies the "right" of its citizens to resist (an expression already used by Calvin). If "magistrates"—responsible persons who are supposed to lead the nation— try to remove such a government, they should not be seen as revolutionaries. What they may have to do must be seen precisely as another way to honour the real calling of a government. Here we again encounter the second cornerstone of the principle of sphere sovereignty, namely that God's calling must have primacy over the abuse of the human will. Authority has to be honoured, no doubt, but only in the context of its calling. Both Groen and Kuyper follow Calvin in speaking very cautiously about the possibility of a necessary "revolution." There has to be a systematic, deliberate, and cruel abuse of power, and there must be care that a revolt does not lead to a bloodbath. Thus a mere collection of citizens possesses no right to resist. Power should be taken over by those who already have a political responsibility and are able to lead the nation. But in principle the right to resist is acknowledged, for having authority is not more "holy" or more "sanctified" than being subject to authority. Was Christ not among us as one who served? Here the first cornerstone of the principle of sphere-sovereignty comes to the fore: the equality in terms of holiness of all stations in life.

It follows that Dutch neo-Calvinism should also construct its own view of *democracy.* Democracy is highly valued, insofar as it expresses the joint calling of government *and* citizens to the direction of the state. It can and must be a corrective against abuse of power. For example, the choice of Elders in Reformed churches has, since Calvin's time, always been a democratic process: the congregation

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chooses them. But once they are chosen, their guidance and authority must be respected, unless they misuse their position for their own interests. Then their calling has to have priority, and they must be removed from their office.

From the start, the Christian Social movement in Holland consisted of a coalition of Catholics and Protestants, although each had their own institutions. Yet it is interesting, for example, that with respect to trade unionism an issue such as co-determination is viewed similarly by both groups. God calls production-households to the service of stewardship. That call is addressed not only to management, but to the whole working community. Of course the daily guidance by management has to be respected, but all have a common responsibility for the *direction* or orientation of the enterprise—just as both government and citizens have a shared responsibility for the direction of the state. And that requires institutional arrangements for co-determination. The owners of the enterprise, the share-holders, must understand that they do not own living persons or a living community. They own only the capital goods of the enterprise. If they receive their financial reward and are given a satisfactory account of what is done with their money, they must be content. They cannot assume command of this living community. To do so would be a violation of the sphere-sovereignty of a living and working human community, in which management and workers, though with different duties, share a God-given calling. If management abuses its power and exploits its employees, it must be removed. For both management and labour are *under* the one law of the Sovereign God as it applies to this part of life. The specific law which applies here has its kernel in the mandate of good stewardship over the resources entrusted to that community *as a whole*.

The theme of antithesis

Christians and non-Christians live together in a single society. Thus the evaluation of society in terms of "calling" and "sphere-sovereignty" is not generally accepted. How, then, should Christians behave amidst pluralism? Should they try to dictate the actions of non-Christians or attempt to build a theocracy?

In relation to these questions, Abraham Kuyper usually referred to what he called the *antithesis:* the radical distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness. His use of the term,

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however, did not imply a state of affairs in which Christians are on one side and non-Christians on the other. Christians cannot be seen only as children of light, nor non-Christians only as children of darkness. All human beings are fallen, and God's invitation of redemption is extended to all. Therefore Kuyper—and Dooyeweerd after him—spoke of God's *common grace* given to mankind. God sends his sunshine upon all, and his call is not addressed to Christians alone.

But the concepts of antithesis and common grace do not, by themselves, solve the problem of Christian behaviour within a pluralistic society. The concept of common grace seems to permit Christian and non-Christian to cooperate as far as possible, subject as they are to the same calling and the same sin. But the concept of antithesis between light and darkness would seem to imply that Christians should withdraw into isolated communities, fleeing as far as possible from the realm of darkness. Which way did Dutch neo-Calvinism take in face of this dilemma?

One can say that Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper, especially the former, wrestled with this problem throughout their lives. In relation to the public school issue, for instance, Groen originally held that every public school must honour the Christian faith in its whole style of education. In his view, separate schools should be erected for Jewish, Muslim or other minorities. But when it became clear that the only politically feasible outcome was that public schools would teach "generally Christian and human social and moral virtues," Groen rejected this compromise and changed his opinion. He then argued for separate Christian schools, and no longer sought to burden public schools with any religious obligation. Once a society has become secularized, he felt, no other choice can honestly be made.

Starting where van Prinsterer had ended, Kuyper founded many separate Christian organizations and institutions. Like his great predecessor, he could not and would not accept these organizations as "safe hiding-places" for a self-contemplating and complacent, Christian segment of the population. He could only accept them as the last line of defense, from which the battle for the heart of the nation would be launched. By means of their own organizations Christians must play an active role within a secular society under God's common grace. For as Kuyper himself once said, "There is no piece of this earthly soil of which Christ has not said: 'It is mine!'"

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Otherness

Again we are reminded of Max Weber, who once characterized Calvinism as *innerweltliche askese*, that is, as living *in* this world but not fully being *of* this world. By their nature, Christian organizations embody the "otherness" of Christians, but in Kuyper's conception are legitimate only if they fulfill their Christian service *within* the world and *within* existing society. Exactly what is that Christian service? It is to fulfill one's calling! A Christian political party, for instance, is not meant to be a self-centred, closed meeting-place for Christians, nor a missionary undertaking to enforce a kind of theocracy. Its calling is to be a servant of public justice—for this is the meaning of all political life. This means, for example, that all must be treated as *equal* citizens of one state, regardless of their religious convictions. That seems to be a "neutral" activity, but it is not. For in this conception, the doing of justice for all is seen to derive directly from God's Law for the state. If Christianity is not to be found in the hearts of the people, the government should not try to enforce conformity. To do so would be to misuse the power that legitimately belongs to government. The battle for the heart of the nation can only be fought with spiritual weapons. But in that spiritual battle, a Christian political party can and should play an active role; pointing again and again to the fact that justice should be done in society, and upholding individual rights, as well as institutional ones, so that calling or vocation can be realized. Thus a Christian political party can play its part in the great struggle on this earth between the Kingdom of God and the realm of darkness: the antithesis.

We can understand why Kuyper would conclude his opening speech to the Free University of Amsterdam with a prayer, in which he asked God to destroy his university if it neglected the liberating wisdom of God in its concrete *scientific* endeavour. There can be no purpose for a Christian organization or institution, other than in the context of its *specific* calling. Purpose must be specific in terms of the specific norms which hold for the "sphere of life" of which the organization is a part. The norms referred to here are those which, by God's common grace, hold in a general way in the midst of a secular society.

A century later the Christian organizations of Holland are all caught to some extent in an internal crisis. Some have evolved into organizations of Christians-belonging-together, with no clear percep-

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tion of their own calling in society. This is true to some extent for the Christian Democratic Appeal, cross-denominational successor of the two Protestant political parties and the Catholic party of the Netherlands. In other cases the organizations have become "open" institutions which can be joined by almost anyone. It has recently been said of Kuyper's life-work, therefore, that it was "a triumph grasped too early." His "cultural optimism" is said to have failed.

Many sincere Christians abandoned the so-called Christian institutions, either because of disappointment, or because they rejected Kuyper's view that Christians should organize separately in crucial sectors of life. What the future will bring is not clear. Will there be a revival of the existing Christian organizations and institutions? It seems improbable. Will smaller groups of Christians form new ones? Perhaps, but they will have to face the fact that, on the one hand, the "old" institutions still exist, and on the other hand, many Christians already have found their way to non-Christian institutions. An era seems to be passing away—and as one who belonged to that era, I have personal feelings of sadness. I only hope that those Christians who find their way to the non-Christian institutions in our present society will not become fully secularized, but will cherish a deep sense of their calling and that of the group, party, or organization which they have chosen to join. This last remark betrays how deeply I myself belong to this Dutch, neo-Calvinist tradition.

The theme of architectonic critique

This picture of the social thought of Dutch neo-Calvinism would not be complete without some account of a third motive: that of a critique of the foundations—the "architectonics"—of present-day society. Kuyper himself coined the word *architectonische kritiek* in a famous speech of 1891 on the condition of the working class in Holland.

Did his commitment to such a critique mean that Kuyper chose socialism? No, his critique had another basis. "Instead of honouring human society as a living organism, the spirit of the Revolution has broken up human society, and in its atomistic mischief has left nothing but the isolated, self-oriented individual." Because of that individualistic principle, Kuyper said, "Now in Europe a well-fed bourgeoisie controls an impoverished working population, which has contributed to its capital, and, when incapable of doing so, this bourgeoisie sinks into the swamp of the proletariat....The rich ex-

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ploit the poor...and the root of the evil is, that man is treated as though he is cut off from his eternal destiny and not honoured as created in the image of God....Our society has knelt down to Mammon, and by the spirit (incentive) of egoism it is now shaken in its foundations." Between the Kingdom of God and capitalism, according to Kuyper, "there is an absolute contradiction." "Where poor and rich stand over against each other, Jesus never chose the side of the rich; he joined the poor."

That aspect of Kuyper's thought does not mean that he approved a bloody class struggle. For such a struggle has its origin "in a hate of those who are rich and a neglect of those who are poor." Jesus did not hate the rich as such; he opposed their mistreatment of the poor and castigated their lust for money and possessions. But Kuyper adds that the position of the rich was enhanced by "a mistake in the foundation of society itself." Therefore, in his opinion the problem is not one of a lack of philanthropy, but a genuinely *social* problem.

What was Kuyper's alternative? "A Society which respects the foundations of social life, as laid down by God himself." In his view this meant two things:

a) that both State and Society had to be honoured as distinctive spheres of life, in which Society should not be seen as an aggregate of individuals, but as a living organic entity;

b) that the State, as the institution charged with dispensing justice, must intervene in Society to safeguard due respect for each sphere of life with its own place and responsibility. No sphere may exercise autonomy, but only responsibility, for "absolute ownership belongs only to God; all our property is only on loan for our use, all our administration is only stewardship" (Kuyper, *De Sociale Kwestie,* 1891).

This summary makes clear that the conception of society in Dutch neo-Calvinism is not only non-capitalistic, but also differs essentially from the reactionary, corporatist point of view. While the concept of society is organic, the idea of a state as the natural head of the organic body of society is decidedly avoided. State and society are spheres of life, each with its own distinctive calling. It is only the administration of public justice which may and should bring the state to intervene in society. For instance, if different social spheres collide, as in the ex-

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ploitation of employees and their families by business firms, then government must rightly become involved.

Here the primary theme of calling in Dutch neo-Calvinism again comes clearly to the fore. Kuyper's "architectonic critique" is seen to complement the theme of calling. For such a critique is necessary to maintain families in their vocation, to recall production-households to their vocation as communities of stewardship, and to encourage the state in its calling to do justice.

This view of the state in neo-Calvinism, moreover, had concrete results. It caused Kuyper himself to design a general law for labour and working conditions (*Wetboek voor den arbeid*), compelling employers and employees to accept joint responsibilities for direction of the different branches of industry. In Kuyper's view, wages should be the outcome not of the free working of an individualistic labour market, but of negotiation between organizations of employers and employees. After Kuyper's death this came about in the Netherlands.

Relevance for our modern society

Our society is vastly different from that of Kuyper's day. The harsh features of nineteenth century capitalism have been softened by government legislation, and our economic system has changed in many other ways. New social problems have emerged. Yet these changes do not mean that the ideas and conditions that brought about the rise of neo-Calvinism are no longer valid in our time. Three illustrations may be useful here.

(1) Unemployment has grown enormously in recent years. Inflation, too, has become a structural problem. Usually, those problems are seen as temporary—caused by a lack of economic expansion on the one side, and a lack of monetary control on the other. They can therefore be treated technically, almost mechanically. We have tended to treat society like a mechanism which needs "fuel" and "help." One might ask, however, whether by dealing with our economic problems in this way, we are not exacerbating rather than solving the problem. Is unlimited economic expansion the answer to unemployment? Is this the fulfilment of our economic calling, and a proof of responsible stewardship in the use of the means entrusted to us? On the contrary, it may appear that these problems are born of a *neglect* of stewardship.

Here we have to acknowledge the reality of sin. To a large extent

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inflation is a symptom of an acquisitive society. Individuals and organizations are never content, but continually enlarge their desires beyond what is available. Social groups and institutions therefore shift their burdens onto each other. As this continues by means of ever-increasing wage demands, prices and taxes, the burden comes to rest on the shoulders of those who cannot fight back. The process of inflation can therefore be seen as another violation of sphere-sovereignty. Rather than rely upon mechanical devices, the government should go to the root of the problem in its fight for public justice, and discipline powerful pressure groups if they misuse their power in this way.

Unemployment

Something similar is true of growing structural unemployment. This problem is connected with the unrestrained progress of production—technology in modern society which has its origin in a worship of the idol of rising living standards. If technological progress generates an annual rise of about 4 per cent in average labour productivity, we need a demand expansion of about the same amount to maintain employment. As soon as the growth of real demand diminishes, let us say, to a 2 per cent or 0 per cent increase—due, for example, to international factors—unemployment must rise: in this case by 2 per cent or 4 per cent respectively. Those who work in more productive firms and industries drive out of employment those who can be spared: usually the weaker. Here again we observe a violation of public justice in economic life which we have already discussed in connection with Kuyper's notions of sphere-sovereignty and his "architectonic critique." We must ask, moreover, if our economic system does not lead us astray in this way from our common economic calling. The earth is not entrusted to us to provide an unlimited expansion of economic goods. If we make it so, we deplete the earth's resources and limit the economic possibilities of poorer nations and future generations.

Unless we are open to a new architectonic critique of the foundations of our present society, therefore, we shall not be able to cope with the problem of rising unemployment. The idol of ever-growing productivity has to fall *if* we want to maintain the possibility of working in a useful and serviceable way in times of decreasing demand. That is only possible in turn if society as a whole abandons its pursuit

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of the "holy grail" of an always-rising standard of living—what Galbraith has called "the article of faith of modern society." We find here another manifestation of the struggle between light and darkness in our times—of the antithesis as formulated by Abraham Kuyper.

(2) Where Luther and Calvin used the word "calling" in relation to *human labour,* they were emphasizing its *human* quality. Not every type of labour deserves that label. The issue here is *not* the degree of simplicity or complexity of work. Rather, it is whether or not the character of the work displays or conceals the image of God in man. The One who calls us must be honoured in the work we do.

This normative view of human labour implies that every type of work should allow choice and creativity. When God created the world, He expressed something of Himself in the work of his hands. The possibility of expressing something of one's own personality in what one does is a *basic human characteristic* of labour. Furthermore, the theme of calling implies that we should have the possibility of co-operating with other human beings, by our labour, and to serve them. Calvin once said that God did not create people with different characteristics in order to show that they are or should be unequal, but rather to make it necessary for them to help and serve each other, and to co-operate in their work. Finally, "calling" implies that work should take place in a context of Shalom—of rest and peace. The Sixth Commandment is the injunction to keep the Sabbath a day of rest, pre-eminent in the week. Only in that context of rest, or Shalom, has our human labour its legitimate place.

Progress

(3) Our society is dominated by the claims of "progress" to such an extent that the spheres of state and private enterprise are intermingled in many ways. Government itself promotes economic growth and technical progress, even sending men to the moon; private business intervenes in political processes by continual lobbying. Sometimes this intervention is welcomed by politicians. Socio-economic decision making has become a joint effort of government, employers and employees in many countries, in the context of a so-called "consensus-state." A new mass-elite division in society has arisen in this way.

Now there is, of course, nothing wrong with continual contact between government and organizations of employers and employees.

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Our society is complex, and such contact can be very useful. But each participant has to be aware of his own specific calling. The norm of public justice is violated when government acquiesces in the demands of the most powerful pressure groups. Society is corrupted. Similarly, society is threatened if a government tries to rule according to the principle of "the least pain," exchanging the criterion of justice for that of utility. This may be popular in the short run, but in the longer term it creates many unforeseen problems which reveal the injustice of the act and lead to governmental rescue operations to patch up a sorry situation.

As I believe I have made clear in this paper, it is my conviction that modern society and the institutions of political democracy are deadly sick. They try to live autonomously, having lost any awareness of God's calling. But now they receive, "in their own flesh," the recompense of their sins. This is the message of neo-Calvinism. It is this that Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper sought to explain, and that their present-day successors in Holland and North America hold out for their fellow-Christians of other traditions.

Comment

Irving Hexham

INTRODUCTION

Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) discusses Dutch neo-Calvinism in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (London, 1931, vol. 2, pp. 655, 660, 676, 879, 935 and 938–940), and his work is a valuable supplement to that of Max Weber alluded to in Dr. Goudzwaard's paper.

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In the context of this conference it is significant that Stahl was a major influence on the thought of Peter Drucker. Stahl's major work, which greatly influenced van Prinsterer, is translated by T. D. Taylor as *The Present-Day Parties in the State and Church* (Blenheim Publishing House, State College, Pennsylvania, 1976). Van Prinsterer's work, *Unbelief and Revolution,* is at present being translated into English by Harry van Dyke and is now available from The Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College Street, Toronto. F. Vanden Berg's biography *Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids, 1960) is informative but uncritical.

The Dutch Christian Labour Movement is discussed in a comparative context by M. P. Fogarty in *Christian Democracy in Western Europe* (London, 1957). For a discussion of the development of Dutch society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the context of race relations, see Christopher Bagley, *The Dutch Plural Society* (Oxford, 1973).

The philosophy of the cosmonomic idea, sometimes called the Amsterdam philosophy, is the basis of a growing interest in Dutch neo-Calvinist thought among evangelical Christians in Australia, Britain, New Zealand and North America. The Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto is one institution founded to promote this branch of Calvinism. The best general introduction to the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977) is L. Kalsbeek, *Contours of a Christian Philosophy* (Toronto, 1976). Critical studies are to be found in A. L. Conradie, *The Neo-Calvinist Concept of Philosophy* (Pietermaritzburg, 1960) and Vincent Brummer, *Transcendental Criticism and Christian Philosophy* (Franeker, 1961). A recent attempt by a British evangelical to apply the insights of this tradition to social, economic and political issues is Alan Storkey's *A Christian Social Perspective* (Leicester, 1979).

The conflict between what Goudzwaard calls the "scientific" and "practical-institutional" wings of neo-Calvinism can be seen in the less than enthusiastic response of many Christian Reformed Churches in North America to Dooyeweerdian groups like the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. Dooyeweerd originally spoke of his work as "Calvinistic philosophy." Later he changed this to "Christian philosophy" and spoke modestly about his attempt to revive Christian philosophy. Unfortunately, many of his followers have been more lavish in their claims than either Dooyeweerd or Kuyper both of whom sought to interact with other Christian traditions.

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The theme of vocation

An attempt to locate the work of Dutch neo-Calvinist thinkers in the reformation tradition is to be found in William Young, *Towards a Reformed Philosophy* (Franeker, 1952). The suggestion that Calvin saw an institutional dimension to the idea of vocation which gave institutions a calling in society is interesting. Dr. Goudzwaard should have provided more information about this, documenting the development of Calvin's thought in Dutch Calvinism.

It is important to realize the degree to which the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition rejects mysticism and the sacred-profane distinction. It sees all secular life as holy and all religious life as secular. This is one reason why it is wrong to identify Dutch neo-Calvinism with the Puritans, evangelicals or fundamentalists. In embracing the whole of life as a religious realm the concept of the Kingdom of God is very important in this tradition.

The "principle of sphere-sovereignty" is the key to the development of Kuyper's thought and provides Dutch neo-Calvinism with a means of limiting claims to authority and power. It should be noted, however, that while both Kuyper and Dooyeweerd very clearly rejected racism, some South African thinkers have developed the idea of sphere-sovereignty as a basis for apartheid. Cf. Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Toronto, 1981).

The implications of sphere-sovereignty are complicated and difficult to understand. One of the clearest expressions of the idea is to be found in Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* (Princeton, 1898) pp. 108–120, where he combines an organic view of society with a mechanical view of the state. In creating his social model Kuyper acknowledges that conflict is an essential part of any human society and argues that the Christian can never hope to abolish social or political conflict but that such conflicts can be minimized when justice is made a goal. The emphasis on the calling of each sovereign sphere of society is an attempt to relativize the authority of all human institutions before the law of God. In theory this sounds great. The problem comes, however, when one wishes to identify the callings of different social spheres and set their appropriate boundaries. What, in fact, does God's calling mean in practical terms? How can a Christian businessman or labour leader implement this idea in the everyday work situation?

The principle of sphere-sovereignty is said to have a "normative colour and flavour." What does this mean? How do we derive our

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norms? Are they arrived at by intuition? By reading the Bible? Or by historical analysis? The problems here are similar to those faced by Karl Mannheim in developing his social philosophy when he faced the issue of relativism in his work *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London, 1952).

Soteriology

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God is basic for this development of Christian social thought. In understanding the development of this doctrine by Kuyper it is worth comparing his view of God's sovereignty with that of the contemporary British Calvinist Charles Spurgeon. For Spurgeon the sovereignty of God was related to soteriology, or individual salvation. Kuyper linked it to the doctrine of creation. Thus for Spurgeon the phrase "Christ is Lord of all" signified Christ's Lordship in terms of man's salvation. For Kuyper the same phrase was a cultural mandate which impelled Christians to take an active role in the state and society. Cf. J. Sills, *An Examination of the Social and Cultural Dimensions of the View of Life Preached by C. H. Spurgeon*, unpublished M.A. Thesis, Bristol University, 1973.

Kuyper believed that the state must intervene in society to protect the weak and maintain justice. *Christianity and the Class Struggle* (Grand Rapids, 1950) is a translation of one of his important Dutch works. Kuyper's political views are discussed by D. Jellema in "Abraham Kuyper's Attack on Liberalism" in the *Review of Politics*, vol. 19, 1957. Socialism, liberalism and Methodism were dirty words for writers in this tradition, who used them to create identifiable external enemies and thus reinforced the internal unity of the neo-Calvinist community by creating clear intellectual boundaries.

The question of central planning is a difficult one. Kuyper seems far more willing to entertain the idea than many North Americans. This needs further discussion. It is easy to say that the government's mandate is to bring "justice in public life." But what is justice? Marxists would make similar claims. The notion of justice and its practical implementation needs clearer definition and explanation. Similar comments could be made about stewardship. Goudzwaard appears to be an environmentalist. But the North American neo-Calvinist leader R. J. Rushdooney would oppose many environmental stands supported by Goudzwaard on the basis of a different understanding of the implications of stewardship.

What is the definition of "autonomous liberty"? How does this dif-

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fer from "normatively-bound liberty"? Who decides which is which and how do they make this decision? The problem of authority and democracy from a perspective close to Dutch neo-Calvinism is discussed in Peter Drucker's book *The End of Economic Man* (New York, 1939). Drucker raises all the questions addressed by Goudzwaard and Dutch neo-Calvinism in what is for me a far more practical way. The weakness of Dutch neo-Calvinism is its love of theory and lack of practical application in the modern world. Drucker made his analysis, influenced by Stahl, and then in the *Concept of the Corporation* (New York, 1946) attempted to provide a solution applicable to modern society. In many ways Drucker's entire work can be seen as an intellectual debate about authority and democracy.

Popular sovereignty

Like authority, the concept of revolution needs more careful definition. For neo-Calvinists "revolution" is a theoretical term with metaphysical implications that must be related to the continual warfare between God and Satan. But while neo-Calvinists may recognize past revolutions as godly or evil I'm not so sure they can analyze the revolutionary situations of today with any clarity. The problem with talk about "respect for every God-given authority" is again the problem of definition and recognition. Were the American revolutionaries acting in a revolutionary way when they revolted against British rule or was their war of independence justified? On the basis of what is said here it would seem that they were fundamentally wrong in their actions. But many American Calvinists would dispute this conclusion. If democracy is not to be based on popular sovereignty, what is it to be based on? Isn't popular sovereignty rooted in the Calvinist tradition? The neo-Calvinist solution of God's sovereignty sounds good but what does this mean in practice? How does a neo-Calvinist, or Dutch election differ from a revolutionary, or French election? The choice of elders in Reformed Churches may have been something like a democratic process but who participated in their election? Women and some men, those under a certain age for example, were excluded.

Co-determination is a major theme of neo-Calvinist social thinkers. Its application in the North American context can be seen in the work of the Christian Labour Association of Canada. See: H. D. Ayers, *A Study of the Christian Labour Association of Canada,* unpublished

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lished M.C.S. thesis, Regent College, Vancouver, 1979. We are told that government and citizens, directors of companies and their workers, have shared responsibilities. But who decides how these shares are to be allocated? Here again the theory sounds good but how does it work in practice? Further, can these deductions really be made in a consistent way from the theological doctrine of the sovereignty of God, Calvinist theology, or the Bible? Goudzwaard makes a very good point when he says that owners of the enterprises are "not the owners of living persons" only "capital goods." But what does ownership mean? Where do the owners get their goods if not from the labour of others? Here along with Keynes and the whole of modern economics Goudzwaard's position seems weakened by lack of a theory of value.

What does it mean to be "under the law of the Sovereign God"? Are the Ten Commandments being referred to? Or the Law of the Old Testament? Or the Law of Love? Or what? Again definition is needed and practical examples are lacking.

The theme of antithesis

The issue of a common society which is pluralistic is one with which few Christian groups have as yet come to terms. In attempting to implement "Christian" policies, Christians face the major problem of non-Christians who do not share their values. This need not be an issue if one believes in Natural Law but for neo-Calvinists who reject this, the antithesis is a major problem.

Anti-revolutionaries claim to appreciate some of the fruits of the French revolution while rejecting its spirit. In this way they hope to avoid becoming reactionaries. However, I fail to see how one can clearly distinguish between the good "fruits" and the bad "spirit" of the French Revolution. Surely the spirit of the Enlightenment gave birth to the fruits of the revolution. Again the problem is one of definition and the ability to make consistent distinctions. If a state is revolutionary when it fails to use its power "in a justiful, non-discriminating way" does this mean that the United States government was revolutionary prior to the civil rights legislation of the 1960s and is non-revolutionary today? A "governmental system misuses its power by exploiting a nation" and thus becomes "a revolutionary government." Does this mean that the government of South Africa is revolutionary because it exploits the Zulu and Tswana nations?

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Goudzwaard says that there is a "right to resist" when "responsible persons can lead the nation." This would seem to imply that if Chief Gatcha Buthelezi were to lead a resistance of the Zulu nation against the South African government in terms of neo-Calvinist thought he would be justified. It might also be argued that the actions of Nelson Mandela in organizing South African Blacks to resist the white government was also non-revolutionary. Yet in South Africa, Afrikaners who accept the theories of Dutch neo-Calvinism would be among the leading critics of Buthelezi and Mandela both of whom are often accused of being communists. Is neo-Calvinist theory really useful if it is open to such diverse interpretations? Goudzwaard legitimizes resistance by saying "God's calling must have primacy over the (abuse) of the human will. Authority has to be honoured . . . but in the context of its calling." How do we agree on what is and what is not a true calling? I find no clear guidance as to when revolution is and when it is not legitimate.

I'm not sure what the discussion about the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness tells us except that we live in a very complicated world. Goudzwaard's recognition that Christians are also "fallen" is reassuring but in practice I suspect most neo-Calvinists tend to trust neo-Calvinist politicians rather than really evaluating their arguments. This may not be the case in the Netherlands but it certainly works that way in South Africa. A similar thing can be seen in the politics of the new Christian Right in America. Although the "concept of common grace" may "invite Christians and non-Christians to cooperate," in practice van Prinsterer's dictum, "In isolation is our strength" seems to prevail. The neo-Calvinist tradition encourages isolationism.

Dutch neo-Calvinism was politicized by the "public school issue." The same is true of neo-Calvinists in South Africa where the issue of Christian-National education played an important role in the creation of Afrikaaner Nationalist ideology. At present this issue is the basis for a revival of interest in politics among evangelicals in North America. What isn't usually realized is that the theories of Dutch neo-Calvinism have been popularized by writers like Francis Schaeffer to provide an intellectual justification for the actions of the new Christian Right. What ultimate impact these writers will have I don't know but it is significant that Schaeffer's book *A Christian Manifesto* (Crossway Books, 1981) sold over 190,000 copies in the six months between Christmas 1981 and July 1982.

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Goudzwaard says that "If Christianity is not shared in the heart of the people, the government should not try to enforce it." Most neo-Calvinists claim to agree with this sentiment, although some like R. J. Rushdoony challenge it. However, it leaves unanswered the crucial question of what enforcement means. Are governments enforcing Christianity when they ban pornography? What about abortion? Many Dutch neo-Calvinists, such as Professor H. R. Rookmaaker, have taken a very liberal stance on these issues. But in North America, distinction is made between enforcing Christianity and upholding Christian values. This issue is far more difficult than the paper implies.

Dutch neo-Calvinist institutions arose as a result of a long social, theological and political struggle. In the first half of the twentieth century they flourished. But now they are in definite decline. Many observers argue that their decline has left the Netherlands a spiritual wasteland where religion is discredited. I would like to hear Dr. Goudzwaard's thoughts on the reasons for the decline of Dutch neo-Calvinism and its impact on Dutch religious life.

The theme of architectonic critique

Dutch neo-Calvinism is presented as making "a critique of the foundations . . . of present-day society." If this is true then we can all learn a great deal from it. Unfortunately, I do not see this claim working in practice. In the Netherlands neo-Calvinists seem to follow secular thinkers in their analysis of society. Similarly, in South Africa it was liberal and radical critics who exposed apartheid, not neo-Calvinists who have tended to accept the *status quo*. How then can such impressive claims be made?

Neo-Calvinism rejects capitalism and socialism. It sometimes sounds dangerously like fascism. Of course, Dr. Goudzwaard is not a fascist and many neo-Calvinists fought bravely in the Dutch resistance during World War II; but it needs to be remembered that others, including members of Kuyper's own family, joined the Dutch Nazi party.

Relevance for modern society

To describe inflation as "a symptom of an acquisitive society" seems to contradict history. Inflation was around a long time before in-

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dustrial society, and the statement says nothing practical about its cure. It seems to me to be rather like saying the Vietnam War was caused by sin. How inflation violates sphere-sovereignty and the ways governments can prevent this I fail to understand. Goudzwaard seems to be calling for tough government action. Kuyper used the armed forces to break a railway strike in 1903. Is this the neo-Calvinist solution to social unrest?

Although he doesn't quite say so, Goudzwaard seems to see technology as essentially evil. If this is so I suggest his neo-Calvinism has strong romantic overtones. Why is a rising standard of living idolatrous? It's easy for academics to condemn labour leaders and businessmen but I'm unconvinced that declining living standards are the answer. In his comments on the depletion of natural resources Goudzwaard echoes the Club of Rome. Here I suggest we are offered a Christian attempt to follow a popular trend rather than an "architectonic critique." Popular fear of industry and environmental concerns have surfaced almost every fifty years since the onset of the industrial revolution. I believe the Club of Rome was wrong in its findings, and it could well be that its scare tactics have done more harm than good.

In attempting to re-introduce labour-intensive work, Goudzwaard wants to reaffirm the value of labour and convince us that production lines and modern methods of manufacturing are inhumane. Unlike Goudzwaard, I spent a significant part of my life in industry. His views do not reflect my own experience of industrial life but rather a popular middle-class image put forward to people who have paid short visits to the workplace. Some workers, fearing the loss of their jobs, may be against technology. But, the vast majority simply want to be sure they have a job and when that is clear, to make it as easy as possible. It seems to me, therefore, that it is a romantic gloss to talk about the meaningfulness of work. There are many jobs which can never become creative or allow the worker to feel he is making a significant contribution to mankind. Yet they need to be done. In such a situation, good pay and as much mechanization as possible seem the only answer.

OBJECTIONS TO DUTCH NEO-CALVINISM

The basic objection I have to this tradition is that its social theory rests on a series of historical contradictions. The theory is anti-revolutionary, yet everywhere it gains popularity it does so on the basis of

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an appeal to a religious community which has revolutionary roots. The Reformation, the Dutch revolt against Spain, the English civil war, the American Revolution, the Great Trek in South Africa and the rise of modern Afrikaaner Nationalism are all revolutionary movements. Yet neo-Calvinists accept and indeed rejoice in these revolutions. At the same time all progressive measures which can be traced to the French Revolution, the Enlightenment, liberalism or humanism are rejected as un-Christian. All I can conclude is that neo-Calvinism legitimates one revolutionary tradition by attacking another.

Although neo-Calvinists claim to make an architectonic critique of the foundations of society all I see them producing are Christianized versions of secular ideas. Two examples illustrate this. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto promoted a magazine, *Vanguard*, as a forum for neo-Calvinist thought. Anyone who examines its articles during this period will see a lack of criticism and tendency to drift along with the latest cultural fad. Similarly, neo-Calvinist criticisms of apartheid in South Africa have lagged behind liberal and radical criticism by about twenty years without making any improvement on them.

Finally, this is a system which is exceptionally complicated and tends to lose itself in jargon. To my mind neo-Calvinism needs a dose of Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy to clarify its rather confused concepts.

VALUABLE ELEMENTS IN THE NEO-CALVINIST TRADITION

From all I have said it might appear that I am strongly anti-Calvinist. In fact I am not. I personally owe a great deal to the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition and find the example of Bob Goudzwaard as a Christian thinker and political activist inspiring. The fact that I disagree with many of his premises and conclusions does not mean I do not respect him or the tradition he represents.

Dutch neo-Calvinism represents for me a Christian myth. Abraham Kuyper inspired his followers with a powerful vision of justice in society. His basis was the Calvinism of the Dutch people. For many Kuyper did bring justice and hope. But I'm not sure that his vision can be analyzed in the way Goudzwaard and most neo-Calvinists would like. As soon as one examines a myth it loses its mythic quality and dies. Kuyper's work held together as long as it provided a vision

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with the minimum of critical analysis, which is not to say that it wasn't intellectually virile and productive.

When transferred to other cultures the vision has taken on different forms. In South Africa justice for Afrikaaners in 1902 meant freedom from the devastating effects of British Imperialism and led to the development of the theory of apartheid. That this later legitimated the oppression of Blacks is the irony of a complicated situation. In North America the vision is resurrected by religious leaders of the new fundamentalism, such as Francis Schaeffer and Tim LaHaye. Here the vision has a new form but for many it offers hope in a confused and threatening world.

However we react to this tradition, I think we must all agree that it is impressive and powerful in its ability to inspire Christians. Many here may not like its right-wing associations but we must remember that Goudzwaard represents what may be seen as the left wing of this tradition, which in itself shows something of the tradition's vitality.

Reply

Bob Goudzwaard

The comment of Dr. Hexham on my paper is not only very valuable and informative (I want to thank him especially for many additional bibliographical notes), but also challenging and intriguing.

Hexham states that he owes personally a great deal to the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition. But at the same time, he continues, he disagrees with many of my premises and conclusions. Obviously therefore, Hexham not only objects to Dutch neo-Calvinism itself, but also, and perhaps even more, to my way of interpreting it. For ex-

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ample, he declares, "For many, Abraham Kuyper did bring justice and hope. But I'm not sure that his vision can be analysed in the way Goudzwaard and most neo-Calvinists would like." Of course my discussant does not suggest here that he understands Dutch neo-Calvinism more profoundly than I. What he wants to make clear is that Dutch neo-Calvinism is a vision of society which hides its essence and flavour as soon as its content is analysed. This explains the astonishing number of cases in which he asks for more and sharper definitions, descriptions and identifications. He even suggests that neo-Calvinism "needs a dose of Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy to clarify its rather confused concepts." That seems to me to express his own conviction, that the way to the heart of Dutch neo-Calvinism is not, and cannot be, that of intellectual understanding.

I certainly agree with some of his criticism. Hexham is quite correct for instance in his remark about "love of theory"; sometimes it has even a scholastic flavour. What Kuyper wrote especially is open to a whole range of diverse interpretations. But I refuse to follow Hexham in saying that Dutch neo-Calvinism cannot be analysed at all from *within*. Hexham seems to suggest that the tradition can only escape being called "a myth," if it is prepared to define not only its *own* concepts (as I did, for instance speaking about sphere-sovereignty), but also to define and identify its "own" idea of generally held concepts such as justice, stewardship, liberty. Here I disagree. Of course I can try to make clear that a word like "justice" is used and interpreted quite differently in our tradition. In Marxian usage, for instance "justice" is a class-oriented concept; and in neo-Calvinism it refers to the basic equality of all human creatures, and to what each person needs for his or her calling. But that is not a definition. For, in my opinion, justice is a God-given norm which precedes all human activity including the activity of the human intellect. In every case in which reference is made to the ultimate norms of life, the movement has to be understood from within.

Context

Let me try to illustrate this. Where I referred to the idea of the meaningfulness of human labour, Hexham's comment is that such an expression reveals "a romantic gloss." But in Dutch neo-Calvinism the totality of life and work is nothing else than a totality in the *context* of normative, God-given *meaning,* which we either accept,

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reject, or ignore. Even outside this tradition Max Weber referred to the *Eigenwert*, the 'own-value' and dignity of human labour, which has to be recognized whenever production process takes place. Of course, many unpleasant jobs "need to be done"—but the question is, *how* they are done with or without creativity, co-responsibility and mutual cooperation.

This brings me to a second objection. I am sure that my discussant has a deeper insight into the *American* variety of neo-Calvinism than I. Perhaps this is also true of the South African variety, which he studied in his dissertation on the ideological backgrounds of apartheid. But my contribution concerned the original, *Dutch* neo-Calvinism. My impression is that my discussant came to the study of *Dutch* neo-Calvinism after that of the American and South African varieties. Dr. Hexham seems to follow the principle that you can judge a tree according to its worldwide fruits. How otherwise can I explain his strange remark about members of the Kuyper family joining the Nazi party? Or his statement: "Neo-Calvinism rejects capitalism and socialism. It sounds dangerously like fascism?" These comments suggest that he judges Holland with white South Africa in mind. *South-African* Calvinists indeed often spoke favourably of nazism, especially during the Second World War. But Hexham must know as well as I that the strongest protest against nazism and fascism in the Netherlands during World War II came from the Dutch neo-Calvinists. And not by accident, but precisely because of their utterly anti-fascist world-view.

How then are the South African and American versions of neo-Calvinism related to the original, Dutch tradition? As I tried to explain, Groen van Prinsterer and Kuyper used the concept of "sphere-sovereignty" as a kind of short-hand for their belief that in every situation or sphere of life, man lives and acts *coram Deo* (before the face of the living God). Their whole outlook on reality was coloured by their awareness that all—whether in authority or not—who are involved in any social relation or institution are subject to a same commandment of the One Sovereign Lord. That is to promote public justice within the State, to promote *oikonomia* (stewardship) in the firm (or production-household) and to form a community of love and truth in the family. But in the American and South African interpretations of this principle the original insight was gradually lost, and the concept was re-formulated to serve other interests. In South Africa, for instance, the principle was not only misinterpreted and misused to at-

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tach to different *races* the label of a "separate" sphere of life, but was combined with elements of German idealistic and romantic thought which referred to an original superiority of the white race and of the necessity for every "people" to survive as one Blood on one Soil. But this was and is a total subversion of all the principle stands for. The will to survive at all costs, preserving a white or Afrikaaner identity, takes the place of the original confession, that within a State everyone must be treated according to the same norm of justice.

A different deformation took place in North America. Here it occurred by way of a synthesis with individualism and conservatism. This was made possible by using the expression "sphere-sovereignty" in relation to the "sovereignty" of *individuals,* who have *authority* in one or other sphere of life. For instance, the legitimacy of almost all types of government intervention in the marketplace could be denied. Even co-responsibility of the workers in business enterprise has sometimes been interpreted as a violation of the principle of sphere-sovereignty, as an attempt to lessen the "soverieignty in power" of individual managers or owners of the firm.

Now Hexham could possibly object here that the original concept was so vague and ambiguous that it opened the way for later neo-Calvinists to arrive at these interpretations. I am of a different opinion. No doubt Kuyper lacked clearness in his formulations; especially in his attempted distinction between the "mechanic" and the "organic" side of society which was open to abuse. But what explicitly motivated him and van Prinsterer was wilfully set aside in later times, even in the Netherlands to some extent.

Conclusion

Let me conclude with a few answers to some of Dr. Hexham's many questions.

(1) What God's calling can mean in practical terms was explained in the twenties in Gerbrandy's book *De Strijd om Nieuwe Maatschappijvormen* (The struggle for new forms of society). Gerbrandy was a true Calvinist of Kuyper's persuasion, and was the courageous prime minister of Holland during the Second World War. I discussed his contribution to some extent in my *Aid to the Overdeveloped West* (Toronto 1975).

(2) Real norms are not derived, but revealed in God's Word and in Creation. Groen van Prinsterer described them as "those truths

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which are written by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the most simple Christian." See also for this question Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought.*

(3) Liberty in the biblical sense is not contrasted with *any* type of human control, but only with enslavement.

(4) A revolution is only acceptable for a Calvinist under extreme conditions: when a government systematically and consciously abuses its power to oppress its own people; and when, at the same time, responsible political leaders (Calvin spoke about "magistrates") can take command without creating chaos. The American struggle for independence was of course justified according to this view.

(5) Popular *sovereignty* is certainly not rooted in the Calvinist tradition. Groen's main work (*Unbelief and Revolution*) can be seen as one continued fight against the idea of popular sovereignty.

(6) In my opinion, the government of South Africa is indeed on its way to becoming a revolutionary government.

(7) The interpretation of Groen's statement is incorrect. He did not mean by isolation a kind of separatism, but the return to one's *zelfstandigheid van overtuiging,* (independence of conviction). See Groen van Prinsterer, *Nederlandsche Gedachten* (July 9, 1870).

(8) Enforcing Christianity is different from upholding Christian values and giving them expression in legal principles.

(9) It is not my perception that religion is yet discredited in Holland. Concerning the decline of Dutch neo-Calvinistic institutions, I tried to explain in my paper that they lost much of their original spirituality: mainly because they could not resist the temptation to become self-centred and concerned with their self-preservation.

(10) I am sorry I did not convince Hexham of the originality of Kuyper's architectonical critique, nor of its relevance for modern society. Perhaps we differ too much in our view of the problems of society today to come to a common mind. Let me only say that *of course* the desire for a continually rising standard of living can become idolatrous if it becomes the final meaning of life; and *of course* technology is not essentially evil. It becomes an evil only if the hope of a better future in terms of peace and happiness is centred on technology.

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Chapter 8

Minority Themes

John H. Yoder

Most of the other papers presented at this conference are postulated upon the following assumptions:

(a) that we can see the social system as a whole well enough to talk about it realistically;
(b) that if we were to know what system were best we might be in a position to do something about bringing it into being;
(c) that what we can do we should, even at the cost of some pain and compromise;
(d) that the criteria for such a judgement are objective enough to be defined with some degree of independence from a particular political system;
(e) and are general enough to be applicable to several if not all systems;
(f) that these criteria are substantially correlated with one's theological beliefs, so as to be worthy of discussion and debate on grounds other than whim, provincial bias or personal interest.

The thin strand of Christian cultural tradition of which I speak rejects these assumptions. It should not, therefore, be thought of as entering into the same debate, but rather as beginning with a different set of commitments and therefore reaching a different set of answers.

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It is rather that the people for whom I speak are involved in a different debate.

The position I describe is, and seeks to remain, quite close to that of the early Christians, or of the Jews of that same time, for whom—as for powerless minorities in most times and places—it is not possible to see the social structure whole. This is not merely because they are few and poor. The Persian Emperor, and Caesar, had much more power than they, but could not see the whole as a system either. The very notion that there is such a thing as a "system," whose characteristics one could describe (as it were) from the outside in order then to compare it with another system, was foreign to the available cosmologies of the time. Thinking about social righteousness, therefore, was not done from the perspective of the philosophically generalizing reflexes which come naturally to us. ("What if this were to be made a law?" or "What if everybody did it?")

I shall later describe in other ways how this minority view throws light on a different approach. My first point is that it calls into question axiom (a): our claim to see the system whole.

There has often been a tendency among minorities, whether racial, religious, or other, to make of their necessity a virtue. Beyond saying that their truth-system did not depend on their being able to help to run the world, they would go further and say that it called them to renounce "involvement," or "effectiveness," or "power," or wealth. This would then be a systematic negation of axiom (c), often supported by some dualistic way of defining identity and priorities, so that letting the world go to the dogs in its own way is a proper thing to do, not simply an unavoidable weakness.

Utopianism

Yet another of the axioms might be repudiated, namely (b). It might be that we see the world whole, (a), but that when we see it we learn that the way it is constructed and governed is such that there is nothing that we *can* do about it. It would then follow that the very exercise of thinking about better systems is utopian, in the bad sense of wasting effort in dreaming about the impossible (although it might also be utopian in the good sense of sharpening our minds and imaginations, and of cultivating our critical awareness).

I identify these elements of minority culture, which sustain, for the people I am to talk about, a solid scepticism about the appropriate-

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ness of hoping to make a better world, not as a basis for debate but rather as part of my assignment to situate the perspective from which the rest of my reporting can be done. I needed to label and set aside one misperception which is very difficult to avoid, namely that these traditions maintain always and only that "the virtuous person will have nothing to do with economic politics." That view I have identified as only one theme of the minority tradition.

My paper differs in another way. The tradition or heritage which I here seek to interpret does not have the shape of most others institutionally or culturally, and therefore requires a synthesis in my reporting which goes beyond ordinary historical description. Some schools of thought are represented by one master-thinker or one close-knit group; it suffices to read these authorities. Others are defined by one dominant idea or a close-knit set of interlocking assumptions. It then suffices to unpack the coherence of that set of statements, without much need to know how they were discovered or by whom. What I am to describe is more like the latter than the former, but the coherent set of perspectives can only be understood as distilled out of a long history, during which their advocates were seldom at leisure to spell them out abstractly. Those advocates were sometimes tolerated, sometimes liquidated, and sometimes able to survive in the chinks between the two, so that the actual shape their alternative perspectives took was quite different from age to age. Even the words and guiding concepts they used were often not of their own choosing, and therefore do not always cohere. This means that the challenge to my synthesis is quite different from that which faces anyone trying to write a faithful history of a single movement. I am trying to write a faithful history of a manifold movement across many centuries, discerned as a unity only by its normative source in the New Testament and by a few main lines of its critique.

Origins

Poverty has always been a mark of Christian faithfulness for some segments of the Christian community. The poor (*anawim*) were already seen in pre-Christian Jewish thought as special objects of God's protective concern. Jesus's propertylessness was not imposed on his disciples as a general law, but was held before them as a Gospel offer, which some could refuse only by rejecting him.

I do not need to review the record concerning the themes of gener-

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osity, sharing, and poverty in early Christianity. That record, in its simplicity and its variety, is the starting point for the people I am to talk about.

The oldest "alternative" theme in economics is that of distribution on the basis of need in connection with the Eucharist. The ordinary term for the beneficiaries was "widows," but certainly this caring included other people who lacked a family breadwinner. Very soon the term used was simply "the poor." Again it meant not everyone with limited resources but only those who were dependent upon such aid for survival. Meeting that category of needs, "first of all for those of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10), was a standard obligation taught by all early Christian communities, and practised with some degree of integrity by all, so far as we can tell.

Recent New Testament scholarship has tried to guess from what social class the early Christians mostly came, and how their economic practice was determined. Though interesting, that debate is a diversion from the simpler statement that the early Christians gave status to, and cared for, the poor.

The phrase, "especially for those of the household of faith" demonstrates backhandedly that the notion of a duty to share was not strictly limited to the believing community, even though it began there. That everyone took responsibility for his own extended family's needs was taken for granted. The generalization of the responsibility to the "household" of faith (as the new extended family of the believer) was the first step. But this text indicates that early Christian benevolence was wider in its scope than the community of believers.

After accommodation

The next phase has been labelled "asceticism" by historians. This is a term which has taken on another meaning in our own time. We must therefore free ourselves from preconceptions in examining the thought of primitive Christianity.

Beginning as early as the middle of the second century, Christians found life in some parts of the Roman world quite comfortable. While the threat of persecution was always in the background, there were times when it stayed there, leaving Christians to prosper in their trades and in their family lives. Before long, there were opportunities for free time for intellectual pursuits, which we find being exercised

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by a few from the middle of the second century, and by several major figures within another generation. What happens decisively in the first quarter of the fourth century—the acceptance of Christianity as a religion first tolerated, then favoured by authority—was beginning sporadically and on a small scale a good century before.

This raises a new question. According to Jesus and the apostles, the life of the believer was subject to a discipline imposed by the unbelieving world. If that discipline is no longer there, should it be replaced from within? When Jesus said that his disciples would have to forsake other things in order to follow him, he had meant not only that they would be coerced into such a choice by the pressures of the world, but also that to put the kingdom first would be a normal part of sober decisiveness. If the sacrifices and losses which keep our priorities clear are no longer imposed on us by the automatic hostility of the unbelieving world, should we replace that discipline with one of our own? A businessman chooses which investments are most worthy of his capital and his imagination. A teacher chooses which kinds of knowledge and which skills need to be taught first. Thus the learning of Christian priorities, once it is no longer under pressure of direct persecution, should properly be provided with some "discipline" or "curriculum" for its own inner health.

Such a setting of priorities, not under pressure of scarcity or catastrophe, but flowing from an inner responsibility for the coherence and the directedness of the life of faith, is what is called "ascetic."

Too often the ascetic life is portrayed by those who see it from outside as if it were the product of an alien world-view which considers the body or material existence to be evil. Such ideas did circulate around the eastern Roman world at the time of the first ascetic Christian communities, and at the slightly earlier time when individuals first began to choose their own eremitic discipline of geographical isolation. Yet it would be a misunderstanding to see that kind of Gnostic or neo-Platonic explanation at the root of it. The central pastoral concern of the "ascetics" was not that material possessions are evil, but rather that they are good, proper in their place, but wrong to put at the center of one's life. A Christian community therefore needs persons and disciplines to enact the primacy of other values in regular and visible ways, not for personal salvation so much as for the sake of the whole community.

Our legalistic and defensive response to the witness of monastic poverty is to question whether its disciples really believe it possible to

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have a healthy culture without wealth. We then observe that the poverty of the monk is less than absolutely sweeping as a social model in two ways

(a) The fact that the celibate life is not self-sustaining, but must continue to be dependent upon families for its recruitment, implies that the acquisitive lifestyle is thereby necessary for families and hence cannot be condemned as morally wrong for all. The celibate seems to concede that parents with children cannot live under the same discipline. Therefore, poverty is a special calling for those excused from the normal duties of maintaining society.
(b) The monastery itself will with time accumulate lands and other possessions. While the *individual* has little to call his own, he shares in a level of security (and perhaps within two generations a level of comfort) greater than that of many whose participation in the lay economy is more competitive.

I have labelled as "legalistic and defensive" the procedure which tests a moral style by asking, "are all who do otherwise wrong?" Or, "can you impose that pattern on everybody?" To look at the Benedictine model with that legalistic frame of reference is to misunderstand it. The monk does not uphold an absolute moral obligation in order to be committed to condemning others who live otherwise. What he does is to respond to the Gospel in a way that takes the Gospel as *good* news, and offers it to others in the same understanding. The way of life of the monastic minority does not condemn others; but neither does it affirm in a cheaply complementary way that other ways of living are equally good, or that its distinctive commitments are only matters of taste or arbitrary preference.

The Middle Ages

Taking one great leap toward our times, we find in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a wave of renewal efforts directed towards those known to historians as "Christ's poor."

In what we call today Northern Italy and Southern France, and in the Low Countries, cities were beginning to grow out of the chaos of earlier centuries, with the resulting visible accumulation of wealth on the part of some, and a matching increasing visibility of the urban poor. Sometimes the clergy were on the side of wealth, since a parish or a diocese could own property. Since clerics could not leave goods

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to their children, preferment to a church office was one way for an individual to become wealthy. We observe a rising concern with the sin of "simony" (purchasing church office by means of bribes).

But the prohibition of simony is just the tip of an iceberg. As an expression of the economic discipline of the Church, it belongs with the prohibition of usury, still on the books but increasingly difficult to enforce; and with a rising number of rules about luxurious expenditure, by which the Church attempted to regulate the new affluence. The unabashed pursuit of wealth, and its proud display, were clearly seen to be vices, even though the only tools of pastoral discipline which can be found were on the surface, and failed to come to grips at its roots with this new level of offence.

The denunciation of simony is the tip of an iceberg in another sense. It becomes the rallying cry for the organization of popular protest movements, which become so strong as to have serious political weight: not by electing people to office (this is not yet the age of democracy) but by determining which of the ruling minorities in a town will be most able to govern. For a generation in the middle of the eleventh century there was a major "political party" in Milan called the *pataria* or the *patarini*, literally the rag-pickers, the people from the dump. When they called for the prosecution of bishops blatantly guilty of simony, their point was not that they were out to get bishops. They were denouncing the Church's failure to meet the challenge of this new level of economic development with an appropriate measure of pastoral discipline.

The struggle for a more valid response did not limit itself to this kind of negation. We observe the appearance of a new Christian community calling itself (or called by its neighbours) "Christ's paupers." Taking literally the words of Jesus about leaving possessions to follow him, its disciples took up a life of mendicant itineration, wandering from town to town in sizeable groups. Some settled soon into a life of residential communities, with or without formal monastic discipline.

Female leaders

Sometimes these groups were led by women. Sometimes they were accused of creating scandal by permitting men and women to travel across the countryside in mixed groups. In the Netherlands the female element seems to have been dominant. The Beguines, as they

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were called, seem to have more initiative, or at least to have remained more memorable in the public mind, than the masculine equivalent, the Beghards. These again were movements of economic solidarity with, and service to, the most needy.

Historical records are scanty for this period. They tell us of Arnold of Brescia, Henri of Lausanne, Peter of Bruges, without our being able to measure their impact quantitatively.

Henri is supposed to have said, "the Church only exists where the faithful confess their sins and live according to the Gospel." The phrase, "live according to the Gospel" is not a vague mood-statement but rather a technical label for mendicant itineration: it identifies the specific form of propertylessness which results from having left things behind to become a preacher of the Gospel. From this affirmation Henri and Peter derived an attack on a definition of the church in terms of ritual and architecture, and claimed that clerics excluded themselves from the church of Christ by their commitment to such stabilized ritual. What we can see in the slim record of these efforts is that this new movement of economic protest and counter-demonstration was one of the main currents of spiritual initiative from the early eleventh until the late twelfth century. It laid the foundation for a movement of more structured community-building soon to be represented by Francis and Waldo.

As a culmination of two centuries of such developments, we properly may group together a movement which was eventually rejected and one which was accepted by the Roman hierarchy. Around 1180 Peter Waldo began what Francis of Assisi began around 1200: gathering and sending people to preach the story of Jesus in the language of the common people; and (in order to do this) forsaking wealth and living by the generosity of their listeners. Both Peter and Francis went to Rome to obtain the authorization of the pope. Each seems to have received such authorization. However, when Peter returned to Lyons the local church authorities were threatened by his message and tried to stop him and his followers, whereas Francis found strong support in the bishop of Assisi. Whether that explains the ultimate difference between the fates of the two movements, the two initiatives did issue in appropriately different movements beginning from the same message. The Franciscan order, with the full complement of a male community, a female community, and a third order for penitent lay people, became the most respected form of renewal of the next two generations, and has left its traces through

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Catholic religious history down to the present. The Waldensian movement, refusing to be silenced, became the oldest and strongest clandestine community, first and strongest forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, spreading as far as Moravia to the East and Flanders to the North. To the formal renunciation of wealth and acceptance of mobility, a naive imitation of a few Gospel stories, each added something more comprehensive: a culture and a sociology of evangelical poverty. The forms of preaching and education, household living and family style, were patterned after the Gospel in such a way as to be able to survive as a counter-community under the Cross.

The first Reformation

Our next leap takes us to Peter of Cheltchitz or Chelcic, the solitary lay theologian who forms a bridge between Wyclif and Hus and the failed institutional reforms of the Taborites and the Calixtines on the one hand, and on the other hand the emergence of the *Unitas Fratrum*, which grew into independent existence during the 1450s and took institutional form in 1467. The Czech Brethren are properly called by their historians, "the first Reformation." Most of the critical and constructive ideas which later come to be understood as "Protestantism" and which live on into the present in the West in forms created by Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, were already there a century earlier in Bohemia and Moravia. The fact that we remember the latter Reformers and not their predecessors is no mystery, its causes being multiple, and mostly political:

(a) the major creative thinkers in the movement did not find powerful and reliable political support as did Luther, Zwingli and Calvin;
(b) the historians of Western Europe seldom learn the languages of Eastern Europe, and therefore neglect any history which was not lived and written in English, French or German;
(c) certain doctrinaire themes which became quintessential in Protestant scholastic polemics ("justification through faith only," double predestination) had not yet been formulated quite as radically in the Czech beginnings.

With regard to the moral and social critique of established Christendom, however, the vision of the Czech Reformers was no less radical than that of those who came a century later. In describing them, I take the most direct path of simply quoting Peter Brock:

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Chelcicky saw in a society founded on class inequalities the antithesis of a Christian social order. It was as completely pagan as the violence on which its whole structure rested. Since he denied the need for armed force in a Christian society, the only justification for the privileges of the nobility, whose task it was to protect the other two estates, lost thereby its validity. The granting of titles meant giving that homage to men which should be reserved for God alone. The superiority of these 'coroneted escutcheons (*erby korunovane*),' as he scornfully called members of the nobility, was based solely on robbery and violence. Their ancestors had obtained property and titles either through force of arms or by money. 'If they now had no money in addition to their birth, hunger would force them to drop their coats-of-arms and take to the plough' [he writes]. 'Wealth alone, therefore sustains the honour of their nobility and the frame of their birth.... Lacking money, they would soon sink back to the level of peasantry and, as they scorn work, they would often go hungry.' They were at present only able to live out their lives in idleness and luxury because of the labour of their peasants. 'If this disappeared, their noble birth would decay miserably.' Chelcicky denounces their whole way of life: their refined luxuries, their class education, their pride, their loose morals, their unwillingness to suffer wrong as Christians should, their contempt for manual work, and their oppression of the workers. Even their frequent ablutions were in his eyes an abomination, 'a burden to the servants.' The nobles were only a millstone round the necks of the hardworking common people, 'useless drones' who only corrupt others by the bad example of their lives.

Serfdom, that bastion of the feudal order, is for Chelcicky a sin against God and man. 'If your forefathers [he says, addressing the nobility and gentry] bought human beings together with their hereditary rights to the property, then they bought something that was not theirs to buy and sell.' Christ has redeemed mankind with his blood: how, then, do so-called Christians dare to traffic in human lives? All their legal documents will not be of any avail on the Day of Judgement. For there is no basis for social inequalities in Christianity, where, 'when one member suffers, all the other members suffer with him.' 'They are quite unable to show any passage from God's scriptures [he writes] why, apart from their superior descent, they are any different from other people.' They are indeed doubly accursed, he cries, once through original sin and a second time by reason of their noble birth.

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Though indeed he did not expressly condemn property in itself, apart from inordinate wealth or its improper use, the apostolic poverty of the first Christians remained Chelcicky's ideal throughout. 'If man was not deceived by avarice [he asks] why should he need property (*zbozie*) or take any heed of worldly things?' His views on property indeed, recalls Wyclif's theory of *dominium*. 'Whoever is not of God [writes the Czech] cannot truly enjoy or hold anything belonging to God, except as the man of violence unlawfully enjoys and holds what is not his own.' The whole earth belongs to God: therefore only those who were putting into practice the principle of Christian equality had a real claim to the use of enough to satisfy the bare necessities of existence. The path of voluntary poverty was the only way open to a true Christian, indeed the only rational course in view of the vanity of temporal things. His injunction to give alms to the poor would seem to show, however, that Chelcicky did not advocate communism of goods—at least as an immediately practicable solution. In Chelcicky's opinion, it was 'difficult to sell or buy without sin on account of excessive greed,' and for him a trader was 'one who has the mark of the Beast.' 'Every kind of trade and profitmaking occupation connected with the town should be avoided in order not to harm one's soul.' Markets and fairs were equally immoral, as were the taverns and usurious practices always to be found in the towns. Only agriculture and certain crafts, necessary for even the simplest existence, were permissible. Chelcicky condemned the use of weights and measures as well as boundary marks, likewise produced by Cain, the outward symbols of unChristian mistrust. (P. Brock, *The Political and Social Doctrines of the Unity of Czech Brethren in the Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries,*'s—Graven Hage, Mouton, 1957, pp.63ff.)

The second Reformation

During the Reformation of the sixteenth century there were several violent dissenting movements including the so-called "Peasants' War" of 1524–25 and the takeover ten years later of the city of Munster. None of these was able to overcome the defences of established government. They belong on the edge of our story only because the name "Anabaptist" has been applied to them. Their use of coercion makes them closer to Zwinglians and the Crusaders.

The most thorough form of Anabaptist communism was established in 1528 among a group of refugees forced to leave the Moravian city of Nikolsburg. It was consolidated a few years later under the

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leadership of Jacob Hutter, and after many ups and downs survives to this day in the Hutterian Brethren colonies of the American and Canadian prairies. The rationale for complete community of production and consumption is stated classically in the *Great Article Book* of Peter Walpot, 1577, under the third article entitled, "Of True Surrender and the Christian Community of Goods." (ET in *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, January 1957, reprinted by The Plough Publishing Co., Rifton, N.Y.)

By 1577 the movement was in its third generation, temporarily tolerated, and prosperous. Walpot's exposition ranges appropriately throughout the entire Salvation story, finding support everywhere for a communal vision of life, beginning with the Mosaic legislation which had ordered that there should be no poor in Israel and which provided a Jubilee year to wipe out such inequalities as should arise. It seemed to Walpot that the provision that Priests of the Lord should need no land of their own, prefigured the status of New Testament believers as Priests.

The key conception underlying the entire synthesis is a simple polarity of "property" and "surrender." Property (*eigentum*) is related, in a way which ordinary English usage no longer makes evident, to having one's own (*eigen*) and being able to say "my." Grasping for power or independence or autonomy is the essence of the Fall. The alternative to it, which enables us to be restored as children of a gracious Father, is letting go: variously translated as "yieldedness," "surrender" (as in our text's English title in the present version), or "abandon" (as in my Spanish translation). Literally the term is an abstract noun, ending in *heit*, the rough equivalent of our English "ness," formed from the passive participle of the verb "to let." Thus etymologically the word means "having-let-oneself-go-ness." The Anabaptists did not invent the term. It was a part of the standard vocabulary of pre-Reformation mysticism and pastoral care. It did not first mean anything social or economic. For the radical Anabaptist its primary meaning still is not economic. Here is evidence of the fact that although institutionally the impetus for forming Anabaptist communities was the Zwinglian Reformation, the Anabaptist tradition took into itself many elements which had been part of other renewal movements in preceding generations. *Gelassenheit* is the "letting-go" of the mystic, who stops trying to explain and to understand the disciplines which prepare for contemplation in the confidence that God will make himself known most authentically the less we contri-

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bute to making it possible. The mystic's affirmative contribution centres in the discipline, which the tradition calls "apophatic," of pulling back or letting go.

The prophet Zechariah predicted that under the New Covenant there would be no traders or merchants in the House of the Lord. John the Baptist described economic sharing as the sign of repentance. In Jesus' temptation it is the Devil who says of the world, "this is mine." "Even so do his children, who have this deceitfulness of Belial in their hearts." Jesus called his disciples to leave their boats and fields and be among the blessed poor.

Two masters

Although these samples from a long series of references may sound like simple proof-texts, Walpot's treatise provides more systematic pastoral and ethical arguments where appropriate. Such are developed around the texts: "no man can serve two masters," and "lay not up treasures for yourselves upon earth." Even the Lord's Prayer teaches community. Christ did not teach us to say severally, "give me my bread." The Apostles' Creed requires us to confess: "I believe in the communion of saints." Jesus taught *community* by example, through the miraculous feeding of all who had come to him in the desert; and by doing it by means of the generosity of those who gave what they had. He called the rich young man to enter into that sharing. When the young man turned sorrowfully away, the disciples had learned how hard it was for the rich to enter the Kingdom.

It is obvious that the example of the Jerusalem Church is a powerful supporting argument. Yet that model is not at the centre of the argument. Nor is the Jerusalem Church taken as typical of the entire New Testament experience, or a model for all time. The churches planted in the Diaspora by Paul were no less called to fellowship, both in their internal life and in their solidarity with the Church of Jerusalem. The Hutterite case would not be weakened if the first chapters of Acts were removed from the story: it is to be found in every other strand of the New Testament.

The treatise concludes with supporting references from Philo, Eusebius, Clement, Augustine, and Chrysostom. In a way that illustrates the true meaning of *Gelassenheit*, it concludes with a quotation from the *Theologia Germanica:*

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> Were there no self-will, there would be also no ownership. In Heaven there is no ownership; hence there are found content, true peace, and all blessedness. If anyone there took upon himself to call anything his own, he would straightway be thrust out into Hell, and would there become a devil. . . . He who has something or seeketh or longs to have something of his own, is himself a slave, namely to what he desireth or hath, and he who hath nothing of his own, neither seeketh nor longeth thereafter, is free and at large, and in bondage to none.

Only the Hutterian brethren experience such combination of pressures in the 1520s and 1530s and privileges after 1550 as to make the development of the Bruderhof economy a promising and rewarding opportunity. It is not the case, however, that the other peaceable Anabaptists of the sixteenth century rejected the notion of community of goods. They had no occasion to construct large, autarchic, residential communities, but they did use the word "community" for such economic sharing and discipline as was possible in their situation. Testimony recorded by the police at Selestat in Alsace in 1534 reported, "If anyone needs it, whether it be clothing or tools for his trade, he is given money to purchase it and at the next meeting he returns the money if he can."

In 1557 a report of a meeting in the woods near Strasbourg indicates that the candidate for baptism was asked, "if he will give all his possessions and goods for this congregation, if that should be necessary to help it, and that they would never let any of them remain in need if they were able to come to help?"

Most Anabaptist congregations had a member designated from among their leadership called the "servant of the poor," whose specific responsibility it was to coordinate the distribution of material resources according to need and capacity. In troubled times this could sometimes be a sizeable economic operation. A.L.E. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders*, Scottdale, Herald Press, 1961, p.95; a report from 1597.

The British Reformation

On the left wing of the Cromwellian revolution we find Gerard Winstanley, spokesman of the "True Levellers," whose condemnation of economic inequality is based on the appeal to Creation.

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> In the beginning of time, the great Creator, Reason, made the earth to be a common treasure....Man had domination given to him over the beasts, birds, and fishes, but not one word was spoken in the beginning, that one branch of mankind should rule over another....Selfish imaginations, taking possession of the five senses, ruling as king in the room of Reason therein and working with covetousness did set up one man to teach and rule over another....
>
> And hereupon the earth, which was made to be a common treasury of relief for all, both beasts and men, was hedged into enclosures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made servants and slaves...and thereby the spirit is killed in both. The one looks upon himself as a teacher ruler, and so is lifted up in pride over his fellow creature. The other looks upon himself as imperfect, and so is dejected in his spirit....
>
> That this civil propriety is the curse, is manifest thus. Those that buy and sell land and are landlords have got it either by oppression or murder or theft, and all landlords live in the breach of the Seventh and Eighth commandments.

With this vision Winstanley and his colleagues set out to plant a garden on St. George's Hill, as a sign of the re-establishment of equality in the Second Coming.

> That which does encourage us to go on in this work is this. We find the streaming out of love in our hearts toward all, to enemies as well as friends. We would have none live in beggary, poverty, or sorrow ... for by this work ... bondage shall be removed, tears wiped away, and all poor people by their righteous labour shall be relieved and freed from poverty and straights. For in this work of restoration there will be no beggar in Israel. For surely, if there was no beggar in literal Israel, there shall be no beggar in spiritual Israel....

Winstanley's garden was not to last for long, but in its simplicity the Diggers brought together dramatically a vision of Eden, of the new Jerusalem, and of the next step to take in the restoration of England.

Valid generalizations?

Where does this selective narrative leave us? This is no place for the claim that the experiences of minority faith-communities "demonstrate," in the sense of "proof," anything about economic possibil-

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ities for tomorrow. It seemed appropriate, however, that I should pull from the record just enough scraps and specimens to indicate that there are sufficient resources, spiritual and intellectual, in the believing communities of earlier centuries to project a different pattern of economic functioning from that which "Christendom" has provided.

What I have described is the tip of an iceberg. This small portion of a body of beliefs and practices is as visible as it is only because there is much more of the same below the surface. Yet it permits us to identify the presence and the character of the community/poverty movement through Christian history. Every specimen I have identified is different in language and form. That could hardly have been otherwise, since each arose out of, and spoke to, its own century. The variety would have been greater still had I finished the list of well-known manifestations with Charles de Foucauld, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa and Jean Vanier (to name only recent Catholics). What can now be said about the common characteristics within this impressive variety?

All of these movements are specifically Christian. They arise within Christian churches and appeal explicitly to the example and teachings of Jesus and the apostles. This does not mean that they are narrowly or exclusively Christian. The Renaissance, even its sectarian movements, can also appeal to the Golden Age of Greek antiquity, according to which the original state of mankind was without private property.

It would also have been possible to expand our display of models with others derived from an interchange on the frontiers of Christian mission with tribal communal economies, or with Buddhist or Hindu monasticism.

There is a continuing debate in theological ethics (going well beyond the scope of our present colloquium) about the tension between a normative Christian loyalty to Jesus, and the ability to converse with, or even learn from, non-Christians in their own language. If our agenda included that wider debate in Christian epistemology I would need to explain in more detail why I claim that the dichotomy as usually set up is false. Christian community/poverty is one social idiom in which this dichotomy is transcended, if not refuted. When encounter is at the point of the elemental needs of bread and shelter, it takes no dictionary to make visible to our neighbours, whatever their anthropological history, a new quality of redemptive community. Nor does it take a dictionary to clarify the "hard" side of the gospel:

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that the price of redemption, the structural pre-condition of entering reconciling community, is readiness to throw one's "self" into the kitty.

In summary: the first claim is the broadest. The vision of Christian community/poverty represents an incarnate proclamation of the Lordship of Christ to all possible worlds in which food and shelter are needed. Because it is a proclamatory form of Christian witness, and not a set of rules to govern a special task-force or more highly specialized staff (as sometimes within religious communities), this vision will not be cooped up or penned in by non-Christian listeners or "scientifically objective" interpreters into some uniquely "Christian" pigeonhole. Overcoming self-centredness through surrender, and overcoming the destructive experience of poverty, rejection and deprivation through sharing, represent a vision of the fulfilment of human dignity that is understandable and (at least partly) operable *independently of the naming of Jesus as Lord.* That Jesus is Lord does not depend upon our naming him such, anymore than Ronald Reagan's being president depends on my having voted for him or liking him or trusting his leadership.

Fall and Redemption

The witness to community as one dimension of human wholeness, part of the original, created dignity of the race, lost in the Fall and restored in Redemption, accessible in mission even to those for whom the call is not convincing, continues to be a live perspective independently of the response of individuals or constituencies.

The advocates of this view are thus mistaken when they accept the well-meaning interpretation of "neutral observers" to the effect that this vision is relevant only to those who believe, or possible only for radical disciples. It is not a "sectarian vision" in Troeltsch's sense: that its advocates accept its rejection by all but their circle. I need to argue against this Troeltschian put-down because it sets aside the cosmic claim which is made from the inside in terms of the Lordship of Christ; and which on the outside has almost the same meaning (if not the same power) in terms of the unity of the human race.

It may seem that this excursion into wider questions of epistemology and sectarian modesty belong somewhere else than in this consultation. Its appropriateness will become clearer as we move to macro-economics. The minority community has often been seen, es-

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pecially by those who intend to be tolerant of it, as one which prescribes no solutions for society at large. This is true in the superficial sense of not coercing conformity to one's vision, and in the instrumental sense of being willing to move ahead in obedience without waiting for everyone else. It is, however, never granted as right that "the world" should persist in destructive acquisitiveness and gluttony. It is never granted that "the world" *needs* avarice in order to keep the economy going, any more than it is granted by the Tolstoyan that it *needs* violence to keep the civil order afloat. The view I am describing accepts the fact of not being able to coerce. It does not accept that of not being heard; nor the cheap tolerance of a pluralism which votes down, unheard, major elements of the Christian witness. Therefore we do not accept being characterized as living in complementary symbiosis with "normal society." We claim rather to be the bridge-head of restored normalcy, beginning to reclaim the Sovereign's dominion over a progressively degenerating, temporarily rebellious, province. That we do not impose our vision on our fellows does not mean that it is only for special people. It is rather that its nature, being non-coercive, would be denied it if we were to enforce it.

There is, therefore, a constructive function in "utopian" discourse which must not be, and logically has no reason to be, set aside on the grounds that it is not immediately feasible. Neither the Declaration of Independence nor the American Constitution are immediately feasible. Nor is the Reagan economic plan. No law is absolutely enforceable, or enforced, the day it is promulgated. No moral minority accepts the backhanded Troeltschian compliment that its faithfulness is in reverse proportion to its relevance.

Frame of reference

A third general observation regarding all these models is that the economic realm is not seen as autonomous, adequately understood when looked at by itself, properly evaluated without any broader frame of reference. The economic witness is in every case the unfolding of logically coherent implications from other elements of a vision of personal and social renewal. It is thus a strength, not a weakness, of this common witness that each of its forms is different, just as the worlds to which they witness are different. When renewal arises out of medieval mysticism, renunciation of property will be a part of *Gelassenheit*. If it arises in the Church of Jerusalem it will

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come from commitment to the personal dignity of widows forsaken by non-Messianic synagogues. In the fourth century it will be relief from the waning of persecution. In the fourteenth it will be modelling an ideal city. In the fifteenth with Chelcicky, or in the seventeenth with Winstanley, it will be reaction to the condemnation by society defending its class structure as God's intention. In Jean Vanier or Dorothy Day it is a rediscovery of the social wholeness of being at the service of the last and the lost and the least. If you stand back from these phenomena and analyse the language of each critically, their differences are self-evident. Yet in the mind of Christ, and in what they oppose, they are modulations of the same Gospel authenticity, living out the promise of the presence of the Spirit; which, according to the Fourth Gospel, was to lead us into all truth.

A parallel from the arms race may show why a position which makes different assumptions about the power gradient does not mean what it appears to people on the other side of a debate.

There are many in the U.S.A. and in Canada who say that an arms race is a stupid and evil way to take responsibility for the world. Yet we live in a society which is so structured as to give us no choice whether to be under the umbrella of the deterrent threat of mutual destruction. That such deterrence is morally illegitimate according to all classical Christian thought, that it is bad economics, bad ecology and irrational, have no power to prevent it. In this situation it is not enough for a moral person to abstain from pulling the nuclear trigger. One must speak judgementally and prophetically and creatively about ways to dismantle the MAD system. Yet one begins within the system and has no choice but to oppose it from within. This does not mean that nuclear strategy is morally acceptable. It recognizes the unacceptable as part of the landscape, in which all who care must do whatever they can to make the unacceptable less likely.

Modes of moral discourse which assume the legitimacy of control need not wrestle with paradoxes like denying the real but unacceptable, or saying that the only morally acceptable thing is something that does not and cannot exist. Yet minority communities do it all the time. We all do it all the time about nuclear and chemical war. Many of us do it all the time about the mythical being we call "the Christian family." It means, however, that our acquiescence in the world as it is must not be confused with moral approbation, or even with the "I'm OK—you're OK" language of moral escapism. In a similar sense, to say that the believing community does not prescribe an eco-

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nomic order for the wider world means neither that we have no notion about economic orders or wider worlds, nor that we accept in any way as morally proper the wider world's neglect of Christ's message of poverty and sharing. Change from the dominant patterns we reject can only come through nonviolent responses to its being as it is. Any violence in attempted renovation would be, by definition, no renovation, for its means would deny its end. Living a counter-cultural way in face of an acquisitive society is not a withdrawal but an aggressive protest. He who protests does not concede that he has no pointers to give the Fallen world. But the counsel he can give has only its truth power and no other sanction on its side.

Description, not advocacy

At this point we are easily led astray by the deceptive appearance of near congruence between the radical view and the pietistic one. Both speak of fleeing worldliness. Both speak of a level of spiritual and moral authority independent of the unbelief of the majority. Both speak of truths which the world does not understand, and both can live with rejection. But the pietistic spiritualization is a socially conservative move, made mostly by persons in situations of social comfort, and accepted secondarily as a palliative by persons in situations with no hope at all. They explain the inability to change the world in a direction of greater justice in terms of the spiritual/material dichotomy; the effect is to affirm the (material) world as it is. The radical, on the other hand, while using some of the same language and living in some of the same forms, projects and lives from the otherness of the kingdom of God as a concrete social judgement and empowerment for those who believe, despite its rejection by the others.

My task has been description, not advocacy. I have left to the end the reasons which might be presented in support of the tradition I have described.

I posed at the beginning a question to which I now return as more than a question. On what can one base a claim to see and comprehend the system as a whole? Generality is a nearly unchallengeable axiom of moral discourse. We are always trained to ask:

(a) What if that idea were made a matter of public policy?
(b) What if acting against that position were made a crime?
(c) Is it possible to ask that kind of behaviour of everyone?

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(d) How will the social system operate if everyone behaved that way?
(e) Will you ever get people to do that?

These questions, though they differ from one another, flow together in our tendency to reason ethically for society as a whole. For any to work well we need to assume that the facts of the social system are well known. We make this presumptuous assumption in a world in which the data to be known are growing geometrically, many relating to a geometrically rising number of independent agents, each bent on guiding the system in his own way and some on misinforming others. The one thing that is mathematically sure is that nobody can see the system whole. If we were to stir into the mix a few fragments of specifically Christian anthropology, we should also be obliged to add that the claim to see as whole might itself be the root of our sinfulness.

If I am right in suggesting:

(a) that the assumption of seeing the system whole and of being able to control it is a necessary presupposition of most of the other approaches to economics, and that
(b) that is not possible,

it follows that we need to look for some new basis of moral discourse which shares the presuppositions of the tradition I have described. If I were to be its advocate in the 1980s I should not use the language of Walpot, Winstanley, or even the New Testament. Rather, I should look for contemporary language to say again, in a world with more starvation, more wealth, more waste, more economic tyranny than ever before—despite the proclaimed beneficent intentions and systemic wisdom of our latest Constantines on both the Right and the Left—that the God who put mankind in a garden to till it, has made His will most fully known in a propertyless man who shared his bread with the poor; and who, when the powerful of his age destroyed him, would not stay dead.

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Comment

Richard John Neuhaus

It does not get you very far to say nice things about how provocative John Howard Yoder is. That, he quickly responds, is intolerable paternalism. I will nonetheless say that he is extremely provocative, almost always so, and I am much in his debt for this paper and his numerous other writings. And saying this is not paternalistic since I do him the honour of quite basically and straightforwardly disagreeing with him.

Yoder is right in saying that there is a dangerous illusion of "seeing it whole." He is also right in noting that there are quite different political approaches which cherish this illusion and arrive at quite different ways of "guiding the whole system." While disagreeing with his anti-property ethic, I agree with Yoder that nobody sees it whole. Especially in the area of economics: the myriad interactions of needs, greeds, fears, vanities and concerns which actually propel what we call "the economy" escape any capacity to catalogue, never mind to understand. I would suggest that in economics, as well as in many other fields of discourse, we should begin with what might be called a postulate of ignorance. We simply don't know. Not knowing, we should not try to guide or control.

This is a line of thinking which could be employed, indeed is employed, in favour of something like a free-market economy. But my purpose now is simply to question Yoder's premise that alternatives to his own position assume the possibility of control over the whole system, based upon understanding of it. Some alternatives, I would suggest, are more modest than that; perhaps more modest than Yoder's property-less communal proposal.

Closely related is his argument toward the end that his opponents assume it is necessary "to reason ethically for the society as a whole." There is indeed a kind of false universalism in much ethical thought accurately summed up in the questions at the end of his

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paper. Such an approach denies the particularities of loyalty, affection and obligation which must inform moral reasoning. The question is not, however, whether the individual should act in bold obedience to the dominical command, regardless of others. It is rather what communities we accept responsibility for. We all make such decisions. Most of us do it, for instance, with respect to family (both the families we are given and those we bring into being). In this connection it is probably worth asking why Yoder refers to the "myth of the Christian family." It is possible that the dismissal of the family as a theologically significant community is the logical consequence of a rigorous understanding of a "believers' church," in which the only association of consequence is that between those who share a similar response to Christ's lordship.

Communities

But to continue with communities: many of us, further, accept responsibility for, "identify with," if you will, regional and national groups. One might also so identify with ethnic groups if one were Jewish or Black. In Christian perspective, it is true, one's primary commitment is to the "household of faith," but the Church in this instance is understood as the *prolepsis* or forerunner of a universal community. Certainly we would all be inclined to say that our commitment to humanity transcends our loyalty to nation. We are more hesitant when the statement is demanded with respect to family and faith. We surmise that it is through Burke's "little platoons" that more universal responsibilities are somehow to be discovered and nurtured. And, of course, Yoder has his little platoon: this community that shares a certain understanding of obedience to the propertyless Lord. Do not individuals in that community "reason for the community as a whole"? Or do they all act in relentlessly individualistic interpretations of what radical obedience requires, without reference to what this means for the community? I should think not. For the Christian, therefore, it is a matter of determining which communities we are accountable for before the judgement of God.

In a churchly rather than sectarian understanding of Christian community, there is a comprehensive embrace of myriad sectarianisms. There is indeed a tolerance (I know my friend John Yoder detests that word) of diverse understandings of the Christian imperative. Sometimes a minority may discover *the* truth which is eventually accepted

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by the whole community. Christian understanding of anti-Semitism and of slavery are examples of such sectarian triumphs. Christians of catholic sensibilities, however, typically warn against sectaries who believe they are in possession of *the* truth which others resist only because they "do not listen to Christ's message of poverty and sharing."

All Christians claim that their highest priority is to do Christ's will. As in any movement or institution, some participants are more serious than others. The hardest disagreement is not, as Yoder's paper suggests, between the serious and nonserious, but between the serious who have come to different understandings of what is required by discipleship. In making a decision between communities of loyalty, it might be objected that the nation, for example, is no proper object of loyalty since it does not accept specifically Christian norms. But Yoder points out in another connection, the claims of the Christian community are universal and accessible to all. Christ is Lord, Reagan is president, whether people acknowledge it or not. A Christian must be concerned for all that is the object of God's loving concern. "God so loved the *world* . . ."—not just the community of true believers.

The function of minority communities

The communitarian and other traditions which Yoder traces have an important provocative function. They do not embody the future, and it would be arrogant for them to make that claim. But they remind the rest of us that the promised future of the coming Kingdom of God has yet to arrive. They proclaim to all of us, mired in our ambiguities of moral responsibility, that none of our other loyalties can be ultimate. The celibate witness is mentioned. This witness is not compromised by its dependence upon the continuing existence of "the normal world." It is an eschatological sign reminding that "normal world" that the only acceptable normality is that promised in the Kingdom.

The whole Church is to be such a sign of the coming Kingdom. In a society such as America however, the Church does not stand "over against" society, since in sociological fact (and by a catholic theological reading) most participants in society *are* the Church. Minority groups of particular vocation (such as described by Yoder) are meant to keep stirring up the whole Christian community in anticipation of the Kingdom.

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It is urged that to accept responsibility for such large terms as "the Church" and "society" is meaningless, since we cannot really change them. Over what can we really exercise decisive control? Over a small community? (How many? Ten? Ten thousand?) Within that community, presumably, there can be the rigour of accountability required for true discipleship. But any degree of psychological sophistication—not to mention other kinds—suggests that we can hardly claim such a degree of accountability even for ourselves as individuals. It seems to me quite possible that America (or Tanzania or South Africa) can be for a Christian a significant community of loyalty and responsibility. "What should I do in light of what is good for America?" seems a legitimate question. It is not the only or the most important question, of course. Church, family, other associations may take priority. But if one believes that in the big picture of world-historical change (which is, after all, the object of God's ultimate devotion in the Christian view) American influence is good for humankind, then protection, even expansion, of that influence is of urgent moral interest.

With respect to larger communities, it may indeed be true that there is little we *can* do about them. But what we feel morally bound to attempt does not depend on an estimate of effectiveness. The catholic Christian also says, "I believe in the communion of saints," but with primary reference to the mystical communion of the Church, centred in the sacramental life, notably the Eucharist. One can say that this is mystification, and an escape from the moral obligations of real people in real community. But such a charge is of course a put-down, sometimes a paternalistic one. It ought to be expressed as forthright disagreement with classic claims about what actually happens, and about the reality experienced in the sacramental community. Along with the provocations offered by monastic and other ventures in radical communal life, the liturgical life of the Church is a "modelling" and anticipation of future communal promise. The liturgical action coexists with the experienced brokenness of the larger Christian community, and indeed of the world in which, not accidentally, that community is situated.

In a small but important way, communities of particular vocation witness to that brokenness. They may present paradigms of possibilities for all. Although it is hard to be modest when a community thinks it has that vocation, modesty is all the more required lest the claims of the community lead it to be dismissed as fanaticism. Those

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experiments which have often most powerfully recommended themselves are precisely those that restrain themselves from claiming too much. Mother Teresa, for example, assiduously refrains from suggesting that she and her order represent a model of broader socioeconomic significance. Dorothy Day was generally restrained on this question also, except when she felt it her mission to expound the socioeconomic teachings of Peter Maurin.

Some specific objections

I am not so sure that the Hutterite case would not be greatly weakened without the first chapters of Acts, nor that it is very strong with them. I understand the notion that property is evil, and Yoder correctly notes that it has roots in non-biblical mythology. I do not think the idea has much basis in Scripture, where notions of stewardship, reward and responsibility for the poor imply the possession (and usually, the goodness) of property. Yoder's literal approach to the imitation of Jesus (spelled out very powerfully in The Politics of Jesus) employs a particular hermeneutic which is marginal to classic Christian christology. We could ask in what ways Jesus was "propertyless," and what were his attitudes toward property; but we are not Jesus, nor are we meant to be Jesus. We do not have the competence—in the sense of both authority and ability—to do all that he did. There is little evidence in the New Testament, if any, suggesting that he is that kind of model calling for that kind of imitation. Each is called to be herself or himself in obedience to the Lord and guided by an ethic of love and promise; that ethic is notoriously short on specific directions for the kinds of decisions each must make. One requirement is that we make those decisions and act in the courage of our uncertainties—always being held accountable to communities within the Community that is the whole Church, and to wisdom that might be found outside the believing community.

Constantinianism and Christendom are terms of opprobrium for Yoder. I am not so sure. There are many ways in which "Christ and culture" have been combined, and what we call Constantinianism and Christendom were not the worst. Till Kingdom comes, the task of Christians and of the church collectively is to proclaim the promise of the Kingdom: first that the world is not that Kingdom, then that the Kingdom has proleptically appeared within history in the "Christ-event"; and finally that participation in that promised future is possi-

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ble in the communion of saints. The Church proclaims this in diverse ways. One very important way is through the encouragement of communities of special vocation, even if some of their claims are outrageously (sometimes dangerously) immodest.

Yoder's minority view of existing reality might be worth discussing. Is our society, is the world for that matter, really characterized by "destructive acquisitiveness and gluttony"? This seems a generalization which, standing alone, is simply false. There are many within the Christian community who do not think that maintaining a nuclear deterrence is "evil, stupid," and the like. It is clearly very dangerous, and there are a lot of other things that might be said about the arms race. But the point is that people, including Christian people, are called to do more than simply say it is very bad. Jonathan Schell's horrifying description of nuclear warfare is a service of limited value; important to those who thought nuclear war might not be so bad. But his conclusion that we need to "re-invent politics" is of limited utility or intellectual interest.

Utopianism is extremely important. Most of what has passed for utopianism has been dangerous or irrelevant because it was not genuinely utopian. It assumed, that is, that there was a program or existing order which embodies the ultimate promise. The crucial importance of utopianism is to remind participants in every institution, including the utopian community itself, that none of these is to be identified with the Kingdom of God. That is the genuinely apophatic way, the *via negativa*, by which the present is kept open to the promise of the future.

How ought we to view minority communities?

Yoder's paper does not indicate whether there is now a specific community, or communities, practising a radical obedience to the propertyless Christ. It is hard to know what it would look like. If participants vote are they "reasoning ethically for the society as a whole"? Is there private property? If so, how is it managed in a way which recognizes that it is not *ownership* but *power* which, in the biblical view, is fraught with demonic possibilities? Can a radical Christian belong to a pension plan, or have a legal contract (enforced by the state) respecting work and income? The questions can readily be multiplied.

The Kingdom will be propertyless, we are told. I am not sure that it

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will be. I don't even know what it would mean, since property and person in all their parts are so inextricably interrelated. People who really believe in that Kingdom, we are further told, should live now as though the Kingdom has already come. But the Kingdom hasn't come and we're not asked to play a game of "let's pretend." People look at the radical communities Yoder advocates and say, "Yes, that's the ideal, but the rest of us aren't there yet." Yoder resents that kind of dismissal, and correctly so. I am not saying that I think "radical community" is an *impracticable* ideal. I am saying that I don't think it *is* ideal. If the biblical imagery surrounding the Kingdom suggests anything, it is that there will be much more property; we shall *all* be rich. Crowns will be passed around, and one crown will be "mine" and another will be "thine." The writer of *Theologia Germanica* will not, I think, be thrust straightway into hell for claiming what is, by the grace of God, his own. Indeed, not to claim it would be to despise God's grace. Without occasion or temptation to avarice, jealousy and resentment, the idea of property will be fulfilled, not abolished.

But for the time being, let us have *Gelassenheit*. Let us live loosely in relation to possessions, sharing generously with others, especially the poorest, and thus demonstrating that we have kept our loyalties ordered by the Kingdom and have not sold our souls to Mammon. Such a way of living does not require that we view property as evil, or embark upon an onerous and probably impossible attempt to be propertyless. For that would be a distraction from working through the difficult responsibilities that are ours in a world that is far short of what, according to promise, it will be. Those who are preoccupied with propertylessness are just as far short. Nonetheless, in our different ways of trying to walk the path of obedience, we should have a generous view of the Christian and, indeed, of the moral community; and we should try very hard to stay in conversation. There cannot be real conversation if alternative ways are patronizingly dismissed. Nor is there real conversation if disagreement is treated as a refusal to listen to Christ's message.

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Reply

John H. Yoder

My assignment, as originally formulated, was to interpret the positions of persons and groups who say that it is not the concern of Christians to keep the world from going to its ruin, but rather to be morally pure on a small scale. The phrase "Christian anarchism" was used to describe this. For several reasons, that way of putting the assignment did not seem promising as a contribution to the present discussion.

Debate among Christians about denominational differences, especially about those denominational differences which were enshrined in classical vocabulary and even in classical documents, is not first of all, and usually not at all, about the question of a global economic order. Those differences need to be handled with other resources and other methods than our conversation here. They would not directly correlate with different answers on the questions of this consultation; even less with the narrower formulation of whether there are built-in class predispositions which determine how certain categories of institutional leaders think about economics when it is not their field of expertise.

If the debate among Christian groups about things more fundamental than economic order were to be relevant to the economic issue at all, it would have had to come at an earlier place in the present discussion. This is because of the questions it would address to the assumptions underlying the entire debate, about seeing the global order whole and having the duty to impose on it a global reversal. The rest of the discussion did assume that it is appropriate for us to be asking what an ideal total economic order ought to be. There has been no serious conversation about how the shape of either moral or economic discourse would be modified by resignation to the presence of a regime over which one would have no control, and of which one would fundamentally disapprove. Richard Neuhaus recognizes that

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this is a question, but his response does not pursue it.

But my main reason for not writing such a paper was not only that "anarchism" is not what I believe, and not what the people I have reported on believe; it is rather because of a point much more difficult to make with accuracy. I attempted to disengage what was really meant by the rhetoric which to some sounded anarchic, which the people whom such rhetoric scandalizes enjoy being scandalized by. Historic fairness means not boxing others (especially people with other languages, less complex or less literate than our own) into our reading of their rhetoric. Minority groups are obliged by definition to converse in a language not their own, speaking to options they do not accept, in a sequence of priorities fixed by someone else. It was therefore not appropriate to accept as describing them the general category of "anarchism" and then to try to exposit or advocate it.

Misplaced criticism

I agreed with conference organizer Paul Heyne instead to a task of historical reporting, passing in review varieties of positions, each of them in phase with its own world, each of which in a different way denied the characterization of "letting the world go and saving only themselves by their own purity." Each of them did, however, live within the limits of not being in control, and not being tolerated, even patronizingly, by the "classical" "catholic" powers among those who believed otherwise.

The people I describe are not the only ones who call into question the above dominant set of axioms. Any position criticizing another will raise some such questions, all the more so if it is *de facto* outvoted, even though its position be designed to provide social guidance. For my present descriptive purposes it suffices to say that one dominant Christian vision does make many of those assumptions, although often not consciously, and that the minority experience I am assigned to recount makes it easier to see through them, and is strengthened (though not "proven") by seeing through them.

I tried to report these phenomena largely in their own words, and to paraphrase or to illustrate only enough to bridge the cultural distance from their time to ours. I did not make them all the same, nor claim that what they say is the whole truth. Where I could I left the bulk of the narrative in someone else's terms.

Richard Neuhaus has criticized the paper I did not want to write:

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he has not discussed the economic substance of an alternative style of Christian life, but has re-worded in contemporary idiom the systematic rejection by historic Lutheranism of the historic free church option.

My answer will belong mostly on the level of clarification. Where there is theological difference between us it is usually a matter of repeating the old debate between the historic reformation and the free churches, rather than anything directly pertinent to the present discussion. Once the choice has been made (as Neuhaus has made it) to guide a debate into stereotyped channels, it is not likely to progress far in one brief exchange. The hardening of those channels, under the constraints of the civil power exercised by one party in the sixteenth century and the ghetto status into which the other party was driven, destroyed the potential for dialogue.

A reflection of the difference between us is shown in the term chosen by Neuhaus to replace one of mine. To "paternalize" (his word) is to retain the authority which someone has, at first, by virtue of a natural responsibility and control, beyond the point where that authority should have been transformed into reciprocal respect through the empowerment of the "offspring." What the mainstream theological traditions tend to do with minority positions, in matters both of ecclesiology and social ethics is rather (my word) to "patronize"; that is to avoid reciprocity from a position of power which is neither natural nor familiar.

Scepticism

I prefaced my introduction with a warning about the claim to see the economic system whole, as a way of locating the different moral posture of the confessing minority, but did not supply an argument for it. I quite agree with Neuhaus that one reason for scepticism is a "postulate of ignorance"; yet had I been advancing an argument rather than simply locating a stance, I would have pointed out that ignorance of the whole system is not the only or the best reason for doubt about global system-management by a few rulers. In fact, the more nearly one can discern the system as a whole the better; so long as one does not derive from that vision a right to coerce others. In the passion narrative according to Luke, Jesus says of "the kings of the nations" that they "exercise dominion" while "letting themselves be called benefactors." It is this claim that the exercise of dominion is

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for the welfare of its subjects that makes of civil dominion something worse than mere inadequately informed manipulation. I did not "premise" that all alternatives to my "own position" assume the possibility and moral right to total control. I could hardly have held such a premise without knowing what *all* the other positions are. I do know that, at certain breaking points of dialogue, that premise has been essential. It is so, for example, with regard to the origins of the doctrine of the "just war," which is one of the five points at which the Augsburg Confession condemns the Anabaptists. The criteria of just authority and proportionality are early forms of what systematic ethical analysis today calls "consequentialism." You do not have "just war" unless the outcome you can reasonably expect by fighting would be better than that of avoiding the war. It is often the case for the "great economic debate," as Philip Wogaman* calls it. It would seem that when Neuhaus describes my topic as "a propertyless communal proposal" he is assuming that I propose communal structures for all of society. Yet, not only did I deny the ability to reason for all of society: most of the people I discussed did not even practise communal property holding for themselves. There are other ways to share and to identify with the poor than by establishing communes.

Nor is it the case that the communal patterns of the free church traditions (in distinction, of course, from those based on celibacy) "dismiss the family as a significant moral community." Except for the celibate cases in my narrative, the communal movements make more of the family than do the societies among which they live, as the context of initial moral formation. They do respect the Dominican teaching to the effect that sometimes family duties must take second place to the call of the Kingdom, but they do not ask, hope or expect always to be in that position. They do prefer extended family structures to the segregated nuclear unit, and they do deny that the family should be a privileged locus of economic selfishness. If they had been asked about a global financial system, they probably would have denied that it is appropriate that the offspring of a rich man should without work inherit the privilege his father had worked for (if he did). They did doubt that every pair of parents are qualified, in the absence

* Philip Wogaman, *The Great Economic Debate: An Ethical Analysis*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1977.

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of the wider community, to provide an adequate moral formation even for their own children.

Dismissal

This is different from the modesty about the achievements of the Christian family which was expressed in the phrase which Neuhaus misinterprets as "dismissal." That sentence says that all of us, whatever our economic or ecclesiological theory, set goals which we do not achieve, and live with the unacceptable. So at this point I was suggesting no distinction between the minority tradition and Neuhaus's own. There is no debate when Neuhaus argues that instead of choosing whether to reason for communities we have to decide which communities to reason for and by what standards to make our choices.

I must protest, moreover, at the parenthetical comment to the effect that I "detest" the word "tolerance." This is simple misrepresentation. Toleration as a mark of Western democracy is predominantly the product of the "free church" traditions; first of all on the ideal level, in that beginning at least in the fifteenth century they denied the propriety of central government dictation of the forms of faith, which official Catholic and Reformation theologies continued to advocate until they were bypassed by modernity; and secondly, because their own suffering nonconformity placed majority "Christian" governments in the position of deciding whether to continue to deal with heresy as a crime. It was Enlightenment rather than the free churches which finally pushed the separation of Church and State over the threshold into legal forms. It was not until a plurality of free churches and the break-up of Europe into competing Christian nations made it impossible to enforce religious uniformity that the churches which Troeltch and Neuhaus would call "catholic" resigned themselves to a "comprehensive embrace of myriad sectarianisms." It is because the free churches caution anyone against thinking that they have "the truth" that they deny the appropriateness of anyone's enforcing it on others through the sanctions of the civil order.

Had it been my assignment to talk about questions of political responsibility in general, rather than to describe historical patterns of contrasting economic order, which by the nature of the case arose

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mostly among people who had no access to political responsibility, I would have repeated the demonstration frequently made elsewhere that it is precisely the perspective of dissent that is able to change society significantly, where the "catholic" acceptance of things as they are does so less effectively. The reason is not that they are few, nor is it merely that there are many actors and we do not know about all the data. The fundamental reason for not expecting to take charge of the whole society is that most of its members do not share one's own moral commitment, and could therefore be led to conform to its prescriptions only by coercion. It is again part of customary historical slander to say that minorities are not interested in what is good for America or for Tanzania, or in how an America better than the one we have would be better for the world. What they deny is that specific selfish definitions of that "good" can be given priority which are not subjected to wider criteria of local discernment and global community.

Straw men

It is a sign of inadequate comprehension of the dialogical situation when one presents as if it were an argument a statement that is not debated. The Neuhaus comment does this repeatedly: by saying that we live in many communities and the question is how to serve which ones first; by saying that we should also try to change the larger societies, and that limited effectiveness is not a criterion which can explain withdrawal from caring. It happens again with reference to the liturgical life of the Church as a modelling of communal promise. At this last point, however, Neuhaus takes back with the left hand what he had just given with the right. After saying that the sharing of bread and the Eucharist is a model, he says that the people who share their own bread, as if they think that it is a model, are guilty of fanaticism.

Neuhaus's criticism becomes *ad hominem* when it raises questions to which my paper did not refer, such as the interpretation of Jesus. The book which Neuhaus names without responding to what it says does not say that we have the competence, the authority, or the ability to do all that Jesus did. It does compose from the New Testament witness a refutation of the claim, which Neuhaus makes on systematic and denominational (not textual) grounds, that Jesus can be appealed to in behalf of an "ethic of love" which is "notoriously

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short on specific directions." The question is not how "specific" may be the "directions," nor whether there is some kind of non-specific, non-directive "love" that can be disengaged therefrom. It is rather whether at those points where a consistent imperative is identifiable within scripture's witness to the Gospel, it should on other grounds be decided to give greater specific directive authority to other values. The medieval disjunction between precept and counsel, the Protestant ascription of revelatory authority to "orders of creation" identified with existing authority structures, or Reinhold Niebuhr's dichotomy between "love as impossible ideal" and "love acting as justice," are ways of doing that. Although he has not pursued the argument, Neuhaus does pay to the dissenters the compliment of granting that the argument they call for would be one based upon the interpretation of scriptures. That has not been the case with regard to most of the other Christian positions described in our consultation. To say that reading Jesus as politically relevant represents "a particular hermeneutic" is about as helpful as saying that we all belong to communities or that God cares for the world. The question is whether that hermeneutic takes account of the texts in a way that is subject to dialogue.

Literalism (Neuhaus used the yet more pejorative term "fundamentalism" orally) is a modern intellectual movement which concentrates upon the denial that there are any serious problems of hermeneutics. It claims that that denial represents classical Reformation thought, and concludes with the rejection of historical and literary critical scholarship. My *The Politics of Jesus* is a popularization of critical scholarship and a demonstration of the importance of hermeneutic problems. What it challenges is the majority, pre-critical view according to which the pertinence of Jesus for determining the social shape of the believing community is to be minimized. That view, which Neuhaus shares, is closer to fundamentalism than is my view. Neuhaus is no fundamentalist. But on this subject he says what fundamentalists say, and I do not.

Soup kitchens

Looking back over the Neuhaus critique, the most striking general impression which remains is that, while he has rehearsed the classical Lutheran rejection of the free church tradition, he has moved past this to questions regarding the economic order only in glancing ways.

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It may be that the Franciscans may have accepted some of the deprecation of the joys of the flesh from the *Cathari* whom they were trying to convert. It may be that Peter Walpot, in the effort to round out his apology, drew on some neo-Platonic undercurrent of medieval mysticism. It may be that the "distributist" personalism of Peter Maurin was less readily respected by people like Neuhaus than Dorothy Day's soup kitchens. But at none of the points at which economic specifics are permitted to come to the surface in the Neuhaus critique does the challenge go beneath the surface. The text, *Theologia Germanica,* which said that since in heaven there will not be selfishness, neither will there be property, which Neuhaus rejects, is part of the common medieval heritage with which the Walpot text closed: it was a text highly praised by Martin Luther, a testimony to the monastic rather than the radical version of the communal vision.

Nor is Neuhaus relevant when he echoes Luther's phrase about "forcing God's hand by establishing the Kingdom now." That applied to the rebellious peasants and to Huldrych Zwingli, not the nonviolent communities. The tradeoff between idealism and cynicism in "taking responsibility for the world" is a debate that belongs elsewhere.

Here the question is not whether moral people on Christian or other grounds, should project a distant ideal of "living loosely in relation to possessions, sharing generously." No one would disavow such a lofty and vague idea. No one would be persecuted for it either. The question is whether, in a world where that ideal is kept distant, vague, nondirective, and inoffensive by majority moral discourse, the person consciously committed to confessing Jesus as Lord either can or should reflect those possibilities in a more concrete and costly way, and even be called to account by his brothers and sisters for his failure to do so. It is at that point that we must argue not about the general ideal, but about the particular reasoning processes which especially since the third and fourth centuries have led most Christians responsible for wealth in the power structure of society to answer this question negatively.

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Discussion

Edited by: Irving Hexham

Bob Goudzwaard: I want to explain further the main thrust of the tradition in which I stand. A person's fundamental reference is not tradition. It goes deeper. It has to do with being human in relation to the living God.

The perspective I take makes it possible for me to see the weak elements in my own tradition, especially its misuse in encouraging an apartheid ideology. At the same time, a lot of what is going on now in relation to the use of the idea of "sphere-sovereignty" is not really rooted in that principle.

My religious outlook stresses the normative element of life. It can be said that the whole of creation in which human activities take place consists of "an answer structure." There is no power which can rest in itself. Power needs to become an answer by being oriented to justice. Only in that way can it become an answer to our fellow man and to God.

The technical possibilities in creation are to be seen in a religious context. They are created to serve mankind.

So too, economic life is seen as an answer, in the aspect of stewardship: Stewardship is the careful administration of what is entrusted to you by someone who is higher than yourself.

In Aristotle you have "œconomia," which originally meant stewardship. If a man in my tradition speaks of economic life, and has some critical comments, he does not do so from the viewpoint of ethics by saying that ethics has to be related to economics. No, he points to the fact that we have to understand what economics really means. This is because we have tried to remove the normative element from the economic sphere. That's important because stewardship is more than just efficiency.

"Sphere-sovereignty" is an important element. It makes clear that responsibility can take a variety of expressions. The responsibility of

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a state is different from the responsibility of a family, trade union, or production unit.

And now for my last comment. In the discussion so far, we have mentioned again and again the market mechanism, production-households, and the state. In my tradition, it is stressed that the growing influence of the state can and has to be explained in terms of a diminution of responsibility in the economic sphere itself.

We would not have seen an enormous growth of state intervention if from the beginning production units had been aware of their own, direct, economic responsibility for their personnel, their environments, and the continuation of employment.

We now have an empty type of production unit, producing only for the market, oriented to efficiency. This has led to a growing necessity for the state to take over the original economic responsibilities of the production unit.

Calvinists have something to say about what is going on now in our societies. The prediction of Calvinist thought is that if we go on looking to production units in a way we will see a continuous growth of state intervention, so that capitalism will eventually end up as collectivism.

Martin Marty: Whenever I'm at a conference, I use one ear as a participant and the other as a journalist. But since I can't publish, quote or attribute anything that's going on here, I will do my journalism right now. In this regard, let me address what I think is probably the most interesting structural dimension of our dialogue on religion and economics in society.

The Liberty Fund and Fraser Institute and most of the economists here are market people, and the celebrators of reason. It seems to me they must find the language of Dooyeweerd and Kuyper extremely archaic. And Yoder sounds like a Hutterite dragged in three centuries late. (laughter) How can this be? I look around the room and anytime we think we reach a universal, on what is reason, or equality, or justice, someone speaks up for Islam, or early Judaism. We had two papers on Catholicism that an outsider or journalist would say sound like representations of two different religions (laughter), not just two different dimensions of the Christian faith.

Yoder's appeal to the public would be seen as conservative, although it is radical. Goudzwaard's people would be conservatives

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yet, probably almost everyone of that stripe in America voted for Reagan. And that's only the beginning.

The World Council of Churches is another of these subgroups. When Clark Kucheman speaks for Unitarian Universalism, I hear shades of eighteenth-century Enlightenment done in twentieth century fashion. In the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, everyone who opened his mouth, in that sense, thought they were talking the universal.

I am pointing to the ways in which I think the present-day market economy advocates are in very uneasy alliances with a lot of subcommunities in America. These alliances aren't going to last long unless they can penetrate the thinking of these communities. Islamic thinkers like Dean Ahmad say: "They don't care what Western reason says," and people with "sphere-sovereignty" concepts go their own ways.

Now it worked in Holland, as long as there were the *verzuiling* (pardon my poor Dutch), the pillars of society. These were column-like divisions between Protestant-Catholic-Jew. Each subgroup then had its own territory.

But the diffusion of modernity has weakened communities. It seems to me that what the present papers are talking about is the attempt to recover the integrity of these communities. This is precisely at the moment when the market economy people are looking for universalism based on a kind of a reason that the particular communities they try to appeal to simply don't want.

Richard Neuhaus comments on the trend toward seeing things from the viewpoint of family, community, body of Christ, or whatever. And people are seeking to repeal the diffusion of modernity by trying to go back in time. That is what we are talking about doing.

These conservative, republican, evangelical folk, the Francis Shaeffers, the John Whiteheads, the John Conlans, are all influenced by the people we are talking about. They are really seeking to restore a kind of a theocracy that will either ask for subcultural theocracies, schools of their own, paid for by the state, or to transform the public schools into a particular kind of religion. The current talk is that we should legislate traditional theism as being the official religion of America.

What it all comes down to, as far as I can see, is that free-market people have come into a new sophistication and a position of power at

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the very moment when huge subcultures in America are trying to restore a community that doesn't welcome the language of reason to which they appeal.

What it means, I think, is that both socialists and capitalists are fighting for the heart of people in pluralist societies. They know what they have to do in the Islamic world where there is a lot of homogeneity. But what do you do in our society? I think they are going to have to find a lot more ways of penetrating these languages and communities, if they're going to win any hearts at all. Otherwise we have nothing but practical alliances.

I heard Arthur Shenfield describing what to him was simply a universal understanding of reason, purposefulness, and justice. I try to picture a Dooyeweerdian sitting there, or a Hutterite, or someone else, and they would have said, "That's very interesting, but it's a religion of its own. It's just one more down the list."

Throughout this conference I've heard two languages in collision. I welcomed both papers this morning for pointing that out. There are ways in which Catholicism and the W.C.C. look like our diffuse, generalized culture, though they have elements too that are seeking a reparticularization, but the present papers present truly radical alternatives.

To me, the strongest trend in the cultures represented in these papers is that they have given up on modernity. There is a move toward a retribalization, an attempt to understand our own language and our own community no matter what happens to the larger social fabric. That may be good or bad. It's not my point of argument right now. But I think it's not being understood how such folk hear the language of Adam Smith and the like.

Robert Benne: I'm not sure that the people who see market economic mechanisms always view them highly ideologically as a universal philosophy. That position is represented in this room but I do not see myself in that tradition. I see the market more as a co-ordinating mechanism to do some important things that have moral significance.

It seems to me that a co-ordinating system like the market can be very useful in allowing various subcultures to express themselves economically and to protect the rights of particular communal groups.

The market, along with pluralist social structures, doesn't fight against subcultures. If you view the market not as ideology but as a mechanism, it is one way to protect and celebrate pluralism. Consti-

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tutional democracies are one way to adjudicate differing interests so that they don't break into anarchism and chaos.

Roger Hutchinson: I just want to add a footnote to Martin Marty's comment. He spoke of the mainline society which is pushing forms of development that impinge upon particular communities. In Canada, those forces have an initial advantage in penetrating an identifiable subcommunity. When they wanted to locate a uranium refinery at Warman, Saskatchewan, which was a Mennonite community, Eldorado Corp. sent some of its members to the Mennonite Bible College for two years in order to familiarize themselves with that society. However, being Mennonite also gave an initial advantage to the community when it organized against that imposition.

Stephen Tonsor: The problem with the present papers is not that they present too much pluralism, but that they leave room for too little. When I read John Yoder's paper, I thought I was reading a boiled down *Readers' Digest* version in the *Magdeburg Centuries,* and that true Christianity had been lost over the centuries, except for this one, narrow, little sect.

Similarly when I read Gregory Baum's paper, with his references to the Church, I could hardly believe my eyes. The Church which he discusses is characterized by a vast pluralistic structure. Yet, the narrow, minority he represents ordains itself to the position of speaking for the whole Church. The Christian position, and to a certain extent the Jewish position, suffers from the same kind of arrogation to particular groups of the right to speak for the whole Church.

If there is one thing I think that churches need to do, it is to find commonality in their commitment and beliefs; and plurality in the pragmatic solutions which they bring to problems which arise out of those commitments and beliefs. So there's plenty of room for pluralism.

Irving Hexham: I commented on the use of words like "liberalism," "socialism" and "Methodism" in the neo-Calvinist tradition. These words were used to erect boundaries around the Calvinist community to maintain the purity of Dutch society. In South Africa, a similar thing happened. The strict Calvinists used these words to identify their enemies. So the evangelicals like Andrew Murray were described as "Methodists." They weren't Calvinists, and as Method-

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ists they were bad. Good Afrikaaners were therefore expected to keep away from them. As Martin Marty was talking, I suddenly realized something of the appeal of the Dutch Calvinist tradition among evangelicals in Britain and North America which I hadn't realized before. The way in which the tradition has gained popularity during the early to mid 1960s is connected with what Richard Quebedeaux calls the "worldly evangelical." In this time period, evangelicals stopped identifying themselves by the old practices of not going to the cinema, not smoking, not drinking, and avoiding other "worldly" pursuits. Instead, they started to drink, grew beards, and did other things that were new to them as a religious community. But they became indistinguishable from the rest of the population. So they now have a problem of identification. It's at this point that Dooyeweerd becomes attractive.

Through appeal to Dooyeweerd and the Dutch Calvinist tradition new boundaries were created. Suddenly evangelicals could identify themselves in terms of a new language. The spoken language of this philosophical tradition rather than the body language of not smoking and not drinking, enabled them to erect new boundaries. The question is how do you maintain social boundaries? And Christian schools etc., provide a basis for communal boundaries, which are very important.

Imad Ahmad: If I've understood correctly what Martin Marty was saying, there was some reference to the contrast or conflict between universal concepts and particular religions. I think he is taking a particular case and universalizing it.

I can see why one would say that, based on the presentation we've had of Dutch neo-Calvinism, but I don't see that it necessarily applies to religions in general. It doesn't apply to Islam and I haven't seen any evidence that it applies to the other religious traditions we have discussed.

There is not necessarily any opposition between faith and reason. When we talk about economic science, and say it is value-free, we attempt to discover certain universal laws. If an analogy can be made with natural sciences, the conclusions we draw from natural science may be called "universals." And the conclusions we draw from the social sciences may also be called "universals." Thus there is no *a priori* reason to believe that a religion should necessarily conflict with them.

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If one of the tenets of religion is that faith is superior to reason, then we may have problems. But in the case of Islam, reason in the natural world is one of the signs of God. Rational understanding is essentially a kind of religious knowledge.

Therefore, any religion that comes into conflict with the conclusions of science and declares itself superior to science, is creating a conflict that must be resolved. I don't think this point can be dismissed by saying, "Well, everyone thinks they're talking in universals."

A minor point on the question of pluralism is the observation that in the case of Islam you have in most Muslim societies large, functioning, and prosperous non-Muslim groups. So pluralism is respected by Islam. There is no conflict between pluralism and the absolutism of Islam.

Paul Heyne: The claim that economics is value-free is rejected by about 50 percent of the leading economists whom T. W. Hutchinson surveys. So I, as an economist, want to disassociate myself from what Imad Ahmad says.

Imad Ahmad: Really, I'm in the majority! (laughter)

Martin Marty: I agree there are no value-free economics in the view of the communities we're talking about. They would say they are utilizing paradigms that work.

It's very hard to have a transcending, national community made up of nothing but tribes who make no appeal to anything like principles of reason. People in these communities won't share that assumption, and we had better know it.

The huge legacy of Protesant neo-Orthodoxy, is just one example. Neo-Orthodox theologians have very little belief that you can connect faith and reason, or any of these things, and they're the most moderate of the groups we are discussing. So I think that keeping mechanism language as mechanism is probably one of the greatest favours the market people can do for themselves.

Ronald Preston

In Britain over the last few years a certain number of evangelicals from the Calvinist tradition have been influenced by Dooyeweerdian

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thinking. The effect has been two-fold. Its effect on those who are not professional economists has been to radicalize them politically, rather like the move to the left we heard about from Gregory Baum in the Roman Catholic church. Its effect on the few who are professional economists has been the opposite. There are a small number of professional economists of this persuasion and they are all monetarists. These economists want to put human beings under automatic, impersonal processes which are not subject to individual political decisions. They distrust the political process and political man, but they want to absolve economic man. In this way the same basic philosophy is having two diverse effects.

My impression is that many established theological positions can be used to work socially or politically leftwards or rightwards, to establish things or to criticize them. This indicates that one can't move directly from any of these theories to a particular conclusion without some other element entering in. So there arises an even more subtle question: what factors influence one's interpretation of empirical data?

Bob Goudzwaard: Speaking about "production-households" is a linguistic question. I use the word to include all types of human activity in production and not just those organized in a firm or corporation.

Cannon Preston's second question is very important for the whole discussion. Within neo-Calvinism there are a variety of opinions which can be described from left to right or from progressive to conservative.

This observation leads to the possible conclusion that this tradition legitimates existing ideas, and does not exercise an influence on what people think or do. That, I think, is a conclusion which goes too far.

A common element in Calvinism is to start from a deep respect for the normative elements in the Bible. Calvinists usually have a tendency to look to the Old Testament, because it is concrete, as we saw in our discussion of stewardship.

It is, therefore, possible to look at the state in relation to what public justice should mean. We can try to formulate what justice is from a biblical perspective. There is then a normative element which always will be more than just a way of thinking.

So, if you speak about justice, or stewardship, you can't say that it is only a Western type of thought and that it does not have a universal claim on mankind.

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Roger Hutchinson: My main contact with the tradition that Goudzwaard and Hexham have been speaking about is the Toronto group, the Institute for Christian Studies and the Christian Labour Association of Canada. I've spent a fair amount of time with Harry Antonides of the Christian Labour Association. In particular I've used this book, *Multinationals and the Peaceable Kingdom*, in one of my classes.

Key elements in that work are "sphere-sovereignty," pluralism, and a proper ordering of society. Underlying that ordering, the image of hierarchy is very significant: children obey their parents, wives obey their husbands. In the hierarchical ordering each sphere becomes norm guided. Finally, in the Calvanist sense, the Sovereignty of God is affirmed.

This has raised the question of the role of women. How is that tradition responding to the feminist critique of hierarchical structures and basic images?

I think it's related to the question, What kind of images are our norms rooted in?

Arthur Shenfield: A quick word about value freedom and economics. Paul Heyne is right when he says that you cannot say that economics is value-free. But, I submit you can truthfully say that there are propositions in economics which are value-free. They are important and are correct.

A statement in Bob Goudzwaard's paper illustrates a deplorable confusion in the public mind. He says: "But workers and directors have a common responsibility for the direction of the enterprise. Just like government and citizens have a shared responsibility for the direction of the state."

He then asks for certain channels of co-determination through the use of a popular parallel between the state and business enterprise. I submit that this is false and dangerously false. A fatal reason is this: if the parallel were true, then it would necessitate that civil servants acting as civil servants, not as citizens, would have the right to elect a proportion of members of Parliament. If you think about that you can see it's a fundamental error.

Imad Ahmad: I think that there's a distinction to be made between economic systems and economics. Economic systems are not value-free. They reflect values. But economics, as a science, should be value-free.

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Meir Tamari: The papers under consideration solved a problem which I had. I'm not sure whether the so-called minority motives in Christianity are not, in effect, a reversal to the majority Christian opinion. But the experiment to see Christianity as supportive of the market economy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a sort of aberration of a tradition of Christian thought which is not only anti-market, but anti-economics and opposed to the idealization of property. Some of the points raised by Professor Sadowsky are actually an attempt by some members of the Catholic church to get on the liberal market bandwagon. What we're seeing is an attempt, not so much to go back, as to reimpose the authority of God on the marketplace.

It's not a question of a conflict between faith and science. The question is what do you do with science after you have it?

In economics, it's not a question of what we have in Calvinist, Judaic or Islamic textbooks. It's a question of how we act.

Lastly, it's very interesting that Marxism and some of the opinions expressed here have much in common in trying to depict economic forces as the major forces in life or, perhaps, the only relevant forces in life.

Anthony Waterman: Marxism and mainstream economics have something in common. I don't believe that's bad. What's interesting about the Dutch Calvinist tradition is that it makes a claim about the relation between theology and economics which we have to take seriously. I haven't yet sorted out in my mind how to deal with this claim. As I understand Dutch Calvinism, there can be, in principle, a Christian economics. Somehow or other, religious belief, or Christian belief, rightly understood, both can and ought to determine the way in which we come at our knowledge of the economy. But in both classical and Marxist economics that claim is repudiated. Both want to say that "science," including "economic science," can be epistemologically autonomous. Marxists and liberal economics may disagree about the goals of economic science, but both want to assert that theology is not queen of the sciences.

I'm not suggesting that economics has to be "value-free." What I am suggesting is that the classical and Marxist traditions can be "theology-free." The most extreme example of this was an ex-Roman Catholic nun I met in England two years ago, who is a member of the Central Committee of the British Communist Party. She said that

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there is no conflict between science and theology. Marxism, she argued, is the correct way to analyze the economy, therefore, she is a Marxist. But she says she is also a Christian. To my mind, the most important reason for discussing the neo-Calvinist tradition is to bring out in the open the big question: whether or not theology must be epistemologically sovereign. Must theology determine the way in which we think about reality, including social reality? Or are neo-classical, liberal, market-type economists, and/or the Marxist economists, permitted to make the epistemological assumptions they do? Can they do science independently of religious beliefs?

Susan Feigenbaum: What troubles me in the discussion of unemployment and technological change by Bob Goudzwaard is that he seems to be saying that disequilibrium situations in and of themselves are violations of the norm of public justice.

It seems to me that disequilibrium situations may, in fact, distribute the burden of such disequilibrium in ways which we may not like. We may want to share as a community with those individuals who bear that burden. But I'm not sure that I would want to say that those situations in and of themselves violate public justice. Rather, it's society's response to the burdens and the incidence of disequilibrium costs that may relate to the notion of justice.

Marilyn Friedman: This is a kind of meta-theoretical point. This session is bringing something into clear focus that I find very distressing. It has to do with the effectiveness of various intellectual systems. Martin Marty made a point about the uneasy alliances of various sub-communities in America whose only point of common commitment seems to be a certain kind of economic behaviour, but not necessarily intellectual commitment. It seems that the same behaviour gives rises to a commitment to different symbols.

Ronald Preston talked about how one and the same set of symbols gives rise to different sorts of commitment with regard to economic behaviour and systems. How effective are these various symbolic systems? Are we merely providing rationalizations for people who have already decided independently of their intellectual commitments, how they want to behave? Are we merely connecting certain people's favourite symbols to their behaviour by an acceptable sequence of conceptual links?

Some people have worried about the use of the term "justice."

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Does it really express anything clear and definitive? The same worry can be expressed about the term "freedom" as it is used by different groups.

P. J. Hill: I'd like to come back to the issue of pluralism. Issues like co-determination basically run against the concept of pluralism. If as Martin Marty said, we want to try to maintain pluralism, particularly among subcultures, then it is important that we not try to impose an institutional structure upon society.

I suggest that those subcultures probably have more freedom to choose if we don't try to predetermine such things.

Yet, people might find co-determination to be desirable. If so, it can be achieved under a regime of freedom, if they so desire it. Workers can organize themselves in any sort of a pattern they wish.

Bob Goudzwaard: I do not feel that I am a member of a tribe or just a subculture. The Calvinist tradition is different from the Mennonite. The Calvinist tradition always says that you have to stand in the midst of the world. Backgrounds may be different, but Calvinists have to fully participate in scientific activities and take political responsibilities. So it is not a question of a subculture in which people try to hide themselves.

Second, the question of Christian economics is an interesting one in Calvinist thought. It can easily create a lot of misunderstanding. The point is that economics is not value-free. You cannot look at facts without selectivity, without interpretation, which are value judgements by themselves.

Next, in the present economics paradigm there is the presupposition of the infinity of human wants. This is based on an anthropology which is incorrect. The real point of Christian economics is not that you want to place a whole set of Christian normativity around economic science, but that you want to get rid of certain presuppositions which have their religious origin (in a very broad sense of the word) in humanistic philosophy. You want to get rid of false presuppositions, and have some liberty to study facts in a context which is not determined by too many narrow presuppositions. Scholars should have the opportunity to accept other presuppositions. My presuppositions are related to the finiteness of humans, and the necessity of taking care of the world.

On disequilibrium, there is a lot of economic disequilibrium in the

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market system which needs no government intervention because the market looks after itself. But in relation to inflation and to the unjustified use of economic power which leads to public injustice, government intervention, motivated by justice, is needed. My approach is not a mechanical one.

John Yoder: My assignment was to interpret the position of persons or groups that are thought to say that it's not the concern of Christians to keep the world from going to ruin, but only to be pure on a small scale. The difficulty as we saw is that Richard Neuhaus has answered a paper I didn't write, by dealing with questions of ecclesiology, New Testament interpretation, and systematic social ethics.

At some points his response doesn't convince me. The interesting place to start is with the shift in language he made. He talked about not wanting to be "paternalistic." I talked about the impatience of minority groups with being "patronized." As I said before, it's not the same thing.

Paternalism is the vice of somebody who has a certain title to authority and uses it wrongly. But to be a patron, or to patronize, is to assume the responsibility to put the other in his or her place, without it being clear on what ground that authority has been assumed.

That's what I see happening in mainstream social practice generally: putting minorities in their place. I'm glad that it's being done gently today; it wasn't done so kindly in the sixteenth century. But all of this still means that we haven't started conversing on the level of reciprocity. Neuhaus says, "Other views can also be modest about system control." Fine. I didn't say other views couldn't be. I said that some views aren't. I'm quite open to other views making the same assumption that I argue for, about not reasoning in terms of efficacy for the best of the total system. But most of the conversation here has still followed that line.

Another point. There is no proposal about communal property ownership in my paper. I reported on a few people who said there should be no personal property. I also discussed many people who live within the property regime. I talked about commonalities within those stances, rather than making communalism the issue.

Neuhaus says that I detest the term "tolerance." That's hardly fair. Minority groups can claim "paternity" for the notion of tolerance. We share that paternity with the Enlightenment but not

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with mainstream Christianity. Where we don't agree with the Enlightenment is that tolerance is an answer to the truth question. Tolerance is only an opening of the truth question.

I made the mistake in my paper of only giving examples up to the seventeenth century, and that left out things that might have protected me against this misinterpretation. The second mistake I made was that I named only few people since the seventeenth century, like Mother Teresa.

When tolerance began in the seventeenth century, as a social form in the Anglo-Saxon context, there was more freedom, political pluralism, and religious liberty than before. Then there was room for minority groups to make a contribution to system change. Because minorities think systemically, without thinking globalistically, they can exercise power as fractions within pluralism. They don't renounce reconciliation or the use of power and they become not only productive, but even prosperous. But they don't side with the rich. I could have told a separate history, of how at particular times and places, people called "sectarian"—whether descriptively or pejoratively—did more than their share in piloting new social structures, in keeping alive a critical consciousness, by creating alternative languages, and contributing to social change.

There are some historians who suggest that it was the Quakers with their concept of reliable products and stated prices that made one of the essential contributions to the market being manageable, as over-against an economy of haggling and unreliable product quality.

So it isn't the case that minority groups are not interested in the wider society, or that they fail to make contributions to it.

I would recognize in state socialism and capitalist nationalism not two serious opponents, but mirror images. Mars and Mammon are more parallel than they are contradictory, both for Jesus and in history. The way they work to oppress is not the same. They don't hurt people in the same way: but they both hurt people. More often they work hand-in-hand to oppress. So that the vision of the oppressiveness of either being decreased by cutting down the other seems hardly promising. And it certainly does not make for greater human dignity. I see no biblical validation for thinking that our suspicions about Mars and our suspicions about Mammon should be of a radically different quality.

Some people think that pessimism about human nature and its perfectibility favours one global system rather than another. That looks

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odd. Both systems make great assumptions about human perfectibility. The oddness is represented for me by the easy use made by some of our marketeers of words like "magic" and "miracle." We know that when we see somebody producing magic, it's usually sleight-of-hand. We have to check the operations which lie behind the claim that our system is reliable and that this way of regulating will make people's innate goodness work better than that way, or make their selfishness work against themselves, in such an effective way that we can trust the system to be ennobling.

There can be progress in taming the tyranny of the civil order. That has happened in some ways more in Anglo-Saxon cultural history than anywhere else. "Sectarians" have contributed to that. The Enlightenment too contributed, more than establishment Christians.

There can also be progress in taming the tyranny of the economic order. That may include clarifying the market mechanism. It may also include refusing to spread the market metaphor into regions where other metaphors belong.

We're not rejecting concern for the larger system. But we begin by defining moral faithfulness on other grounds than the ability to save the system. And we refuse to define ethics as utilitarian calculation about how we can help the system by making one or two basic moves.

What is the basis for the other view? Martin Marty called it "intrinsic." In different ways, Judaism or Islam could call it "law." I don't care what we call it. But it has its base in a community which is not the same as the total society, and is not derived from its ability to accredit itself to the total society. Precisely for that reason it can do something useful—not only in the minority community, but in the wider society.

Stephen Tonsor: John Henry Newman said that something was a characteristic of Christian heresy not because it was untrue, but because it was partial, that it was a truth, taken out of the context of other truths. This is characteristic of most of what we have been doing: taking truths out of the context of other truths, and commitments of faith out of the context of other commitments. Thus the science of theology is taken out of the context of other sciences; and partial views of great religious traditions are represented as being whole and absolute.

What I plead for is contextuality and a recognition of complexity within Christian orthodoxy, and its relationship to the world. Unless

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we accept that we don't really deal satisfactorily either with our Christianity or with the world.

Gregory Baum: I wish to say a few words about the "natural law" tradition in the Catholic church and its relation to the Gospel. In the past the Catholic church distinguished between the evangelical ideals preached by Jesus Christ and rational moral norms that apply to all people, not only Christians. Catholics believed that these rational moral norms could be discovered by people thanks to their intelligence and goodwill. In recent decades, Catholic theologians (and later the Church's official teaching) have affirmed the universality of divine grace. According to this teaching, God's summons and God's help are available not only in the Church where they are recognized and received with gratitude, but also among people outside the Church, whether they be religious or not, whenever they wrestle with the important issues of justice and truth. Many elements of the "natural law" tradition, especially those pertaining to social justice and the distribution of wealth and power, are therefore understood by Christians as related to the divine summons operative in history. Christians look upon humanists and secularists who love justice and stand in solidarity with "the least of the breathren" as guided by the Spirit.

Paul Heyne: When I read or listen to John Yoder's analysis, I'm never quite sure whether I'm listening to proclamation or argument. I say this with great respect. I always wonder whether a transformation of mind is not required before I can appropriate what he's saying. I want to make a suggestion about the nature of the transformation of mind to which I sometimes feel myself called when I am listening to John Yoder.

I find it akin to something in the romantic movement. In Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality,* he talks about the savage, prior to the age of calculation, prior to his ability to recognize differences; he just reacted spontaneously to everything. I can understand Rousseau when he describes lying in the boat with the universe poring in upon him; there's a complete sense of trust, of letting go. One does not have to make provision any longer for life, because it is a gift. I can understand that. I'm wondering if I'm beginning to understand the witness of John Yoder's minorities when I struggle to understand this theme in romanticism.

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Roger Hutchinson: Paul Heyne's transformation of mind doesn't have to be quite that radical. What I hear John Yoder talking about is a relativization of a utilitarian framework in which it is assumed that our ethical discernments are primarily cost/benefit analyses based on calculations of consequences.

I respond to this as a member of a Social Gospel tradition which emphasizes the importance of sound analysis. One can appreciate the role of social analysis in ethics and theology around the question of discerning what's going on. The way we retrieve our theological traditions is intimately tied up to what we think is going on. If we think we're on the verge of tyranny, we call forth symbols which are resources for the struggle for freedom. If we think we're on the verge of chaos, we call from our tradition sources for recovering order and stability.

I would take a slightly different but complementary angle to Richard Neuhaus's point about seeing the system whole and acting in relation to it. It's important to locate our efforts to see and to act in relation to the question of what is going on. As Gregory Baum was saying, you must always ask the questions: "Who are the winners, who are the losers? Which side are you on? Are you on the side of the rich or the poor? And what are the consequences of this kind of policy? Who will benefit? Who will lose?"

That in a way locates me in the conflict-oriented, socialist way of seeing society in terms of conflict and contradictions, and of choosing sides. There's another aspect of being contextual that the Mennonites have been reminded about by one of their own scholars. Calvin Redekop has written about Mennonites who came to North America to escape persecution and occupied lands that were empty. But the only reason the lands were empty is that the native Indians had been kicked off. The lesson he draws from this is that when one moves on to so-called empty land one should ask the question: "What happened to the previous occupant?" By forgetting to ask that question, the Mennonites could with a good conscience set up a world-denying colony.

Settlers live in the present moment, and say, "Oh good, the land is empty, we can have our little world-denying colony." But they are already caught up in social sin.

Imad Ahmad: In our discussion, there have been three answers to one interesting question. The question is "how does one acquire a just

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distribution of goods?'' The moderate view is you do it without coercion, but you use coercion to defend yourself. This raised the objection: ''Well what about aiding the poor? How do you enforce that, without coercion?''

Another view has been: ''You need coercion in order to give the poor their due.'' That raises the question, ''Aren't you in fact creating an unjust society because there's a violation of people's rights?''

What John Yoder has done is to present us with yet a third view which says, you don't need coercion at all. If someone wants to take away material goods, let them go ahead. To this, the objection has been raised: ''That purifies you, but it's not going to change society.'' Henry David Thoreau said he thought it was not so important that everyone should be good but that there should be some good people somewhere. Perhaps they would leaven the whole lump.

Ellis Rivkin: Historically, it seems to make quite good sense to ask what are the consequences of an economic system for minority groups. After all, it was only in those areas where we see a beachhead of capitalism expanding through the grand capitalist revolutions, the revolt of the Netherlands, the Puritan revolution and the American revolution, that we find a variety of religious options. These followed from the right of the individual to choose, and opened up the possibility of complete eccentricity on the part of an individual. He could be totally and completely associated with nothing other than what he thought was needful for himself, without being punished on that account.

Actually, it is the expansion of capitalism, alone, that opened up the possibilities for these groupings to exist uncoerced. It is preeminently in the United States that the variation and the spread of every conceivable kind of religious option has flourished with relatively little interference on the part of the state.

This is not a matter of indifference. Capitalism opened up those wider radical options that no longer involve punishment and even death for articulating them.

On the other extreme, no Marxist state now in existence allows for those kinds of options. Then there are the intermediate systems which frequently may be called socialist, but really are not socialist in that they are mixed systems. They are heir to the constitutional freedoms that were generated by the expansion of capitalism. Frequently socialism is just another name for finding ways for keeping bankrupt industries alive.

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Now within mixed systems there is space also for different kinds of groupings. Therefore, one cannot really be indifferent if one is involved in a minority confession, or a minority affirmation, as to which of these systems are more likely to allow living one's life to its end within one's profession.

James Sadowsky: A lot of people seem to think that you can have something like socialism and at the same time have with it the so-called bourgeois liberties, written in such documents as the Declaration of Independence. This is an illusion, as admitted by the prominent socialist, Robert Heilbronner, in a well-known article that appeared a couple of years ago in the magazine *Dissent.* He pointed out very clearly that there is an irreconcilable conflict between bourgeois liberties and socialism.

It's also interesting that many minority groups tend to think that somehow their salvation lies in embracing collectivism and socialism—the gays, feminists, and so forth. Yet the fact is when you talk about deviant lifestyles, all the so-called "sin cities" are in the capitalistic world. (laughter) I can't imagine anybody going to Peking or Moscow to have a wild time. (laughter)

Hanna Kassis: I don't know why when speaking of socialism one has always to choose the extremes of comparing the capitalist liberalism of North America with the extreme forms of socialism of either China or the Soviet Union. I throw in the case of France, which is currently, strictly socialist. Here, not only have the so-called capitalist liberties been preserved, they have been enhanced.

Under the capitalist regime of Giscard d'Estaing, the minorities that came from outside France had literally no rights. It was under the socialist regime of François Mitterand that they suddenly acquired rights.

Ellis Rivkin: In the case of France aren't we dealing with a mixed economy? It's not a socialist country in the sense that all the means of production are owned by the state. It has a vast realm of private enterprise. The nationalization is simply a way of dealing within inefficient industries. I don't see France as a socialist society simply because Mitterand happens to be a socialist.

James Sadowsky: There is another point that could be made with regard to France and Britain. If you take a society that is beginning to

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go socialist, you're going to have liberties as hangovers for a while. And it may be that people like Mitterand want these liberties to continue.

The question is, as things develop and become more and more socialistic, is there a necessity to restrict liberties? In England, for example, in the days of the Labour government, back in the 1950s, they almost got to the point where they had to forceably freeze people into jobs.

Anthony Waterman: They had direction of labour for about eighteen months.

James Sadowsky: They had to because the price mechanism was not allowed to induce people to take certain jobs. I don't think the slave camps in Russia are an accident. If Russia were capitalistic, people would be induced to go to Siberia by enormously high wages. Where the carrot is not allowed to operate, you have to use the stick.

Ronald Preston: Simple polarizations of total structures are most inadvisable in terms of how the industrial societies in which we live are to survive. None of them are working well.

Our "social market" economies are not dealing with long-term structured unemployment. There is no chance the ideal model of a free market economy will be set up for it is not politically practicable. Other socialist economies, or semi-socialist ones, have started not from a Marxist basis, but from a social democratic philosophy. The idea that they cannot possibly develop, that they must turn into a sort of Marxist collective, seems unproven and unlikely. We are faced with the problem of how to run advanced industrial economies when none of the existing models look convincing. This is the sixty-four thousand dollar question that faces Western industrial societies.

Richard Neuhaus: We've had a very generalized discussion, as though we had just met for the very first time, about the relative merits of capitalism and socialism. We're obviously not talking about John Yoder's paper. Maybe there's a reason for that. I was somewhat dissatisfied with my response to his paper. What Paul Heyne said rang true. It's not clear whether Yoder's paper is proclamation or argument. And, that's not said critically. The paper is a declaration over-against presuppositions with which most of us are operating in the discussion of democratic capitalism, socialism, etc.

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In that sense, it is dramatically in contrast to Bob Goudzwaard's paper, where he is proposing a theologically grounded way of "norming," redesigning, or raising questions about the world in which we participate.

Yoder's tradition simply says that the world in which we are participating is not the real world. It's hard to know what to say to that. But in a sense, it's like a preacher when you've listened to a sermon. You can discuss the theology of it, and so forth. But the most appropriate response is not to sit around and analyze the merits and demerits of it. You pause and think about it. You've been challenged. It is a statement of a truth that has this kind of critical, over-against, character. And meditation is a response. Or one can decide: "I want to be part of that over-against community, that radical alternative."

Gregory Baum: In these discussions we have paid no attention to the role of eternal life or resurrection in one's view of divine salvation. Eternal life and resurrection are at the core of the Christian creed. What do they mean? The preaching of life after death can have quite different political consequences. If I focus on personal survival, on what happens to me, me, me, after I die, then Christian teaching encourages narcissism and indifference to the suffering of others. If I focus on the death of the other, the oppressed other, the masses of people, victims of hungers, wars, and genocides, then the doctrine of resurrection means that the victims of history will be vindicated by God. The oppressors shall not remain victorious over the innocent victim. God raised the crucified Jesus from the dead. With this emphasis the Christian teaching of eternal life enhances our social conscience, our compassion for others, and our hope that God stands with the downtrodden, the marginal, the discarded, even the dead.

Anthony Waterman: My paper used the Christian doctrine of eternal life and resurrection to justify a very large measure of social inequality and what might, pardon the phrase, be described as "social injustice." This is because it was going to be remedied hereafter: which is a different use of the term from Gregory Baum's.

Irving Hexham: I don't think Bob Goudzwaard and John Yoder are as different as they appear, if you look at the effects of their communal beliefs. Both proclaim the evils of our society and back up their critiques with academic study. But look at what happens to the people who read their books. I've had students who have used John

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Yoder's books. They read them but they don't study them. His books set them alive. Then they go out and do something. The same effect occurs with Bob Goudzwaard's books. Students get a vision and they're off as activists. Its the vision which is important. The same thing occurs with Marxists. Young Marxists who read Marx, don't study Marx. Marx just sets them alight. This is a prophetic tradition.

Stephen Tonsor: In the 1870 Prussian campaign against France, there were French men out of uniform sniping at the German troops. They were rounded up and the question was asked of Bismarck what to do with them. Bismarck said, "Shoot them. I believe in eternal life." (laughter)

Arthur Shenfield: One of John Yoder's most important points is the parallel between Mars and Mammon. But it's faulty! If I follow Mars, by which I mean that the pursuit of war is the dominant purpose of my life, then inevitably I must harm my fellow men and ruin my own soul. But, if I follow Mammon, by which I mean the pursuit of wealth, it can well be that the only harm I do is to my own soul. I may not harm my fellow man. I may pursue the acquisition of wealth, follow Mammon, by serving the wants of my fellow men more abundantly than they have ever been served before!

I make a better mousetrap, and the world beats a path to my door. I do no harm to anybody else. I do harm to my soul if my ultimate and dominant purpose in making the better mousetrap is the acquisition of wealth. That can, of course, poison my life, and make it harder for me to get into heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

The difference, then, between Mammon and Mars is very important. The network of human beings that makes a society can tolerate a great deal of Mammon. Society can in fact live with and even prosper with a great deal of Mammon, and still remain a very good society. But you cannot have Mars and a good society.

The history of the United States is precisely that. I would say that the United States is an example of one of the best societies in the world of the nineteenth century. It had a great deal of Mammon in it. But it couldn't have been one of the best societies if it had Bismarck in it and had been serving Mars.

Imad Ahmad: The making or the pursuit or the increase of wealth as the primary occupation of one's life does not, as long as one does it by just means, constitute anything wrong, or evil. However, I also think

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that it may be considered a kind of calling within the Calvinist tradition. It is only when one pursues Mammon by any means, regardless of justice, that one has elevated Mammon to a God, and one becomes a Mammonist rather than a Christian, Muslim or Jew.

Paul Heyne: At the beginning of this paper, John Yoder talked about trying to see the system whole, and he worries about that. It bothers me deeply, too, when people claim to be able to see the system whole. Tillich's phrase "self-sufficient finitude" haunts me. But the economist's task is to try to see the system whole. Am I caught in *hubris?* I think the answer depends upon what comes next, when you think you've seen the system whole. Do I play the engineer and try to adjust what I see to conform to what I would like to see, thereby inevitably coercing people and involving myself in all sorts of compromises? Or do I play educator, or storyteller, and recount what I think I see in the hope that people will act differently because of the story I've told?

I think that mainstream economists overwhelmingly take the first position. They don't fully recognize it, but their concepts clearly imply that they are engineers. They think their vision of the society qualifies them to prescribe adjustments. But there are some economists—I am one—who consciously reject that and say they are educators and storytellers.

John Yoder: The last thing Roger Hutchinson said about the Social Gospel pushed me back to something I didn't say as fully as I would have liked. The approach I'm supposed to be interpreting does think systemically. It is not atomistic or occasionalist. It looks at structures and their meanings. It doesn't claim the degree of knowledge that would authorize one to make one's decisions instrumentally, or consequentialistically, in the light of the overwhelming chance that things will get better because of what we do. But we want to see as much of system as we can.

Consider the discussion we had about whether seeking to see things whole would be "value-free" or not. This means that the adequacy of one's effort to see as much as one can, as whole as one can, will be correlated with one's recognition of the *limits* within which the propositions one makes are true. Even there, the modesty of the claim to wholeness is part of its authenticity. The willingness to be an educator instead of an engineer is one sign of that modesty.

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I agree with what Steve Tonsor says about orthodoxy. The people I'm interpreting never agreed with the majority and the princes. They were only a prophetic minority. They always claimed to be reading the main tradition better than the people in power. That's a debatable claim, but that was their claim. They never granted that they were outsiders with just one string on their bow. If they made just one point in the given situation, it's because it was a situation in which other points were being made by other people, whereas they were being put to death for this particular issue, so it became rather important to them. They never said that the point that had pushed them out on the edge was the only truth. Usually, when they had the time to do it, they claimed that their stance was more faithful to the scriptural documents and the experience of the Church of the preceding centuries.

What of the notion that proclamation and argument are somewhat different moral modes? I think that is what we're debating, rather than a firm conclusion. If you categorize my argument as a proclamation, that's another way of not listening to it, by saying that you'll meditate on it but that you won't grant that it has any hold on your moral accountability. You listen to it, that means, the way you listen to a sermon rather than the way you listen to meaningful discourse. That polarity itself, sometimes phrased as between realism and idealism, is just another form of what we're debating about.

Capitalism is not the only way to have a society which is tolerant. One major example, from my very modest knowledge of history, is the way in which Islam, when living up to its ideals, made a stated place for minorities. Jews in early medieval Spain and Anabaptists in seventeenth-century Transylvania were better off under Muslims than they had been under Christendom.

When you are taken in as a refugee by somebody, you tend not to be as critical of your host's social ethics as of the people who chased you out. So it isn't just that Mennonites came into North America and settled on land that was taken from the native Indians. Mennonites did that already in the seventeenth century in eastern France, and again in the eighteenth in Russia. Being the favourite of the prince, because you are a minority that is productive and not threatening, is something that both Jews and Anabaptists have experienced through the centuries in different times and places. That's one of the besetting temptations of a minority hoping to survive.

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Chapter 9

The World Council of Churches and Social and Economic Issues

Edward Scott

I have taken the liberty of changing one word in the title assigned to me. The original title was, "The World Council of Churches on Social and Economic Issues," and I have altered it to, "The World Council of Churches and Social and Economic Issues." The change was small, but it was deliberately made because it enables me to write and speak more directly from the perspective and integrity of the World Council of Churches, setting forth more adequately the nature and self-understanding of the World Council so that the social and economic statements made by the Council are seen in the context of its total work. It is only when they are so seen that they can be responsibly understood and evaluated. This is not done to avoid direct questions or criticisms, but as an attempt to deal with such criticism and questions more honestly.

The nature and development of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches came into existence in 1948 following several decades during which a number of efforts were undertaken to bring Churches into closer relationship, following several centuries of increasing division. A key event in this process was the World Missionary Conference of 1910 from which followed three international emphases: the International Missionary Council, The Faith and Order Movement and The Life and Work Movement. In

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1948, The Faith and Order, and The Life and Work Movements came together in the World Council of Churches. In New Delhi in 1961, the International Missionary Council became a member of the Council, to be joined in 1971 by the World Council of Christian Education and the World Sunday School Association.

In 1948 the one hundred and forty-six founding Churches came, for the most part, from Europe and North America. Only thirty were from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The founding Assembly took place amid the debris of war-torn Europe. It set forth a basis for membership and other Churches were invited to join. In 1961, after long deliberations, Orthodox churches in the socialist countries became members, and now some three hundred Churches from every continent, First World, Second World and Third World, belong. The Council includes Anglicans, Orthodox, Baptists, Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Quakers, Moravians, Disciples, Old Catholic, and also many independent Churches from Africa and other areas of the developing world, coming from over one hundred countries. These member Churches "live and move and have their being" under virtually every political, economic and social condition in the world. The World Council of Churches is, therefore, a Council which has grown out of a variety of movements within and between Churches. It still retains aspects of a "movement," and enables representatives of this wide variety of Churches of widely different traditions which exist in a multiplicity of contexts, to meet and reflect together, to interact with each other and so be influenced by each other. The World Council of Churches is not a static but a growing entity, with a great complexity of dynamic factors influencing its life and development.

Basis for membership

The decision to be (or cease to be) a member Church of the World Council of Churches, must consciously be made by each Church. The founding Assembly determined a basis for membership which is continually reviewed in the course of the Council's life and work. The Council sees itself as: "A fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

The Council is not, nor does it desire or intend to be, a "super Church." It is a Council or community of Churches, each with its

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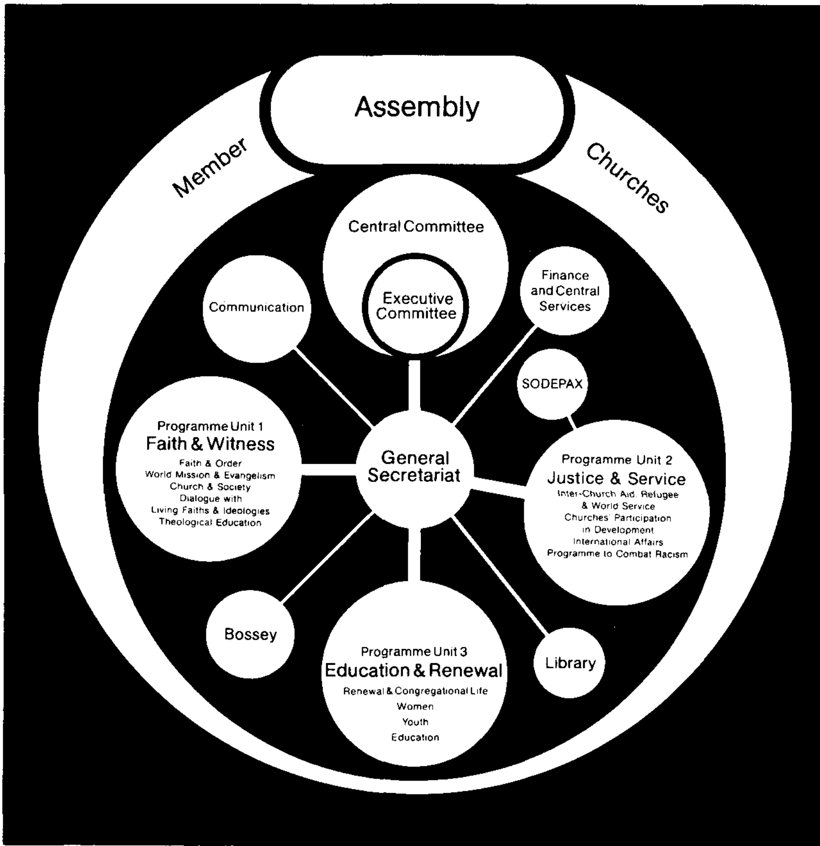
own understanding of its authority and order, through which the member Churches search for an expression of visible unity and obedience through theological study, common encounter and joint ventures in witness and service.

Structure of the Council

The structure of the Council has grown, developed and been deliberately altered as the Council itself has grown and developed. The goal (and goals are always far easier to state than achieve!) is to develop structures which enable the Council to fulfil its basic purposes as effectively as possible in ever-changing world conditions. At present, the structure may roughly be represented in the following diagram.



The diagram is useful because it reveals the wide scope of the work of the Council. This work is expressed in a variety of ways; through the addresses and actions of officers, staff, and members of Commissions and Units; through study documents; through reports of Units and Sub-Units; through conferences; through intensive study documents; through general publications, and through many types of public statements. The latter includes pastoral letters, messages from the presidents, and public statements issued by the Assembly, Central Committee and Executive Committee, and (between meetings of such bodies) by the General Secretary and/or Moderator of the Central Committee. The making of public statements by a body such as the World Council of Churches is a complex and very difficult process. The constitution makes it clear that member churches have the right to dissent from public statements and to be critical of such statements if this is felt to be necessary. This is a quite acceptable practice. The statements do not pretend to be statements of all the member Churches, but are statements of particular representatives of the Churches gathered in particular groupings.

Against this background, let me now try to deal with the question raised by this conference with respect to "The World Council of Churches and Social and Economic Issues."

How does the World Council address social issues?

By way of introduction to this section, I would like to set forth a view I hold, which I believe is generally shared by members of the Central Committee and staff, about the relation between *culture* (including ideology) and *faith;* which finds political expression in the relation between *states* as political entities and *churches* as communities of faith. The biblical view is that the church—the Christian community in the widest sense—is called to be "*in* the world but not *of* it." It is called to be concerned about the world as God's creation, the object of God's love; yet not to be subservient to the values of the state, but to offer its final loyalty to the God who transcends. I would contend that every ideology, and each state as representing some particular ideology, has sought to "domesticate" communities of faith to its own ideological position, and to make the Church a servant of its ideological needs. This means that there must always be tension between the State and the community or communities of faith. The degree of tension will depend upon many factors. But one of the most

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important is whether the state recognizes itself as accountable to that which transcends, or sets itself up as absolute, requiring final loyalty of its citizens. Since neither institutions nor persons can escape influence by the culture in which they live, it follows that Churches which make up the World Council, and representatives who form the Committees, Commissions, working groups, and staff of the World Council of Churches, will all be affected by the ideological climate of the time. It further follows that there will be tensions at World Council gatherings which arise out of the interplay between persons from different churches and from different political, economic and social systems. This interplay is found both within the various world communions, as they meet internationally, and also in the World Council of Churches. This is a very real part of the dynamic tension which is an ever-present element in World Council discussions of every kind, particularly discussions of social and economic issues. Such a dynamic is present in virtually every international gathering, such as the United Nations bodies. There is, however, a difference in the world communions and in the World Council of Churches. Here, there is a recognition that one's ultimate loyalty may never be given to a culture or to an ideology, but to God, the "I Am."

There is always a danger of separation between a theoretical position and its practical expression. The theoretical position of the World Council of Churches is that it addresses social and economic issues from the perspective of a belief in a transcendent God, who (the member churches of the Council believe) has revealed His Nature in terms that human beings can respond to, in and through Jesus Christ. How in practice does the World Council come to its positions and make public statements? How does it decide what issues to deal with and to make statements about?

Consultation and action

At each Assembly, issues are brought by the Churches, either through the work of the Units and Sub-Units or through formal representation by member Churches, for mutual consultation and action. When such issues are identified as being at the centre of the life and work of the Council, there is consultation with and between the Churches. At each Assembly, and at each meeting of the Central Committee, there are examples of business which have been introduced in response to interventions from particular Churches. Two such ex-

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amples are racism at Uppsala and militarism at Nairobi. There is no special process by which political and economic issues are placed on the agenda. They are an integral part of the working procedure of the World Council of Churches. They arise out of the concerns of the member Churches. There have, inevitably, been changes in the kinds of issues which receive attention because of changes in the membership of the Council. When the Council was composed primarily of Churches from Europe and North America, the issues of central concern tended to come from those areas, and to be dealt with from the point of view of those areas. When Churches from the eastern European, socialist countries and churches from the Third World became members, new issues and new perspectives were introduced. The dynamics became more complex; the need for study, research and for dialogue in community became much more apparent. In some cases, new Sub-Units were created to attend to particular areas of concern. Statements which have political, economic and social implications can and do flow through all the Units and Sub-Units, but tend to come particularly through the Sub-Units on Church and Society, Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and World Service, the Commission on the Churches Participation in Development, and International Affairs, and from the Programme to Combat Racism. When Churches raise issues, they are usually referred for study and action to one of these Commissions for report to the Central or Executive Committees. The Central Committee has determined a number of criteria which guide the selection of matters to be placed on the agenda. These criteria include:

(1) Areas and issues on which the World Council of Churches has direct involvement and long-standing commitment;
(2) Emerging issues of international concern to which the attention of the Churches should be called for action;
(3) Critical and developing political situations which demand that the World Council make known its judgement and lend its spiritual and moral voice;
(4) Expectations of particular member Churches that the World Council should speak out;
(5) The need to formulate a policy-mandate for the World Council of Churches Secretariat.

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If a statement is considered by the Central Committee, persons representing all parts of the world and all major Communions will have to vote on it. Here we get the interplay between different Churches and different political, social and economic orders. Such common statements are not easily achieved. There is a real effort to achieve consensus, to make a statement reflecting Christian insights that will be of value to the member Churches, to government agencies, and to the general public; while at the same time recognizing the situation in which member Churches have to live their lives. If at all possible, no statement is made without careful consultation with the Churches in the area whose life and work may be affected.

Sometimes some statement by the World Council of Churches is called for between meetings of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee. Such an occasion was the war over the Malvinas/ Falkland Islands. Churches in both Argentina and Great Britain are members of the Council, and both expressed concern. A cable was sent to the General Secretary of the British Council of Churches communicating the contents of the message received from the Argentinian Churches, and adding the expression of concern on the part of the World Council of Churches. The British Churches were urged to keep in touch with their counterparts in Argentina. Since the World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which transcends national boundaries, the attempt to achieve common witness in the social, economic and political realms can become particularly challenging and meaningful. At such times the words spoken at a provisional committee meeting at Utrecht in 1938 are tested: "We intend to stay together."

Quite apart from situations which require public statements, the very nature of the fellowship at the World Council of Churches requires careful monitoring of political and economic developments which affect the life and witness of the member Churches, and the lives of many persons outside the churches; all of whom, the Council believes, are made in the image of God and loved by God. It is not possible to express love for God without concern for the well-being of those whom God loves. Love of neighbour is an inextricable aspect of love for God. One cannot truly love one's neighbour without considering the impact of political and economic developments upon him.

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"Lobbying" or "consensus?"

The question is often asked whether statements of the World Council of Churches represent a consensus among member Churches and/or their delegates, or whether they result from lobbying by activist Churches or individuals. This is, of course, a very important question. It needs to be answered on several levels.

One of the reasons for the existence of the World Council of Churches is to draw Churches into conversation with one another precisely on those points at which they do not agree. It follows, therefore, that most of the actions of statements of the World Council of Churches are directed to its member churches, and designed to engage them in further discussion and reflection, both within and among each other. The Constitution of the World Council of Churches, and subsequent explanations, make clear that only under very limited circumstances is the World Council of Churches entitled to speak or act on behalf of certain member Churches. Even a consensus of delegates could not necessarily be regarded as a consensus of member Churches. Consensus is an open and ongoing process and not the result of parliamentary voting.

This means that there may be occasions on which the World Council of Churches publicly raises an issue with its member Churches on which it is clear that no consensus exists as yet. Ecumenical discussion of controversial, social and political issues is not constrained by the consensus among member churches. It should also be added that churches are free at any time to refuse a challenge or to reject the advice or recommendation adopted by an official body of the Council.

At the same time, I know of no example where the World Council of Churches has spoken publicly without a broadly-based, prior discussion involving the member Churches. In fact, on all major areas of social and political concern, the World Council of Churches has continually attempted to arrive at an "ecumenical consensus" and has formulated a basic policy position either through Assembly or through the Central Committee, thus involving the appointed representatives of member Churches. Public statements of the World Council of Churches usually make explicit reference to this agreed policy base. Even where there are differences of opinion about the strategies of action, there is a considerable agreement in most cases on the nature of the issues involved. Before policy statements are

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made, therefore, we go through a process of careful consultation in which the Churches are involved. Examples of this are the positions on racism, militarism and human rights. In this connection, it should be noted that membership of the World Council includes Churches from East and West, North and South, who have been able to make common affirmations on these and many other issues which sometimes deeply divide the nations concerned. There is a process of free discussion which leaves enough room for individual Churches, groups of Churches or individuals who have particular concerns to bring these to the attention of the appropriate World Council bodies. In all these cases, the World Council of Churches provides a forum for the expression of different points of view, and any pronouncement usually is made only after attempts have been made to secure the support of the broadest possible majority of Churches or representatives concerned.

In the time that I have been Moderator, I would contend that lobbying (if it is meant in a pejorative sense) has been largely absent. Concerned Churches, groups and persons have the opportunity to raise issues for discussion and there is much very frank, direct, open debate; with ample provision where necessary for consultation between persons and groups in an effort, not always successful, to reach a common position.

Politics or the Gospel?

Another question which is often asked is whether the World Council of Churches attaches more importance to political and economic concerns than it does to traditionally ecclesiastical questions such as doctrine and worship, intercommunion, reunion, and mission. It has been my observation that this question is usually asked by those whose primary knowledge of the World Council of Churches comes from the secular press; or by those who take the position Richard Niebuhr classified as "Christ against culture" (that the Church should not be concerned about political or economic questions). There are people who are rightly concerned about an adequate balance. One of the purposes for the factual information about the World Council of Churches at the start of this paper was to indicate the wide range of its concerns. A review of its publications reveals clearly that the charge of concentrating on political and economic is-

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sues cannot be substantiated. It is true that the reports of the secular media might well give that impression. News coverage of addresses I give as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada tend to focus on perhaps less than ten percent of what I seek to deal with in my presentations of the Christian calling today. This gives a very inaccurate view of my concerns. The problem arises partly from the media's definition of "news" and partly from my own failure of communication. It is very difficult to present information in a way that the media can use within the limitiations under which they operate. We need to develop alternative ways of communicating, in view of the fact that the secular media will never be adequately able to cover theological reflections on increasingly complex issues. I recognize that this is not a unique situation for Churches. Other segments of society face the same problem.

Another question which is raised in relation to the World Council of Churches concerns the range of theological points of view represented in its discussions of political and economic issues. This is complex indeed. Within each of the larger member Churches, there is a variety of theological viewpoints which is reflected within the World Council. Insofar as the various Churches also comprehend different theological viewpoints, these too are represented. It needs to be recognized however, that the scene is much more diverse than it used to be in the early days of the ecumenical movement. There are now few dominant theological schools. Even traditional Confessional theological positions have undergone significant change. We are in a period of theological reassessment with continuous dialogue between various traditional and contextual theologies. This dialogue influences the reflection on political and economic issues. It has led to the formulation of theological and ethical criteria which help the Churches evaluate and respond to social and political developments. Illustrations of this can be found in the guideline of the "responsible society." This has been further developed in the 1966 Conference on Church and Society In more recent times, stimulation has come from the "Humanism Study," from reflection on a "Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society," and on "Political Ethics." The World Council, therefore, is engaged in a continuous theological process of mutual questioning in which theologians and lay people from different Churches and different theological positions are involved as equal partners. This Council also seeks to involve representatives of non-

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member Churches, such as the Roman Catholic church and certain evangelical churches.

Representation

Questions are also asked about the principal political or ideological points of view which are represented in the Council's discussions. Since those involved in policy and decision-making bodies of the Council are official representatives of the member Churches, they are not chosen because of their political or ideological point of view. In fact they represent a very broad variety of political points of view, and the Churches they represent may also differ from one another in responding to particular political situations. Representatives come from different ideological backgrounds. Some may support and others disagree with the prevailing ideology of their particular country or government. As they engage in ecumenical dialogue, they are conscious of the fact that they speak and address one another primarily as Christians and as members of Christian churches, not primarily as representatives of particular nations or ideologies. It is with the recognition of their common commitment to Jesus Christ that they debate together, and often challenge each other. It would be a total misperception to identify members of the World Council of Churches governing bodies with particular ideological or political positions held by their states or governments. It is the freedom received in Christ that has made it possible for this fellowship of Churches to deal with some of the most difficult political and ideological differences of our time, and to speak to them as one body.

As Moderator of the Central Committee, I often am told that the statements of the World Council of Churches have a political bias, one way or another. Some people I meet, particularly in parts of the United States, make charges of a bias towards the political left. Others I meet in Europe accuse the Council and its statements of bias towards the political right. Many people in the under-developed world say that the statements are biased in favour of the developed world. Still others from the developed world say the Council's statements are biased in favour of the under-developed areas. In developing its statements, the Council seeks to combine three elements:

(1) insights from biblical witness;

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(2) experiences of the Churches and the ecumenical movement;
(3) the best available social and political analysis.

The Constitution of the Council contains a reference to statements:

> While such statements might have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgement or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom.

The Council recognizes that the views expressed will only have real value if they contain truth and wisdom. They are not designed to express ideological views, but to assist in the discovery of deeper insights into truth. There are those who suggest that a deliberate effort should be made to ensure that such statements represent a "balance" from a political point of view. If this were consciously done, then the Council would be failing in its primary responsibility: to seek to be true to its theological insights. It would, in fact, cease to be primarily a "community of faith" and tend to become more of a "political movement," therefore deny its own integrity. I think it is to be expected that the Council will receive criticism from every side. It should take criticism seriously but evaluate and respond from the basis of its own integrity, recognizing that the questions asked say as much about the person or group questioning as they do about the body being questioned. If a paper such as this were to be prepared at the request of a body in a socialist country or in the Third World, I believe the specific questions they would put would differ in many cases. They would reflect the political context or political viewpoint in which the questions arise. This is quite understandable and the Council should seek to respond, again from its own integrity.

Christian theology and social criticism

To ask if statements flow from a theological or from a political position is, I think, to misunderstand the essential inter-relationship of basic concepts. Justice and righteousness, which are central biblical words, have theological, political, social and economic implications. The task of theological reflection is to link these implications into an integrated whole, which is very difficult. We must therefore reject a

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distinction between theological, economic or political arguments. It is concern for justice and righteousness, and the recognition of persons as relationship beings made in the image of God, that leads to critical analysis. Both the current capitalistic, and the dominant state socialist models of social and economic organization are found wanting. The World Council has so far refused to espouse any particular political, social or economic system as being the ideal expression of Christian ethical conviction. I believe it will continue to do so.

What does seem to be developing in the ecumenical dialogue is the raising of questions that are directed at the major political and economic ideological system of our time. These questions focus attention upon a deeper question which churches in all parts of the world need to address: to what extent has the Church in your part of the world become domesticated by the culture, and ceased to be leaven, salt or light?

There seems to be a growing feeling that neither the capitalist market economy nor the state/socialist approach are adequate to the challenges of our time. If this be so, if Toynbee's interpetation of history is correct, civilization as we know it may not survive. Let me be more concrete. What are some of the challenges which are not being met? Again, I want to put this in question form.

Is the capitalist, market economy proving able to close the widening gap between rich and poor among (and also within) nations? Is the consumer society which has resulted from capitalism responding adequately to the growing shortage of non-renewable resources, or has it become a society of waste? Is it satisfying the deepest needs of human beings and commanding their loyalty?

Is the state/socialist approach proving able to deal with the basic needs for food for the people over whom it holds sway? Is it proving able to address the issues of human dignity and human rights? Is it able to provide that freedom which is essential if human beings are to experience life in all its fullness?

Is either economic system demonstrating an ability to respond to the world-wide ecological crisis which is causing increasing concern? Is either able to respond to the madness of the increasing militarization of our world, with its misuse both of human and other natural resources?

The raising of questions like these within the World Council lead us to believe it should be inviting and challenging people in all parts of the world, particularly Christians, to work together for a new ap-

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proach that will lead to an international order more closely approximating the ideal expressed in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Closing reflections

I recognize that I have set forth up to this point a view of the self-understanding of the World Council of Churches that readers may feel is far too idealistic. It is also the self-understanding of the member Churches and of the Council. All human beings are sinful: we all rebel against God, break covenant with our neighbours, and fail to be what we were meant to be. The World Council of Churches knows that it has weaknesses because it is made up of fallible Churches. Philip Potter has expressed it this way:

> We have sometimes made wrong-handed decisions for which we had to pay the price. We have, in the midst of conflict, sometimes hurt people one way or the other and we have had to learn how to be more patient—but patient in an impatient way, if you see what I mean. (*What in the World is the World Council of Churches?* p. 12.)

The World Council of Churches should continue to invite open dialogue and discussion with concerned groups, both within the Council and with groups outside the Council. There is a great need to learn "the difficult art of relating to each other honestly and frankly, without pulling moral rank."

This means being open to, and welcoming the process of, challenge and response; and encouraging open dialogue about issues of concern. It is for this reason that I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this symposium.

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Comment

Peter J. Hill

The paper by Archbishop Scott contains an interesting account of the rationale and mechanism by which the World Council of Churches considers social and economic issues. I find myself in basic agreement with almost all that Scott says in the paper; but suspect that if we went on to discuss the details of the World Council's position on various social and economic issues we might be in substantial disagreement.

I agree with the statement that, as a Christian, "one's ultimate loyalty shall never be given to a culture or to an ideology but to God, the 'I am.' " I also agree that such a commitment clearly points to the necessity of making decisions about culture and society. A concerned Christian should take a stand on social and economic issues, and his stand should be biblically-based.

However, in discussions such as this it is much more interesting to focus on areas of disagreement than agreement, hence I will attempt to do just that. I say "attempt" because it is not completely clear from Archbishop Scott's paper whether we are in disagreement or not, for he chooses neither to defend nor reject the World Council's position on economic and social issues. Faced with a lack of evidence I venture forth boldly, assuming that if these comments are not applicable to the Archbishop's position, they will be of some interest in discussing the position of the World Council.

Scott states that the World Council "addresses social and economic issues from the perspective of a belief in a transcendent God, Who (the member Churches of the Council believe) has revealed His Nature in terms that human beings can respond to in and through Jesus Christ... " As one who also holds that position, I find in that statement much clearer guidance with regard to economic and social issues than, it would seem, most of the member churches of the World Council. In the rest of my comments I will indicate how cer-

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tain principles of political economy flow from such a belief, and consider the relevance of these to the basic issues of our day.

(1) To say that man is created in the image of God means to me that individuals are of infinite worth, are responsible, moral agents capable of rational choice, and as such will be held responsible for their choices. The integrity of the God-created individual means that no one has the right to control or coerce another person, except to prevent coercion. God sees all people as of equal value, and for one person to make decisions for another is to violate that equality and that sphere of influence in which God holds the individual responsible for his actions. The Bible illustrates this well inasmuch as it is basically a narrative of man's choices and God's response to those choices. However, for man's choices to have moral significance they must be uncoerced. They must represent a decision between real and feasible alternatives. Therefore, a basic issue in judging the moral quality of a society is the degree to which freedom of choice is allowed. A casual reading of Council's statements leads me to doubt whether they see the freedom of the individual as important in evaluating the moral worth of a society. Their silence about societies that are extremely coercive would imply that the degree of coercion is not a significant issue.

The foregoing does not lead to the conclusion that to be free is to be good. That clearly is antithetical to the Christian position. God's law sets out standards of right and wrong that man can choose between. I believe that choosing God's ways will lead to a more stable society of happier individuals. However, the issue at hand here is freedom of choice. God gives man that freedom. We should grant it to our fellow human beings.

(2) If part of the essence of humanity is freedom of choice, this has important implications for property rights. Without individual property rights the whole concept of a God-created individual, choosing and being responsible for his choices, is meaningless. The right to oneself implies the right to own property, to transfer it, and to dispose of it as one sees fit. To be free from coercion by others also means one is free from the claims of others on one's property. The World Council makes little distinction between societies where private property rights are respected and those where they are not.

(3) I see a clear distinction between our responsibility as followers of God to our fellow human beings, and the moral duty of the state to enforce those responsibilities. Consider, for example, the issue of

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poverty. The Bible is extremely clear about our responsibility to care for the less fortunate. However, the step from arguing that individuals have a responsibility to care for their brothers and sisters to arguing that the state should *enforce* that responsibility is a large one. It is perfectly consistent to believe that those who are wealthy should share their wealth and also to believe that the state should have no power to redistribute wealth. God wants a free and loving response to His commands. To coerce obedience to His standards is to remove moral significance for actions, and God places great significance upon the act of choosing to follow or ignore His standards. One must also remember that mandatory redistribution of wealth is usually achieved only by the concentration of coercive power in the hands of a select group. To trust such power to a few means one has to trust the willingness to do good of those with power.

(4) Another theological principle becomes relevant to social issues at this point: man's fallen nature. The Garden of Eden story relates how man fell from his state of purity to one in which he became sinful, self-centred, and very much concerned with his own welfare. The rest of the Old and New Testaments develop the theme of man's alienation from God, and his consequent selfish nature. Christianity, of course, does argue that through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, man can be reconciled to God and can overcome that selfishness. However, the Bible makes it clear that even when man is in proper relationship with God there will be a continual tension between the old nature and the sinful, selfish self which will dominate for much of the time.

In view of this basic inability of mankind to act consistently in a way that is not self-centred, it seems appropriate to construct an institutional order which recognizes it. If man is selfish, if he does spend a great deal of his time concerned with his own welfare, and if he does find it difficult truly to stand in another's shoes, the basic rules of society must take account of these facts. A successful society must constrain man's selfish behaviour and encourage him to act for the good of other people. Egoism run rampant is clearly inimical to a stable society. A free society, based upon markets and private property rights, is an institutional order that takes account of man's sinful nature. It recognizes that people do not always behave for the good of others unless constrained, and it provides mechanisms for individuals to cooperate while pursuing their own ends. The price system effectively identifies areas in which selfish people can make one another

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better off, and market exchanges of private rights enable people to help others in achieving their goals, even while pursuing their own. Much of the World Council literature seems to deny the basic fact of man's fallen nature, and trusts instead to human institutions that assume that man is basically good rather than evil. If mankind is by nature sinful, we must be as careful to design social structures that limit our ability to harm each other as to give ourselves the potential for good. The amassing of coercive power in the hands of the state has been one of the most oft-used tools of violating God's commands about our responsibility to our fellow creatures.

(5) In respecting the integrity of the individual, the Christian should recognize that freedom of choice will mean a great deal of diversity in society. Because of the divergent mores, ethics, and values in any society, the fewer decisions which require social consensus the less strain on that society. Most collective decisions are made by majority rule. This implies that there will always be a dissatisfied minority. In order to reduce the number of dissatisfied minorities and to ease the strain on the social fabric, it is necessary to limit collective decision-making. For instance, in the United States today there is a continuing controversy over what should be taught in public schools concerning the origin of our species and our planet. The evolutionist-creationist debate is an interesting public policy issue only if we have public schools. If education were privately financed and privately controlled, we would not have to debate the "correct" view of our origins, any more than we would have to decide the "correct" position on diet, vegetarianism or non-vegetarianism. Again, I find distressing the World Council's willingness to trust the collective decision-making mechanism for so many of our choices.

Furthermore, the free society that I am arguing for here assumes no universal set of goals on the part of its members. It allows individuals to choose those goals and then respects their choices. One can disagree with those choices but still prefer the society that allows them. For instance, there is much in capitalism that I find inimical to Christian values. In a free society however, I and others of like mind, can choose to order our lives around the ethical standards we believe in. That option is not so easily achieved in a coercive society.

Now, with reference to Archbishop Scott's paper, it may appear that I think there is clear-cut positions that the World Council of Churches should take on all social and economic issues. But I do not think it is quite that simple. There are many fuzzy issues, even if one

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accepts the basic theological positions and their implications for social policy that I have put forth. I am most sympathetic to the difficulty of reaching a consensus among people of varied backgrounds and cultures. However, since as Archbishop Scott states, there is a common adherence in the World Council of Churches to a basic belief in a God-centred universe, there should follow from that certain basic premises about the role of the state, the importance of the individual, and the primacy of freedom of choice. I also recognize that many Christians who share the same basic theological positions as I, may not find the implications of those positions so obvious as I have argued in these remarks. However, I offer my views as a starting point for comment and discussion.

Discussion

Edited by: Irving Hexham

Ted Scott: I was concerned to study the nature and development of the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.) because I think very often it is condemned for being something it was never intended to be. The W.C.C. never takes a position on socioeconomic issues in the same way as the Roman Catholic church. By the very nature of things, the Council has wide variations. And those variations have increased since its formation in 1948.

When it was formed in 1948, the W.C.C. consisted primarily of churches from western Europe and the United States. Since that time, the Orthodox family of churches and more of the independent churches from the so-called Third World have joined.

Now with these developments there are some new dynamics. First

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of all, from the Orthodox side there are links with the pre-Reformation history of the Church. The liturgy and the spirituality of the East now interacts with churches from the West. We also have churches that are based and live, have to live, in Russia.

Now if we say that the Christian faith is transcendental, that its concerns are over and above the political situation, you have to ask what they have to try to stand for and work for in that context. You can't make an absolute judgement about something only in terms of the Western context when you're dealing with that kind of ecumenical situation.

The other new factor is the Third World. Churches there were formed largely under the impact of the Western Churches, but have appropriated the Christian phase out of their cultural context, with the biblical record as their primary textbook.

For most of us in Western Christianity, Christendom was formed by the whole library of classical theology. But Christians in the Third World have not had that classical tradition. So their primary textbook is the Bible.

They also deal with the Bible in a different context. They haven't dealt with it in a framework where it was used in a particular way by the Church of the Reformation, against Roman Catholics. So it speaks to them much more directly.

In fact, they raise some serious questions. Now, one of the theological debates is whether or not much of Western Christendom is not syncretism between biblical and philosophical thought, where weak philosophical thought won over biblical thought.

Most of us don't travel in those areas and are not exposed to these kinds of dynamics. That's what's taking place in much of the discussion of the W.C.C.

So when they come out with positions they are for study. They set forth an analysis in a struggle to understand. Then their considerations are presented to the churches for study.

I've been concerned since I've been Moderator that we make far fewer pronouncements and far more attempts to analyze a situation. We need to share insights so that people can grapple with them and create a consensus.

In the context of the W.C.C. public statements are questions. The interaction of the discussion is very complex, as is the interplay of factors.

A number of fundamental questions are raised. What has happened

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to the interplay between the Orthodox, Third World and Western Christians? How much of our expression of the Christian faith is inherently based on the nature of the faith? How many of our beliefs have been conditioned by the cultural context in which we have grown up and appropriated the faith?

We are trying to stand back from being locked into the cultural situation of being in the world and also of the world; to see where the faith elements that you hold set you in tension with the cultural context in which you live.

In this process, through the ecumenical dialogue, I think churches in all parts of the world are beginning to question their cultural contexts. Now some cultural contexts are much easier to question than others. One of the real joys and positive aspects of the culture in which we live is the freedom to criticize. I take this to be a fundamentally important freedom. Maybe the W.C.C. hasn't made clear enough its respect for the freedom to criticize. The W.C.C. is now posing some questions directly at the market economy approach in terms of some of the unanswered problems that now confront it. It is also posing some very direct questions about the socialist approach. It is raising questions about both ideological approaches. It seems to me that neither the market economy nor the operations of socialist countries have come to terms with the ecological issue. Look at some of the serious factors regarding the ecological situation. There is still an inability in the market system and socialist states to be able to respond effectively to the ecological crisis.

The other questions that neither socialism nor capitalism are responding to effectively are the use of human and natural resources and militarism. It seems to me we have problems that need to be grappled with. So the World Council raises some of the questions.

We must also do some solid thinking about what's involved in the process of coercing. How do we interpret coercion? It's very easy to see it clearly within socialist structures. But is that the only form of coercion?

I believe in both the Golden Rule and the Iron Rule. The Iron Rule is that you should never do for another person what he or she can do for themselves. You should help people to be independent and self-reliant. We are coercing any time we build dependencies which take away from the people the "right" to be responsible. There's a lot of coercion in our society in terms of both government activity and company activity.

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Let me give an illustration. I worked on a mission boat running out of Prince Rupert when I was first ordained. That was the time when the Japanese were removed from the coast and there was a shortage of fishermen. The Indian people, who had not been as popular as fishermen because they weren't as systematic, as dependable as the Japanese, were in demand.

Then a problem arose. How do you keep the Indian people accountable to the cannery where they worked. The system was developed of giving them unlimited credit, and encouraging them to buy all kinds of things. So, if they went away at the end of the season owing the company money, it meant they had to come back and work for the company next year. Is that coercion?

Is it coercion to move into the homes of people in a different culture with our modern technology, to invade their privacy and family values with a whole set of alternative values? The view that life will not be full unless you have a particular product, or service is thus created by radio and television. These media often undermine traditional values by promoting greed and unnecessary consumption.

This is a religious interpretation because it says that the fullness of life consists in the things that you possess and own. That's the subtle religious message that comes over television. And that's now being focused time and time again on native Indian and Eskimo families throughout this continent.

Roger Hutchinson: A quick point on the nature of decision-making. In spite of the public's fears, P. J. Hill said that decision-making is consensual in the private sphere and coercive in the public sphere. I don't find that very credible. When INCO decided to move it's earnings from Sudbury to another town, the INCO workers in Sudbury didn't feel they had participated in that decision.

I think that there is a kind of careless rhetoric being used. Those kinds of gross distinctions claiming coercion in the public sphere and non-coercion in the private sector are not helpful.

Gregory Baum: In this dialogue I have only spoken of the Roman Catholic tradition. Yet this is only one Christian tradition among others. Anglicanism and Protestantism have also produced significant movements of social concern. I have great admiration for the World Council of Churches and its religious option to become the voice of the poor, the voiceless, the people pushed to the margin.

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Roman Catholicism always stressed the common good above the private good. This corresponded to the vision of society entertained by the feudal order. Protesting against medieval religion, the Reformation often put great emphasis on the person and personal freedom. In an indirect manner this encouraged the individualism that was to spread in Western civilization in recent centuries. Reacting against this, Anglican and Protestant churches generated religious movments that emphasized the common good, the well-being of all, and preached the gospel of social responsibility. The W.C.C. has taken up this Anglican and Protestant heritage. Because the W.C.C. is in solidarity with the former colonies of Western empires and with the marginal classes and peoples everywhere in the world, it has recently come under attack. In the present, all groups, religious and secular, which advocate the redistribution of wealth and power find themselves attacked as the enemy, as subversive forces. "Blessed are those," Jesus said "who hunger and thirst after justice. Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice's sake, for theirs is the reign of God."

John Yoder: A World Council of Churches Assembly is the nearest thing I know to a high society. (laughter) It's a marketplace of six to eight hundred people who have a week together. They thrash their ideas around and make the most pertinent objections to what a small drafting committee working through the night thought most of the people would find tolerable. Whether that's a good way to work or not is a subject for separate debate. But at least it does not mean that the staff or the responsible decision-making agencies that work through the years, or all the churches, have made that statement. That document is a sounding board from the present mixed mind of the churches of the world. As such it is very valuable. But it is not a statement.

Susan Feigenbaum: How does the decision process of the W.C.C., with its emphasis on consensus, yield doctrine which is independent of time, situation or state?

John Yoder talked a little about this process, and I found it very impressive. But I also question whether it can yield doctrine which is independent of an individual's current circumstances. I hope I won't be mischaracterizing Islam or Judaism in stating that their basic tenents are independent of time and place. Therefore, I would respond to

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John Yoder as follows: some religions say there is a correct position, that should not simply be determined by consensus or some kind of political decision process. Rather there are some truths above circumstances.

P. J. Hill: This discussion ignores a basic fact that somebody's in control of property. When you say that a decision is made by all, that seems to me like saying somebody else will do it. Nor will it help to call upon state decision-making. First of all, we can't assume a benevolent government. Secondly, only individuals can make property decisions, even if as part of government action.

Stephen Tonsor: In primitive societies, as Sir Henry Maine recognized in the nineteenth century, individual private property does not exist. It is the group collectively which possesses the property. The movement from custom to contract is a general movement in the development of modern societies. It was most marked in English writers in the nineteenth century who went out to India.

It's quite clear that property rights are a recent development of sophisticated modern societies. But that doesn't mean that this is not a superior way of organizing a society which gives an enclave of protection to freedom.

Roger Hutchinson: I'd like to know what Ted Scott thinks about the allegation that the W.C.C. ignores basic questions about the ownership of property. How does it relate to the way the W.C.C. actually relates to these issues?

Ted Scott: When you get into the situation of the W.C.C. taking some stand in relation to aboriginal rights you are dealing with property rights. If you are going to talk about property rights, at what point does ownership of the property begin? Is it by right of conquest?

If you are going to individual freedom and property and link those things tightly together, it seems to me you have to rethink the starting point in the situation. We are struggling with that in the world pattern. Can we go on with the kind of economy we've got on the basis of the private ownership of property? Or are we going to have to find some other way of dealing with the property situation?

The W.C.C. is trying to reconcile theories of property with the re-

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ality of the situation now. If we take seriously what we say, we have a right, a responsibility, to make contracts with aboriginal peoples. The original inhabitants of the land.

Richard Neuhaus: The W.C.C. is terribly important as bearer of the ecumenical quest for more visible Christian unity. But, I've also been very critical of it. In the current *Reader's Digest* (August 1982), there is an article on the W.C.C.'s social and political viewpoints which is highly polemical, but not unfair. The W.C.C. sent out a release to refute this article. They list some of the people who are quoted and allege that they have very vicious right-wing backgrounds and therefore are not to be taken seriously.

When they get to Richard John Neuhaus they could not say that. Instead, they say, "He is a persistent critic of the W.C.C." Period. That's enough to dismiss me because this is a community in which there is a Christian consensus for which dissent raises serious problems. I think it is a community that represents no consensus at all of any spiritual or intellectual significance. To say this is not to morally indict the individuals involved. It is in the very structure of the W.C.C.

A large part of Ted Scott's explanation has to do with the engagement of the Third World. And that this has been a new phenomenon.

But this, in fact, is not true. The majority of Christians in the Third World—Asia, Africa and Latin America—do not belong to churches which are members of the World Council. What we have here is a classic exercise of a bureaucratic manipulation of some mythological reality, called the "Third World viewpoint." Several years ago I attended a World Council consultation in Switzerland where we spent several days on the question of multi-nationals. There were only two of us out of thirty who even thought that multi-nationals might not be unqualifiedly evil. And one such happened to be a bishop from Nigeria—very black, very indigenous, very much a native person. He gave what I thought, at least in that context, was a relatively sober and balanced statement about the negative and positive aspects of having multi-nationals operate in your country (in his case, Nigeria).

The moderator was white, European, male—and a bureaucrat of the World Council. After the bishop spoke, and had given this rather moderate, balanced statement, he said, "Very interesting, Bishop, very interesting viewpoint. That's a fine contribution. Now I wonder

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if we could hear a Third World viewpoint?" (laughter) And then he pointed to a Tanzanian friend of his, whom he knew would come along with the right line.

So I cannot agree with Ted Scott's explanation the W.C.C.'s dissent from, indeed propaganda against, Western, capitalist, democratic values.

Now for another point. Ted Scott asks: Is the consumer society satisfying the deepest needs of human beings? I ask: Can any society meet all human needs? Should any society aspire to? "Thou has made us for Yourself, oh Lord, our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Once one has accepted this viewpoint, inevitably, every society must be condemned. But just as inevitably, the only societies that will be condemned are those societies where people are free to condemn. Which is to say, our kind of society.

It is this fact that so fundamentally skews the social and political witness of the W.C.C. much to the detriment of its important and theologically mandatory mission as a genuinely global, ecumenical vision.

Roger Hutchinson: I've had some involvement with the church and society department of the World Council of Churches. Of course there are difficulties with its methodology and organization. The W.C.C. is not exempt from the difficulties all organizations have. It has the same sort of problems and the same blemishes as other large organizations.

It would be absolutely stupid to pretend otherwise. So let's take that for granted. There are going to be some flaws. But, the most important point is that ecumenical groups of people are brought together and the agenda is no longer set by the relatively well-off white churches. The W.C.C. does reflect worldwide opinion. Its leaders are not manipulating its members. The way the West thinks of things is no longer simply accepted by people of Third World countries. You don't get a consensus. It's impossible to expect the W.C.C. to reach a consensus. What it can usually do, and does rather well, is to state which issues are bothering people, and which things people really feel strongly about.

Then you can usually find a method where the major approaches to these questions are stated. Then you can say to the people: "What are the questions that you want to address to your fellow Christians?

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Have you listened to what your fellow Christians in other parts of the world, who may take another view, are saying about this? Have you done justice to their views?''

Imad Ahmad: On the matter of rights and duties. The negative right, my right not to be aggressed upon, implies that you have a duty not to aggress against me.

If you do not fulfil your duty, that is to say, if you aggress against me, I am entitled to use coercion to rectify the consequences of that aggression. If you don't fulfil such duties, that is, if you initiate violence, I may use force against you. So much for negative rights. Now consider positive rights. If you as a Christian have a duty to do positively such-and-such, then I may use coercion against you to get you to fulfil your duties. Ultimately, this leads to the kind of situation I think we are trying to avoid.

In regard to Ted Scott's list of possible forms of coercion, some of those cases involve offers. You have to be very careful and not call an offer ''coercion.'' An offer is always a situation where the person receiving the offer is, at worst, indifferent to the fact that he has received the offer. And possibly may be grateful for it. It's not proper to call that a form of coercion.

Jim Sadowsky: No person has the right to control or coerce another person except to prevent coercion. But I find objectionable the argument that a lot of libertarians use to support this statement. Libertarians claim that for men's choices to have significance, they must be uncoerced. That is, they must represent a decision between a real and a feasible alternative.

I think that is false. Your ability to gain merit, if I may use that term, or to be responsible for your choices, exists as long as it is possible for you to do the thing that you are asked not to do. The mere fact that the alternative is an unpleasant one, such as going to jail and being put to death, does not mean that you don't have a choice. It doesn't follow that there is no real moral activity.

The fact that I know that I should go to jail if I'm caught stealing, does not entail that my refusal to steal in the face of temptation is not virtuous. I can have an additional motive of refraining from stealing over and above the fear of going to jail. I don't see that in order to remove the possibility of it being a moral action, it would

have to erase completely my freedom to resist.

I think it's a bad argument for not engaging in coercion. It doesn't become any better because it's commonly used.

Walter Block: It is claimed that the free market creates problems like pollution of the environment, monopoly, booms and busts, structural unemployment, inflation, etc. But in each and every one of those cases, it can be shown that this is the result not of the operation of the marketplace, but rather of government interferences with the operation of free enterprise.

In the 1840s in the United States of America, a series of ecological cases were addressed by the courts. In a typical scenario a train was spewing forth smoke and sparks, and setting the farmer's haystack on fire. Or the manufacturer was polluting and getting some women's laundry dirty.

In each of these cases, the plaintiff brought suit for an injunction against the perpetrator for nuisance, or violation of property rights. And in each case the court said, in effect, "Yes, yes yes. We agree that these are violations of private property rights; however there is something much more important than mere private property rights, and that is the public good."

This "public good," of course, consisted of subsidizing manufacturing. The courts gave manufacturers a *carte blanche* to pollute without any payment, without any limits; without any necessity to pay off people for these rights, or to homestead these rights. As a result, industry became biased toward these pollution-intensive manufacturing techniques.

Had the decision of the judiciary been in keeping with the appropriate private property rights of the plaintiffs in the first place, our industry would have been unbiased. It would have taken into account not only internal costs, but external ones as well. So to say as does Ted Scott that the pollution problem is the result of the unhampered operation of the marketplace is erroneous.

Now let us consider Ted Scott's attempt to redefine coercion so as to include offering credit to native peoples, or advertising new products and services to them. Coercion used to mean "physical invasion." In its new definition, it means advertising, or offering options, or what have you. I would suggest that this is an improper extension of the word "coercion."

If you want to use "coercion" for these new meanings, fine. But let

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us please keep in mind that this is a deep and serious departure from what it meant originally.

For example, take giving people credit. I think that granting credit is an ancient and honourable marketplace transaction; and I cannot see how this is akin to physical aggression. Nor can I see how advertising can be considered invasive for entering a home and offering alternative values. This is just offering people new options. This is the way we learn of new things. This is what civilization is all about. Are we to forbid this, on penalty of jail sentences (as would be appropriate for real coercion for those who seek to introduce native persons to new goods and services? Hardly.

Then there is a matter of hypocracy. Consider church advertising. Let's face it, commercial entrepreneurs are not the only advertisers. Advertising is not limited to McDonald burgers, autos, soft drinks and soaps. Religious institutions also advertise. We have spoken out in favour of freedom to criticize, and we're all in favour of freedom of speech. Well then, advertising is no more than an exercise of tree speech.

Now let me address Roger Hutchinson's example of INCO moving from Sudbury to Guatemala. He characterizes this as coercive. Well, it might be coercive in this new sense of the word; but it's certainly not coercive in the old invasive sense. All it is, really, is a refusal to continue to deal with certain people. If Mr. A refuses to dance with Miss B at the Senior Prom, he is as guilty of physical invasion as INCO in moving away from Sudbury—namely, not at all.

It's a perversion of the word "coercion" to say that a refusal to deal with a person is coercive. All INCO did was pick up its own private property and take it where it thought it could earn the greatest return. Would Roger Hutchinson condemn as coercive a worker for leaving INCO to find a better job in order to increase the rate of return on his human capital? Hardly. Moreover, people in Guatemala are poorer than the people in Sudbury; so on the grounds of equality, or narrowing gaps between rich and poor, that should be considered a positive step.

Ellis Rivkin: Walter Block has brought up an issue that we have not sufficiently taken into account; that is, that by the very nature of the capitalist system, capitalists continuously find themselves competing with other capitalists. Therefore the good of one sector, let's say the manufacturing sector, and what the state ought to do on its behalf,

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comes into a conflict with the welfare of the homesteader, and so on.

I think there are two issues here. One is, what is the role of the state in relationship to competing capitalist interests that have to be adjudicated within the system? The second is that there is inherent within capitalism the conflict between the drive of individual capitalists to maximize their profits, and the interest of the capitalist system as a whole. There is the inherent danger that the pursuit of an individual sector's goals could, if successful, eliminate the continuation of capitalism per se.

Therefore, what is the role of the state in adjudicating the two claims? The state represents the generality and in this instance should have supported the interests of capitalism per se. That means to have decided for the homesteader as against the polluters.

P. J. Hill: With regard to Ellis Rivkin's question, it seems to me that the whole idea of a well-defined set of negative rights, coupled with the principle of nonaggression, does lend some guidance. There are some very clear guidelines that tell us when we (and the state) are acting appropriately. And it's not just a question of whose rights. I think there are some principles that can be laid out that do give some pretty clear guidance about that, namely, private property rights.

Clark Kucheman: I am bothered by the assumption here that once we know what the Christian way is, we know how we ought to organize our society. And I'd like to suggest that maybe we should have a good word for secular humanism.

Hanna Kassis: P. J. Hill said:

> It is perfectly consistent to believe that those who are wealthier than the norm should share their wealth with those who have less but also to believe that the state should have no power to redistribute wealth.

He goes on to say:

> Remember, again, that God wants a free, loving response to His commands.

I think this is a marvellous idea—a perfectly marvellous idea, if you happen to be on the wealthier side. But, if you happen to be on the

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side of the poor, and hungry, I don't really think you can wait until the divine miracle happens, and the wealthy change their minds and give willingly. That's why I think there has to be an authority, such as the state, to see to it that wealth is distributed, even by coercion, if need be.

Roger Hutchinson: I didn't pick up earlier on the coercion question because that wasn't my point. The point is that the decisions made in the private sector are not consensual in the way we usually define that term; and it is mythologizing to suggest they are. That was why I used the INCO example.

If we are going to talk about consensus, on what basis do we leave out the workers? That's all I meant. I wasn't saying that was coercive, and getting into some innane discussion about what constitutes coercion. It just means it was not consensual in the way this word is commonly used.

Stephen Tonsor: A major culture exerts a powerful effect. If we look at the example of Rome and Greece and their experience with the primitive peoples of Europe and the Mediterranean world, we can see the force of that culture. Incidentally, Christianity was a part of that powerful, attractive culture. And the offer, in all its variety, was there. Some Celts and Germans went on the rocks because of it. But Western society developed out of that offer and the amalgamation of cultures which took place in the period after the fifth century A.D.

So the fact that Native peoples watch television and see things on it that disturb their culture is something I would expect. It's a part of the systolic relationship between small-scale and sophisticated societies. And it has good and bad aspects.

Secondly, Archbishop Scott said one of the most intense experiences in the W.C.C. was the stripping away from Christianity of the cultural accretions of Western society; that is, of the influence of Greek philosophy and so forth.

But this argument cuts both ways. It makes us very dubious if we think of theology as interpreting, as Bernard Lonergan says, the relationship of the process of revelation to culture. When we think of it in those terms we will be very hesitant to impose on Christianity, Marxist revolutionary notions and other ideas which are quite foreign to the experience of that revelation as we find it, not in the Fathers, but in the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible.

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Ted Scott: We have to deal with the question that Stephen Tonsor raised. How does a more advanced culture relate to less advanced cultures?

It seems to me that one of the obligations of more advanced cultures is to be concerned about the kind of impact they are having on less advanced peoples. New knowledge brings with it new responsibilities. We have to look at the questions: "What are the conditions we have created and developed as a result of our activities? And what are the responsibilities that follow from those new kinds of patterns?"

If we have a sense of accountability to a God that transcends, then we also have to ask the question: "What is the impact of what we are doing on other groups?" For example, in the Canadian picture, there were numerous technological studies in order to bring television to the North. But there was no major study on the possible social impact of television upon the people of the North.

We have an obligation to look at that kind of question in terms of this country. We've been talking quite a bit about the place of the state. One of the real obligations of the state has to be that of settling claims based on rights that come into conflict.

If that is true, are there any premises that, from the religious point of view, can be raised around this issue? I would like to suggest the following:

(1) The needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich.
(2) The freedom of the dominated takes priority over the liberty of the powerful.
(3) The participation of marginalized groups takes priority over the preservation of an order that excludes them.

These are the three premises David Hollenbauch has worked out in the question of the process of settling rights that are in conflict. I think the state should apply these premises to balance power in society. In this way we will create justice and true freedom in social life.

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