

"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

regarding land claims, on to the need for Christians to speak and act against the injustice of human suffering and oppression due to poverty.

Baum accepts the Bishops' position that the growing unemployment in Canada is largely a function of the increasing centralization of economic power in large corporations and metropolitan centres, foreign ownership of the Canadian economy, and heavy emphasis upon production of crude resources for export and capital intensive projects. But he does not provide analysis to support these views. More generally, the problem of capitalism is attributed to two impersonal developments: the internationalization of capital and the advent of computer-based technology. Baum argues, in agreement with John Paul II, that the capitalist system is moving into a third, more brutal phase, whereby corporations are relying more and more on governments to protect their empires by regulating the masses while they simultaneously push greater numbers of the people in impoverished and less developed areas of the world "outside of the economic system." (56)

One wonders whether the desire of corporations today to have their governments protect their interests is much different in principle than in the days of colonies and empires of the 19th century, and whether the intensity of individual human suffering, although now on a larger scale because the population is so much greater and more of the world has become industrialized, is any more severe than during the agonies of the industrial revolution in Britain and the rest of Europe before social legislation reduced much of this suffering. These possibilities are never considered. Rather, Baum simply places emphasis on the Bishops' two moral principles: the "preferential option for the poor" and the "value and dignity of labour." He notes that the church's teaching as far back as Pius XI (1922-39) advocated that workers should share in decision-making in the work place and be joint-owners of that work place.

Baum generally defends the Bishops' right to speak out on socio-economic issues, and suggests, quite rightly I believe, that their pronouncements have made an important cultural contribution by challenging the status quo, thereby "desacralizing" it and initiating debate on it. He suggests, too, that the Bishops' criticism of the existing social order shows repentance for the failure of the Church to speak out during Hitler's atrocities. He does admit that the Bishops' emphasis upon Canada becoming more self-sufficient fails to take adequate account of the needs of the developing countries to export more of their labour-intensive goods. Yet he suggests that greater imports from these lands as well as greater employment at home should be possible--although it is far from clear how the Bishops' recommendations such as those involving more labour-intensive production in Canada will necessarily bring this about.

The lack of economic analysis and assessment in Baum's discus-

sion of the basic economic issues that the Bishops' statement addresses leaves one expectant that these will be adequately addressed in the subsequent essay by Duncan Cameron. They really are not. Cameron first discusses the monetarist solution of tight money supply and high interest rates, and the accompanying government restraints upon public service wages. He likes neither, and argues that they both show a bias against labour. He makes some valid points such as the one that the rising price of government services is an important and often neglected cause of inflationary pressure. Yet he neglects the inconsistency between that position and his view that controls on the incomes of government employees are inappropriate. Again, he correctly notes that a depreciation of the currency can help to make Canada competitive, but ignores that if all this depreciation is doing is to offset inflationary wage and salary demands or profit taking, nothing is gained, and the danger of greater inflation and a continuously depreciating currency is heightened. And nowhere in the statements of either the Bishops or Cameron do we ever find criticism of union attitudes and behavior that permits and/or condones poor work performance, whether it be laziness, carelessness or needless absenteeism, both in blue collar and white collar jobs. Yet the Bible has a good deal to say about workers giving fair value for their pay.

Cameron defends the Bishops' point that many corporations are becoming increasingly transnational in their orientation, and that high technology and capital intensity often characterize their behaviour. For many industries, both goods and services producing, this is true. But he never shows any awareness of the possibility that high union wages or minimum wages may contribute to the increasing substitution of capital for labour.

Cameron is correct however in suggesting that there exists no global shortage of funds for investment. He is also correct in arguing that "the market" is far from neutral in the sacrifices that are required of people in an economy facing a deterioration in sales of its products, and that a unilateral stimulation of the Canadian economy is not an easy way out of the unemployment. But "self-sufficient, community-controlled development," (143) or giving workers a greater voice in management decisions--as he and the Bishops suggest--are not simple solutions to the problems of unemployment or unequal sacrifice. Granted, many more products could probably be produced domestically than currently are, but it is not easy to identify them, and someone's money is going to have to be risked for these businesses to commence.

This last phrase needs emphasizing. Neither the Bishops nor Cameron ever address the issue of where the capital should come from for new community-based ventures, or who should bear the risk if these ventures fail. They both could have made an important point if they had at least identified clearly the increasing propensity of so-called capitalists to want to risk someone else's money but their own, and to desire government grants for their own

businesses or government guarantees on any loans they make to others for new ventures.

The Bishops and Cameron could also have noted that human greed may often be at the heart of many of the difficulties in business endeavours and relations, dominating the motives of both owners of capital and labour unions. (One does not have to be rich to be greedy.) Only in the Bishops' 1977 statement "A Society to be Transformed," is there a short phrase indicating that man is "called to turn from self-seeking and greed." But this theme is sadly lacking throughout the rest of this entire volume. It deserves greater prominence, given the warning against it in the Bible (e.g. I Tim. 6:9-10).

More generally, in my judgment, both the Bishops' statements and the commentaries on them would have been more powerful had they referred more frequently to the Bible. As it is, they are consistent with the observation made by Baum that "traditional Catholic social teaching did not invoke the Scriptures . ." (43)

Jesus has told us to love our neighbours, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan He made it perfectly clear who our neighbours are. Perhaps this is where we have to begin--not on some grand scale, not with some new organizational structure, but attempting to apply His instructions to us in our daily lives as teachers, administrators, owners of vast amounts of capital, agents of financial intermediaries, or trade unionists. We also have Jesus' injunction that he to whom much is given, much will be required. Perhaps this is what the Bishops are trying to say in their priority of labour over capital principle. If so, it then makes good biblical sense, and if it had been stated more clearly, capitalists might have been challenged more effectively to look at their social responsibilities.

In conclusion, the Bishops' expression of concern and the discussions it has engendered in books such as this one are timely. The world is hurtling forward with varying degrees of chaos in financial, commodity, and labour markets. There are no easy answers. It is true that the market by itself will not likely resolve all the difficulties now being faced or minimize the pain involved in adjustment--as some ardent believers in the market seem to believe. There is room for changes. This volume helps us to think about the need for such changes and what the nature of these changes ought to be, even if it does not push either the economic or scriptural analysis as far as it might.

"Christian Ethics for Christian Economists: An Annotated Bibliography"
Prepared by Christopher Lind (Professor of Church and Society, St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon).

Donald McCloskey's recent article and now book, *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), has been an extremely important part of my own attempt to try and understand the ethical dimension of economic thought. In my view however, his work does not stand alone. Rather, it has strong affinities with the work done by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 2nd Ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970 [1962]). Kuhn interprets knowledge in terms of the community doing the knowing. So, when he wants to understand how revolutions in scientific knowledge take place, he examines the activities of the scientific community. There he discovers that the community has its own internal code for deciding what is normal scientific activity and what is abnormal (or anomalous). This internal code is critical for the distinction between knowledge which is scientifically credible and that which is not. McCloskey's affinity to Kuhn is established because of McCloskey's parallel concern with the community of knowers. In McCloskey's case he is concerned to distinguish between how economists say they work (in the formal discussions of methodology) and how individual economists and the community of economists actually behave to ensure that their views command respect. He does this by analysing the rhetoric of this distinct community.

This concern for communities as the bearers of tradition and knowledge is a familiar one for those of us who continue to be nurtured by the traditions of the biblical people. It has a special relevance, however, for anyone who wants to bridge the great divide between the community called social ethics and the community called economics.

Some may think that this division is just another name for the gulf of scientific ignorance in which theologians (especially theologians on the left) are thought to be immersed. Economists often are heard to complain that churches and/or theologians are knee deep in economic debate justified only by their theological resources, as if the whole body of economic literature was irrelevant. To show how economists can also function as a self-justifying community, as if the whole body of literature known as Christian ethics did not exist, let me use an illustration.

In May of 1986, there was a conference of Anglican economists convened in Winnipeg. I attended as a representative of the category 'Anglican, non-economist, theologian'. It was a significant event and I was privileged to have been included, but there was one recurring event that puzzled me deeply and which Kuhn and McCloskey have helped me to understand. With regularity, whenever one of the economists developed an argument referring to an ethical dimension of economic life, they would do so in reference to