

To what extent can specifically biblical theism be used to support egalitarianism? And what are the logical and moral implicates of condemning economic individualism ("capitalism") while applauding compassionate individualism?

....All this probably either is or has been on your THEOLOGY IN THE AMERICAS agenda.

There is a too-frequent anti-institutional and even anti-clerical bias among increasing numbers of clergy and laity. This can be understood to grow out of legitimate disenchantment with existing structural forms of the church and society. But, it should not lead to escapism or to ignoring the problems, which is often the case. In order to have an adequate understanding of salvation that is offered us, it is necessary to understand the fullness of the principalities and powers which we need to confront. To pretend or to limit ourselves to dealing with one aspect of our sinfulness will leave us with a truncated salvation. By spending all our energy on individuals, we are playing right into Caesar's hand. For, Caesar tells us, by every conceivable means today, that life is individual while at the same time dominating our lives through organizational forms. So long as we accept the myth of individualism, we continue to allow our society to move in the directions now prescribed.

Elliott #1298

Some of my thinksheets on individualism:  
489  
559  
659  
1222  
1229.

26Feb79

A great article, Dick!

A for what's underlined in green above, the central paradox is that this myth's roots include our Lord's expectation of individual response to his Malcuth (Kingdom) announcement (along with Enlightenment Faustianism, Hellenistic Cosmanthropism, Hermeticism ancient-medieval-modern, machism, heroism [as a mystique], sociologized Darwinism, Smithism minus the "invisible hand" and visible biblical thics, Freudianism so easily perverted to narcissism and hedonism, and the universal phenomenon as a society disintegrates that the promise/threat, reward/punishment social sanctions collapse down into individual decision-making about self-destiny). To put this another way: Our very dominical sensitivity to "the poor" seen as individuals is nourished by our liberal training in what you well call "the myth of individualism." This sensitivity is moral, ethical, emotional, spiritual, and political (in various mixes and orderings). Again, the current egalitarianism is at least a philosophical-ideological extension of "the individual" in the West's developed myth. Can the notion of "equality" be sustained even philosophically if only from below (i.e., by Stoic argumentation within secular humanisms) without support from above (i.e., theistic sanction)?

*Elliott*