

Past and Present, the Church Speaks on Economic Matters and New Challenges

A General Assembly Policy Review with possible new applications of Reformed Christian Principles

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Economic Crisis: We Have Been Here Before

The Church has faced economic crisis before. This policy review examines social witness policy affirmations from previous General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that address topics identified for study and recommendation by the 219th General Assembly (2010). Those topics are contained in “Living Through Economic Crisis,” A Social Involvement Report included in *Unbound*, Vol. 1 Sept/Oct. It is the usual practice of the Assembly to draw on earlier wisdom when possible; in the current economic crisis, we look particularly to the Church’s reflections during the “Great Depression” of 1930’s and period of de-industrialization of the late 1970’s into the mid-1980’s. At the same time, a policy review also seeks to identify new areas unaddressed by earlier Assemblies or in need of up-dating. That work of updating was explicitly done in terms of the broad “social contract” of the United States in “A Social Creed for the 21st Century,” adopted in 2008 in the Centennial year of the first ecumenical social creed.^[1] The Presbyterian Church’s national programmatic response to concerns for the working and immigrant poor dates back to 1903, with the formation of the Workingmen’s Department, so today’s call to apply the Gospel to a new kind of economic crisis for both society and church has much to draw upon.

The Reformed Ethos in the Church’s 20th Century Economic Witness

Calvin’s views are frequently cited, often drawing on the definitive work of Swiss scholar Andre Bieler, to indicate the tradition’s deeply biblical and post-feudal approaches to vocation, money (and usury), commerce and government.^[2] The accountability of all power to the common good or whole society is to be embodied in democratic structures, particularly in political life, but the 20th Century statements produced by the Church also track the growth in the power of industry, the market, and corporations, and corresponding changes needed in the role of government and witness of the church. The roles of other institutions are sometimes noted, but none are seen to play the government’s overarching role in social protection and correcting for business cycle and other market limitations.

The Industrial Revolution

Presbyterians responded to the industrial revolution, in part, by leading it, and the names of Presbyterian industrialists like Andrew Carnegie remain etched on church plaques in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, and many other cities. At the same time, Presbyterians were active in the Social Gospel movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in opposition to Social Darwinism, and in social reform movements; the longtime head of the Socialist Party, Norman Thomas, came out of the Presbyterian pastorate. The General Assembly’s initial ethical statements in the 20th Century were made in conjunction with the ecumenical movement, as in the adoption of the Social Creed and subsequent updating of it, particularly the 1932 version. Alongside the movements of moral welfare (prohibition, anti-gambling, Sabbath-preservation),

women's suffrage, and anti-lynching efforts in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the United Presbyterian Church in North America (which united in 1958), the ecumenical movement kept a witness for what became social security, workplace safety regulation and the end of child labor. The mainline Protestant and historic African-American churches kept up their advocacy for these economic reform measures from the turn of the century through their successful enactments in the 1930's and 1940's, joining with Roman Catholic leaders at times in support of workers' rights to organize.[\[3\]](#)

Following the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, General Assembly statements of the early 1930's began by updating the ecumenical—mainly Methodist—Social Creed originally written in 1908 and adopted by the Presbyterian Church in 1910. Its first two affirmations were broadened beyond the specific problems of industrialization by the 1932 Assembly:

1. "Practical application of acknowledged Christian principles to the acquisition and use of wealth; subordination of profit to the creative and cooperative spirit; observances of such social plans and control as are involved in the economic process which operates for the common good.
2. The right of all to an opportunity for self-maintenance; a wider and fairer distribution of wealth; a living wage as an irreducible minimum together with a just participation by the worker in the profits of the industry in which he or she is engaged." (note inclusiveness!)

The next two General Assemblies extended this ethic of public responsibility further. A new list of affirmations from the 1934 Assembly:

1. That new motives besides those of money-making and self-interest be developed in order that we may develop an economic system more consistent with Christian ideals.
2. That competition as the major controlling principle of our economic life be reexamined, and an attempt made to secure rational planning in our economic life.
3. That our natural resources and economic institutions be considered as existing for the public good and such plans for ownership and control be developed as will lead to the best use in the interests of all.
4. That cooperative economic life be developed on an international scale...

This was followed by several reaffirmations of the rights of labor to organize, opposition to materialism, property rights conditioned by community needs, then "That men and women must be counted as persons, not as mere hands; that they must have some active part in the control of the industry to which their lives are given." The final two affirmations called for "a universal system of unemployment insurance" and for the church's ministers to have such a system as well. The 1935 Assembly added to these concerns a flat out call for the "abolition of unemployment."

The 1937 Assembly summed up the church's response to the continuing economic crisis of their time:

It is the task of the church to get the facts before the people so that they may know what it is they face. Periodically recurring depressions with their devastating effect upon the

morale, bodies, minds and souls of men, the inequitable distribution of the fruits of industry with a large proportion of families receiving an income insufficient to maintain a family in health and comfort, the concentration of control and power in the hands of a few and the temptation of that group to exploit the many for profit, the denial of fellowship which grows out of vast inequalities—these are some of the elements in our present social order, which are incompatible with the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God. The church appeals to the consciences of men to correct these abuses.

The Passage of Two World Wars

The shift in approach from the Social Gospel to the post-World War II Christian Realism was visible in a growing acceptance of a “mixed economy” and fewer calls for a “cooperative commonwealth.” The Cold War opposition to officially Communist societies, however, did not erase the acceptance of a major government role in the economy, progressive taxation to create public goods, and growing worker and social protections, eventually including some measure of environmental protection. An illustration of the shift in thinking can be visible in the major 1944 statement, *The Church and Industrial Relations*, which endorsed unions as “a primary agent of democracy,” while also encouraging social harmony and shared management practices. By 1947, General Assembly economic statements began using the language of “countervailing” in addition to “cooperating” powers. The use of power analysis increased as Reformed Christian concern for social reform was seen to require engagement by the church as a corporate entity supporting systemic social change, and not simply the general exhortation of individuals.

Corporate Mode

Some historians point to the 1950’s and 1960’s as a transitional time when denominations adopted management and organizational structures from corporations. But the theological and ethical emphasis on collective *social* witness often led to conflict *with* corporations, as in the corporate social responsibility movement, consumer boycotts, and selective purchasing policies to support equal employment opportunity for racial minorities and later women. A significant body of thinking accompanies the Church’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) strategy (beginning 1971), emphasizing both the integrity of the church as an investor and employer itself, and its role in effecting social change through the advocacy of shareholder resolutions and, when necessary, divestment. The General Assembly Mission Council’s 1979 analysis of boycotts found them to be consistent with its earlier prohibition, anti-gambling, anti-tobacco, anti-child labor and other efforts, up to support for the Equal Rights Amendment.^[4] The MRTI efforts, particularly on South Africa, human rights, military production, and the environment, used the church’s ownership position “inside” companies for moral leverage and made the best of the limited structures of shareholder democracy.^[5] Added to MRTI starting in 1975 was a “creative investment” program to invest a limited portion of unrestricted investments in cooperatives and alternative enterprises not served by the usual marketplace.^[6]

Let us consider the debates prompted by this corporate responsibility work before turning to the two denominational tracks’ treatments of broader economic questions. A major study, “The Task Force on Review of the Policies, Strategies and Programs of the United Presbyterian Church Related to Transnational Corporations” (1983), looked at criticisms of that church’s economic advocacy and re-affirmed MRTI and other approaches.^[7] In illuminating the influence of *The Confession of 1967* on mission theology during the late 1960s and 1970s, it cites the final report

of the Board of National Mission in 1972 to identify three key approaches: self-determination (also “self-development of people”), advocacy (for minorities and those without power), and empowerment (or “enablement”), all antecedents of the liberation theme in theology.[8]

A New Economic Ethic

In 1972, within a policy statement, *The Elimination of Poverty and Unemployment*, came a call for “a task force to examine the impact of our economic system on the environment, continuing problems of poverty and international economic development, and alternative economic lifestyles...” In 1974, this charge was refined “to develop an in-depth stewardship ethic to help us as individuals and as a church to reconcile the operation of the ecological, technological, and economic systems as they affect creation.”[9]

The result was *Economic Justice Within Environmental Limits: The Need for a New Economic Ethic* (1976), a study designed as a call for churchwide dialogue (not debate) about the consequences of an economy driven by material consumption creating increasingly recognized environmental degradation. Issued in the year of the American Bicentennial observance, “a major underlying theme of this study is an exploration of the prospects for economic democracy in the United States.” This discussion “can and should avoid the jargon of ‘capitalism vs. socialism,’ according to the Council on Church & Society:

For many decades, the United States has exhibited a mixed economy, combining private enterprise with manifold examples of public regulation, public ownership, public financial subsidy, and public investment... created... largely at the behest of the private sector... Public participation and its attendant public accountability through government has not meant automatic public ownership...

Because of the persistence of poverty, the end of the illusion of infinite progress based on industrialization, and yet the continued striving for wealth without limits, the three areas of distribution, production and consumption all needed a new ethic.

Much of the “new economic ethic” was to be built on a broadened conception of stewardship that would explicitly include

a type of economic planning that decentralizes as much of the decision making as possible, and includes the necessary checks and balances on all planning functions, and more decentralization of economic power... (through) meaningful citizen participation... increased corporate accountability...(and) movement toward economic democracy, i.e. an economy by and for all the people.[10]

Slightly later, starting in 1978, the PCUS called for the development of “a contemporary statement on Christian faith and economics.”[11] This study followed Walter Brueggemann’s formulation in contrasting a social order characterized by a theology of God’s sovereignty, a politics of justice and an economy of respect *with* a social order marked by a religion of control, a politics of oppression and an economics of privilege. Its theology affirms a justice built into creation and contains a strong understanding of social as well as personal sin, partly to frame its own treatment of economic ideologies. After establishing six criteria for evaluating economic

systems (equality, sustainability, sufficiency, concern for the poor, community, and liberty), it outlines characteristics of “democratic socialism” and “democratic capitalism” for evaluation, urging readers to make a choice above all “for the side of the poor.” This study was commended for study by the 1984 General Assembly and also linked to work then in progress on “A Just Political Economy.”

Work had begun in 1982 in the UPC on “issues of justice in the life of the nation and the world” and “the effects of changes... of funding social programs upon racial ethnic minorities and upon the poor” by what was originally envisioned as a Standing Committee on Economic Policy, a 20 member “blue ribbon” committee chaired by former Secretary of Labor and economist Ray Marshall. What marked this study were two innovations: a teleconference on December 3, 1983, linking 1300 Presbyterians at 36 sites to view and discuss a professionally designed 2 hour program produced by the church’s media staff, and the widespread distribution of a pamphlet in advance of the 1984 election entitled, “Questions to Candidates and Directions for Holding Candidate Forums.”[\[12\]](#)

Resistance in the 1980s

The Committee’s report to the 1985 Assembly was titled, *Toward a Just, Caring and Dynamic Political Economy*, reflecting a model of democratic participation that included the voluntary sector, revealed the salience of economic decision-making in politics, and which had a spiritual component. Pushing back at the “deregulatory” fervor and initial recession of the 1980’s, the report contains a fine synthesis of expert analysis on how to alleviate the conditions of marginalized groups and deal with slowed growth (due to energy and ecological considerations), deficits (due to military spending increases and tax decreases), and the eminently debatable inflation/employment trade-off. More experimentation in economic and corporate governance is recommended, as is a form of economic planning or coordination termed “industrial policy,” which would moderate the economic dislocation of de-industrialization and have an analogue on the international level to manage trade and currency imbalances. In its conclusions, the study stresses the capacity of responsible individuals to challenge myths of market determinism and government demonization that dis-empower large numbers of citizens.

Vocation and Compensation

Two areas of economic concern that point somewhat beyond the focus of this survey are the related subjects of vocation and compensation. In 1967, a study of *The Church, the Christian and Work* sought to reclaim a Protestant Ethic that supported both full employment and good employment:

In... our contemporary economic situation obedience to the covenant demands the exercise of our imagination in the creation of new modes of work, the assertion of human worth as grounded in community rather than employment, the reminder that unemployment is essentially a problem of community, and the reaffirmation of vocation over occupation as the mark of (hu)man faithfulness to God.

In 1976, a report, *The Theology of Compensation*, provided the basis for some equalization of salaries in the United Presbyterian Church using a “circulation of funds” approach predicated on the unity of the denominational staff and governing bodies. Its theology was a kind of trade-off

between egalitarian and meritocratic values. In 1983, the Presbyterian Church, U.S., commissioned a paper from Walter Brueggemann that put compensation in the context of the church's distinctive embodiment of a contrast model to the world: a model of solidarity. In 1995, the re-united PCUSA adopted *God's Work in Our Hands*, a strong call for full employment, fairness in and limits to excessive compensation based on a community-based doctrine of vocation. As the 2010 report, *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*, noted, none of these efforts have in themselves prevented a widening income spectrum both among pastors and within the national staff.

The need to narrow the traditional income gap between men and women's work was addressed in a 1988 study, *All the Live Long Day: Women & Work*, and in the 2008 resolution, *God's Work in Women's Hands*, which called for more effective strategies for pay equity. Both of these studies also looked at the restriction of women to particular kinds of jobs and the impact of the "double shift," in which women, already propelled into the workforce by male wage stagnation, continue to carry the larger share of parenting responsibilities. Hence the call for more effective childcare in the United States, for more family-friendly policies overall, and for equal pay not simply for equal work, but for comparable work.

Toward Sustainable Development

Twentieth century Presbyterian social witness policy on economic matters reached a high point in 1996 with *Hope for A Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*. This book-length study included strong recommendations incorporating the church's ecological commitments (notably in the 1981 energy report and the 1990 *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*), its long address to the root causes of hunger (that created a Hunger Program in 1976), and a re-evaluation of economic measures of productivity and development.^[13] Core ethical norms developed in previous policy are reinforced; participation (based in various rights), sufficiency (including frugality for those with enough), justice (related to equity), and sustainability (see below). The study also involved a research trip to Honduras which helped crystallize some of the concerns about previous failures of "sustainable development" and ways that a more holistic approach could correct them.^[14]

While keeping a rigorous understanding of economic complexity, *Hope for a Global Future* adopts a definition of "sustainable development" that entails "not only improved economic standards of living but also the full complement of social, political, cultural, and transcendental values and rights," along with a concern for the "quality of life" for future generations and even other species. This comprehensive vision is reflected in the wide-ranging recommendations, each applying a principle guided by the overall vision (see Appendix A).

Globalization

Those principles developed in the 1996 report undergirded a substantial 2006 report, *Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership and Accountability*, resulting from the trade and aid monitoring the earlier report recommended. Already in the late 1990's ACSWP member-experts had developed a set of four papers and held consultations in Brazil and Korea on aspects of globalization; minister, mission co-worker and economist Walter Owensby helped shepherd this work, which also became part of the PCUSA's response to two major ecumenical critiques of economic globalization: "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy of the Earth" (the "Accra

Confession”) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and “Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth” (the AGAPE declaration, part of a larger “Poverty, Wealth & Ecology project) of the World Council of Churches. It was in response to these cries from the global church that the study part of *Just Globalization* contains an explicit critique of “neo-liberalism” or anti-regulatory capitalism.[\[15\]](#)

The concern about globalization was prompted by a widening “global income gap,” reflected as well within countries; largely unregulated and unstable patterns of capital flow and immigration; and challenges to existing Bretton Woods era international institutions by changing debt burdens, new economic powers (China, India, Brazil), communications technology and climate change. Globalization was defined as “the process by which people, nations and economies throughout the world become ever more connected and integrated. Although often driven by economics, globalization includes spiritual, cultural, political, and human welfare dimensions... what happens to people in the process of being ‘integrated’ is a key criterion by which globalization must be measured.” Receiving its substantial study document, the Assembly approved:

measures to (A) strengthen our own discipleship in an international context, and support measures by the community of nations and our own government that will (B) improve international governance, (C) manage technology for the common good, (D) support fair exchange in trade policy, (E) make development assistance more effective, (F) protect workers and vulnerable groups, and (G) encourage congregational, governing body, and missional responses.

In terms of key visions, two themes may be noted. Building on an image from Martin Luther King, Jr., the introduction states: “We believe that the vision and values of the ‘world house’ are more encompassing than those of the ‘world market...’ This is part of the celebration of the whole world as God’s household and economy. But then the need for reform:

The theological core of this work is Christian realism about sin, a particular gift of the Reformed tradition... Because no nation or people or king or pope or company or economic system is without sin, all need accountability. The recipe for this is still in our theological ethos as a church whose polity is rooted in democracy and representation. Democratic accountability is what all power needs... The values of sharing, sufficiency and sustainability make for a stewardship society more than an ownership society; the image of the covenant still reflects both our accountability to God and ...God’s grace...

Those communal gifts of grace would certainly be needed a little more than two years later, in 2008, when a credit implosion began the current major recession. Ironically, the particular problem of sub-prime mortgages was warned against in a short resolution also adopted in 2006, *A Reformed Understanding of Usury for the Twenty-first Century*, which mainly focused on improving banking, lending, and borrowing practices, but nonetheless renewed the church’s attacks on the sin of excessive interest-taking and profiteering financial services.

Presbyterian Policy Positions on Specific Subjects

The chief dimensions of the economic crisis identified for the current (2010-2012) study are the damage to employment prospects, family life, the conditions of the already impoverished or

marginalized, and groundwork for future sustainability. Government protections are being weakened steadily as the social contract is renegotiated in a way that enhances inequality and degrades citizen-government capacity to address problems. The military-security sector, the only privileged area in the federal budget, is not subject to rational or moral analysis in terms of threat levels and deficit impacts but seems rather an arena of response to collective anxiety about the deteriorating international position of the United States. The clear danger is that the economic crisis, persisting particularly in unemployment and hamstrung government, will become simply a steeper downward step in irreversible economic decline.

The church's role of prophetic critique and annunciation is to help connect Christian values to both better policy choices and a better vision overall. The clearest summary of the church's social-ethical position, the Social Creed for the 21st Century, tries to provide both a coherent set of policy directions and a biblically-inspired vision. The chief Christian model of sharing burdens and blessings stands in direct contrast to the dream of "competitiveness" by which even constructive governmental initiatives are being promoted. "Team USA," using the present economic playbook, will continue to call players on the field to massive sacrifice for those in the skyboxes, while pricing out a majority and locking out those who protest. To advocate a different playbook may require the study team to provide an account of the causes of the crisis that identifies policy mistakes still being made or advocated and solutions, such as massive bank bailouts, that have not provided enough of their intended benefit for homeowners or job-generating investment. The centralization of economic power in the "too big to fail" banks and the un-taxable transnational corporate sector, and the limitation of public purpose to military engagement, also suggests that the church's vision of non-violent, democratic power and shared prosperity has been eclipsed.

The General Assembly's most thorough critiques of the U.S. economic system can be found in the 1976 study, "Economic Justice within Environmental Limits," and the PCUS and UPC studies of 1984 and 1985, "Christian Faith and Economic Justice" and "Toward a Just, Caring, Dynamic Political Economy." Yet there is a substantial critique as well in the church's environmental and development policies—it is time, perhaps, to consider the persistent and even deliberate un-development of the United States.

The repeatedly reaffirmed values of participation, equity, sufficiency and sustainability point clearly toward a system with more economic democracy and what might be called "eco-industrial policy." The need for "economic conversion," repeated again in the Social Creed, begins with shifting resources out of the military sector but speaks to a larger need for economic transformation. The economic crisis can thus be a wake up call as well as the logical (and partly deliberate) result of bad policies. Like broader economic decline, it is the result of choices by some and the disempowerment or passivity of others.

Employment, Underemployment, and Unemployment

"God's Work in Our Hands" (1996) provides a very helpful summary of prior affirmations made by the General Assembly on matters related to vocation and employment, including the calls for full employment, living wage, the right to bargain collectively, and the role of government as employer of last resort. With approximately one sixth of would-be workers unemployed, underemployed, or discouraged (according to the Bureau of Labor as of May 2011), the

imperative to put people to work is a major concern. The report also developed a solid set of principles to guide employment decisions, including those in the church, which should be a “model employer.” The Assembly supports workers’ rights in general; the definition of these rights, and economic rights more broadly (in relation to a right to healthcare, or example), may stand in need of re-statement in light of the current efforts to eliminate public employee bargaining rights and unilaterally abridge pensions, etc.

Support for elements of economic democracy also relates to the rights and kinds of participation, whether in corporate management or through accountability of public regulators. The Social Creed reaffirms full employment at “family-sustaining living wage,” and “the rights of workers to organize and to share in workplace decisions and productivity growth.” But its more challenging claim is its first affirmation: “full civil, political, and economic rights for women and men of all races.”

The question of banking and credit reforms, the financial infrastructure, measures to prevent future “bubbles,” misplaced fear of inflation driving Fed policy... all point to the great need for planning that is not entirely in private hands. The idea of a “public option” in health care seems transferable to the role of public banks for each state, as well as public authorities, that would control costs and provide an alternative to the monopoly of conventional lenders. Cooperatives, credit unions, and ESOPs are still worth endorsing even though regulation will continue to be the primary method of corporate accountability. The Church can make a distinct contribution to this debate which has been ceded to Tea Party “populists.”

Taxation

Though essential in any discussion of fairness and equality or equity in the distribution of the fruits of economic productivity, taxation is a particularly ideological zone in US political culture. The Church’s latest in-depth discussion, *Federal Tax Reform* (1977) covers very basic matters of church concern and elaborates four criteria within a general push for progressivity. Along with its study are only brief recommendations: “(1) that the Federal Tax System and proposals for its reform are proper matters of concern for the Christian Church, and (2) that the criteria for considering tax law and tax reforms are these: equity, moral integrity, simplicity, and efficiency.”^[16] Consideration of taxation also involves consideration of charitable deductions, now complicated by “charitable choice,” Faith Based Initiatives, and church/state boundary issues.^[17]

Marginalized and impoverished groups (including immigrants)

The Church’s support for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity is frequently noted, but actual mechanisms such as selective purchasing requirements have atrophied since the 1970’s. Gender and age provisions for equal treatment are part of affirmations of pay equity and comparable worth legislation, and the addition of sexual orientation may also be added in situations not involving marriage protections. Advocacy for adequate welfare provisions, tax credits, and targeted programs are all regularly endorsed by the Church’s Washington Office. The Social Creed’s language here echoes that of 1908: “Abatement of hunger and poverty and enactment of policies benefiting the most vulnerable.” The Hunger Program, working with various resolutions relating to farming and community food adequacy, presents an alternative vision for sustainable agriculture and remedies for those with food insecurity in the US, as well

as some development work overseas. The Fair Food program includes advocacy and support for worker organizing in agriculture. Support for the Immokalee workers in Florida, mainly of immigrant background, involved the boycott of Taco Bell, one of the more recent boycotts endorsed by the General Assembly.

The poor are most directly affected by declines in social services and public amenities, in addition to cuts in public education, public health, public transportation, libraries, and so forth. The debate over “entitlements” has been particularly misleading, but the bigger picture is of a nation in denial as to the real scope of poverty and decline in middle class status. The loss of housing through foreclosure and the rise of homelessness provide key visible indicators of the presence of poverty in our communities.

The Assembly has recently spoken on Homelessness (2008), recommending supportive services and ways to develop affordable housing, should communities and their governments be interested in providing it. This treatment does not repeat our support for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, all recently reaffirmed in Economic Security for Older Adults (2006) and reinforced by calls for a “single payer” health policy (2008).

The globalization policy speaks in part to the linkage between trade agreements and human migrations, such as the wave of displaced Mexican farmers coming to the US, unable to grow corn cheaply enough to compete with subsidized US exports. War, resource wars, and climate refugees are also part of the globalization situation likely to get worse...

Military Spending / Security Expenditures

“Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling” (1980), the foundational position for the church’s ministries in this area, called for participation in efforts devoted “to slowing, stopping, and reversing the worldwide arms race.” Military-related investment guidelines adopted two years later (1982) restricted the church’s investments in the largest military contractors, those most dependent on military production, and the makers of key nuclear warhead components—consonant with the church’s 1988 position in favor of nuclear disarmament. The General Assembly has not, however, addressed the economics of militarism in a significant way, either within the arms race framework or the framework of a “unipolar” empire seeking “full spectrum” dominance. Walter Owensby has called for more treatment of “economic shalom.” The Social Creed calls directly for “nuclear disarmament and redirection of military spending to more peaceful and productive uses.” Infrastructure, or green technology, might be examples of such uses.

Building a Sustainable Economy

Since the 1976 study, it may be concluded that it is hard to have a new economic ethic without more initiatives toward an actual new economy. The rise in environmental disasters due to climate change is becoming increasingly undeniable, but the U.S. failure to complete its endorsement of the Kyoto protocol (repeatedly called for by the General Assembly) and other failures in climate-related legislation point back to political attachment to traditional energy subsidies and patterns as well as determined, well-funded efforts to weaken all regulation. The arguments about international competitiveness may work in this area, as energy independence (liberty) gardening hasn’t been that effective yet.

APPENDIX A

Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development (1966)

PRINCIPLE: The satisfaction of basic needs is indispensable for human development. Sufficiency for all requires that poverty be eradicated and that the affluent live more frugally (p. 96).

PRINCIPLE: Human rights are essential to the expression of human dignity and are fundamental to the quest for human development. These rights include satisfaction of basic biophysical needs, physical security, moral and spiritual autonomy, mental and cultural development, social participation in defining and shaping the common good, due process, environmental protections, and the common good itself (p. 100).

PRINCIPLE: Women's rights—to a secure livelihood, to freedom from oppressive domination, to education, and to safe contraception within broadly available health care—are an essential component of just and sustainable human development (p. 102).

PRINCIPLE: Public participation of all persons in the decisions that affect their lives and well-being is a fundamental human right (p. 104).

PRINCIPLE: Commitment to human development requires a commitment to effective governance capable of encouraging order, assuring justice, and promoting the common good (p. 106).

PRINCIPLE: Education is a basic human right and is essential to human development, because it enhances human capacities, improves opportunities, and widens the range of choices (p. 109).

PRINCIPLE: Overpopulation is neither just nor sustainable. Procreation is a deeply felt human right that must be balanced with the responsibility to preserve environmental quality and long-term sustainability and to make sufficient sustenance available to all (pp. 111–12).

PRINCIPLE: Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained (p. 115).

PRINCIPLE: Environmental sustainability requires agricultural sustainability, which is necessary for human survival and well-being, now and for the long-term future (p. 117).

PRINCIPLE: Authentic human development does not come in a single, fixed pattern. There are differences in cultural and worship practices that express the same universal values of justice, integrity of the person, solidarity, and sustainability (p. 120).

PRINCIPLE: Peacemaking is essential for human development and for the church's faithfulness to Christ. It requires actions to reduce militarization and to address the unmet needs that aggravate tensions (p. 124).

PRINCIPLE: The repayment of debts and interest at the expense of the basics of life raises serious questions of justice. The burden of debts must be shared equitably in ways that reduce poverty, protect the environment, and avoid perverse incentives in the future (p. 128).

PRINCIPLE: In an interdependent world, no nation can be fully independent of other nations, and no nation should be overly dependent on other nations. This means that the international trading system must incorporate the basic norms of social justice and environmental sustainability, rather than depend solely on the norms and outcomes of free trade (p. 131).

PRINCIPLE: The purpose of development assistance is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development (p.137).

Appendix B

PRINCIPLES OF VOCATION AND WORK

1. Vocation is a lifelong response to God in all aspects of one's life. Work, paid and unpaid, is an integral part of the believer's response to God's call. One's vocation may include multiple careers, volunteer opportunities, and should involve continual spiritual growth in every step of the life-journey to which God calls us.
2. The social policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should seek to change work from a burden to a glad and collaborative response to Jesus' transformative life and work of redemption. Such good work contributes to the creation as well as to the economy, by providing not only the means for subsistence, but also a way to honor human dignity and participate in community life.
3. The church must seek to become a model employer by providing workers with adequate compensation, meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making, leisure time in which to participate in family and community life, and by developing a ". . . reasonable relationship between the highest and the lowest salaries paid to all church employees."
4. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should provide educational materials so that its members can become informed voters and advocates for economic policies that will serve to alleviate poverty, empower marginalized groups, and generate environmentally sustainable economic growth around the world.
5. All sectors of society---including labor, management, and government---must be engaged in the task of economic renewal of our life together. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should play a significant role as a catalyst for conversation among these sectors.
6. The social safety net that supports individuals, families, and communities suffering from economic dislocation must link both private voluntary agencies and the public sector. The church alone cannot provide an adequate safety net.

7. The foundation upon which all just employment policies are built is access to employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security. In a market economy, the private sector provides the majority of jobs, supported by local, state, and federal government policies designed to ensure that there is sufficient employment for all willing and able to be in paid employment. The cost of such policies must always be weighed against the cost to society of allowing high levels of unemployment or underemployment.

8. Inequalities in compensation and working conditions demand the strictest scrutiny. As our workforce becomes increasingly diverse, these concerns become even more urgent. Employment for persons who have suffered the injustices of prejudice and bias is the object of laws requiring affirmative action....

9. All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well-being of households and families, the social cohesiveness of communities, and the integrity of the global environment.

10. Justice demands that social institutions guarantee all persons the opportunity to participate actively in economic decision making that affects them. All workers---including undocumented, migrant, and farm workers---have the right to choose to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining.

11. Domestic economic policies should be judged in the light of their effect on the most vulnerable groups of people in the society, including racial ethnic and national minorities, women, older and younger people, and persons with disabilities.

12. International economic policies should be judged in the light of their ability to raise the standard of living of the world's most vulnerable groups, the human rights of workers, as well as of their effects on the global environment.

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Banner image by "hipopp."

Notes

[1] Minutes of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (hereafter simply “Minutes, 2008”). Minutes since 2006 are also found on-line in the searchable data-base of Assembly actions called, www.pc-biz.org, organized by the Committees working on given topics prior to plenary action.

[2] Andre Bieler, *The Social and Economic Thought of John Calvin* (World Council of Churches, 2006).

[3] Hall, Cameron and Ward, Dudley, eds. Series: *Ethics and Economic Life*, New York: Harper Bros., 1947-1965. This series included a popular summary: Caterer, Douglas, *Ethics in a Business Society*, New York: Harper Bros., 1965.

[4] 1979, *Minutes*, Part I, pp. 250-255, 257.

[5] 1972, *Minutes*, Part I, pp. 58, 198, 658. 1982, *Minutes*, Part I, "Resolution on Military-Related Investment Guidelines," pp. 261-264. 1984, *Minutes*, Part I, "Study of Divestments," p. 59, and "Mission Responsibility through Investment," p. 178. 1985, *Minutes*, Part I, "Divestment for South Africa: An Investment in Hope," pp. 209-232.

[6] In 1976, the PCUS developed its corporate responsibility program which began to coordinate with the UPC committee as the 1983 reunion approached.

[7] This Report includes significant debate among high level corporate executives and critics of their "global reach" from the US and overseas, and provides a solid analysis of "The Church in Economic Affairs" that frames the institutionalization of justice tactics in the 1970s. 1983, *Minutes*, Part I, pp. 94, 116, 208.

[8] Among its fine annexes are papers by Jane Dempsey Douglass ("Calvin's Relation to Social and Economic Change"), John C. Bennett ("Protestantism and Corporations: Reflections on the Ecumenical Teaching of the Church"), and James Kuhn ("The Emergence of the Transnational Corporation").

[9] The 1972 and 1974 citations are found on pp. 13-14 of *Economic Justice Within Environmental Limits*, Church & Society, September-October, 1976.

[10] The proposed dialogue was to be organized in five sections, with contrasting readings provided on each topic, including a section on "global interdependence" introducing the United Nations' initiatives toward a "New International Economic Order."

[11] The statement was to contain "(1) a theology of economic justice from a specifically biblical perspective, (2) a critical analysis of economic systems such as capitalism and socialism, (3) a theological and ethical appraisal of economic choices... (4) a discussion of the global context ..., with special attention given to transnational corporations, a more equitable international economic order, and the relationship between economics and environmental concerns worldwide." See 1984, *Minutes*, "Committee on a Just Political Economy," pp. 61-2, 355, 361.

[12] While copies went to every minister in the denomination, it was reportedly used in approximately 75 congregation and presbytery gatherings. Participants in the Teleconference (styled, a Presbyterian "Town Meeting") returned 911 questionnaires largely appreciative of the venture, though concentrating on general affirmations of the need for full employment and the perception that military spending was "too high."

[13] Specific note of the two environmental policies is made on p. 11 of the printed report. The expert work of two economists, chair James W. Kuhn and task force member, Gordon K. Douglass, and the eco-justice contribution of William Gibson, should be particularly noted on this project.

[14] Examples of this would be the proposal of a different set of criteria for “structural adjustment” by the IMF, a critique of “free trade,” and the recommendation (adopted) that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy continue to monitor trade and aid policies.

[15] <http://oga.pcusa.org/publications/resolution-on-just-globalization.pdf>.

[16] 1977, *Minutes*, Part I, pp. 34, 114, 232.

[17] *Just Globalization*, which originally contained a recommendation for a study of taxation, was approved by the Assembly, simply to: “express continuing concern for social inequities in the current U.S. income tax system and support equity-based reforms...” The 2008 *Social Creed* calls for “tax and budget policies that reduce disparities between rich and poor, strengthen democracy, and provide greater opportunity for everyone within the common good.”