

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies, 1986 Forum on Planetheonomics, June 17-21, 1986, Mancelona, Michigan, with special reference to "The Once & Future State of Planetheonomics: A Review of Recent Literature on Ecology, Economics, & Theology," by Fred G. Van Dyke. Report by James B. Thornblade (International Economist, Bank of Boston).

This conference brought together a remarkable diversity of people from academic, theological, and government policy backgrounds for a half week of inquiry and Christian fellowship in a beautiful setting of woods and lakes in northern Michigan. The Au Sable Institute, located on the upper Lower Peninsula of Michigan, is designed to support and serve evangelical Christian colleges by offering programs in field ecology and biology, land and water resources, and environmental studies. The mission of the Au Sable Institute is to be a:

center for study and experiences which integrate environmental information with Christian thought for the purpose of bringing the Christian community and the general public to a better understanding of the Creator and the stewardship of His creation.

The leader of the conference was Ragnar Overby, with a career in economic development and environmental policy at the World Bank. It was Overby who fashioned the term "Planetheonomics"-- "God-directed, ecologically sound, economics for humanity." Prof. Fred G. Van Dyke of Fort Wayne Bible College rendered invaluable service as the bibliographer and wrote that: "Plantetheonomics joins concepts of ecology, economics, and theology toward a formulation of a God-ruled planetary economics."

The thirty-seven participants ranged widely from around the United States and other countries: policymakers from Washington, professors of economics, theology, and ecology from schools in many states, ecologists and those familiar with the rural environment, a missionary doctor from India now "retired" to run a leprosy center in Louisiana, scholars from Oxford, Netherlands, Ghana, and Zaire. Looking around the meeting the first day one wondered what this diverse group had in common. It was truly a working of the Holy Spirit that knitted the conference together in stimulating fellowship.

The Au Sable conference was a bold effort to break away from a narrow specialization in economics and environmental policy. As Van Dyke pointed out, academia is fragmenting, but world problems require a much more integrated approach. Environmental concerns have had a low profile during the Reagan administration. American business opposes these concerns as detrimental to free enterprise. Developing countries see such concerns as retarding de-

velopment. The evangelical church views the environmental issue with suspicion because of ties to humanism and Eastern religions.

Van Dyke cites two landmark publications at the interface between economics, theology, and ecology. The Club of Rome study in 1972, *The Limits to Growth*, foresaw critical resource shortages given current economic structures and growth trends, and the model was refined and elaborated in the work of the conference participant Herman Daly, in his *Steady State Economics* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1977). The confluence of ecology and theology was profoundly influenced by a second key work, Lynn White, Jr.'s essay, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecology Crisis" *Science* 155: 1204-07 (1967). In White's words:

Christianity . . . not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends. . . . By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to natural objects.

Van Dyke cites as a major document leading to a more serious interest in the environmental movement by Christians, the 1980 publication *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.), which was one influence inspiring the establishment of the Au Sable Institute. The role of theology in public sector policy on the environment was spelled out in the book by conference participant Wesley Grandberg-Michaelson, *Worldly Spirituality: A Call to Take Care of the Earth* (NY: Harper & Row, 1982).

Within the last ten years, two conflicting views have developed in Christian economic policy. Although directed at the hunger issues and the uneven distribution of food around the world, Ronald J. Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (NY: Paulist Press, 1977) calls for lifestyle change that would also reduce the pressure on the environment. This view is in contrast to the interest among some evangelical Christians in survivalism and the "prosperity gospel"--or, in Van Dyke's words, "the proclamation that it is God's will to bless His people with material wealth and physical health." Economists like Gary North [*An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1973)] support policies to promote economic growth and the Western consumption standard around the world.

Van Dyke reviews the references in the *Religion Index* that combine Christian thought with either economics or ecology. He found that the literature on Christianity and economics is more extensive and displays more mature scholarship, whereas writings on ecology and theology "have often been faddish and trendy, rather than considered and professional." He concludes that:

long-standing and more mature Christian interest in economics, particularly when united with professional ecologic in-

sight, holds great hope in achieving the kind of integrated outlook on world problems so necessary to produce solutions.

To that end this Au Sable Forum broke important new ground for a more integrated world view--a new paradigm--planetheonomics.

At the conference two papers stood out in attempting to integrate Christian thinking, economics, and environmental science. The most systematic proponent of planetheonomics, before the term was created by Overby, has been Herman Daly, professor of economics at Louisiana State University, and author of *Steady-State Economics and Economics, Ecology, & Ethics* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1980). Daly argued at the conference ("A Biblical Economic Principle & the Steady-State Economy") that Christians have a basis in Scripture, and particularly in the Old Testament (Lev. 25, Dt. 17, Prov. 30) for agreeing to the principle of limited inequality in the distribution of private property. He then translates that principle into a contemporary policy of minimum and maximum income limits, not only within, but across generations. A steady state economy:

aims for a scale and quality of economic activity that is ecologically sustainable for a long future at a level of per capita resource use sufficient to provide a good life for whatever population size can be accommodated under those conditions.

A second paper that stimulated good discussion was "Biblical Economics & the Long Term Future of Creation," given by Donald A. Hay, member of the economics faculty at Oxford University. Biblical material supports a policy that exploitation of renewable resources should be kept at a level which permits the stock to remain in long run equilibrium. In Gen. 1:26-28, man is called by God to "rule" and to "subdue" the earth and animals--passages which support the critical comments of Lynn White Jr. However, Hay points out that in the parallel creation story in Gen. 2 God calls man to "take care of" the garden (v. 15) and to "name" the animals (v. 19), suggesting preservation and respect for the creation.

Hay goes on to demonstrate with a simple model and graph of fishing that "an unregulated market economy does not have any mechanism to prevent the process of extinction," and indeed may in several situations promote this process. Renewable resources, such as in agriculture and fishing, can be maintained by policies stemming from a positive stewardship of creation, which a careful reading of the Bible supports. Regarding non-renewable resources, the concept of stewardship would have to be broadened to include "a strong obligation to make full provision for future generations." Hay notes that "a culture which gives a high priority to preserving family identity over the generations will probably perform better in this respect than one which leaves each generation to make its own way in the world."

Hay expresses a preference for setting up a "guardian" to direct the market system at the margin toward activity more favorable to the environment via quotas, licenses and fees. He warns against undertaking big scale systemic changes that can become a "tower of Babel" or idol, rather than changing attitudes from the bottom up through heightened awareness in Christian community of our stewardship of the creation.

To summarize, the 1986 Au Sable forum on Planetheonomics was a stimulating beginning to more active involvement by the evangelical Christian community in environmental economics. I retained my previous impression that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, has little to say directly on stewardship of the earth, with the emphasis being much more on interpersonal relations. However, there was considerable discussion during the forum about the benefits of a simpler material lifestyle, or as the participant from the Netherlands, Bob Goudzwaard, put it, the "economy of enough." A fruitful direction for future discussion and research is the interaction between Christian fellowship and simpler material lifestyles, and particularly how to move toward such a steady state economy and still improve the basic wellbeing of the poorest members of the society.

The following papers were presented at the conference, and can be obtained for \$2 each plus postage (except for the Bibliography and Review of Literature by Fred Van Dyke, which are available as a set for \$7 plus postage); a set of the other papers is available for \$20 plus postage. Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies, Rt. 2, Big Twin Lake, Mancelona, MI 49659 (616) 587-8686. The following name and number also have been included for information about the Forum or the papers: Helen L. Vukasin (914) 255-8766.

"Religions, Ecology & Economics" Thomas Berry (historian of cultures; president, American Teilhard Assn for the Future of Man)

"Development from a Christian Perspective" Lans Bovenberg & Theodore R. Malloch (economists)

"The Pursuit of Happiness" Paul Brandt (surgeon and author)

"Christianity & Agriculture: God, the Soul & the Soil" Stephan Carr (agroeconomist)

"A Biblical Economic Principle & the Steady State Economy" Herman E. Daly (economist)

"Creation's Challenge to Oikonomics: Earthkeeping & Housekeeping in a Godless Economy" Calvin B. DeWitt (ecologist; director, Au Sable Institute)

"Christian Economics & the Stewardship Mandate for Creation Management" Bob Goudzwaard (economist)

"Ethical Economics: A New Paradigm for Justice & Stewardship"
Robert D. Hamrin (economist)

"Biblical Economics & the Long Term Future of Creation" Donald A.
Hay (economist)

"Enviro-Economics of the Coastal Zone: A Christian Perspective"
Calvin Hurst (environmental scientist)

"Weapons & Planetheonomics" Charles Overby (mechanical engineer;
combat pilot)

"Prospectus for the Au Sable Conference on Planetheonomics" Ragnar
Overby (environmental affairs specialist)

"Annotated Bibliography on Planetheonomics" Fred Van Dyke (theo-
logian, economist, and naturalist)

"The Once & Future State of Planetheonomics: A Review of Recent
Literature on Econogy, Economics & Theology" Fred Van Dyke

Ethics & Economics: Canada's Catholic Bishops on the Economic Crises by
Gregory Baum and Duncan Cameron (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1984).
Reviewed by B. W. Wilkinson (Professor of Economics, University of Al-
berta)

This little volume contains the paper "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis" released by the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs, of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on New Year's Day, 1983; two essays by Gregory Baum and Duncan Cameron respectively, assessing in turn the background to and the nature of the Bishops' statement; and four Appendices reproducing earlier not-readily-available statements by the Bishops on various socio-economic issues in Canada during the years 1975 to 1980. I will focus on the two essays which account for about 70 percent of the volume. In the process some of the key aspects of the Bishops' various pronouncements will be mentioned.

Gregory Baum's essay "The Shift in Catholic Social Teaching" argues that the growing leftward emphasis of official Roman Catholic documents emanates from Latin America. There, the impoverishment of the masses caused the people to reject the traditional Catholic organic view of society in favour of a liberationist, conflictual one. The Church of Rome gradually accepted this view and identified itself with the downtrodden and oppressed. Man was perceived to be in need of liberation not only from the slavery of personal sin, but from the oppression caused by societal sin as well. The Canadian Bishops' pronouncements from 1975 to 1983 which Baum discusses document their growing acceptance of this position. In their statements they moved from initial concern about northern Canadian development and justice for the Native Peoples