

Church and Inflation

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For the past several years, national agencies of Protestant denominations in the U.S. have challenged corporations through stockholder resolutions on various issues related to social justice. Roman Catholic orders and dioceses have more recently joined the movement.

At a September workshop sponsored by the Ohio Council of Churches and the Catholic Conference of Ohio, it was agreed that "as investors, Churches are part owners and therefore have a right and obligation to monitor corporate behavior and to act where necessary to prevent or correct corporate policy which leads to social injury, including the effects of inflation."

A statement by the U.S. Catholic Conference's Department of Social Development and World Peace on the subject of multinational corporations cited "evidence" that these fiscal giants are "curtailing international development and human rights." The statement expressed the conference's concern about such "concentrated power."

It stressed that "multi-national business interests which play such a dominant role in the less developed countries... also dominate, to a great extent, our own domestic economy." Thus, another area of economic concern for the churches was pinpointed.

In recent months, the religious community has begun to address another dimension of the inflation question,

directly "challenging the marketplace" and speaking out on specific problems of the nation's economy.

Several churchmen, including Msgr. Lawrence Corcoran, executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, and Dr. Arnold Mickelson, general secretary of the American Lutheran Church, took part in President Ford's economic "summit conference" in late September.

Prior to the "summit," Msgr. Corcoran told a U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare hearing that the nation's "first priority" in the fight against inflation must be steps to alleviate the plight of the poor and low income families.

He went on to urge more public service employment by the government, reductions in the defense budget, space budget and highway expenditures, the closing of tax loopholes in upper income brackets, the lowering of interest rates on housing loans, and food price reductions that would not hurt the small farmer, with the brunt being borne by agribusiness and the non-farm sector.

Calling for a "serious review" of the nation's economic system, Msgr. Corcoran said the country has been unable to cope with the "pervasive monopolistic practices that vitiate the nation of a free and open economic system."

A statement by 55 black leaders, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson of Operation PUSH and the Rev. Bernard S.

Lee of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, called on the government to find creative means to ease the "disproportionate" pressures of inflation on minority groups.

A Canadian Catholic leader took a slightly different approach to the economic slump, calling on large corporations to divert 10 per cent of their advertising budgets to help improve conditions.

Cardinal Paul Leger, who resigned his post as archbishop of Montreal to serve among lepers in Africa, said that if 10 per cent of all advertising budgets were channeled to the needy, "the present relationship between rich and poor in our affluent society would be transformed."

In a draft statement formulated as a response to President Ford's economic "summit," a joint Catholic Charities-U.S. Catholic Conference committee went so far as to urge the President to dump his corps of economic advisers and exercise "his own leadership" to aid workers, the aging, young people and the needy.

Sharply critical of administration proposals to allow high unemployment to curb inflation, it also urged strong measures against "profiteering" and possible anti-trust violations by the food and energy industries.

The statement questioned the assumption that inflation is due to excessive demand and that "high unemployment" would curtail that demand. It blamed the current economic crisis on the general lack of confidence in government, worldwide hunger and the consequent demand for goods, and on increased energy costs and exploitation by some industries.



From left, John McRory, Mrs. William Arnold, Father Elmer J. Schmidt, Ronald Jones and Mrs. Arden Wolterman discuss plans for campaign pledges.

Parish Plans New Hall

Apalachin — Parishioners at St. Margaret Mary's Church, plan a pledge campaign for a multi-purpose building. The pastor, Father Elmer J. Schmidt, stated that workers will meet at 1 p.m. in church on Sunday, Oct. 20 for Benediction and then will visit parishioners.

The volunteers will ask families to pledge a "fair share" over a year-and-a-half payment period for the proposed hall. The new structure will be built adjacent to the church for catechetical and social programs and meetings.

A census taken last month showed over 700 Catholic families in the parish and an additional 95 families attending neighboring parishes.

A parish survey in the spring indicated the people realized the need for a multi-purpose building. Parish Council president Ronald W. Jones announced that

the recent sale of the old church, which was formerly used as a hall, and the continued growth of the parish necessitated immediate plans.

Power Questioned By U.S. Bishops

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — An agency of the U.S. Catholic bishops has seriously questioned the roles, motivations and "enormous power" of the relatively few multinational corporations and banks, citing growing evidence that these financial giants are curtailing international development and human rights.

Citing reflections made by Pope Paul in 1971 on possible

abuses of power by multinational enterprises, a statement issued by the U.S. Catholic Conference's Department of Social Development and World Peace, said:

A growing number of Catholics are beginning to share Pope Paul's concern about the emerging power of multinational corporations.

The document said there is growing evidence that "concentrated power in the hands of a relatively few multinational corporations and banks inhibits international development and deters the process of achieving justice here and abroad."

"The time is at hand for us not only to question the enormous power wielded by so few people and institutions, but in a more fundamental way to question the underlying motivation behind such unbridled power," the statement said.

In a preface to the document, Auxiliary Bishop John J. Dougherty of Newark, chairman of the USCC committee, said it is important that "as citizens of the U.S. (we) sharpen our vision in these times when the maldistribution of the earth's resources and the concentration of the world's wealth are so blatant."

National Goal For Mission Sunday \$11 Million

New York — A three fold theme — "Pray — Love — Give!" — is at the heart of this year's Mission Sunday appeal to be made in all dioceses around the country on Oct. 20, according to Bishop Edward T. O'Meara, national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

"Never has the world needed prayer more, never have people needed each other's love more and never has the need to give been greater than at the present time," declared Bishop O'Meara in launching the appeal.

This year's Mission Sunday goal is \$11 million. It will be used to assist over 138,000 missionaries engaged in all forms of mission work and service around the world.

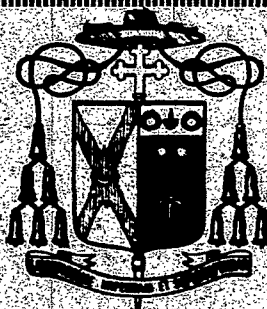
"When U.S. Catholics can spend an estimated \$146 billion on cigarettes a year, they will surely find it in their hearts to contribute to this vital work of the Church," said the Bishop.

"Catholic Americans have always responded generously to the needs of the missions," he said. "Our personal dedication and response is a necessary sign of the vigor of our faith, and our help is essential for the survival, in body and soul, of many of our brothers and sisters in the missions. I beg you, for them, to respond in prayer and with sacrifices. Please pray, love, give on Mission Sunday, October 20th."

HOLY YEAR TRIP OK

Budapest, Hungary [RNS] — The Department For Religious Affairs of Communist Hungary announced Oct. 7 that no restrictions will be placed on the number of Hungarian Catholics who might wish to make a pilgrimage to Rome during the 1975 Holy Year.

Diocesan Appointments



ASSOCIATE PASTORS

Father Mark Miller, to associate pastor of St. Helen Church, from Ss. Peter and Paul, Elmira.

Father James Callan, first assignment, to Ss. Peter and Paul, Elmira.

Deacon

Rev. Mr. William Laird, deacon intern, to Blessed Sacrament, from Holy Family.

"This enlightened vision is a prerequisite to a more truly Christian response," he stated.

The USCC statement recalled that Pope Paul's comment on multinational corporations urged Christian communities to analyze the situation proper to their own country and "to shed on it the light of the Gospel... drew principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church."

It said that last Spring a special session of the United Nations General Assembly heard the complaints of Third World nations about the inadequacies of the international economic system.

"The issue of economic development is central to an examination of the relationship of the international economic system and the Third World," the document pointed out. "The presence of Catholic episcopal leaders in this debate is understandable in view of the explicit papal writings on the issue."

The document noted that in addition to statements by bishops in Latin America a number of lay, religious and clergy groups in

Latin America have pinpointed the influence of foreign businesses, governments and cultures as a cause of considerable poverty and social ills in their countries.

The document declared: "The impact of U.S. policies on the lives of millions of people in less developed countries, particularly in Latin America, where traditionally our nation's ties and that of the Church are most evident, compels us to reflect on our role as members of the universal Church and as citizens of the U.S."

The document also stressed that "multinational business interests which play such a dominant role in the less developed countries... also dominate, to a great extent, our own domestic economy."

"In our own country, the document said, 'there is a growing sense among the working people as well as minority groups that power belongs only to those few who hold enormous wealth.'"

"As Catholics, we must continue to rediscover our own distinct identity as a religious, prophetic people who stand apart from the powers which possess dominant control of society," it added.