

As this morning [23June78] Loree and I were talking about Wellspring (like Sojourners, a recently founded Christian community reminiscent of Qumran, which was wiped out by the flow of political-military force across the surface of the earth), I got the idea for an "open" thinksheet on something which for a long time I've wanted to work harder at getting an honest grasp of, viz. what I usually call [using Rich. Taylor's title] "economics and the Gospel." Please add whatever questions occur to you, then rate in order of importance to you at the moment. You may then wish to use p.2 to organize an essay outline, or even frame a few paragraphs toward group discussion.

1. Jesus' total, noncalculating trust in God's presence and present/final action being the baseline or model or ideal or all three, how here and now is this type of trust to function among Christians and Christian institutions in the world?

(1) An obligation on all Christians in private life? in Christian institutional life? in political life (the life of the general community, Christians fighting against e.g. life insurance companies and public capitalization through taxation)?

(2) An obligation on some God-chosen-and-called individuals, to be a vanguard of the human future or sign of the Rule of God? [Cp. anchoritism.]

(3) An obligation on some God-chosen-and-called persons to form Qumran-like communities of witness and waiting-action? [Cp. monasticism, old/new.] I have never found one that wasn't astench with arrogance and blindness, but I dream of the possibility of such a vanguard/sign.

2. What's now to be done with Wesley's "Get all you can and give all you can?"

3. What now are we to make of Calvin's social action, viz. the restructuring of an old society [in his case, the city of Geneva] on the biblical paradigm of justice and peace and joy? And what of it vis-a-vis new community [in our case, the history of the U.S.A., "New England"]?

4. How factor in the in-use and potential physical energies of the planet?

5. "Capital" being funded human energy in interaction with the earth's resources, what responsibility do we Christians--severally, collectively, corporately--have vis-a-vis decisions concerning....

(1) The locus of capital? Anyplace you put it, the devil finds it. Historically, the liberal posture of individual freedom has best correlated with the individual funding of capital: can a system locating the capital (and therefore the capitol, i.e. decisional power over the use of the capital and therefore of the freedoms economic of the people) be devised which would not radically reduce individual freedom? Or have we had too much individual freedom (BEYOND FREEDOM AND DESTINY, and Solz.'s 1978 Harvard graduation speech)? [Meditate on how the devil has found the capital when it's been lodged in monarchism, syndicalism, and various brands of socialism--in addition to "capitalism," which began as individual-locus and has become a mixed economy leaning toward syndicalism in the shape of multinational corportations.]

(2) The use of capital? E.g., direct human services and goods to "the disadvantaged"; military "protection," increasingly the reverse; "ploughing back" for capital increase; ecologizing the future, short and long; long-term building (public transportation, public buildings, public and private housing, private nonresidential buildings); and cultural/religious imperialism (e.g., Sun Moon).

(3) The future of capital? As we pray and labor toward "the Kingdom of God," what responsibility do we have for creating proleptic processes/structures toward a more humane interim society--what responsibility in the now use of such capital as is under our Christian control as private and public individuals?

6. In light of the long "not yet" eschaton, should Christians use probabilism in relation to the capital needed to sustain their lives in the future (the alternative probability being economic dependence on one's offspring or the state welfare bureaucracy)?

7.