

WEIS from Willis
4 Apr 78
"Economics and the Gospel"

Sorry to take so long to get back to you on this. I immediately pulled out some thinksheets--#471, #799, #881, #891, and #1018--and should have given them to you right away instead of delaying for the writing of this note.

1. Today I recorded Dorothea Sülle on this subject, and you can go first on listening to it if you wish. [Five students have already signed up for it, but I told them AF is first.] She's brilliant, and so can exhaust a metaphor or idea; what she does in her "political theology" is to exhaust the Marxian "class struggle" notion in revisioning Jesus. It was done at least as well by some Americans in the 1920s, so her talk and responses thereto left me with a deja-vu feeling; but she's a beautiful person. [NB: Jesus will survive.]
2. Richard Taylor's studybook, same words in the title as in the title of this memo, is the finest thing I know of on this. I hope AF uses it for CE sometime.
3. You asked specifically whether I have anything on the Rich Man and Lazarus. Do you have #991 ["Succeeding as a Human Being"], my 3July77 sermon on this text? If not, and you want it, just ask.
4. As for "structured experience" to help folks feel and work through the issue, how about using the Luke text on either Procedure A or Procedure B on #1112 (herewith, but I gave it to you when I accidentally used it as scratch paper to draw Clyde Reid's group-life parabola, which is on the back). Another suggestion is #531 (herewith), my Action Bible Study, which is easy to adapt for your purpose, using the Luke passage. Also, pp.23-27 of #71 (herewith).
5. #810 (herewith) would make an interesting adaptation! Or #12 (herewith).
6. In appealing for individual decision, our Lord tries to sensitize the individual by isolation of conscience from institution: what am I-a-person going to do about this specific need of you-a-person? Besides being clearly a rhetorical device [used successfully, e.g., by Werner Erhart's est, where the question is collapsed into an internal conversation], this individual-isolate-from-institution serves Jesus' purpose of increasing one's alienation from a dying society--a technique all radicals have always used, for the New Age cannot be welcomed by those tight-clutching the Old Age. Obviously, this approach will be highly qualified by those living responsibly in the Old Age while praying and working toward the New Age. This is true even for Sülle, in her phrase "the long march through institutions."....One instance of the dysfunctionality of individualism is what's happened to the public schools since monsters have gotten their "rights" and are free to terrorize their fellows with impunity. Another is (Henry Ford, 15 NEWSWEEK 20Mar78) Government's "tendency to satisfy each [social] goal," and winding up doing little for anybody--instead of intelligently balancing "costs to people as consumers" and "benefits to people as citizens." [This tempts me to get into the churches' self-righteousness on the J.P.Stevens case, but I'll resist!]
7. And why not throw in a few sheets on group techniques, held together by a paperclip? #22, #28, #84, #462A, #642, #823, #825, #826, #1066, #1091, #21, #81, #77, #74, #38, and #53.