

ever, it costs something, because the core reasons for disagreements on some issues remain fuzzy. The editor seems at times too eager to find harmony, where the differences might have been clarified instead. I do recommend this book to

readers as thought-provoking. It prompts discovery of one's own viewpoint, while promoting better understanding and respect for alternative views. I look forward to the next volumes in this series. ■

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## Reformed Faith and Economics

**T**his well-edited selection of papers from seminars during 1985-87 held at Ghost Ranch, a national adult study center of the Presbyterian Church (USA), provides an opportunity for reflection on previous Presbyterian documents, notably *The Church and Transnational Corporations*, 1984 and *Toward a Just Caring and Dynamic Political Economy*, 1985. The volume contains a summary introduction by the editor and Dean Lewis of the former Advisory Council on Church and Society of the UPCUSA as well as a comprehensive conclusion by Christian Iosso, former Associate for Mission Responsibility Through Investment. The other articles are written by academics outside the church bureaucracy.

The first papers discuss Old Testament prophets' visions of economic justice and experiences of the New Testament church in Jerusalem.

Three articles follow on John Calvin's theology. Ronald Stone of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary stresses that though Calvin had post-feudal ideas about Christian vocation, the role of money, and capital accumulation, he never advocated the economic individualism attributed to Calvinists by Max Weber. To Calvin, "humanity was formed to be a social animal" (*Commenting on Genesis*, p. 128). The individualism imbedded in our economics texts today came later.

Preston Williams of Harvard Divinity School shows that Calvinists in North America believed so strongly in property rights that they had difficulty in combating slavery and racism. Furthermore, the Puritan covenant did not extend easily to African-Americans or to European ethnic minorities. Only the affirmation of God's sovereignty over all of society leads Calvinists to favor inclusiveness.

David Little of the University of Virginia finds that Calvin believes the rich must share:

There is no doubt that in Calvin's mind the "fair survival shares"—enough to eat, sufficient shelter, affordable medical care, access to education, employment opportunity, protection against arbitrary injury—

### EDITOR/ PUBLISHER

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Robert L. Stivers, Ed.  
Published by University Press of America,  
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### REVIEWER

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Scott Brunger,  
Maryville College, TN.

*Economists seeking formal models will be disappointed in this volume.*

constitute a relatively objective standard of justice, above and beyond the subjective interests of individual human beings, and according to which economic performance can and must be judged (p. 66).

Taxes may be raised and spent for job training and the development of new industries to employ the jobless, such as the weaving industry in Geneva, Switzerland. While Calvin defends the rights of property, he also promotes "beneficence to neighbors" as a religious obligation, though not as a legal right.

The volume then contains six articles on contemporary policy issues, beginning with two on tax reform. Robert Stivers of Pacific Lutheran University concludes: "The community is the holder of property in trust from God, even though in its wisdom it may delegate this responsibility to individuals. Taxes are not a 'taking away' but a 'withholding,' that is, a holding on by the community to the socially generated product for purposes of extending the common good" (p. 104). He proposes a liberal agenda of progressive taxation, transfer payments, and legislation to eliminate discrimination. William Raby, a tax consultant, finds the 1986 Tax Reform sadly deficient by the standards of equity, moral integrity, simplicity and efficiency. However, he points out that part of tax reform would require eliminating the exclusion of ministerial housing allowances, deductibility of charitable contributions and of church investment income. He finds that since Geneva, the Calvinist tradition has proposed a privileged status for the church.

Two articles discuss environmental crisis. Gordon Douglass, Dean of Franklin and Marshall College, and Jane Dempsey Douglass, Professor of Historical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, point out that reformed theology emphasizes human sin and redemption to the detriment of the doctrine of creation. When they review Presbyterian Creeds they find

little emphasis on creation but no reference either to a mandate from Genesis to dominate and subdue the earth. As a means of preserving the earth and the family farm while exploiting new technologies for increased food production, they propose integrated rural development. William Gibson of the Center for Religion, Ethics, and Social Policy at Cornell University challenges the Reformed faith to observe and criticize the existing economy, to transcend personal interest, to envision a new order, and to pursue the new things that God declares.

Bebb Wheeler Stone of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary relates stories of Indian women confronting a mining monopoly, Korean women buying sisters out of prostitution, American women instituting female impact statements for government projects, Hebrew midwives defying Pharaoh, and the rights of widows in the Old Testament.

Lee McDonald of Pomona College discusses capitalist virtue. He finds that Adam Smith balanced a belief in "the invisible hand" with one in natural sympathy according to which individuals find pleasure in seeking other's happiness too. He assumes that any system can lead to excess and so there is a role for admonition as opposed to social action. He states, "an ethic of virtue aimed at changing motivations is to be preferred to the construction of formal principles that must then be imposed on reluctant subjects" (p. 198).

Finally, Carol Johnston of the Claremont Graduate School analyzes the U.S. Roman Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on the economy, *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, 1985. The Douglasses also discuss their chapter on "Food and Agricultural Policies."

Economists seeking formal models will be disappointed in this volume. They will find an implicit critique of consumer choice theory. Those looking for a norma-

tive economic paradigm within Reformed theology will find a consistent one represented throughout the papers. It upholds the principle of private property under the sovereignty of God, though it is debatable whether moral appeal or law should govern redistribution of wealth for the needs of the poor and conservation of the environment. Reformed theology takes seriously human sin, so any economic system is under God's judgment as are the church's hiring practices and privileged tax status. It stresses Christian vocation

motivated by a sense of gratitude for God's forgiveness rather than pecuniary rewards. The Reformed economic vision is less detailed than the Roman Catholic pastoral letter on the economy, though in many respects they converge.

This volume is accessible to undergraduates and ministers as well as to professional economists. It provides a good companion to the current six-volume series by other researchers, *The Presbyterian Presence: The Twentieth Century Experience*, sponsored by the Lilly Endowment. ■

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