

Today's NYT has speaking a poor man hungry to believe: "I'm trying to believe a lot of things that good old Western Civilization has taught me not to believe" (NYT chief book editor Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, p.45); and speaks of political doublespeak, the use of language by Government to disguise instead of communicate facts: Government agencies have been instructed, as of the past year and until further notice, "to eliminate the use of the word 'poverty' for all official documents and to replace it with 'low-income'" (editorial).

1. The denotatum of "poor" and "poverty" is material-negative/material-diminuative (L.r. "pau"/L.stem "paup"), with implication of reluctance except in the case of the vow of poverty, which is spiritual-positive, a defiant polar. Thus one may speak of a poor "poor," meaning unwilling lacking (physically, of money-possessions; tropically, of energy--biological, psychic, ratiocinative, spiritual, relational, situational, structural); and of rich "poor," meaning ascetic, open to "the Kingdom of God." (These facts can be ascertained by going no farther than WEBSTER'S SEVENTH NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY.)
2. The Bible uses "poor" both ways. E.g., in the Lord's Prayer we are twice poor, having to beg both bread (physical meaning of "poor") and forgiveness (tropical meaning of "poor" --in this case, deprived unwillingly of a relationship--specifically to God, but elsewhere in Jesus also to neighbor). In this way of seeing the world, people are all poor, and divide only in that some know it and others don't. To be "rich" is not to have to ask anybody for anything; to have to ask is to be a beggar, "poor." Thus the Stoic ideal (which has radically infected Western Man) is autarcheia, "self-sufficiency." The point of my passing out the Chinese "Psychosociogram" last week was to point to the opposite ideal in ancient and modern China: kinship, interdependence (which makes the highest Stoic virtue the lowest Chinese vice!). "National sovereignty" is this Stoic ideal writ large, and its latest incarnation is the current cry for U.S. oil-self-sufficiency, so that we'll not continue to be oil-"poor." ("Poverty," like "violence," is a complex idea.)
3. The struggle not to be poor causes one man/group to commit injustice against other men/groups. The 10 Dec 73 Administrative Faculty Meeting minutes put "sensitization to injustice" at the top of a four-item list of NYTS "educational goals." Clearly, our commitment as "Continuing Biblical Seminary" is to take most seriously the Bible's understanding of poverty/injustice in all its complexity. It will not do for us, e.g., to allow Marx to reduce our understanding of "poverty" to the economic, which his theory requires and ours (as Jews and Christians) rejects. He was ferocious, as was his mentor Feuerbach before him, against man standing poor before God in self-inflicted groveling caused by projecting our dignity ("spirit," deciding-energy/responsibility) outside our skinbag and society: this was the root "alienation," the religious delusion which deprived us (to use the terms of my Reality Cube) of "spirit" while leaving us with "psyche," "mind," "body," and body social ("society"). What Marx did with Feuerbach's projection-theory outside the skinbag, another German deracinated Jew, Freud, did inside the skinbag: Feuerbach's general alienation became socio-alienation in Marx and psycho-alienation in Freud. (Sociology-of-knowledge note: The whole development can be seen as secular Jewish, specifically German Jewish, vengeance against the Bible of Jews and Christians.)The message of this whole understanding of poverty (including, in Marx, economic poverty, "injustice" in the sense of maldistribution of money-possessions) as religious robbery (albeit self-inflicted) of manhood from man: restore your wealth by reclaiming what is rightfully yours, the means of production (Marx) and the means of self-determination (Freud et al). (Bonhoeffer et al stupidly fell into this trick and trap with his "man come of age," which nevertheless contains great truth for today and tomorrow.)
4. The Beatitudes display the physical/tropical distribution and complexity of "poverty": Mt.5.3ff, tropical, as church-manual Mt. tends to be, with its scribal-societal orientation to history-future (NEB: the poor are "those who know their need of God....hunger and thirst to see right prevail (or, to do what is right)"); L.6.20f, successive lines, physical (NEB: the poor are those who "are in need....now go hungry"). So which was Jesus' emphasis? The question is misshaped when anachronistically imposed on him; in other

words it's our question, not his (on w.v. Cadbury, THE PERIL OF MODERNIZING JESUS). But some of the things we can say here is that he was prophets-and-Spirit sensitized to the fact that people around him were really hurting from injustice, hurting visibly and invisibly both personally and societally (collective processes and structures); and that he illumined this multiple hurting and its causes with the character and will, and the promises and threats, of God; and that at the last stage of his earthly life he gave himself to calling and training for the soon theocratic Untergang (overwhelming) of the present "world" and its economic-social-political-cultural-religious replacement with "the Kingdom of God"; and that his call was universal, excluding no one; and that the more one had invested in the present "world," the less he/she was apt to respond positively to Jesus' call (which created the illusion that he made an ideological-partisan pitch to the economically poor, an error even Jim Sanders makes in his recent THESIS tape): rather, by existential transposal, "the poor" in Jesus' movement came to be a term for the positive responders to him (a use anticipated in Isaiah). If, then, NYTS programs for "the poor," does this not mean all who hunger and thirst for whatever we offer; and should we not then offer whatever, within gospel parameters, people are hungering and thirsting after (including the disenchanting Christian and the non-Christian)?

5. Did the prophets demand that the economic complexification of society from Solomon on be matched by a complexification of caring beyond primitive charity, i.e. by fundamental justice (Amos 5.24, Micah 6.8)? Rather, they pointed to the discrepancy between social existence (injustice) and divine will (truth, righteousness, justice, fellow-feeling, leal-love); and (when they moved at all from diagnostic to cure, from denunciation to prescription, from ends to means) recommended shuvnah ("return" to the old social arrangements purified and idealized if not romanticized--the word, incidentally, usu. trd. "repentance"). (This element exists, but is not prominent, in America's Radical Right, which uses more the sanctions of the civil religion than those of the character and will of the biblical God.)...In concentric circles we may say, from the outermost circle inward, that the Bible teaches (A) respect for the personality/rights of everybody, (B) concern for everybody's welfare/needs, (C) championship of the oppressed (governing what only seems partiality for the economically poor in L.6.20f,24f and Jas.2.1-7, 5.1-6), (D) readiness to sacrifice anything (though not necessarily ideologically give up everthing material, though we have this in Ac.2), including money-posessions, for the Kingdom of God, which includes/transcends "the world" (Mt.10.17-22 and parallels, governed by such stewardship-trusteeship texts as L.19.8f, the Good Samaritan, L.16.1-12, Mt.24.44-51, L. 12.41-46, Mt.25.14-30, L.19.11-18), and (E) Jesus' "dominant concern for spiritual values" (p.300, Millar Burrows' AN OUTLINE OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY--referencing M.4.3f and L.4.3f: Jesus therefore, and in the light of "his eschatological expectation," "made no effort to imporve economic conditions"). QUESTION: Is Bill Iverson's social concern nearer to Jesus than is the traditional social-action Protestant liberal's? NOTATION: "Spiritual values" means attention-orientation toward the source of just material values, viz. the inbreaking Kingdom of God. DEFINITION: "Kingdom of God" here-now and later-latest.

6. A grid-window as discussion-frame:
WHO ARE "THE POOR"?

Marx's "poor" is AB, his "alienation" ABCD.
Post-Marx Christianity is in danger of reading Jesus' "poor" through Marxist eyes.
In A, practically everybody feels "poor" in the energy crisis--a spiritual model!
In AC, day before yesterday was the 1/2-century celebration of the

	self-acknowledged	un-self-acknowledged
material-visible	A	B
spiritual invisible	C	D

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which hundreds of millions lack mainly and tens of millions extensively. Besides, many in C are neither clergy nor laity but church-outsiders (on w.v. Clock's "The Religious Experience Questionnaire" in the current PSYCHOLOGY TODAY). This only begins the window-grid's discussion/planning potential. What is "evangelism" in A?B?C?D?... "theological education" in A?B?C?D? "Promotion/recruitment" in A?B?C?D?