

01' SF plopped down in the commuter seat next to me tonight [14 Apr 76] and said "Willis, what are you thinking about?" and I said "My storefront ministers" and he said "Tell me more" and I said "They're about the only leadership left in many a ghetto, as most of those who could get out have" and he said "I agree...." As it happened, our entire conversation had to be little more than five minutes....this time, and his station came up....I see him occasionally in an FOR group. Here's his card, and a few comments:



1. Thoreau wondered if anybody was awake. We're, culturally, in a somnolent time again, like a depressive patient who sleeps all the time. We're in desperate need of signs of hope, and I'm saying they do exist, and one task of theological education is to point to them.

2. One of America's innovations in economics is "the mutual principle" as developed in mutual insurance [a favorite concern of my father, as over against "stock" insurance] and, in the money market, "the mutuals" [syndicates for stocks/bonds fund-management]. The principle of mutual responsibility is quite biblical, and the learnings from these economic experiments/structures have been underexploited in the nonbusiness realms of culture.

3. Acts 2.41-7 had better be called "mutualism" than "communism." Notice that one one thing that "came upon every soul" was "fear," which is a properly negative delimiter of community. In housing, what should the participants fear? Only one factor, but one that usually is assumed and goes unexamined. In finance, the bottom line manages fear nicely, neatly, cleanly. In human relations, fear must be managed or it'll be manipulated or scattered--in either case, to the death of community/mutuality.

4. Boden emphasizes, as we at NYTS do, the need for visible signs of hope. His organization has one such in a Bronx apartment building [130 W. 183rd St.] run on the mutual principle of mutual benefit of the contracting "tenant members." A significant drop in the bucket....Bob Wood, a MidCareer Exploration alumnus, is into a similar project in Conn....A fellowship/community/mutuality of skills transcending rich/poor?..And what's all this say to "theological education" and "economics and the gospel"?