

the whole community. This is to say that the Christian is concerned that all men have work to do and that they are justly rewarded for their labor. A higher standard of living is only an illusory achievement if it is limited to only one segment of the population.

In summary, for the Christian a responsible economic order is the effective use and development of his country's resources — its land, its money, and its labor. This development takes place as the greatest number of people are given the opportunity for productive labor, are allowed to share in the rewards of their labor, and are encouraged to grow in their responsibility for the welfare of the whole community.

1. A Change of Attitude Toward Labor

In working for a responsible economic life in the Philippines, we are called upon to relate our faith to two areas of concern. First, there is need to see our Christian responsibility for reshaping the general attitude toward labor. If economic development is to take place there must be a new appreciation of the importance of labor in the life of the people. A willingness to work to achieve a more beneficial life for all must be the motivating force of those in government, in industry, on the farms and plantations. In applying himself to this need, the Christian is guided by the Biblical understanding of labor. In the light of the Scrip-

tures, labor is not regarded as a degrading task. Labor is seen as a task which God has given us to do in order to sustain life and to upbuild our community. Within our Christian understanding of labor, it is not the job that a man has that matters but it is how responsible he is in his work. In doing our work responsibly, we are performing the command of God for the common life.

The Public Servant

Within the Christian understanding of labor is the concept of service. This sense of service through one's labor is especially pertinent to those engaged in government work. Within government circles there is need for a consciousness that the government exists to serve the people. We might say that the willingness of the people to work for the goals set by the government depends upon the confidence the people have in their government officials and workers. This confidence is fostered among the people only in so far as those elected to public office and those employed in government agencies fulfill their jobs as public servants. Historians point out that in the annals of history, a nation's maturity can be measured by the development of the public servant.

One of the tasks of the public servant is to serve the people without special regard to racial, regional, religious or political affiliation. The public servant does his job in accordance with the

rules established by his government. He judges each case on its own merits. Favoritism within government destroys the confidence of the people in equal treatment and encourages them to get what they want by "pulling strings." For the government worker, there is need to see his work as a trust, placed in him by the whole people, that he will carry out his job to the best interest of the people.

Christian Vocation

For the Christian, the understanding of labor is summed up in the word "vocation." Our vocation is God's purpose for us in our whole life, and especially in our job. We need to begin by helping Christian parents see their hopes for their children in the light of Christian vocation. Christian parents especially need to be concerned that their children find a place in life where they can make a responsible contribution. Too often, however, parents choose their children's work without considering the child's desires or abilities. The professions are chosen with an eye to prestige and social status. Thus many young people with technical skills are pushed into a profession for which they have no ability. Within our Christian understanding, there is no hierarchy of work. Men are judged by whether they are responsible in the job they are performing. Responsibility, in turn, is determined by the person's abi-

lities for his job, his faithfulness in performing his task and his relationship to his fellow-workers.

2. More Equitable Distribution of Nation's Wealth

A second area of Christian concern is the just distribution of the nation's wealth. The Christian is not only concerned with vocation in one's labor, but also with a just remuneration for one's labor. Within the Christian understanding, responsibility in performing one's job and the just payment for one's labor are inter-related. (Deut. 25:4; I Tim. 5:18; Luke 10:7). In many areas of the nation's economic life, especially agriculture, those who provide the labor receive such meagre rewards that they are kept in perpetual poverty. Poverty, in turn, fosters situations of sickness and ignorance which directly affect a man's labor both physically and psychologically. Thus in working for a responsible economic order, the Christian is not only concerned with the effective use of labor, but also with a more equitable distribution of the fruits of labor.

There are many aspects to this problem of distribution which must be considered. Nature itself deals unkindly with people. The energy spent on harrowing, plowing and planting may be wiped out in one flood. Cultural factors may be another cause for poor distribution. If one member of a family is successful in his work, it is expected that

his "good luck" will be shared with his relatives. Any person with initiative will soon have it dulled when he realizes how far the fruit of his labor must spread. More than the whims of nature or the obligations toward family relations, distribution is a matter of a more just balance of the returns of land, labor, and capital between those who are the managers or the landlords and those who are the laborers.

In establishing some criteria for a desirable minimum standard of living, Candido Ordinario, a statistician of the Bureau of Census and Statistics, sets ₱1,500 as an annual family income below which families may be considered "poor". The Philippine Statistical Survey of Households, last released in March 1957, showed that approximately 70% of the nation's families received under this amount. Families receiving less than ₱500 yearly income are about 1/5 (22.5%) of the families of the Philippines and account for only 5% of the national income. Families receiving above ₱2,000 are also approximately 1/5 (18.1%) of Filipino families but get over one-half (52.7%) of the national income.

Realizing the wide discrepancy which exists in distribution of income, it is the Christian's concern to work for a more just distribution of income within the Philippine economic order. The Christian's concern for justice works itself out in

practical ways within the present Philippine social order.

Christian's Concern for Social Justice

In giving labor its just rewards the Christian should be aware of and should strengthen those laws which aim at a more just remuneration of labor. In the rural areas this means a determined effort to see the provisions of the Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1954 for equitable distribution of the income from land implemented. Share tenancy is one of the most abused practices in the agricultural areas of the Philippines and it is as landlords become aware of their obligations under the law that better relationships can be developed. If landlords of their own accord will not meet these obligations then due process of the law will have to be resorted to by the tenants and their representatives. The enforcement of the minimum wage for agricultural labor (₱2.50) and for industrial labor (₱4.00) is another means of working toward a greater share of the national income for the laboring classes.

In working for higher income for labor the Christian should take cognizance of the role played by the trade union movement. The democratic trade union movement is one of the forces working in an economy for the more equitable distribution of wealth. It was in recognition of this fact that the 1960 General Assembly of the United

Church of Christ in the Philippines incorporated the following section in its "Statement of Social Concern":—

Trade unions exist to see that the benefits of the industrial system are more equitably distributed to those who help produce these benefits. In a rapidly growing society, responsible trade unions are not only a means for seeking justice, but they also provide a new social grouping for workers drawn away from the older social patterns of the countryside. Trade unions have the great task of training those in the lower economic groups to take responsibility as citizens within their own community and in the nation as a whole. Besides the educational task of the trade union, there is also the need to better prepare their people for the discipline required by the new industrial society.

Responsible trade unions have the opportunity of serving the whole people by training their trade unionists to understand their role in the production needs of a growing nation. Responsible trade union leadership seeks to foster better labor-management relations in raising productive standards. It believes in exhausting every possible means of conciliation in arriving at sound labor management relations.

In the light of this situation we encourage a free, responsible and democratic trade union movement. We see the opportunity for educating the great number of workers to responsible citizenship and workmanship through the trade unions. We call upon our own Christian workmen to support the Trade Union Movement and to provide the responsible participation and leadership necessary to achieving the goals of freedom and justice in society. We are concerned also with the tremendous task and responsibility placed upon management in developing the economic resources of the na-

tion. Therefore, we encourage those engaged in this task to discover ways and means of directing the force of economic life into healthy patterns of community living.

Besides this concern for the trade union movement, the Christian should also be conscious of those organizations in the rural areas which are attempting to raise the standard of living of the people through a community development approach. Christians in the rural areas should seek to work with community development projects such as World Neighbors and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (P.R.R.M.) in their efforts to raise rural living standards and increase participation in local and national government. These private organizations, together with the government P.A.C.D. programs, are effective means through which Christians can express their social concern for sounder community life.

Responsible Action as Citizens

In applying himself to the problem of distribution of income the Christian can take responsible action through his government. Within a responsible society, the legislative process is one of the ways for reaching higher levels of justice. One Filipino leader remarked that "the less the poor have in life, the more they should be given in law." It is the genius of the democratic process that it allows for the interests of different men and groups of

people to be expressed. As the rights of rich and poor, farmer and labor, are heard, and recognized, glaring inequalities are brought into balance through social legislation and through equal justice before the law.

The Christian should work for the election of socially responsible legislators who are aware of the needs of the lower economic classes and who will see that these needs are met through legislation. The Christian is, therefore, responsible for acquainting himself with the issues and in learning the qualifications of the various candidates running for public office. In cases where the sources of information on issues and candidates are inadequate, Christians can provide a service to the community by gathering the material and organizing forums in which the issues can be openly discussed.

The Christian's task as a citizen is a continuous one. Even after election it is his responsibility to inform himself on pending legislation and to search out with other Christians a responsible Christian understanding of the issues. In turn this stand should be communicated to those legislators responsible for the laws of the land.

It is the task of responsible government to see that the poor are provided the necessary services of life which the wealthy hold as privilege. Through the taxation of higher incomes the government accumulates the resources to provide health, housing,

and education services which the poor cannot provide for themselves. In providing these services to the poor, it is the Christian's responsibility to pay his taxes and to see that the government carries out its program efficiently and effectively. The Christian should be concerned that the taxes he pays are used to benefit the life of the whole nation.

A Responsible Economic Order

In a responsible economic order the government does not control a man's labor, but it insures the development of that freedom and opportunity in which men can use their labor constructively. The goal toward which a responsible society moves is that all men have the freedom to choose their work, and the opportunity to develop their distinctive abilities. In a responsible economic order a man does not labor for himself alone, but through his labor he cooperates with other men in upbuilding the life of the community.

It is in recognition of this interdependence of all labor under God, whether that labor be mental or manual, professional or menial, managerial or technical, that the responsible economic order is realized. In this mutual dependence upon one another, the community recognizes that each man should be given his just due, not according to his position or his status, but according to his needs and his contribution to the responsible society.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain the different attitudes of the Spanish and the U.S. toward labor. How did these attitudes affect the Filipino people?

2. What part do you feel parents should play in choosing their child's vocation? If you were advising a family in an occupation for their son, what factors would you emphasize?

3. What do we mean when we say that a nation's maturity can be gauged by the development of the public servant?

4. What are the goals of economic development in the Philippines? What part does labor play in achieving these goals?

5. What is the Biblical understanding of labor? How do we fulfill our responsibility to God in our work?

6. What is the Christian's attitude toward injustice?

7. What is your attitude toward labor unions? What is the role of the trade union in a democratic society?

8. Explain the two major problems which stand in the way of Philippine economic development. What are some of the ways Christians can apply their Christian faith to these contemporary economic problems?

9. Give your definition of a responsible economic order.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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