

ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Summer, 1984

Vol. 18, No. 3



PEACE & JUSTICE



Concordia College
ARCHIVES
Seward, Nebraska

Summer, 1984
Vol. 18, No. 3

ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Peace and Justice

3 A Fore Word
by M.J. Stelmachowicz

4 Editorials

6 Is It the Business of the Church to Promote Peace and Justice?
by Allan Paul Vasconcellos

12 Educating for Peace and Justice
by Jerrald Pfabe

18 Coping with Life in a World of Injustice
by E. George Becker

23 Book Reviews

EDITOR'S NOTES

Our daily sources of news keep us posted on the latest featured locations of injustice and violence. The majority of people look, listen and talk about these events but they, like the Bible's account of two of the men who passed by the robbery victim on the road to Jericho, soon move on to the priority items in their lives. Such people will not be interested in this journal.

This *Issues* will be helpful to another type of reader, namely, those who are, or who will become the Good Samaritans of today. The authors present some of the causes of the inequities among the peoples of the world and suggest what can be done to right wrongs and bring peace where there is unrest. Their words will appeal to those who want to act, instead of talk, because their main concern is caring for the pressing needs of those who, like the man who fell among thieves, are suffering as a result of injustice and/or violence.

We also use this opportunity to say farewell to Dr. M.J. Stelmachowicz who edited *Issues* when it began in 1966. His column, "A Fore Word," and his enthusiastic support of this journal and of its editor will be missed.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Esther Pfabe is a faculty wife who, in addition to being a homemaker in Seward, Nebraska, also invests much time helping others become aware of the existence of the oppressed and needy in our world and of what individuals and groups can do to help them.

The other authors are: Michael Stelmachowicz, Larry Grothaus, Edmund Martens, Paul Vasconcellos, Jerrald Pfabe, George Becker and Kenneth Block. All are members of the Concordia-Seward faculty.



PEACE & JUSTICE

A FORE WORD

This "fore" word will be for me a last word written for *ISSUES* as president of Concordia Teachers College. By the time this issue is printed and reaches you through the mail I will no longer be serving as president of CTC.

My new position of responsibility will be to serve as executive secretary of the Board of Professional Education Services. This means that instead of being concerned about one college my span of responsibility and concern will embrace all 12 colleges and four seminaries operated by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada. I suppose this new job is a kind of fitting climax for my years of service to the church since 1950 because all of those years have been served in Lutheran schools or colleges.

ISSUES in Christian Education has been a publication dear to my heart since I was privileged to serve as its first editor when it began in 1966. That first and founding editorial committee rejected many other excellent names which were suggested for this professional journal. First of all, we insisted that the words "Christian Education" must be in the title as representative of what Concordia Teachers College stands for and, secondly, we wanted to discuss and publish stimulating topics and ideas about which Christian scholars might take different views.

Debate is both desirable and essential on a college campus. While our entire faculty is of course committed to the Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions theologically, the field of professional education is replete with topics and issues which provide opportunity for wide variation and difference of opinion in the fields of methodology, administration, curriculum, supervision, etc. From time to time we also like to look at broader issues which confront Christian people in the world today. This issue is an example of such a topic — the issues surrounding Peace and Justice.

I wish you good reading and bid you and the editorial staff of *ISSUES*, "Farewell." May God's continued blessings rest on this journal of Christian education and may it be a valuable resource for Christian churches and schools.

M.J. Stelmachowicz
President
Concordia Teachers College
Seward, Nebraska
3/1/78 — 5/15/84

CIRCULATION POLICY — *ISSUES* . . . in Christian Education (ISSN0278-0216) is published three times a year by the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska 68434. A copy of *ISSUES* is sent free to each church, school, district and synodical office in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Copies are also sent to high schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with the Synod. Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @ \$1.00 each; Subscription @ \$3.00 per year; 10 or more copies mailed to the same address @ 60¢ per copy.



GOD — JUSTICE'S SOURCE

Justice and peace are two well used words in our vocabulary. Everybody knows something about "justice" and "peace." We speak of a "Department of Justice" and of "peace officers." Peace officers arrest criminals and cause them to stand before the "bar of justice." When we think of justice we often think of a wicked man being brought before a judge who will make him pay the proper punishment for the wrong deeds he has perpetrated. We often understand justice in terms of a verdict before a court in which a fair judge makes sure that the criminal is pronounced guilty and given a sentence to pay for his crime. During the Viet Nam war days we spoke of a "just peace." What we meant was peace without the United States being forced to leave the country in humiliation. For us, that was not just. It was important to many that the perceived communist perpetrators of the war pay a punishment.

In this editorial we seek to point out one of the many things the Bible teaches us about justice which can positively change our present perceptions. The Bible speaks of people who have had their right taken away from them. In this situation it is the job of the judge to intervene and restore the right

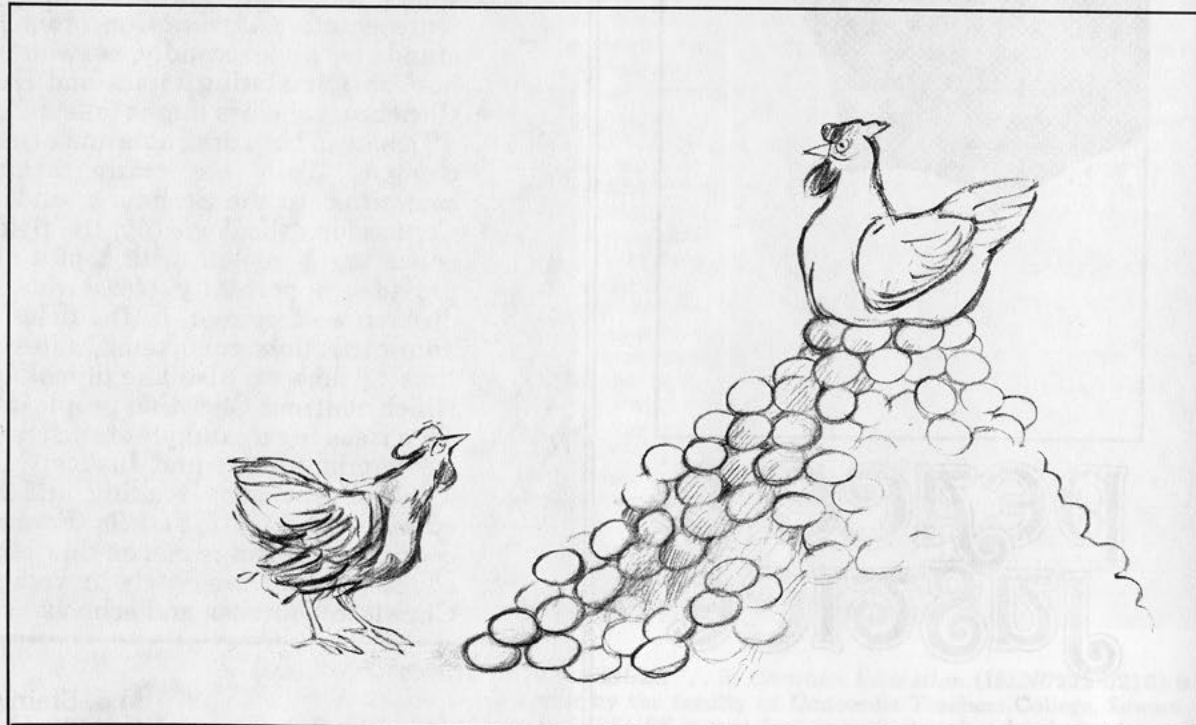
to him who has been deprived of it. The judge decides in favor of the deprived one — of the one who is needy. He declares the oppressed or the afflicted person to be just and to be in the right. Thus, ever since the time of her slavery in Egypt, Israel has been in the right over against her enemies (Psalm 68:3) and God has been working justice by putting down all her foes (Psalm 103:6). Over against her enemies Israel is always righteous. Her righteousness exists in the fact that she clings to the One who "works justice." (Cf. Isaiah 33:2; Micah 7:7-9; Psalm 36:10; 69:6; 61:5; 103:11; 146:5)

The same is true within the community of Israel. Those who are righteous are victims of oppressors (Psalm 14:5), of enemies (Psalm 69:28), of wicked rulers (Psalm 94:21), and of violent men (Psalm 104:13). All of their trust is in the Lord for He is the one who restores their right (Isaiah 27:27-28). He is the one who judges in behalf of the oppressed and the hungry. He is the one who releases the prisoner, cares for the blind, the widow and the fatherless. He is the champion of the alien and of the poor. Thus, it is important to understand that God's righteous judgments are saving judgments. In I Samuel 12:7 the Hebrew word for righteousness is translated "saving deeds" (RSV) and in Psalm 22:31; 51:14; 65:5 it is translated "deliverance" (RSV). According to St. Luke Jesus was anointed to preach the Gospel to the "poor" (Luke 4:18). When John's disciples ask if Jesus is the Messiah, Christ answers:

"Go and tell John what you hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me." (Matthew 11:5)

He who has ears to hear let him hear!

Ronald W. Vahl



JUSTICE IS SOMETHING WE DO

We believers in Jesus Christ — the church — and we members of organized congregations and denominations know full well that justice and peace are values that God wants and demands of His people. God Himself "is excellent in power, and in judgment and in plenty of justice" (Job 35:23). He told Abraham "to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgments" (Gen. 18:19). God told the Princes of Israel to "execute judgment and justice" (Ezekiel 45:9), and concerned Himself with the accuracy of measurements and scales in the buying and selling of goods. We have the Golden Rule and the command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 7:12, Rom. 13:9) and, more specifically, He has told us to defend the rights of the poor and orphans (Ps. 82:3), to defend the stranger, fatherless and widow (Jer. 22:3), and to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves (Prov. 31:8). These and numerous other exhortations and commands appear throughout Scripture.

God also wants us to be at peace with Him, and He provided the Sacrifice through which our guilt has been washed away. He wants us to be at peace with ourselves and with others as well (Mark 9:50). We understand that we are to "live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (II Cor. 13:11)

We also know the needs of our fellowman and, if not, we can readily discover the obvious by looking at both sides of the city as we travel from the suburbs through the slums, ghettos and areas of deterioration. Any of the media will quickly inform us of the rampant hunger in Africa and the hunger in America, the plight of boat people and the refugees of the world's southern hemisphere, the street people of metropolitan areas and the rural poor. Television presentations, movies and other media expose injustices in our social, economic, legal and political systems.

He has showed us what is good and what is bad. What does God require of us? Part of God's answer as Micah words it (6:8) is that we "do justly." The requirement is action. We can talk about justice, write about it and bemoan the lack of it, but Micah reminds us that justice is something we do. We protest injustice and by so doing we seek peace. We conclude that we do not need every material good and that we have many material and spiritual gifts to share with others. We pray that we may overcome our personal and national selfishness and that others may do the same. We pray for our enemies. We organize and work for local agencies to help our neighbors and support causes that we think will lead to greater peace and justice.

We take risks. We do not expect to completely end injustice, poverty and evil in the world. Paradise is neither here nor now. We do not know for sure if this program or that program will achieve justice and peace. We need to read, study and think about these things (Phil. 4:8) and take the risk of acting on behalf of those efforts that we pray will be helpful in achieving peace and justice.

Larry Grothaus

USE STRENGTH FOR PEACE

A recent column by George Will announced new evidence of the "unfettered brutality" by the Soviets against civilian populations in Afghanistan. The ultimate goal is to sap the strength and resolve of the populace by creating lingering suffering through, not killing, but maiming the people and thereby causing secondary infections and other physical tortures.

That such a vendetta continues against an innocent people in a conflict now longer than the Soviet's entire war against Nazi Germany should be no surprise. It is but one example of many which can be cited against the most powerful and repressive regime and secret police force this world has ever experienced. No human can tally the millions who have suffered and died at the hands of the world-wide Communist movement centered in Moscow.

The surprise is that so many in America do not see these clear threats to our freedom. Where do we begin our defense? Central America? The borders of East Germany so clearly marked by the deadly fences?

To place peace initiatives, arms reduction talks, or even rhetorical pianissimos in perspective, we must take into account the brutal aims of the foe. How does one deal with such an evil force?

The leaders and people in America would like nothing better than total nuclear disarmament by all sides. President Reagan, in his 1984 message to Congress on the state of the union, emphasized the wish of all Americans that there be peace in a genuine reduction of East/West tensions. America will never be the aggressor. The American government can make that abundantly clear to the whole world. That is its proper role.

But there is also a proper role for Christian men and women as they debate the issues of world peace/conflict. They would do well to promote these three strengths: military, economic, and spiritual.

America must remain strong militarily so long as it is necessary to deter the enemy. This does not come cheap. The establishment of a strong defense of her freedoms is a clear Constitutional mandate for the protection of her citizens.

America must remain strong economically. Without the production of American farms, factories, and businesses, some parts of the world would soon face ruin and starvation.

America is the number one bastion of peace and freedom. That is an awesome responsibility. Christians especially know the full meaning of freedom, for they have found that real freedom in Christ who has freed them from the ultimate bondage. That is their first strength. Not only because "righteousness exalteth a nation," but also because they are the salt of the earth. Christians are motivated to extend Christian principles into all segments of world society in order that the Gospel might be preached freely in all the world.

Some "Christian" churches have forsaken this spiritual mission. It is assuredly not the mission of the church to promote Communism and left wing causes. The church is to open doors for the Gospel. Before these doors can be opened in many parts of the world, there must be freedom from the tyrannies of atheistic state religions.

America's leaders can and should engage in dialog with their adversaries. Yet, they must be aware that while they have negotiated, the Soviets have increasingly armed and fortified in all areas of strategic and conventional weaponry. What is the answer? Our strengths. All three of them. The Soviets respect only might and firm resolve. They know our economic system has no parallel so long as we allow the free market places to create wealth and incentives. Their atheistic system cannot survive a genuine spiritual renewal in the Gospel-centered witness of the faithful. Their Gulags cannot forever contain their shame.

Isaiah wrote, "Be not afraid; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." These are words to live by as we face the uncertainties of this world. We live in a great country; our people dream and aspire to make it yet greater. We are closer to our goal today than ever before. With patience and perseverance we will see the results of our strengths.

Edmund R. Martens

It is estimated that over 800 million people of the world are destitute and despairing. For many of us, these people are the nameless, faceless masses whose profound problems and limited life are isolated from our own ordinary, protected, privileged experience and purview. They are the victims of violence — the violence of abject poverty, starvation, malnutrition, disease, exploitation, and unjust economic systems and political structures. As the violence of injustice increases, so do the decibels of human cry. The "have nots," the marginalized, cry for justice. To respond to the cry for justice is also to respond to the cry of peace.

Injustice produces tensions which conspire against peace. Extreme inequality feeds a growing frustration among the marginal groups of society. Tension increases when the rising expectations of those who suffer and are heavy laden are blocked by those in power. The privileged and the powerful are largely insensitive to and isolated from the misery of the poor. Force is used to stem any wave of opposition. Those who raise penetrating questions, or who attempt to organize the poor to help themselves, or are critical of government are labeled "subversive" and are imprisoned, tortured and killed. The dependency of Third World countries on

foreign powers creates international tension. While industrialized countries extract raw materials from the Third World and enrich themselves, the majority of the peoples of the Third World remain poor because, in part, they are prevented from sharing in the fruit of their own labor. As long as such injustices continue and increase there can be no peace.

Is it the business of the Church to promote peace and justice? As a way of getting at this question, we shall consider some of the current events in Latin America and how some Christians are attempting to answer this question.

Problems in Latin America

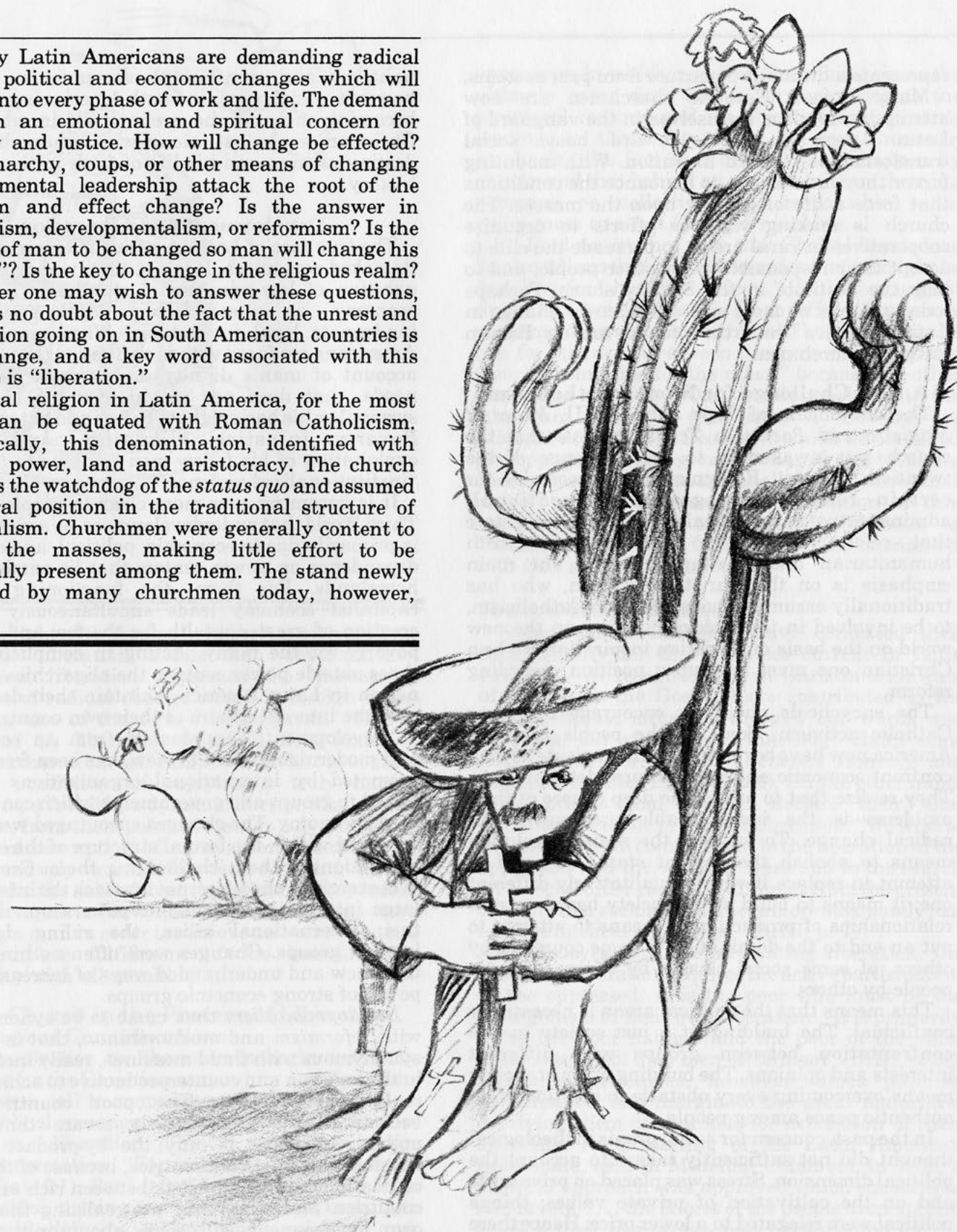
Latin America is particularly rich — in problems. Notable among the vast array of problems are: low living standards resulting from inadequate and poorly distributed land, income and purchasing power; population flow from the rural to the urban areas contributing to the growth of slums, unemployment, dislocation and unrest; inadequate education and rigid hierarchical social structures preventing change and upward mobility; inadequate and inflexible credit market systems leading to exploitation, high prices and low return to the farmer.

Is It the Business of the Church to Promote Peace & Justice?

by Allan Paul Vasconcellos

Many Latin Americans are demanding radical social, political and economic changes which will reach into every phase of work and life. The demand is both an emotional and spiritual concern for dignity and justice. How will change be effected? Will anarchy, coups, or other means of changing governmental leadership attack the root of the problem and effect change? Is the answer in militarism, developmentalism, or reformism? Is the nature of man to be changed so man will change his "world"? Is the key to change in the religious realm? However one may wish to answer these questions, there is no doubt about the fact that the unrest and revolution going on in South American countries is for change, and a key word associated with this change is "liberation."

Formal religion in Latin America, for the most part, can be equated with Roman Catholicism. Historically, this denomination, identified with wealth, power, land and aristocracy. The church stood as the watchdog of the *status quo* and assumed a central position in the traditional structure of paternalism. Churchmen were generally content to ignore the masses, making little effort to be physically present among them. The stand newly assumed by many churchmen today, however,



represents a dramatic departure from past customs.

Many Roman Catholic churchmen are now attempting to place themselves in the vanguard of Latin America's march toward basic social transformation, toward liberation. With mounting fervor they have begun to denounce the conditions that force a life of poverty upon the masses. The church is making vigorous efforts to organize cooperatives in rural areas, to persuade the elite to accept their responsibility for other people, and to help the destitute in the big-city slums. Perhaps today there is no more militant force for change in Latin America than that found among Roman Catholic churchmen.

A New Challenge for Roman Catholicism

The encyclicals of Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, indicate that the church was awakening to the challenge of the twentieth century. Recognizing the necessity for certain reforms — agrarian, educational, administrative and political — the encyclicals state that reform should be promoted with both humanitarian and spiritual motives. The main emphasis is on the Christian layman, who has traditionally assumed a passive role in Catholicism, to be involved in the task of building up the new world on the basis of Christian inspiration. To be a Christian one must take up a position regarding reform.

The encyclicals obviously encourage conscious Catholic activism. Some of the people in Latin America now have begun to lose their naivete as they confront economic and sociocultural determinants. They realize that to attack the deep causes of their problems is the indispensable prerequisite for radical change. To support the social revolution means to abolish the present *status quo* and to attempt to replace it with a qualitatively different one; it means to build a just society based on new relationships of production; it means to attempt to put an end to the domination of some countries by others, of some social classes by others, of some people by others.

This means that the political arena is necessarily conflictual. The building of a just society means confrontation between groups with different interests and opinions. The building of a just society means overcoming every obstacle to creation of an authentic peace among people.

In the past, concern for social praxis in theological thought did not sufficiently take into account the political dimension. Stress was placed on private life and on the cultivation of private values; things political were relegated to a lower price. Hence there came the insistence on the personal and conciliatory aspects of the Gospel message rather than on its

political and conflictual dimensions. Today, however, social praxis in South America is gradually becoming more of the arena itself in which the Christian works out, along with others, both his destiny as man and his life of faith in the Lord of history.

Development and Liberation

The true face of Latin America is emerging in all its naked roughness. It is not simply or primarily a question of low educational standards, a limited economy, an unsatisfactory legal system, or inadequate legal institutions. What many Latin Americans are faced with is a situation that takes no account of man's dignity or his most elemental needs, that does not provide for his biological survival or his basic right to be free and autonomous. Poverty, injustice, alienation, and man's exploitation of his fellow men combine to form an "institutionalized violence."

It is becoming ever more clear to peoples in the Third World that underdevelopment, as a global fact, is primarily due to economic, political, and cultural dependence on power centers that lie outside their homelands. For them, the functioning of the capitalist economy leads simultaneously to the creation of greater wealth for the few and greater poverty for the many. Acting in complicity with these outside power centers, the oligarchies of each nation in Latin America maintain their dominion over the internal affairs of their own countries.

"Development," approached from an economic and modernizing point of view, has been frequently promoted by international organizations closely linked to groups and governments which control the world economy. The changes encouraged were to be achieved within the formal structure of the existing institutions without challenging them. Great care was exercised, therefore, not to attack the interests of large international economic powers nor those of their international allies, the ruling domestic interest groups. Changes were often nothing more than new and underhanded ways of increasing the power of strong economic groups.

Developmentalism thus came to be synonymous with *reformism* and *modernization*, that is to say, synonymous with timid measures, really ineffective in the long run and counterproductive to achieving a real transformation. The poor countries are becoming ever more clearly aware that their underdevelopment is only the by-product of the development of other countries, because of the kind of relationship which exists between rich and poor countries. Moreover, they are realizing that their own development will come about only with a struggle to break the *domination* of the rich countries.



In the light of this, some in Latin America prefer to speak of "liberation" rather than "development." For them liberation expresses the inescapable moment of radical change which is foreign to the ordinary use of the term "development." This is perceived as liberation from all that limits or prevents man from self-fulfillment. What is at stake is the possibility of enjoying a truly human existence, a free life, a dynamic liberty. What is also at stake, from their point of view, is a dynamic and historical conception of man, oriented definitively and creatively toward his future, acting in the present for the sake of tomorrow. Here history is seen as the conquest of new, qualitatively different ways of being a man in order to achieve an ever more total and complete fulfillment of the individual in solidarity with all mankind.

The Church in the Process of Liberation Theological Considerations

The aspiration to liberation is beginning to be accepted by the Christian community as a sign of the times, as a call to commitment and interpretation. The Biblical message, which presents the work of Christ as a liberation, provides the framework for this interpretation. "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1). Paul refers here to liberation from sin, a selfish turning away from God and turning in to oneself. Refusing to love one's neighbor and, therefore, the Lord Himself is sin. Sin is, accordingly, the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, and the

oppression in which men live. Describing sin as the ultimate cause does not in any way negate the structural reasons and the objective determinants leading to these situations. It does, however, emphasize the fact that things do not happen by chance and that behind an unjust structure there is a personal or collective will responsible — a willingness to reject God and neighbor.

St. Paul asserts not only that Christ liberated us; he also tells us that He did it in order that we might be free. Free for what? Free to love. "In the language of the Bible," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "freedom is not something man has for himself but something he has for others . . . between two persons. Being free means "being free for the other," because the other has bound me to him. Only in relationship with the other am I free" (Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 36). The freedom to which we are called presupposes the going out of oneself, the breaking down of our selfishness and of all the structures that support our selfishness. The foundation of this freedom is openness to others. The fullness of liberation — a free gift from Christ — is communion with God and with other men.

Toward Transformation

Some Roman Catholics have confessed their responsibility for the injustices current in Latin America. "We recognize that we Christians for want of fidelity to the Gospel have contributed to the present unjust situation through our words and attitudes, our silence and inaction," claim some Latin American bishops (*Between Honesty and Hope*, hereinafter BHH, p. 230). On the other hand, some priests and laymen declare their total commitment to the process of liberation: "We wish to express our total commitment to the liberation of the oppressed and the working class and to the search for a social order radically different from the present one, an order seeking to achieve more adequately just and evangelical solidarity." (BHH, p. 79)

In the eyes of those advocating liberation, the process of liberation requires the active participation of the oppressed. It is the poor who must be the protagonists of their own liberation: "It is primarily up to the poor nations and the poor of the other nations to effect their own betterment" (BHH, p. 28). Existing structures, however, block popular participation and marginalize the great majorities, depriving them of channels for expression of their demands. At a meeting of the Latin American Episcopate, held in Medellin, Columbia, in 1968, a pastoral approach was approved which encourages and favors "... the efforts of the people to create and develop their own grass-roots organization for the redress and consolidation of their rights and the search of true justice" (BHH, p. 231).

The Presence of the Church

Many Roman Catholic leaders have called for a profound revision of the church's presence in Latin America. There is the strong insistence that the church, and in particular the bishops, fulfill a role of *prophetic denunciation* of grave injustices rampant in Latin America. "To us, the Pastors of the Church, belongs the duty . . . to denounce everything which, opposing justice, destroys peace" (BHH, p. 231). The church calls for a conscientizing evangelization. "To us, the Pastors of the Church, belongs the duty to educate the Christian conscience, to inspire, stimulate, and help orient all of the initiatives that contribute to the formation of man," asserted the bishops at Medellin.

Poverty is one of the most frequent and pressing demands placed on the Latin American Church. Vatican II asserted that the church ought to carry out its mission as Christ did "in poverty and under oppression" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 8). At Medellin it was made clear that poverty expresses solidarity with the oppressed and a protest against oppression. Suggested ways of implementing this poverty in the church are the evangelization of the poor, the denunciation of injustice, a simple life-style, a spirit of service, and freedom from temporal ties, intrigue, or ambiguous prestige (BHH, pp. 211ff.).

The demands placed on the church by prophetic denunciation, by the conscientizing evangelization of the oppressed, and by poverty sharply reveal the inadequacy of the structures of the church for the world in which it lives. A group of Bolivian priests wrote:

The very structure in which we operate often prevents us from acting in a manner that accords with the Gospel. This, too, deeply concerns us; for we see that it greatly complicates the chances of bringing the Gospel to the people. The Church cannot be a prophet in our day if she herself is not turned to Christ. She does not have the right to talk against others when she herself is a cause of scandal in her interpersonal relations and her internal structures. (BHH, pp. 141-142)

A group of Argentinian priests stated: ". . . we feel that if we did not denounce injustice we would be responsible for and accessory to the injustices being committed." (BHH, p. 87)

The Meaning of Liberation

Some contemporary Roman Catholic thought sees three levels of meaning of the term *liberation*. Liberation expresses the aspirations of oppressed peoples and social classes, emphasizing the conflictual aspect of the economic, social, and political process which puts them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes.

Secondly, liberation can be applied to an understanding of history. Man is seen as assuming conscious responsibility for his own destiny. This provides a dynamic context for the desired social changes. In this perspective the unfolding of all man's dimensions is demanded — a man who develops himself throughout his life and throughout history. The gradual conquest of true freedom leads to the creation of a new man and a qualitatively different society.

Thirdly, liberation leads to the Biblical sources which inspire the presence and action of man in history. Christ is presented as the one who brings us liberation. Christ and Savior liberates man from sin, which is the ultimate root of all disruption of friendship and of all injustice and oppression. Christ makes man truly free, that is He enables man to live in communion with Him, and this is the basis for all human brotherhood.

These three levels of meaning are interdependent. It is not three parallel or chronologically successive processes. It is three levels of meaning of a single, complex process, which finds its deepest sense and its full realization in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

A Perspective of the U.S.A.

Is it the business of the church to promote peace and justice? Many Roman Catholic clerical thinkers and leaders in Latin America respond affirmatively. Faith is not separated from life. "Liberation," informed and inspired by the Biblical drama of Redemption, is a key concept for many Third World Christians.

We cannot speak of "liberation" in the United States in exactly the same way it is spoken of in Latin America. Our circumstances and our national history and experience are not the same. We are not faced with massive poverty, massive starvation and disease, massive destitution and despair. It is not that any of these phenomena are non-existent in America. It is that our major problems are not exactly those found in the Third World. It is not that we Americans do not need to be liberated. We do need to be liberated from, among other things, an over-identification of Christian faith with civil religion, cultural standards and cultural idols.

A major individual and social sin in America today is idolatry. This idolatry expresses itself in many ways, including consumerism, hoarding, planned obsolescence and wastefulness. Human worth is based on quantitative values — productivity, marketability and consumption. Sins of narcissism, myopic nationalism and insatiable consumerism imprison body, mind and soul. Our problem is that, by and large, we are as blind to those sins as was Israel to her sins in the days of Amos. We need a global vision and more altruistic concerns as

global citizens living in a global village.

The Church can and should play a significant role in individual and social analysis and value clarification. We need to awaken in ourselves a critical sense which will lead us to examine the society in which we live and its values. The Church has the duty to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice when and where the fundamental rights of man demand it. The Church alone certainly is not responsible for justice in the world, but her mission includes witness before the world of the need for love and justice. It is not necessary for the Church to offer specific solutions in the social, economic and political spheres for justice in the world. Her mission does include, however, defending and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person. In short, it is the function of the Church to bring the full dimension of the Gospel to bear upon the human situation.

Justice is required again and again because sinful self-interest encourages one life to take advantage of another. There will be no rest for the Christian and the Church in society this side of Heaven. Whatever approximates true love, peace and justice is temporary and never a permanent establishment. God's Law judges all human relationships and arrangements. Even our best efforts to bind the wounds of human conflict and to do the will of God are tainted by sin because we are finite sinners, albeit forgiven sinners.

What this says then is that both the doctrine of sin and the doctrine of justification are necessary components to any Christian discussion of justice and peace. Both doctrines allow the Christian to live in this world in the tension between the already and not yet, the actual and the ideal, the relative and the absolute. In any given society, at any given time, one can look only for *possibilities* of justice and peace in society — not perfect plans or programs since there are no perfect planners or programmers. This places a tentativeness and temporariness on all we do, and warns against a self-righteous zeal or overly idealistic utopianism, or men establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Such reality, however, does not assign the Christian or the Church to irrelevancy, resignation, despair or monasticism. Taking seriously both justification and sanctification, we believe, teach, confess and live the reality that God, through Word and Sacrament, is moving us on to becoming what He has declared us to be for Christ's sake. So He calls us to do the faith in the specifics of our living. He calls us to discipleship and to ethical obligation in society. Every establishment of justice, every peacemaking in the name of Christ becomes a sign of the

Kingdom, of the already but not yet.

The Gospel delivers people from their own self-centeredness. As Christ was a "man for others," so is the Christian. As God so loved the world and gave Himself in Christ for the world, so does the Church. The Christian and the Church are called to humility and repentance. Through Word and service the Christian and the Church seek to create both the spirit of repentance and love within the human struggle. Our Lord Himself is both the Ideal and the Model.

Selected Bibliography Books

- Between Hope and Honesty*. Translated by John Drury. Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1970.
- Bonino, Jose M. *Toward a Christian Political Ethic*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Brown, Robert M. *Theology in a New Key*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978.
- Colonnese, Louis M., (ed.) *Human Rights and the Liberation of Man in the Americas*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1970.
- Corson-Finnerty, Adam D. *World Citizen: Action for Global Justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Translated and edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973.
- Laurentin, Rene. *Liberation, Development and Salvation*. Translated by Charles Underhill Quinn. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1972.
- Reed, Edward, (ed.) *Pacem in Terris*. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1965.

Periodicals

- Hebblethwaite, Peter. "Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Doctrine." *Daedalus*. CXI (Winter, 1982), 83-89.
- Hollenbach, David. "Politics of Justice." *Theology Today*. XXXVIII (January, 1982), 489-93.
- Mays, James L. "Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition." *Interpretation*. XXXV (January, 1983), 5-17.
- McGovern, Arthur F. "Liberation Theology in Actual Practice." *Commonweal*. CX (January 28, 1983), 46-9.
- Sider, Ronald J. "Jesus' Resurrection and the Search for Peace and Justice." *The Christian Century*. XCIV (November 3, 1982), 1103-8.
- Szoka, Edmund C. "The Church's Concern for Social and Economic Well-being." *Vital Speeches*. XLVIII (March 1, 1982), 283-4.
- Williamson, Arthur P. "The Great Commission or the Great Commandment?" *Christianity Today*. XXVI (November 26, 1982), 33-36.
- Yancy, Philip. "The Other Side of Thanksgiving." *Christianity Today*. XXVI (November 26, 1982), 23-29.

Educating for Peace & Justice

by Jerrald Pfabe

"Peace will exist when injustice disappears." That sentence captures precisely the intimate relationship between justice and peace. There can be no peace where injustice prevails. The Christian who seeks to fulfill Christ's call to become a peacemaker must work for more than prevention of war. She or he must strive for justice among peoples.

In this short essay, I will provide guidelines for the challenging, yet essential, process of education to bring our world closer to God's vision of a just and peaceful society. Injustice takes many shapes in our world: racism, ageism, poverty and hunger. Because of space limitations, we will focus on poverty and hunger, two pervasive evils in our world. Poverty and its accompanying hunger are not accidental, but result from injustice which individuals and groups, consciously or unconsciously, impose upon others. They are the realities which we Christians must confront if we are to work for peace and justice here on earth.

The Scriptural Foundation

The process of education and action for peace and justice has a solid Scriptural foundation. God speaks unequivocally on these matters. The Old Testament concept of "shalom," or peace, does not envision simply an absence of warfare. Nor does it involve only an individual's personal relationship with God. It is a broad concept, envisioning a society of community, wholeness, and cooperation. God's "shalom" includes many material aspects of life. The prophet Micah (4:1-4) envisions such a society. Not only will nations not go to war, but their weapons will be turned into implements of production for human good — plowshares and pruning hooks. Every person will have his/her own vine and fig tree, grown, we may assume, on his/her own land. All will live securely, free from fear.¹

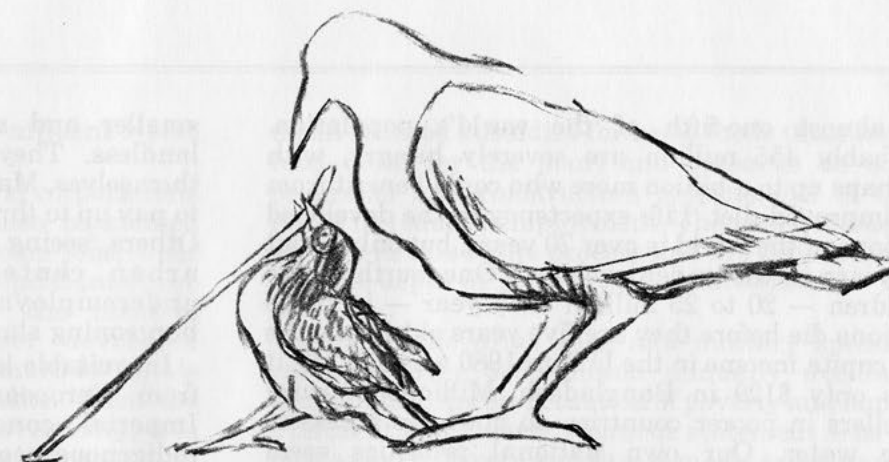
Throughout Scripture we read of God's passionate demand for a just and humane society. He identifies Himself repeatedly as the God of the poor and the

oppressed (Ps. 146:5-9; Ps. 107:39-43; Luke 1:46-53). He opposes the oppression and exploitation of the poor and defenseless in society, threatening ruin to those guilty of such evil. Old Testament laws demanded compassionate treatment of the unfortunate. Portions of every harvest were to be reserved for the poor, the widows, orphans, and foreigners (Lev. 19:9-10; Ex. 23:10-11; Deut. 14:28-29). In Israel the productive resources were to be distributed equitably, with lands returned to original owners every fifty years, the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17). God wants the rulers of His people to deal justly and fairly with the poor and dispossessed (Ps. 72:1-2).

God makes clear that the signs of genuine love for Him are not religious worship or ritual but the doing of justice to the poor and downtrodden (Is. 1:17, 58:5-11; Micah 6:6-8). God's laws and directives reveal unmistakably what His Shalom is. Today we often think of justice as that which a person deserves, but in the Old Testament, justice involved actions taken in behalf of or with the less fortunate of society. Justice is more a reflection of God's gracious nature, than of His vengefulness.

James McGinnis has identified four basic elements in the Scriptural concept of justice. First, every person is entitled to sufficient life goods. Second, all people, created in the image of God, are to be treated with dignity and esteem. Third, every individual should have the opportunity to shape his or her own destiny. Fourth, there should be interdependence and solidarity among peoples, working mutually to obtain fairness and equity.²

These teachings from Scripture are a guide for our discipleship. Peace and justice are to be genuine and active concerns of every Christian. "Noninvolvement is a nonoption."³ That means confronting the realities of our world which condemns millions to unnecessary and unwarranted suffering and death. The quest of peace and justice is a legitimate and necessary goal of Christian education.



Obstacles to Christian Involvement

Despite the clear witness of the Scriptures to this imperative, many factors hinder us from working effectively. One factor is a highly individualistic, other-worldly approach to Christianity which perceives that the sole interest of God and the purpose of faith is to get us to heaven. Earthly matters, then, become irrelevant. Related to that is our tendency to divide rigidly sacred concerns from the secular, with Christians being concerned only with the former. Such an extreme separation of spheres does not square well with the Word of God.

Others insist that the church should not deal with issues such as poverty, unjust economic structures, or the nuclear arms race because it will produce division among Christians. Therefore, rather than upset the tenuous "peace" within the church, we ought to avoid such questions. Unfortunately, that attitude prevents the Church from being the kind of prophetic witness which faithful discipleship demands.

The aura of maintaining intellectual detachment prevents some from taking concrete action in favor of justice and peace. Some who believe in a "myth of objectivity" are willing to study the realities and causes of poverty and hunger, but fear they might lose their intellectual detachment if they climbed into the trenches, so to speak, and struggled alongside the poor and downtrodden for justice. Detachment is a luxury which Christians are not permitted. God has clearly taken sides — the side of the oppressed and the exploited, of those who make peace. We are called to join Him!

Another obstacle which prevents effective ministry in behalf of peace and justice is our failure to understand the sources of unrest and poverty in our world. Many place the blame for poverty and starvation on the poor and starving themselves; it's their own fault. A related conviction is that the poor are poor because they are lazy or live morally

dissolute lives. Human deprivation is perceived to be a result of overpopulation in a world that cannot produce enough food to feed all these hungry mouths. While population pressures are real in some countries, the fact is that in grain foodstuffs alone, our world produces more than 3000 calories per day for every man, woman and child. Furthermore, many of the poor are terribly hardworking but receive pitiful wages for their work. Other millions desperately seek jobs, but live in economies where unemployment reaches 20 to 30% or more.

Finally, we fail to work effectively for peace and justice because of ignorance — a lack of awareness of human suffering, of the causes of injustice and deprivation, and how our own society and government are implicated in these issues.

Developing Awareness of Global Suffering

Awareness of realities, therefore, is a logical place to begin to educate. We can initiate education for peace and justice through a "ministry of reminding,"⁴ informing ourselves about what the world is like and the incredible sufferings which millions of God's creatures endure. We need to stimulate both consciousness and conscience. This process can occur, I believe, at almost any age. While primary grade students cannot comprehend fully the harmful effects of multinational corporations on a poor nation, they can learn about children with bloated stomachs, families who have to live in hovels, and people who have to walk miles every day to secure firewood or to obtain polluted water for the family's use. Resources of great variety are readily available to implement such a ministry of reminding: films, filmstrips and slide shows, newspaper and magazine articles, television shows, and testimonies from individuals who have visited or lived in areas of poverty.

Even a cursory examination of global realities reveals a devastating picture. The World Bank estimates that 800 million people live in destitution

— almost one-fifth of the world's population. Probably 455 million are severely hungry, with perhaps up to a billion more who could benefit from an improved diet. Life expectancy in the developed nations of the world is over 70 years, but only about 50 years in the underdeveloped. One-fourth of the children — 20 to 25 million each year — in those nations die before they are five years old. While the per capita income in the U.S. in 1980 was \$11,347, it was only \$129 in Bangladesh. Millions of rural dwellers in poorer countries do not have access to safe water. Our own national priorities seem distorted and warped in the face of these conditions. For the cost of one jet fighter, about 40,000 village pharmacies could be established. The cost of a new nuclear submarine equals the annual education budget of 23 developing nations with 160 million school age children.⁵

Presenting the Causes of Poverty and Hunger

Christian education which seeks to realize peace and justice must move from awareness of world realities to an understanding of the causes of poverty and hunger. According to Suzanne Toton, "... the problem of world poverty and hunger is fundamentally a moral problem. It is a by-product of an economic system and values that give precedence to the pursuit of goods over human well-being."⁶ Poverty and hunger are not, on the whole, accidental, nor are they primarily consequences of natural events such as drought or floods. They are the result of political and economic decisions, of unjust national and international structures which provide some with a life of affluence but doom others to enormous and needless suffering. To change the world, Christians must understand how these structures produce injustice. Furthermore, we must be able to examine critically our own nation's involvement in the problem. That can be difficult, but it's essential. Peace and justice education must be truly global. It should include analyzing the interactions between nations and study of the relative positions of political and economic power, trade patterns, and how these work to the disadvantage of the poor.

One place to begin an investigation of causes of poverty is to analyze landholding patterns in Third World nations. According to the World Bank, some 3% of all landowners controls 50% of all farmland in the Third World. In Latin America, 90% of the farmland is owned by only 7% of the owners. In Guatemala, 3% of the farm owners owns over two-thirds of the land; and, according to Guatemalan government figures, that wealthy elite has increased its landholdings by about 20% in recent years.⁷ These inequitable social structures are a fundamental cause of poverty and hunger. Peasants are driven to

smaller and smaller plots of land, or become landless. They are unable to produce food for themselves. Many become tenant farmers, but have to pay up to three-fourths of their crop to the owner. Others, seeing no hope in the countryside, flee to urban centers where unemployment and underemployment is high, and crowd the burgeoning slums.

Inequitable landholding structures often resulted from European imperialism in centuries past. Imperial conquerors wrested land from the indigenous people. Even though imperial political control has ended in most of those nations, the elite-controlled landholding structure and economy often remain. Typically, the political structure remains in the hands of this elite, who utilize the power of government to maintain their social and economic status.

The landed elite decide how much land is used — and in many underdeveloped nations large portions of arable land are left uncultivated. They also determine land use. Frequently, the land is used to produce crops for export, not basic foodstuffs for the local population. Whether the crop is cotton, peanuts, sugar, bananas, coffee, or whether cattle raising becomes the prime operation, the wealthy landowner is able to get a greater return by exporting and can use the earnings to purchase luxury imports from developed nations.⁸

Frequently, developed nations, including the United States, have encouraged such conditions. Interested in having products from these nations, and desirous of exporting expensive manufactured and technologically-advanced goods to the Third World, they have been able to encourage and, to a large extent, lock those nations into being producers of inexpensive raw materials.

One instrument of fostering such development in the Third World is the multinational corporation. Many of these corporations, such as Gulf+Western in the Dominican Republic, and Del Monte in the Philippines, have gained control over substantial amounts of land, either through direct or ownership leases. Gulf+Western in 1975 controlled 8% of the arable land in the Dominican Republic and 30% of that nation's sugar exports. Land devoted to basic food production in that country, however, has declined despite a growing population. Ninety percent of Del Monte's Philippine agricultural production is exported, yet malnutrition is widespread there. Other corporations have developed contract arrangements with powerful local owners. As a result Mexico has become a major exporter of fruits and vegetables to the United States — tomatoes, asparagus, onions, strawberries and cantaloupe. Land once used to grow corn and beans for Mexicans now produces fresh fruits and

vegetables throughout the year for affluent North Americans.⁹

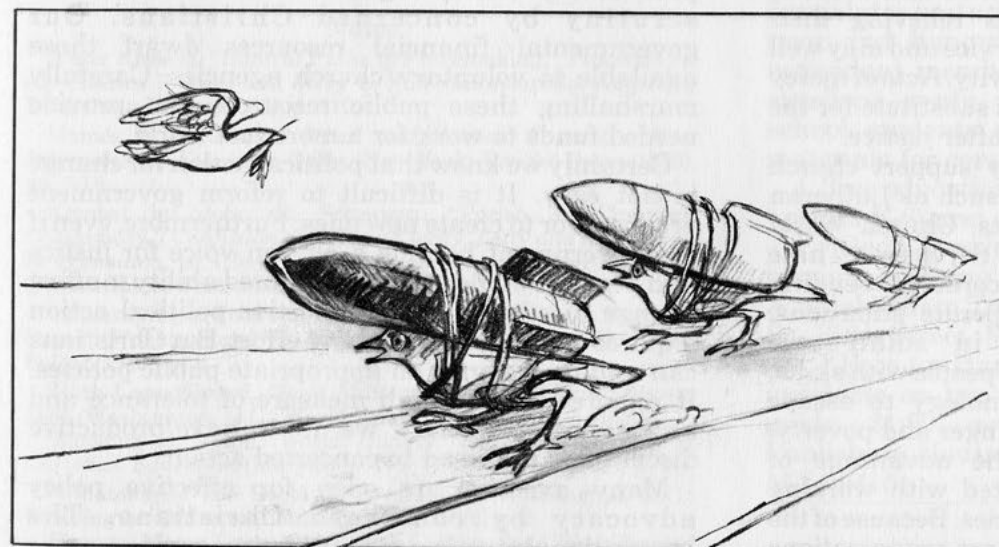
The overall impact of multinational corporations upon Third World societies must also be studied carefully. Although they provide some jobs, their propensity to utilize labor-saving capital-intensive technology does little to relieve the massive unemployment problems in lesser developed countries (LDCs). In the LDCs the multi-nationals produce primarily for the wealthy elite. When the masses are targeted by corporate advertising, it is often for food products which provide little nutrition and are costly for a poor family. In addition, the profits which multinationals take out of the LDCs often greatly exceed the capital they bring in.

The structure of international trade often works to the disadvantage of Third World nations. The free market system encourages raw material export from the LDCs, raw material producers typically are at a disadvantage compared to the industrial nations. For years they have faced declining terms of trade. In 1954, for example, 6,000 kilograms of tea could buy 100 tons of steel; in 1974 it could buy only 50 tons. In 1960, 3 tons of bananas bought a tractor; in 1970 the same tractor cost 11 tons of bananas.¹⁰

This unequal trading situation has contributed to the enormous external debt problem of Third World nations, which in 1983 had grown to some \$800 billion dollars. Several major nations, such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, teeter on the edge of bankruptcy. To avoid bankruptcy, these nations seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund. In return for granting additional credit, the IMF imposes a stabilization plan on the debtor nation. These plans usually have a devastating effect on the poor. Strict caps are placed on wage increases which do not allow the poor to keep up with inflation. Limits on government spending often

mean reduced subsidies for basic foods (thus higher food costs for the poor) and cutbacks on social programs and construction projects. All of these result in reduced employment. The poor become the victims in this entire process and are driven farther into the depth of poverty and malnutrition.¹¹

Finally, the arms race and military spending, currently over \$660 billion annually worldwide, contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and hunger. President Eisenhower's famous statement is as true now as ever: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." Even within wealthy nations like the U.S., high military spending has negative economic effects; it is fostering inefficiency and economic concentration, contributing to inflation, reducing employment and dampening future economic growth.¹² The results are even more devastating for the LDCs who are caught in their own arms races, which are often fueled by military assistance and sales from superpowers. Military spending diverts resources from needed civilian projects and aggravates the indebtedness problems of these nations. U.S. military aid often supports authoritarian regimes which blatantly violate human rights and show little interest in changing unjust economic structures which produce poverty among the populace. In addition, the belief that military spending provides security diverts attention from the real causes of instability and unrest — human suffering, deprivation, and starvation. U.S. security assistance to Israel amounts to \$600 for every Israeli citizen. But all U.S. aid to desperately poor Bangladesh amounts to a mere \$2.00 per person, a truly warped sense of priorities from a Christian perspective.¹³



Sharing Options for Producing Change

This brief survey has attempted to demonstrate that the causes of hunger, poverty, and much of the unrest and violence in the world are, in fact, systemic. Any serious program of education for peace and justice must examine these structural factors — national and international — seriously. Any genuine plan for justice and peace must seek to change systems which produce deprivation and suffering. It will be difficult to confront entrenched structures. But Christians live in hope, never giving up the struggle for justice and peace. That struggle is indeed God's own struggle. What, then, are some of the options we have in attempting to shape a global society into one which more resembles God's vision of justice?

Every peace and justice educational program should be oriented towards action. Christians should pray faithfully to God that injustice and violence end. But I am continually reminded of a statement which a Mexican friend made to me a couple years ago, "Prayer without action is a lie." Responding to the Gospel call, we must work diligently for justice and peace. One way to begin is to examine and simplify our own lifestyle. Lifestyle modification can release us from the oppression of Third World peoples, and simplified living reminds us of the continual need to fight oppression. It can make a concrete witness to other Christians. Reduced consumptive habits give us greater financial resources to use for peace and justice work.

Christian groups should investigate carefully the needs of their own immediate communities. We are often blind to the suffering which exists around us. Even in areas which seem prosperous, there are families who are malnourished and unable to pay rent and utility bills. These people can be assisted through congregational food pantries and deeds of charity. Assisting them, besides relieving their suffering, opens us to a sense of service and may well spur us to enlarge our scope of activity. Acts of mercy are God-pleasing, but they cannot substitute for the more difficult, long-term seeking after justice.

Christians should energetically support church relief and development agencies, such as Lutheran World Relief and its counterparts, Church World Service and Catholic Relief Services. These organizations have excellent records of sending immediate aid to people in desperate situations. They also work effectively in small-scale development programs, providing people with skills, resources, and appropriate technology to escape permanently from the grasp of hunger and poverty. Church relief agencies have the advantage of avoiding some obstacles connected with working through governmental bureaucracies. Because of the limited scale of most projects, these organizations

have much direct contact with the poor and work with them in developing programs, instead of merely imposing outside solutions to local problems. Furthermore, church development agencies have unusually low administrative/overhead expenses. Typically, more than 90% of every dollar contributed is used directly to relieve suffering and bring hope.

Despite the excellent work done by Lutheran World Relief, its support by members of our Synod has been sadly limited, averaging only about \$1.00 per member annually. That is a woefully inadequate response to the Lord's desire that we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless. Generous support of church agencies will do much to demonstrate God's love for all creation.

Finally, we must use opportunities as citizens to influence government policies and actions toward justice and peace. For many Christians that seems to be difficult. We want to divide absolutely church and state. We are troubled by waste and corruption in government operations. And yet, as members of a political society, we bear some responsibility for what our political institutions do. By adopting a politically passive stance, by staying "out of politics," we in fact take a political position. We tacitly sanction what our government does. Furthermore, because injustice and violence are so frequently the consequences of structures and systems, it is largely through government that we can effect change. Church relief and development organizations have limited ability to change structures. If, for example, U.S. tax laws encourage multinational corporations to exploit Third World people, we have to work to change those tax laws. Our foreign aid programs, which are increasingly emphasizing military and security assistance rather than development aid which helps the absolutely poor of the world, ought to come under careful scrutiny by concerned Christians. Our governmental financial resources dwarf those available to voluntary/church agencies. Carefully marshalling these public resources can provide needed funds to work for a more just world.

Certainly we know that political action for change is not easy. It is difficult to reform government programs or to create new ones. Furthermore, even if our government became a clarion voice for justice and peace, it would have only limited ability to effect change in other nations. Effective political action requires enormous cooperative effort. But Christians can and do disagree on appropriate public policies. It requires of us a high measure of tolerance and acceptance of others if we are to have productive discussions that lead to concerted action.

Many avenues are open for effective policy advocacy by concerned Christians. The conventional tactics of contacting a senator or

congressperson by letter or phone are crucial. Elected officials do take note of such communications, particularly when they receive a considerable number on the same issue. Church groups can meet with elected officials to voice their views. Christians might consider joining organizations which focus on political activity. Local political parties are one possibility. While their primary focus is not on peace and justice issues, they present a forum for advocating such ideas. Peace and justice groups, organized on local, state, and national levels, provide active support and information for a committed Christian.

Bread for the World, a Christian citizens movement whose goal is to shape legislation to alleviate hunger here and abroad, is an outstanding, effective organization. It provides its members with abundant, carefully-researched information on pending legislation and on hunger and poverty issues in general. It offers specific suggestions and methods (such as a quickline telephone network) for influencing governmental action. By using the gift of citizenship which we have in this nation, the Christian can become a more effective agent for bringing the world closer to a realization of peace with justice.

Christians are not called to a comfortable, passive life. God calls us to be active servants of change, to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). God cares deeply about His world and all people who live in it. He desires that they live in peace and justice. As we become more fully attuned to His hopes and as we learn how far the world is from that ideal, we can undertake an essential, challenging, and exciting field of ministry and witness.

Notes

¹Peter Kjeseth, "Biblical Paths to Peacemaking," *Peace-Ways*, ed. Charles P. Lutz and Jerry L. Folk (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), p. 110.

²James B. McGinnis, *Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 9-18.

³Quoted by John E. Schramm, "Parish as Christian Community," *Confusion and Hope: Clergy, Laity and the Church in Transition*, ed. Glenn Richard Bucher and Patricia Ruth Hill (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 110.

⁴"Identifying a Food Policy Agenda for the 1980s: A Working Paper" (Washington, D.C.: Interreligious Taskforce on U.S. Food Policy, 1980), p. 8.

⁵Ruth Leger Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures: 1983* (Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1983), pp. 5, 36-41.

⁶Suzanne C. Toton, *World Hunger: The Responsibility of Christian Education* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), p. xi.

⁷"Guatemala: The Roots of Revolution" (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America, 1983), p. 2.

⁸Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, *Food First: Beyond*

the Myth of Scarcity (rev. ed., New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), pp. 99-117, 220-224.

⁹Toton, *World Hunger*, p. 58; Lappe and Collins, *Food First*, pp. 277-292.

¹⁰Norman Faramelli, "Trade Barriers to Development in Poor Nations," *The Causes of World Hunger*, ed. William Byron (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 111-112; Toton, *World Hunger*, p. 28.

¹¹Lappe and Collins, *Food First*, pp. 435-437.

¹²Mark Lund, "The Arms Race and Economic Security," *Peace-Ways*, pp. 61-76.

¹³Lane Vanderslice, "Real Security in an Insecure World," Background Paper No. 69 (Washington, D.C., Bread for the World, 1983), p. 4; Mary Kaldor, *The Baroque Arsenal* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), pp. 148-162.

Selected Resources

There is an abundance of excellent resources available on peace and justice education. The following brief list provides a starting point for materials and ideas on the topic.

1. LCMS World Relief, 1333 S. Kirkwood Rd., St. Louis, MO 63122 (phone: 314-965-9000). LCMS World Relief provides many fine media resources (many without charge) along with study courses on hunger. A valuable tool is "A Festival of Sharing," which includes a bibliography on poverty and hunger, media, study courses, worship materials and activities. It is available in quantity at no charge.

2. Church World Service/CROP, P.E. Box 968, Elkart, Indiana 46515. CWS is the counterpart of Lutheran World Relief for major Protestant denominations. It has an excellent media library with free loan.

3. Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20018 (phone: 202-269-0200). BFW is a Christian citizens movement which formulates and advocates legislation in behalf of the poor and hungry throughout the world. Annual individual membership is \$15.00. BFW publishes excellent study materials, particularly for high school students and adults, along with worship materials for congregations.

4. Two educational programs for younger children (grades K-6) are:

a. "God's People Meet the Needs of People": a four session teaching resource for use with children. Available from The American Lutheran Church, 422 So. Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

b. "Help for Hungry People": a five session course available on two grade levels, 1-3 or 4-6. Leader's guide, \$1.60, activity booklets, 65¢. Augsburg Publishing House, 426 S. Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

coping with life in a world of injustice



by E. George Becker

The doves and the hawks are at it again! Demonstrations all over the world, particularly in Europe, have set forth the concerns of those who firmly believe that any kind of global blast could do us all in. But these attempts have not tempered the thinking of those who believe that superb military

defense is of the essence in protecting the future of humanity.

What is more, the rebels and guerrillas of third world countries seem to be even less concerned with a potential holocaust. They apparently feel that their own immediate concerns are far more important. Undoubtedly, they have asked the question a sufficient number of times, "What do we have to lose?" And their answer seems to be, "Nothing if we keep on fighting; everything if we don't."

Because of our religious orientations and social experiences it is difficult for us to imagine a world in which fighting never stops and where personal life and security are at extreme risk practically 24 hours a day. Nor do the major theoretical explanations regarding the courses of revolutionary war offer much consolation. It makes little difference whether you buy into Marxian theory which holds that such wars stem from exploitation and oppression of subordinate groups by a society's ruling elite,¹ or whether you accept the theory of relative-deprivation expounded by Davies and others,² or that of Pareto's so called circulation of elites in which too many people are excluded from positions of power by incompetent individuals of high inherited rank.³ Nor do the various proposals for preventing war seem to be taking hold: neutralizing the strength of nations through the balance of power; partial or complete disarmament; the limitation of military aggression; the elimination of inequality in order to effect social justice. The wars continue to break out and those that have already broken out never seem to cease.

Personal Reflections

How does one survive, much less, live a full and wholesome life in an environment which offers nothing but personal insecurity? When I was a little boy of about 7 or 8 it was difficult for me to imagine the world lasting until the year 2000. Just the number was fascinating in contrast to something like 1984. The 1900s could be pronounced. The 2000s you had to kind of stutter around on!

But more critical were the Biblical predictions regarding the last days which some teachers seemed to think you should always view as more important than the immediate present. I'll never forget my third grade teacher, Mr. Strieter. He was a great guy and a good teacher — an excellent story teller, as well. Nor did he overlook the Gospel. But he imprinted so indelibly upon my mind the concept of John's Armageddon,⁴ that whenever we Lutherans were playing the Catholics from Our Lady of Victory School, the pitcher's mound became the mountain of Megiddo and the game always became the final battle between God and the hostile world powers. After the game, however, things were quiet different, regardless of who lost. Both sides sat around

drinking soda pop out of bottles that permitted temporary congeniality. The last war again was over — until next time.

Now make no mistake, the Lord and His prophets have never given warnings to be taken lightly. Remember the words of Jesus, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places; all this is but the beginning of the sufferings."⁵

Back in third grade I didn't think humanity could make it through another World War. The Lord saw it differently. What is more, He not only permitted us to survive a world catastrophe, but He has always given us opportunity after opportunity to get off the war-wagon and become heralds of peace. But how we persist in fighting injustice with more of the same — in Korea, in Viet Nam, in Central and South America, in the Middle East. Nor are we alone. A goodly portion of the time we don't even know who the unjust are. Maybe those humans who respect human life and justice the least will be instrumental in blowing up the world before the year 2000, or at a later date.

But remember that the Gospel is firmly embedded within our Lord's warning about wars and rumors of wars. Note that He said, "See that you are not alarmed!"⁶ To worry about the end to the exclusion of the needs of the present is a waste. In fact, it can prove to be downright sinful, especially if we do not meet the needs of the present and in our folly contribute to the ultimate universal destruction.

Remember what else Jesus once said to His disciples as He sat with them on the Mount of Olives not too long before His own personal suffering and death, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places."⁷ These are words addressed to the Lord's disciples of 1984, as well. They are a bit more direct, a moderate amplification of the "wars and rumors of wars." These words address themselves to the very problems for which we are also at least partially responsible. We may not create wars or famines, but we don't always help to extinguish them. Even earthquakes and their devastating effects catch only our glances on the tube. We simply have a hard time remembering that we are living in what Jesus described as the "beginning of the sufferings," and that this suffering as it applies to us personally deals with the basic question of human injustice. We may not always be able to fight off the elements, but we can choose not to support the inhuman injustices which are running rampant in what appears to be a world headed for Armageddon.

Social Categories

You don't have to fly to South Africa and fight apartheid or join the army of your choice in Lebanon or Northern Ireland. This is not to say that if you determine to go to another part of the globe where famine or social devastation are more real than they are here at home, you should think otherwise.

There are injustices all about us. The common problems of life include experiences of unrest and injustice. Often the two go hand in hand. Either problem is demoralizing. To try to cope, when one cannot find peace and justice personally or when one sees others being robbed of a peaceful life and being dealt with unjustly, is a problem that cannot be overlooked by a person who regards himself as one who has been called by God to serve both church and state.

Look at the poverty that immediately surrounds us. Perhaps we dare not compare it to others places in the world such as India and Africa and portions of Central and South America. But the poverty in our own country, in contrast to Ed Meese's assessment, is still very real; and there are some who are actually starving.

It is true that poverty may be defined as either absolute or relative. Sometimes we divide the poor from the non-poor by using an objective standard, such as insufficient funds to buy enough food or clothing or provide for adequate shelter. This is the approach which the government uses in defining poverty. The relative approach suggests that people are poor if their income is significantly less than the average person in their own society. John Kenneth Galbraith suggested that people are poor or poverty stricken when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls significantly lower than that of the community in which they live.⁸

It makes little difference, however, whether one settles for an absolute or a relative criterion. The problem of establishing the cut-off point between those who are poor and those who appear to be otherwise still remains. The division process is relatively simple in contrast to the need for a vital concern for every member of society. A member of the Social Security Administration once suggested that there is no particular reason to even count the poor on the basis of any standard unless you are going to try to help them.⁹

One reason it is difficult to define who is poor in our society is because of the various societal segments that overlap and interrelate. Social categories such as age, family structure, residential areas and ethnic background are basic in such analyses. Generally, the young and the old are much more likely to be poor than are persons in the middle of their lives. Persons under 14 and over 65 constitute half of the poor in our country.¹⁰ Let's not forget that

the youth category is legitimate because many youths are members of large families which are more likely to be poor and because the young have great difficulty finding jobs even if they are old enough to work.

The elderly are also excluded from the labor market. Retirement may prove to be a mixed blessing, at best, for millions in our society. Many subsist, or perhaps only exist, on whatever the social security check has to offer each month. Almost one-third of the elderly who live alone are poor and some of these are starving. About one-tenth of those who live in families are regarded as poor.¹¹

The steady increase in single parent families, especially those headed by women, has contributed to this major problem in our society. In 1970, e.g., only 10.8% of all American families were headed by women. Just ten years later that figure had risen dramatically to 14.6%. Families headed by female single parents are much more likely to be below the poverty line than other households. Almost half of all families below the poverty line are headed by single women.

When we focus upon the poor, we usually find ourselves looking at crowded urban ghettos. But the percentage of rural persons below the poverty line is greater than the urban percentage, in spite of the fact that the majority of poor people live in large metropolitan areas. Over 16% of farm persons in 1979 were poor as compared to 12% of the rest of the population.¹³ This is due, in part, to the fact that migratory workers make up a considerable portion of the poor in rural areas. It also reflects the situation of Native Americans who live on barren reservations where it is almost impossible for them to make a living.

What is usually unrecognized at the popular level is the fact that most poor people in the United States are white. This category comprises two-thirds of all poor people in our country. But note carefully that the percentage of whites below the poverty line is much lower than the percentage of minorities below that line. Although about 11% of all whites were classified as poor in 1983, the black ratio was over 34%.¹⁴ In 1981 the average white family earned \$20,153 while the average black family earned \$11,309.¹⁵

It should also be remembered that the unemployment rate for blacks is just about double that of whites and that the rate of Hispanics is about the same. According to the latest studies, employment is stable or rising for young white men and falling for their black counterparts.¹⁶ A related variable is that housing discrimination as well as discrimination in other related services often causes minority persons to spend far more than white for the same goods and services. These injustices are

often totally overlooked, casually accepted, or explained away prejudicially, socially, and even theologically. Remember that Jesus once said, "The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."¹⁷ Upon more than one occasion I have heard someone resort to this passage as a defense for fewer dollars for world missions, world relief or some other vital need. What was forgotten for the moment was the social context of Jesus' retort to that fellow, Judas Iscariot, who was always more interested in filling his own pockets or preserving his own private investments to the extent that he saw fit to censure his Lord for accepting Mary's expensive anointment as a token of her love and affection for Him and His work.¹⁸

What is far more appropriate at this point is to remember one of the purposes of our Lord's coming into the world in which we live. It was to condemn the injustices set against both young and old, among families and related residential areas, and certainly toward persons of varying ethnic backgrounds, especially those who, as a result of ethnicity, were poor in both body and spirit. This is one reason why Jesus took the time to speak at length with the Samaritan woman and her people, much to the chagrin of His own disciples.¹⁹ This purpose is reflected in the Lord's own declaration as to the purpose of His coming. Remember how He entered the synagogue in Nazareth shortly after He embarked upon His ministry and read from Isaiah, chapter 61? "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And remember His single homiletical statement that followed, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."²⁰

Chuches and Malls

But where does one begin? How does one cope? How does one help another in coping with life in a world of injustice? It is one thing to hear the words of Jesus. It is quite another to listen to them, to heed them, to enact them, to fully represent them. Our human, sinful nature simply will not permit us to always be just, to be fair and deeply concerned about the rights of others. We feel the hurt when we are wronged. We have far more difficulty in internalizing the wrongs that others experience. This principle applies to us as individuals, as collective members of a family, a community, a society, and as members of the Body of Christ. The more remote the other person or group is from our presence or experience, the more difficult it is for us to sympathize with the respective grievance or hurt.

Furthermore, we find ourselves trying to cope in a

world that Parker Palmer describes as a "Company of Strangers."²¹ He suggests, as you may recall, that as long as primary opportunities in our lives remain private we will always have the tendency to deny public relatedness. In fact, we will be prone to amplify such relatedness.²² In his description of the typical shopping mall he suggests that this new phenomenon tends to repress rather than evoke public experience. Palmer sees the mall as a symbol of a shrinking public life. The mall is not identified with any local community. It strives to create a fantasy environment conducive only to shopping. The strangers one meets on the city streets are, for the most part, fellow citizens of the community. In this social context, the public life is enhanced by a sense of geographic relatedness. The mall, on the other hand, by its very creative design offers a center for commercial, not civic interaction.²³

The smaller mall in the smaller city may be somewhat of an exception by virtue of its size and geographic orientation, but the large mall in the large city bears out Palmer's descriptions. James Wood contrasts the mall with the inner city church. In one church he studied he found that in one year this church allowed 60 community organizations to use the building for a total of almost 3000 hours.²⁴

The question is justified, "How does the church to which I belong appear to the person who is trying to cope with life in a world of injustice?" Does it look more like the crossroad of personal interaction and support? Or is it more representative of the impersonal shopping mall intent upon pushing its wares for the sake of its own profit or sheer survival? The problems of our day and time cannot all be met by the church, it is true. But the primary mission of the church is still that of dealing very personally with the needs and the concerns of individuals who are merely trying to cope.

Personal Questions

There are some basic questions which each of us must continue to address to ourselves as members of Christ's church. They are questions which we dare never assume we have answered fully or adequately. They are questions which we hopefully are dealing with differently than those found in a nationwide survey. When asked about the causes of poverty, 58% of the respondents said that lack of thrift and proper management are the causes of poverty. Fifty-five percent said that lack of effort on the part of the poor is a very important cause.²⁵ Because the poor and many other groups of persons who seemingly do not measure up to popular social standards are blamed for their respective conditions, a stigma is attached. These prejudices make it difficult for those who are honestly trying to cope with their plights in life to understand why they continue to fall short and never

really gain in the race that is set before them.

The application can be made to all of those poor folks who are suffering physically, psychologically and spiritually. The fact of the matter is that the poor are always with us! Will we continue to take them for granted? Or will we make a greater effort to try and help those who are still staring at all of their own disproportionate shares of life?

Footnotes

¹Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1955) Originally published in 1948.

²James C. Davies, "Toward A Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, 1962, Vol. 27, pp. 5-19.

³Joseph Lopreato, ed., *Vilfred Pareto* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 109-162.

⁴Revelation 16:16. *Revised Standard Version* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1952.)

⁵RSV, Matthew 24:6-8.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), p. 323.

⁹Mollie Orshansky, "Counting the Poor: Another Look at the Poverty Profile," in German, Kornbluh and Haber, eds., *Poverty in America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965).

¹⁰Joan Huber and Peter Chalfant, *The Sociology of American Poverty* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1984).

¹¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level," (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 8.

¹²U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level," (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), p. 6.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1982-83* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 429.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 442.

¹⁶Robert D. Mare and Christopher Winship, "The Paradox of Lessening Racial Inequality and Joblessness Among Black Youth," *American Sociological Review*, 1984, Vol. 49, pp. 39-55.

¹⁷RSV, John 12:8.

¹⁸RSV, John 12:1-8.

¹⁹RSV, John 4:4-42.

²⁰RSV, Luke 4:16-21.

²¹Parker Palmer, *The Company of Strangers* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

²²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 47-49.

²⁴James R. Wood, *Sociological Analysis*, 1984, No. 45, 1-10.

²⁵Joe R. Feagin, *Subordinating the Poor* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979), p. 97.

Send for a free ETERNAL WORD® catalog now . . .
and offer your students
an exciting Christian curriculum next semester.

Look over our free ETERNAL WORD catalog and see how interesting, instructive, and inexpensive a complete, Bible-based curriculum can be!

Entertaining, illustrated Student Books for third-through eighth-grade day and weekday school students present challenging activities—directly relating God's Word to students' daily lives. Clear, concise Teachers Guides for each grade make preparation and instruction easier, and more rewarding, too. Lutheran day and weekday schools across the nation now depend on ETERNAL WORD curriculum. Find out why by sending for your free ETERNAL WORD catalog today!

Or order one or more ETERNAL WORD Examination Packs with Concordia's 30-day, no-risk guarantee. Use the form below, or call toll-free 1-800-325-3040 (in Missouri, call 1-800-392-9031).

30-Day No-Risk Guarantee:
If not completely satisfied, return order and invoice within 30 days; you pay only postage.

Please send me: ETERNAL WORD® catalog \$ FREE

Day School Examination Packs—includes 4 Teachers Guides and 4 Student Books.

Grades 3/4 Exam Pack (55-8605) \$ 69.00

Grades 5/6 Exam Pack (55-8603) 69.00

Grades 7/8 Exam Pack (55-8601) 69.00

Weekday School Exam Packs—includes 2 Teachers Guides and 2 Student Books.

Grades 3/4 Exam Pack (55-8705) \$ 34.50

Grades 5/6 Exam Pack (55-8703) 34.50

Grades 7/8 Exam Pack (55-8701) 34.50

CHARGE to my CPH Account No. _____ Total Merchandise \$ _____
(Shipping & handling will be added to charge orders) Shipping & Handling \$ 2.50

Name _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

School _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

CONCORDIA
PUBLISHING HOUSE
3558 SOUTH JEFFERSON AVENUE
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63118-2098

CPH © 1983

book reviews



EVANGELISM: DOING JUSTICE AND PREACHING GRACE by Harvie M. Conn. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.

Conn does not present his study as a how-to-do-it manual on evangelism. His quest is an effort "to look at the relation between evangelism and social questions as two sides of the same coin." Other terms that he uses to describe his work are "holistic evangelism" or "Lordship evangelism."

Author Conn asks some penetrating questions in order to help the reader focus on the crux of his theme: doing justice and preaching grace. He then develops the first part of his book in the context of evangelism. The word "evangelism" is viewed as a call: to reconciliation with God, to incorporation, to humanization, to celebration, and to justice. Harvie Conn uses terms like *kerygma* (proclamation), *diakonia* (service), *koinonia* (fellowship), and *leiturgia* (worship) as "different ways of describing the same room."

One added dimension of the concept of evangelism that the author discusses is *dikaïoma*. This term in the Greek means a thing or person pronounced by God to be just, the restoration of a criminal with a fresh chance, or a righteous deed. Conn emphasizes the challenge of the Church to model out *dikaïoma* while it faces the hindrances of sympathy and not compassion; talk and not truth.

The author illustrates that it is important to recognize that those whom we need to evangelize are those who are sinned against as well as sinners. Secondly, "truth is the acting out by word and deed of God's faithfulness to Himself and to people. It is the constancy of God in covenant with His creation." (p. 48)

Models of *dikaïoma* evangelism were illustrated on a congregational/church level and on a personal level. The attempt seems to be to balance the Word (peace) and Deed (justice) parts.

In the chapters on "Spirituality as a Barrier to Evangelism" and "Prayer: Where Word and Deed Come Together" the author is trying to point out a greater dimension of evangelism and to indicate that prayer is the nexus of word and deed, peace and justice. These chapters were important from the author's point of view but were more difficult to follow and dissimulate, even upon rereading.

The author of the book appears to want the reader to see mankind as both otherworldly and this worldly, spiritual and

human, an individual being who as a Christian lives the other world in this world. Thus the true Christian response follows a model of evangelism that uses a word of peace and a deed of justice.

Harvie Conn's plea seems to me to be a desire to employ a model of the "priesthood of all believers" that will require even more reformation from hierarchical church structure, intellectual meritocracy, pride and status and manipulative tactics. He desires a reactivated laity that is rejuvenated by a new model of ministry. "Our models of ministry can change biblical perspective into sociocultural realities. We see the biblical portrait of the Church not as it is but always from inside such models." (p. 96)

The model that the Church uses affects a Biblical vision in the way it explains, evaluates, provides group reinforcement, integrates and adapts. Models must assimilate or be destroyed because they are intrinsically conservative. "They must be aware of the patterns and processes of the culture in which they work and they must work with or in terms of these patterns and processes to bring about the changes they seek" (p. 101). Professor Conn, who speaks from a Protestant perspective, can be commended for urging a rejuvenated part in evangelism for the laity and a more wholistic approach to the nature of man as God's creature in maintaining a tension in peace and justice.

Kenneth B. Block

PEACE-WAYS: 16 CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY IN A NUCLEAR AGE, Charles P. Lutz and Jerry L. Folk, eds. Foreword by David W. Preuss. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983.

One sign of renewed vitality in Christianity is that churches, both in the Eastern and Western Blocs, are addressing seriously issues raised by nuclear warfare and accelerating military expenditures throughout the world. Many U.S. main-line denominations have taken stands on the issue of nuclear warfare, the most publicized being the Pastoral Letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*.

For Christians who are attempting to formulate a stance on questions of nuclear war and the arms race, *Peace-Ways* is an outstanding tool. It does not provide easy answers to these difficult questions, but does present thoughtful analyses of the issues. The book consists of sixteen articles organized around four major topics: 1) The Nuclear World; 2) Arms and Justice; 3) Biblical and Theological Perspectives; and 4) Aids for Peace Action.

Peace-Ways is helpful in a number of ways. First, the chapters are clearly written and understandable, yet they reflect competent scholarship. They are of modest length, making the book a suitable resource for group discussion as well as individual reading. Second, there is a solid Scriptural foundation for the study of nuclear war and the arms race. Although the Bible says little directly to these questions, several authors provide a thoughtful application of Scriptural materials and principles to our contemporary dilemma. Third, unlike many study materials on peacemaking, this book presents a variety of perspectives: support for the idea of nuclear deterrence; an argument for Christian pacifism (but against Christian passive-ism which just bows to political authority and the status quo); and a defense of the just war concept. The consensus of the contributors, however, supports nuclear pacifism. They argue this

(Continued on page 24)

CONCORDIA TEACHERS COLLEGE
Seward, Nebraska 68434

Address Correction Requested. Return Postage Guaranteed

Route to: _____

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Seward, Nebr.
Permit No. 4

(Continued from page 23)

point with clarity and persuasiveness. This stance is an important one for Missouri Synod Lutherans to consider because recent statements in synodical publications have implied that nuclear warfare and the just war concept could be compatible. The writers in *Peace-Ways* argue that this cannot be valid.

A significant message in the book is that peacemaking must be rooted in the Biblical concept of Shalom, which not only involves the absence of military conflict, but the presence of justice, wholeness and community in human relations. Three chapters give stimulating analyses of the negative impact of the arms race on economic security, on the poor and hungry, and on sexism.

Finally, readers are given helpful suggestions for the implementation of peacemaking efforts, ranging from opportunities for national government policy, for denominations as corporate entities, and for parishes in their worship and educational life. Several appendices, which include the excellent statement by the American Lutheran Church, "Mandate for Peacemaking," provide resources and ideas which can be used in the study and practice of peacemaking.

This is an important book, an excellent resource for Christians who wish to expand the scope of their discipleship to address the vital questions of peace and justice in the contemporary world. It deserves widespread use and study in our churches.

Jerrald K. Pfabe

**HOMEMADE SOCIAL JUSTICE:
TEACHING PEACE AND JUSTICE IN
THE HOME** by Michael True. Chicago:
Fides/Clarentian, 1982.

"Rearing children is a very difficult task, but it is difficult in ways that few people ever tell about in books," writes Michael True, one of those few people. *Homemade Social Justice: Teaching Peace and Justice in the Home* addresses that difficult task. True helps the reader understand problems of injustice and helps his/her family become involved in shaping a just and peaceful world. It's a practical book, written with parental insight.

A teacher by profession and father of six nearly adult children, True speaks with unusual credibility — admitting failures and celebrating successes in training his own children to perceive and act on those things which make for justice and peace. To parents who worry about the risk involved, he replies, "What will happen to them if children are *not* taught the skills to live as responsible people in the face of injustice?"

Acknowledging that working for peace and justice is often slow and very discouraging, True is honest about his own struggles with faithfulness to this task. He adds, "It is astonishing what a few people can do when they are patient, persistent, and competent." He stresses the importance of having the worshipping community give sustenance to their families' commitment to strive for people and justice.

Writing from a Catholic perspective, True utilizes powerful church documents on

social teaching to support his family efforts. I envy that support and lament the Missouri Synod's reluctance to help its members give strong witness to the world in matters of peace and justice. He also suggests that parents use literature and history to help children understand the realities of sexism, racism, and poverty-hunger. He says, "Children should be taught about the bravery and loyalty of their ancestors in confronting injustice and learn that there are better ways to prove a person's courage and dedication than preparing for war." He includes an annotated bibliography, approved by his children and their friends.

In the chapter, "But What Can One Family Do?," suggestions range from a dinner-time offering for the hungry to refusing to pay war taxes. Other practical sections include a helpful guide to parents for the essential task of staying informed on current social issues.

In just the few hours this book requires, the reader will not only learn how to teach peace and justice in the home, but he/she will probably turn the last page with a sharper social conscience.

Parents, teachers, pastors, grandparents, friends — anyone in regular contact with the young — can be a blessing to them by reading and using the ideas expressed in this brief volume. *Homemade Social Justice* is hopeful, helpful reading for anyone who wants to help children respond to God's relentless call for justice.

Esther M. Pfabe

