

WORKSTYLE

Parts One, Two and Three

A Prelude to Ideas in the *Reality Search Kit*



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Note: *Workstyle* was written as an informal thesis on Sociology of Religion in the 1980's. It was re-worked for a web site in 2000-1 and edited again in 2007. It is replicated here. *Workstyle* reflects ideas and questions that were to be explored further through the textual analysis of *Reality Search*. The *Reality Search* Kit was started in October 2001.

The *Reality Search* Kit provides a solution to a problem. *Workstyle* shows what the problem is.

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WORKSTYLE

Introduction

'Workstyle' was prepared for a "Theol M." thesis around 1986. But it was never formally supervised or examined. An academic did read it at the time and said it was somewhere round Distinction level but he also said it appeared to 'jump all over the place'. In retrospect this comment may have come from the fact that 'Workstyle' really changes academic disciplines- from History of Philosophy, to Religious Sociology to Biblical Studies. In this sense therefore it doesn't really fit the description of a 'thesis' very well. In fact it was meant as a kind of exploration of a position statement on theology of work. The 'jumping around' may well suggest that a theology of work does in fact cut across theological disciplines as it is like a hermeneutic - a way of looking at things. The writing of 'Workstyle' entailed a following of where ideas and their applications went rather than an academic exercise. However End Notes and a Bibliography were compiled.

The first part of 'Workstyle' is developed from readings set in a Sociology of Religion II subject conducted by Dr Noel Ryan SJ (RIP) between 1982-4. The writer actually did this subject about three times because of interest. While 'Workstyle' incorporates material taught in this subject it develops its own line of argument. It attempts to demonstrate that the contrasting Greek philosophies of spirit/matter as taught by Plato and Aristotle (500 BC) are

threaded through succeeding social philosophies of Western civilisation. Oddly enough this argument was never really discussed with Fr Ryan and so it can't be said whether he agreed with it or not.

The second part of "Workstyle" considers the Greek philosophical influence of Plato and Aristotle and the adequacy of Church and social structures. At first this second part was written in relation to the middle 1980's. But it was largely re-written in 2001 and edited in 2007 to accommodate shifts that have taken place. Part II proposes the use of an industry analysis based on an organic model of the sociologist Talcott Parsons, for a new Church mission.

The third part of "Workstyle" is based on a premise that Christianity is formed from a Judaic as well as a Greek 'world view'. It points out the Western Church would do well to search out and emulate the Wisdom tradition of the Old and New Testaments in order to find new energy for the future.

SUMMARY OF WORKSTYLE

- 1. Humankind is called to work - the Hebrews:**
Their theology of work in Genesis Chapter One presents a call to humankind to share in the work of the Creator.

PART ONE: GREEK-BASED PHILOSOPHIES

Section One: Historical Figures

- 2. The Greeks**
 - (a) Plato - claimed in the *Republic* that an elite trained in disciplines like maths have the skills to perceive eternal truth and impose it on others.
 - (b): Aristotle- analysed the vast range of created forms. He allowed for a group's autonomy under the rule of their own constitutions.
- 3. Early Christianity**
 - (a) Jesus and Paul - combined the Hebrew and Greek insights to establish a call to all people to humanise the world.
 - (b) Augustine - saw the City of God as an ideal community separate from yet served by, the City of the World.
 - (c) Aquinas - showed the interconnection between Divine, natural and human laws which are all based on reason. People can reason out their way to happiness and the Church nurtures their efforts.

4. Renaissance and Reformation

- (a) Luther - held that the princes of the world should command it. The church is separate.
- (b) Machiavelli - held that there is a science of cause and effect by which control can be exerted on the political world.
- (c) John Calvin - said people are called to glorify God by working in the world. The Church has final say.

5. The Modern Contract

- (a) Hobbes - said people forfeit their freedom to the State which protects them.
- (b) John Locke - held that people can use common sense to maintain their private and political worlds.
- (c) Rousseau - said the 'esprit' or joint wills of a country should rule it with a ruler to interpret what this is.

6. Materialism

- (a) Hegel - saw the Gheist or 'spirit' of a country as the absolute.
- (b) Karl Marx held the rule of the country should be given to the masses through those who perceive their real economic situation.

7. Finding Community

- (a) Durkheim - said organic community is basic to a society's reality.
- (b) Weber - said society has major functions of culture, community and goals.
- (c) Talcott Parsons - sub-divided the basic functions of Weber into Pattern Maintenance, Integration, Goal Attainment and Adjustment.

- (d) Vatican II - took a line similar to that of philosophies like Aristotle. It maintains the rights of people to self-determination.
- 8. The Liberation Approach**
Segundo - puts forward a liberation approach to free developing countries from oppressive systems of Government and education.
- 9. Commitment by the Roman Church**
John Paul II - pointed to the call of people to fulfillment through their joint work of improving the world.

Section Two

Summary Reflections - There are two major streams of Western philosophies.

The Platonic Approach - imposes order on a chaotic, unjust situation.

The Aristotelian Approach encourages autonomy for organic communities.

Emphasis towards the year 2000. The Catholic church has committed itself to an Aristotelian approach into the electronic age.

Towards an Organic Approach to Work. The 'Gemeinschaft' community with its holistic inter-relations reflects an organic-type of approach.

PART TWO: CHANGES IN APPROACH

'Gesellschaft' and 'Gemeinschaft' styles in the workplace, reflect to some extent a feminine and masculine mode.

An Organic Pattern for the Workplace

The headings of the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification* are re-arranged to fit the functional pattern of Parsons' analysis of the work community.

The Dilemma of Platonic Institutions

- (a) Religious Orders - are based on a Platonic structure. They form an 'elite' without family ties etc. They could use their structure to respond to the needs of a wider reality e.g. in adult education and worker co-operatives.
- (b) The Local Parish - is based on idealistic Church rules and hierarchy. It could widen its response to reality by encouraging regional life-review groups based on workplace communities.
- (c) The Schools System - is based on a Platonic approach to learning. It could widen its approach by basing more of its curriculum on industry observations rather than on separate subjects.
- (d) The Modern Work World - is Platonic in its impersonal separation from family life. It could widen its definition of work to encompass the semi-paid and embryonic forms of worker co-operatives.
It could also seek to liaise through the Church with fledging companies seeking backup

expertise in the developing world.

A Problem with Key Ideas

Platonic systems tend to be 'locked into' the one view of reality and can ignore the obscure beginnings of seminal ideas.

PART THREE:

ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FEMININE

"but Keep to the Role of the Female"

A look at Taoist poetry and its bias towards the feminine.

The Hebrew (Wisdom) Approach:

- (a) Background - The Hebrew stress on existence and presence in a community is considered, especially in relation to this theme in the Wisdom literature.
- (b) The Presence of Wisdom - can be found in the work of creation, the plans of God, experience, moderated wealth and beauty etc.
- (c) The Jewish Tradition - does not, after C1st AD include all the Wisdom books in its Canon.
- (d) The Woman who is Wise - is lauded every Sabbath.
- (e) Further qualities of Wisdom - relate to 'doing'
- (f) Wisdom contrasts with Folly "who" exaggerates female and material attractions and seduces people.
- (g) Men are distrustful of women - because of this.
- (h) The depths of God remain a mystery.
- (i) The Wisdom of God is beyond logic - c/f Job.

The Christian and Post-Christian Era

- (a) Jesus - "Wisdom is proved right by her actions". Jesus recalls the work of Wisdom in his healing outreach to those on the margins of legal Judaism.
- (b) The Mantle of Mary - Mary recalls the figure of Wisdom in her nurturing care for all people.
- (c) Protestant Reform of the Local Church. This has attempted to restore local autonomy.
- (d) The Environmental movement. This shows concern for all nature.
- (e) Summary Reflections - There cannot be a renouncement of either a male-like Platonic approach to work with its stress on action, logic and power or a renouncement of a feminine-like, Aristotelian view which at least recognises reality has many facets and is closely connected with nature.

An Overall Conclusion

A Platonic approach tends to renounce the feminine. An Aristotelian approach tends to de-grade it. The Taoist and Wisdom approaches offer an alternative feminine view but efforts are made to control these. Other alternatives for a feminine view are also to be found, but these tend to be on the periphery of the mainstream.

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PART ONE:

MAJOR PHILOSOPHIES OF WORK

SECTION ONE: Historical Figures

Chapter One The Hebrews

One of the most crucial sources of philosophy in the civilised world is that of the ancient Hebrews. They provide the foundation of Judaism. Though Jews comprise only a small percentage of the world population (c/f Australia 0.5%), they are a reminder of the sources of thinking for two of the biggest world religions, that is, Christians and Moslems which comprise about 800 million people each.¹

One of the most revered works in both these systems of belief is the first book of the Jewish Torah, that is, the Book of Genesis. What does Genesis tell of the Hebrew understanding of work?

Genesis Chapter 1

The first verse of the first Chapter tells us God exists and that God is a worker.

"In the beginning God created." In the verses to follow we are told that the work of God, in its process and effects, is good. "And God saw that it was good." (c/f Gen.1:10),

The Hebrew/Jewish people assume God has always existed and has created everything. They claim that what God does is morally good. It was no small feat for them to reach this understanding and hold on to it. Other religions established around the Hebrews worshipped many gods. Some of these were seen to be evil. They had to be bribed and worshipped if people were to survive. Much of the conduct of the pagan gods was seen as trivial, mischievous and even childish. But the Hebrew God was (and is) by nature always working towards an intrinsically good and wholesome world. Perhaps in some ways the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1) 'says it all' as far as the Hebrews were concerned - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The story in Genesis goes on from here to describe the work and creation of God. God is mindful of his own desire to create humankind "to have dominion over the animals (Gen 1:26) ... and to till the earth" (Gen 2:5). God made people in order to continue a role similar to that of Himself, the Maker.

The Sabbath Rest

When God finished creation after six days "he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done." (Gen. 2:2) In a way such a rest was established as a first institution. Work and rest are two sides of the one process. The Hebrews, like God, were to rest on the 7th day, that is, their Sabbath. Over the centuries to follow, the Sabbath was the day they would study the Scriptures, worship together and visit in each others homes.² The Sabbath was to be a holy time of rest. This reminded the Hebrews that work was also in itself a sacred task.

Stewardshp

The Genesis story of creation pictures a pre-historic time when "there was no man to till the earth" (Gen 2:5). History, like the world, began as "the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15). The man was to understand that he (and humankind) has been chosen for the task of stewardship in a world that has been made by God and which belongs to Him. The Hebrews were to recall from this that all belongs to God.³ Therefore they do not have any "rights" to keep, use or destroy goods for their own self-centred reasons.

Right action

God expects humankind, made "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27), to behave in the same way as He Himself. All of God's behaviour was ordered towards the general good. Thus for the Jews right action was seen as more important than 'right' ideas.⁴ God told the man "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen 2:17). The Hebrew generations to come were to understand from this that action in terms of the will and law of God must be the focus of their lives.⁵ Faithfulness to God's will was the gauge one's fidelity to God, to oneself and to the world.

Co 'creation

Having set out 'right action' as the major focus in life, God says in the story, "I will make a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). Then God brought all the creatures before man and "whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name" (Gen 2:19). All of creation and life was to be looked at and "named" by the man, standing alongside his helpmate

and God. In this sense humankind was called to co'creation.⁶ In the history of this people, (Hebrews or Israelites or Jews as they have been called) all creation has been 'named' through the range of rituals they have kept. These rituals, like the law, touch on every aspect of Jewish life bringing creation, God, the people as a whole and the individual all together. The keeping of rituals that have been universal, time-honoured and aesthetic have been viewed as being part of the 'work' of the pious Jew. Like the exercises of a violinist, such rituals and habits have attuned the person more keenly to the presence of God at work in the world. In turn they tune in the worker to the style of working that God has used.⁷

Work against evil

In the Genesis story we are told the man and his helper fall for the wiles of the serpent. They eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They thereby incur misery and death for themselves and all humankind. God tells the man "cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Gen 3:17). "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen 1:19).

The story reminds the Hebrew that the serpent reflects the very real, clever and harmful presence of evil in the world. The Hebrew now has to go out and fight this.⁸ However he is to be mindful he is not the product of such evil. Human appetites (e.g. sex, ambition etc.) still come from God. Human drives, like the earth, have to be harnessed for good. And this is possible. At the same time the Hebrew has to acknowledge the likelihood of falling prey to evil himself. Because of such teaching, in the centuries to come the Feast of Atonement was to be the chief feast day in the Jewish

Calendar.⁹

Equality

This feast, as well as the Genesis story, was to remind people that all are prey to wrongful deeds. Therefore no one can set themselves over others. All are equal. This means males and females are equal. Also the community cannot over-ride the rights of the single person.¹⁰

Improvement

The Hebrews held that just as all people are inclined to wrong-doing against each other and God, so all people are called to the task of improving their situation and the situation of others. The first Chapter of Genesis concludes with the picture of God sending "him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken." (Gen 1:23). As in the first verses and throughout the chapter, the human person is defined in the same way as God Himself is defined, that is, as a worker. Over the centuries of thousands of years, this basic image in Genesis, of God and the person, has remained in the Judaic tradition. It has continued to have a strong influence on beliefs about humanity in the Christian and Moslem religions. In this way it has influenced the whole world.

The Jewish people have struggled to retain their identity as Hebrews amidst the power lusts and cultural enticements of the world. They have continued to redirect their focus back to their own most basic precepts and in this way they have given witness to the world. In the Second World War, as the Jewish people struggled against extermination, Leo Baech, the Rabbi of Berlin reminded them, 'existence is their task.'

It is also the most basic task of all.¹¹

END NOTES

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Chapter Two

THE GREEKS

The Hebrew tradition and its views about the moral law enacted by work has been a major strand of influence in the development of Western society. Another major strand has come from the Greeks. Whereas the Hebrew focus was on doing God's will, the Greeks presented a view of the eternal order as expressed in the world. Plato and Aristotle presented two sides to this approach. The following pages will argue how these two facets have been repeated through the western philosophies and present a challenge at the present time. A general introduction to this is to suggest that Plato sought to impose order on his ideal society. Aristotle accepted the order there and classified it.

(a) Plato

Plato (c.427-347 B.C.) grappled with the question as to why Socrates his teacher had been forced by society to take his own life. Socrates had seen his role in society as pointing to the truth. People objected to this. Socrates drank hemlock poison as he was pressured to do, not because he thought the laws condemning him to do this were right, but because he believed law and order as such should be imposed on a society for its own best interests.¹ Plato wrote the *Republic* and set out the arguments of Socrates to support this position. In this book Socrates claims that a just man is one who aims to achieve what is best for the common good. He is like a medic who tells someone what to do. He is like the captain of a ship who is conscious of the needs of the whole concern.

He says discerning what is best for the whole, requires great skill. Great stock therefore should be put on having such a role performed as well as possible.² Plato says through Socrates, that a society has three great needs of food, shelter and clothing. The people who provide these services should be able to get on with their job without interference. Related work e.g. marketing should also be protected.³ He sees this type of order as a just situation.⁴ Plato insists it is in the design of Ultimate Order that good and harmony should prevail. He objects to whatever suggests otherwise e.g. poetry that presents the picture of a mischievous God.⁵ He says that the rulers of a society should be selected from students who have the best aptitude for discerning ultimate truth and order. These will become the Guardians of the state. Some will be the rulers and others the executives of the law.⁶ This Guardian class will not have property or wealth in case this tempts them to act in their own interests rather than for the good of the State.⁷ Plato saw that each individual should be able to work according to their own aptitude regardless of parentage.⁸ He said men and women should have equal access to jobs.⁹ Family structures seemed an obstacle to this so he suggested women should be shared in common. Children should be bred from the best types of males and raised apart from their parents.¹⁰ He said a Philosopher Ruler class would have pressures to face, just as Socrates had been pressured to stop asking questions that were forcing people to re-think their position.¹¹ However Plato held it would be possible for such a class to exist and function. Indeed it was essential for this to happen if Athenian society itself was to be reconstructed and survive. Selected people therefore were needed to be trained to perceive the truth and to use their skill to rule the rest.¹²

Plato, who was himself a close follower of Pythagoras, believed mathematics were basic to the structure of the universe. He said Geometry in particular reflected a universal order. He pointed out that a right-angled triangle could be found in many shapes and sizes. But the same rules of form were prevalent in all the variations of this.¹³ Mathematics therefore would be an essential part of the education of the philosopher-ruler class. Harmonics was also important.¹⁴ Plato claimed on the other hand that poetry and art was suspect, despite the fact that the *Republic* is itself a great literary piece of art. He said artists were removed from the clear logic of mathematics.¹⁵ The poet Homer, whose *Odyssey* had been seen as a 'Bible' to the Greeks, was viewed by Plato as especially suspect.¹⁶ One recalls that Homer's heroine, Helen of Troy, reflected a force of sexuality beyond the control of reason and logic. In this way Homer actually showed up the limitations of attempts to order life according to a strict logical pattern. But Plato still insisted that society needs to be ordered according to clear insights and definite outlines. He said it was the role of philosophers to see the truth and to tell society about this.¹⁷ In his image of the cave he pictured the ruler philosopher who sees the light of the sun while other people remained chained up in a cave watching the reflections of life go by.¹⁸ It was this ruler philosopher who could teach real truth to society and enable it to make the laws needed to enable everybody to work in harmony and as one.

(b) Aristotle

Aristotle was a student of Plato and spent twenty years in his school.¹⁹ However he came to realise that Plato's teaching about truth being removed from matter implied that matter as

such was evil. Aristotle evolved a line of thinking that focussed on where life was heading towards rather than where it had come from. He called this direction the Final Cause.²⁰ He noted as an illustration of this that two eggs may look the same. But one has the potential to become a snake.²¹ The other one is destined to be a chicken. What each would become, is determined by its form. Growth moves a form of life towards greater reality rather than away from it. Aristotle said the 'good' or 'final form' of things is contained within them rather than being removed from them. He noted, as a biologist and the son of a physician, that the whole range of life forms and things are interconnected as in a web.²² He saw differences between life forms and between people as being helpful to the whole. Therefore people should be allowed to have variety in their lives rather than being coerced into a blueprint of the ideal as imposed from above. Also, their work does more than provide for social needs. It is an opportunity for people to improve their situation.

In time Aristotle set up a library in which he sorted out different branches of learning. He also set up a museum.²³ It is said his own student Alexander the Great helped him to do this.²⁴ Alexander himself set off on an expedition early in life which led to the Greeks conquering almost the whole of the known world. Ironically there is very little in Aristotle's writing to show this was going on. But it would have influenced Aristotle in his efforts to grapple with the question of how people can live and work together.

In his work *Politica* he focussed on what structures would be the best for a city state to operate upon. It seems he was not thinking in terms of an empire and it did not occur to him

that this was what Alexander was forming.²⁵ Yet *Politica* provides guidelines as to how a people can go about writing up their own city constitutions. He points out the need to clarify the aims of a state.²⁶ He analyses the good and bad points of a whole number of city constitutions which were around at the time. He claimed that insofar as people work for the aims of their constitutions they are good or bad citizens.²⁷ This is distinguished from being morally good or bad.

Aristotle draws a comparison between people in a city state living and working together and sailors on a ship. The citizen, like the sailor, is a member of an association. Sailors have various duties to perform, one is a rower, another a pilot, another a look-out man and so on: but it is clear, that while the precise definition of each one's virtue will apply exclusively to him, there is also a common definition applicable to them all. All, you see, have a common end in view - the safety of navigation. In a city-state one citizen differs from another in some sort of way. Yet the safe working of their association, viz the constitution, is their common purpose. Civic virtue therefore must be relative to the constitution" (Book 3 Ch 3)²⁸.

Aristotle also saw that Justice exists in relation to the moral aim of the state (c/f Book 3).²⁹ Because Aristotle's focus was on where things were meant to go, rather than where they came from, he saw life as moving towards reality rather than away from it. He saw the family as encouraging affection³⁰ and private property as enabling generosity to develop.³¹ Art was a way of giving more meaning to an experience (c/f Bk 2).³² He saw that some people in certain roles would be in a better position to develop the 'virtue' needed for ruling the

state. Thus warriors, rulers and priests were seen as eligible for full citizenship rather than mechanics, traders and husbandmen (Bk 7 Ch 9).³³ However he noted that situations vary. The aim of a whole society and the power that different types of people have within the state varies from place to place.³⁴ This is the way things should be.

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Chapter Three

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity the Hebrew view of God as a worker and the Greek view of God as eternal order were welded together. In Palestine the influence of the Greeks, through the Romans, could not be avoided. Greek thinking was to have a formative influence on the new religion especially through its first theologian, St Paul. Whereas Jesus synthesises the essential points of Judaism in his teaching, Paul presented this against the background and in the language of the Greeks. How did the Christian message start?

(a) Jesus and Paul

Jesus

Jesus of Nazareth was conscious of a world-wide empire while he was living within the Hebrew tradition. Luke's Gospel began by referring to a census conducted by the Roman Empire. This was the first of its kind.¹ A new age had begun. Jesus grew up in Nazareth which was in many ways a backwater of Judaism.² But it had many travelers passing through. In Jesus' early years hundreds of rebels were crucified outside the town.³ Each year Jesus was caught up in the cosmopolitan throng of people at Jerusalem. When aged twelve he stayed on there by himself for an extra three days.

Luke's Gospel is structured to show how Jesus' mission spreads out from the Hebrew tradition to the world.⁴ He is introduced by John the Baptist.⁵ Then he begins to teach

people and cure them of their sickness and deformities.⁶ He shows that all types of people are accepted by God. He sends out his twelve apostles to preach and heal sickness.⁷ Then he sends out seventy-two disciples. These are amazed at how they share in his own healing powers.⁸ Jesus challenges Jewish stress on the letter of the law. Such a stress closes out so many people from participation in religion.⁹ Jesus confronts some of the legalistic taboos of the day. He cures on the day of rest.¹⁰ He eats with known sinners.¹¹ He affirms the lost sheep¹² and the humble pray-er.¹³ He shows his regard of women,¹⁴ the diseased,¹⁵ the poor,¹⁶ children¹⁷ and the outsiders.¹⁸ All of this leads to a confrontation with the Jews.¹⁹ Finally he is killed.²⁰

Yet the Gospel also shows how the essential message of Jesus wins through.²¹ It shows that everyone is called to share in God's Kingdom.²² The work of Christians is to reach out to all other people and to humanise their situation.

Paul

The Book of Acts, written by the same author as Luke's Gospel, continues the story. The disciples are fired with enthusiasm by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.²³ They address the multi-lingual crowd at this festival and are understood by all.²⁴ They continue to heal and to suffer persecution.²⁵ Peter makes an outreach to the pagans.²⁶ Paul, the new convert sets out to preach to the pagans.²⁷ Later Paul challenges the new Church to accept pagans as full members without having to take on the technicalities of the Jewish law.²⁸ For a short time Paul preaches to the Greeks at Athens. But they, like the Jewish institution, are unreceptive. On the one hand the Jews objected to the lack of prescriptive

acting in what Paul taught.²⁹ On the other hand the Greeks were only prepared to discuss this as a set of ideas.³⁰ Eventually in the story of Acts, Paul is arrested by the Jews. He appeals to the Emperor Caesar and finishes up in Rome, the centre of the Empire and the known world.³¹ It was from here that the Christian message was to spread.

The Christian message about work, welds Hebraic and Greek thinking together. It teaches the Hebrew approach to work as set out in the Bible. It thereby promotes a close sharing with God in his caring, creating and moral action for good. At the same time Christianity is based on abstract belief about order in the universe and the natural law. In its outreach, it extends beyond the boundaries of a Jewish culture to touch people everywhere.

Paul set out the new Christian message in his letters. Ideas from his own Greek education can be seen here. For example Plato had said "justice consists in minding your own business and not interfering with other people."³² (Bk 4) Paul alludes to this in chiding the Thessalonians "some of you are living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's." (2 Thess: 3:10). Paul also favours an unmarried state for missionaries (I Con 7). At the same time, he also sets out aims and structures for the different churches according to their different situations. Again, in a way similar to Aristotle, he views the rightness or wrongness of something in terms of the aims and types of people in a group, e.g. in relation to the eating of meat used in idol worship (I Cor:8). He also taught that action should be aimed at producing effects for the good of the whole group which he pictures in terms of a large body (c/f Acts

13).³³

Paul spoke and wrote about Jesus in the Greek language. At the time, Greek-speaking people were tired of their abstract amoral gods. On the other hand the Hebrew religion appeared to be rule-bound. The Christian message, when it was heard, appealed to both their minds and their hearts. It appealed to their desire for effective action and personal affirmation.

(b) Augustine

During the first few centuries AD the Christian community grew, despite the persecutions against it. At the same time the inner strength of the Roman Empire was waning. In 410 it was sacked by invaders. The Romans blamed Christianity, which by now was the strongest form of religion. The Romans said Christianity had distracted people away from the religious foundations of the city. Augustine (354-430) wrote the *City of God* to challenge this claim. He pointed out that it was not the pagan gods that had protected Rome over the centuries. Rather, it was because of the virtues of the Roman people that they had gained their worldly success.³⁴ Their religious rites by contrast were depraved and did their civilisation more damage than good.³⁵ Augustine showed how pagan thinkers like Varro had long doubted the value of pagan worship.³⁶ He recalled how Plato had a deeper understanding of what God was like than was to be found in popular paganism. Plato perceived God as the Truth of an eternal order.

In Part 3 of the *City of God* Augustine claims the Christian religion reflects an order which exists beyond the every day

order of the State.³⁷ Christianity challenges people to focus on God, rather than on themselves, which is sinful.³⁸ He claims religious order has existed side by side with the State since the earliest times (Part 4).³⁹ He puts out a challenge to the State to look beyond this present life to another one. He said on the one hand the city of the world is inferior to the city of God. Yet the city of God relies on the world for the provision of material needs. Thus Augustine downgrades the city of the world even while affirming its importance and its independent role. He sees that people of the city of the world are motivated by earthly desires such as worldly success.⁴⁰ Yet even while these are not the best reasons for acting the results of the work done are worthwhile. People acting for their selfish ends at least discipline themselves and prevent the growth of worse vices. They also promote an ordered environment and provide basic necessities for themselves and religious-minded people.⁴¹ People belonging to the city of God are and should be grateful for this.⁴² Those of the City of God should support the city of the world even though the duties of a secular job can appear at times to conflict with the ideal sphere of acting from the motive of pure love e.g. in time of war.⁴³

Augustine sees the city of God as an order or "body of Christ" which is beyond an earthly form such as the state or even the Church.⁴⁴ In the City of God people are united in a sense of goodwill which has been brought about by their faith in God and their dialogue with Him. Their lives are inspired with a sense of the truth which is beyond the values of worldly success.⁴⁵ People therefore should look towards the city of God and beyond, to God himself, to find the foundations and security of a just order.⁴⁶ Augustine argues that if the Romans had looked to God for security they would

not be so disheartened by the destruction around them. If the Christians did this more, they would find new strength and clarity in each others faith. They would sense a world-wide unity amongst themselves.⁴⁷ They would be encouraged to promote their faith as a source of strength for re-building the civilisation around them.

(c) Aquinas

Aquinas was born towards the end of the Middle Ages some centuries after the ideas of Augustine had been established in the Church. This was a time when the Moslems, who had retained the classics of the Greeks, were having a big influence on the Christian world. It was a time when the ancient pagan learnings were being re-discovered by Western scholars. Questions were now being asked about the use of the elaborate ritual and spiritual order in the Church. This was used to dominate the Christian world. Aquinas, a Dominican monk, embraced the teaching of Aristotle. He showed that this contrasted with the emphases taken by Plato and later by Augustine.⁴⁸ Aristotle had shown how everything is interconnected. He said that reality can be found in one's daily experience rather than in a world apart from this one. Augustine had focussed on other-worldly motivation for work. In contrast to Augustine but like Aristotle Aquinas set out the means and ends whereby work can be carried on to develop the sense of God. He did this in particular by providing a carefully worked-out framework for human law. He saw this as being based on the natural and Divine law. Like Aristotle, he claimed these laws can be known through the use of reason.⁴⁹ He said human laws can be devised and supported by people as an extension of the Divine and natural laws. Such human laws should be aimed

at the common good. They should be in accord with the experience of people in a given situation.⁵⁰ Aquinas said God is essentially reasonable and people share in God's use of reason.⁵¹ In this way they can share in God's authority when they make reasonable laws. Thus by their own individual and joint efforts they can find a way of living and working which will bring their lives closer to God and to true happiness. The quest for happiness is a central theme of his book.⁵² Aquinas encouraged people to devise ways to help different sectors of society to work in cooperation.⁵³ He affirmed people in setting up institutions to promote the common good. He saw this as promoting the overall pattern of God's plan.⁵⁴ Aquinas, like Aristotle, stressed how virtues are developed by good living. The basic ones are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.⁵⁵ Aquinas went on to claim the sacraments of the Church will help people to develop a personal relationship with Christ.⁵⁶ This helps them in turn to lead lives that are more reasonable and therefore more happy.⁵⁷ In the framework or rather network that Aquinas puts forward, the Church could claim that because of its links with the life of God, the Church is very likely to understand God's law best and therefore know what is best for human law.⁵⁸ But Aquinas had also asserted the right of ordinary people to make their own regulations in working for the common good. This assertion was to remain.⁵⁹

At the time of Aquinas, many people in the Church felt threatened by his use of the pagan classics. They disliked his criticism of Augustine. They also disliked his claim that Augustine's thinking was akin to the 'pagan' Plato. They were upset that he obtained his pagan writings from the Moslems. Some bishops therefore burned the books of

Aquinas and tried to excommunicate him.⁶⁰ But his Dominican brothers supported him. Aquinas' thinking framework was to become the major one for the Catholic Church in the centuries to come.

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Chapter Four

RENAISSANCE and REFORMATION

(a) Luther

Martin Luther was born in Germany in 1483 and died 1546. It was a time when the great Renaissance or rebirth of learning was at its height. Foremost among the patrons of art was the Medici family in Rome. A number of members in this family were Popes and they were planning to build the Vatican. The sums of money needed for this were enormous. In the effort to raise money, a practice grew in the Church of "selling" off its positions of power. In Luther's geographical area a man of only 23 years of age was made Archbishop. This was on condition that he paid a great sum to Rome and allowed the "selling" of indulgences. The latter practice gave people the idea that if they made a donation to the Church's building projects they were forgiven whatever wrongs they may have done. This idea was not in fact correct Church teaching. But a preacher in Luther's district gave the impression that it was. Luther, who was responsible for Church teaching in the same area protested about the preaching. But the Archbishop, wanting as many funds as possible, did nothing about it. Luther did not know of the Archbishop's monetary deal with Rome.¹

People in Germany were tired of the amount of money going to Rome each year. They were also concerned about the many other abuses in the Church which even extended to the Papacy itself. They wanted reform but it looked unlikely that the Church would reform itself. The Germans protected Luther when he was called to Rome to explain his position.

The rift between Germany and Rome widened. Luther began to outline more fully, his idea that religion should be based on faith in the Word of God. He objected to Rome's practice of controlling people by setting out a range of "good works" that they must do in order to reach heaven when they die. The "good works" that he criticised included, not only the paying of money to Rome's building projects. He began to attack practices relating to the rituals of Mass, the sacraments, the use of relics and the status of religious life.

He set out his major ideas in a small essay called the "Freedom of a Christian" (1520). He sent this to the Pope as a last effort to keep in union with Rome.² In the pamphlet Luther says the soul of a person is independent of the conditions in which the person may live. The Christian relies on a spiritual life, separate from the material things around them. This life comes from the Word of God.³ He says that the "work" God asks of people, is to believe in this 'Word' who is Jesus. He quotes the Gospel of John to support this position (c/f John 2:28 ff and Romans Ch 8).

Since belief in the Word of Jesus is seen as the key to a Christian life, the works that people may do are seen as separated from this. Luther recalls the fable of a dog with meat in its mouth. He compares this to a Christian holding on to faith as the crux of their religion. He recalls that in the Fable's story the dog saw its reflection in a pool of water. It dropped its meat to snatch at the meat reflected and finished up with nothing. He said this behaviour was like dropping and losing one's faith in order to snatch at "good" works as being the essence of a Christian life.⁴

Luther says people should do good works. But this should be a free action, like the free work Adam did in the garden of Eden before he had fallen into sin. This free work was done to please God. He said people should be able to work at a whole range of professions and jobs and be equal in doing this in the sight of God. They did not have to do special deeds in order to gain Christ's life or righteousness. They already have this life by faith. Their ordinary work could be done in freedom -to please God, give good example, keep their bodies under control and enable them to submit to others out of love.⁵

Luther was very conscious of how wayward people can be, unless they are controlled. The times he lived in were very violent. He wrote about the need for Princes to be strong in keeping order. When the peasants of his country thought they were 'free' because of his teaching and revolted against the nobles, Luther surprised Europe by harshly condemning them. He said order is needed at any cost and the peasants should be crushed by every means at hand.⁶ In this way he showed that the State, rather than the Church, needs to be active and impose order.

Within his lifetime Luther brought about the Protestant Reformation,⁷ and it split the Church in two. Had he spoken at another time and place he may not have had such an impact. But the times demanded reform and more separation between the Church and State. People needed freedom to go about their business in a more independent way. The teaching of Aquinas allowed for this. But the Church had not yet adopted what he had said. Luther was an Augustinian monk. His approach therefore was akin to Augustine and Plato (rather than Aristotle). Thus he saw the Church and State as being

distinctly separate rather than seeing them with a graded connection between the two. Luther was not prepared to modify his ideas when the Dominican Cajetan (of Aquinas' Order) urged him to take their line.⁸ Thus he exalted the State as major leader instead of the Church.

Besides the need for reform, another factor had arisen which enabled Luther's reformation to surge onward. This was the advent of printing. The printing machines quickly spread Luther's writings around Europe. They enabled ordinary people to pick up the Bible and read it in their own language. Printing enabled them to find out for themselves what the Word of God was saying. In the event of printing, the power of the Church was undercut. People thought they could work out for themselves what the Word of God was saying. Also with the advent of printing, the power of the monasteries that had hand-copied manuscripts and monopolised learning was now eroded.⁹

In the figure of Luther, the era of the individual conscience and a work world separate from the Church, had now begun.

(b) Machiavelli

Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Italy around the time Luther was born in Germany. At the time, trade with the East was booming for the Italian City States. The East had been recently opened up by the Crusades and the Italian cities were well placed for this trade. But the new wealth was beyond the control of the city-constitutional form of government.

Conflicts between the cities became deeper. Machiavelli saw that foreign armies would take Italy's wealth unless it united

against them. He looked back to the early days of the Roman Empire when Italy was one. He claimed that Christianity had been a hindrance rather than a help to strong unity because it praised weakness in virtues such as humility and meekness.¹⁰ Machiavelli said that virtue consisted in the skill of using any means at all which would bring about a desired result. In some ways his approach was similar to that talked about by Plato. Plato said the philosopher ruler could skillfully impose order, because unlike others, he saw truth as it really is.¹¹ There are further parallels. We recall Augustine spoke of two cities, the city of God and the city of the world. In Machiavelli's time Luther said the two 'cities' should be kept separate. The Church should not interfere with the State. Machiavelli went further. He said success in ruling related to causes and results which had nothing to do with morals or Christian principles. This was similar to the Roman city of the world in Augustine's day. However, since Machiavelli deleted all morals, even the Roman stress on the common good and law were secondary to his end in view.

As a public servant of the day, Machiavelli closely observed the causes and effects of actions within politics. He also read the histories of ancient Rome. When he was forced into early retirement because of a switch in government, he wrote his observations into a small treatise *The Prince*. In many ways the principles he sets out there were based on the action and success of Caesar Borgia, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI. Machiavelli hoped to influence the new prince Lorenzo de Medici. But as it turned out Medici ignored him. On the other hand *The Prince* has had a great impact on politics ever since. It is said Hitler kept a copy by his bedside.¹² *The Prince* sets out principles used by many rulers in the industrial work world. One of these is that they need to

have the appearance of morality i.e. compassion, religion etc., but they need skill to be able to act without these when it is expedient.¹³

The Prince warns that if people are morally good they will come to grief amongst so many who are unscrupulous (Ch 15). He warns against spending too freely (16). He says the use of some cruelty will result in general order but be careful to avoid making people hate you (17). He uses the image of the fox which is wary of traps and the lion which can confront the wolves. He also notes that most people are vulgar and go by appearances and results. They do not notice if someone has used (devious) means to gain their end. At the same time the few who suffer from such methods will be too isolated to be able to speak out (18). Machiavelli warns against arousing the hatred of the mass e.g. by stealing. He advises one instead to do actions that look grand (19). He advises listening to what people actually think and to avoid flattery (20). He advises that helpers should be well rewarded to retain their loyalty (21+). He urges being in tune with the times (25)¹⁴.

Machiavelli concludes that the armies of Italy have been very poor at fighting. He hopes a strong leader will closely observe and use the methods of government that history shows are most likely to unite the country. He sees this 'end' as being more important than any means used to achieve it.¹⁵

(c) John Calvin

Calvin was born in France in 1509 and died in 1564. He was raised a Catholic and was trained in theology and law. At 21+ he converted to the New Protestant Reform. At 27 he published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This set out

a systematic basis for Protestantism. In it Calvin tried to show that Scripture provides all the answers to questions about law, government, work, purpose in life etc.¹⁶

In Book IV of the *Institutes* he sets out a rationale for secular law and rulers. This had been a crucial question faced by the Reformers such as Luther. In Luther's teachings on the rights of the individual he had unwittingly encouraged the German peasants to revolt against their princes. But Luther then condemned them for this and the Princes crushed them with great bloodshed.¹⁷

Calvin, writing in 1530, said that rulers are agents of God's will for general order. They should be mindful of this. On behalf of God they protect property,¹⁸ daily trade and social living etc. (c/f Bk IV:22). Individual people should honour and obey their ruler even when they are unjust.¹⁹ On the other hand if such rulers oblige people to act against God's will then the religious leaders of the people can lead an ordered revolt against them.²⁰

Calvin visited the city of Geneva and was asked to stay there. Geneva was trying to retain its independence. Calvin presented it with a new Constitutions which provided that the state and church would work together. The state would embrace order, standards of morality, respect for religion etc. The Church itself would be governed by a council. In some ways this church council was parallel to the government. Yet it could also dictate at times to the government on what was God's will.²¹

Calvin recalled that the kind of council that Paul set up to keep order in the early Christian communities was similar to

the Council that he established.²² The ministers would preach the gospel and administer sacraments. The doctors would teach and set up schools and universities. The elders would keep discipline. The deacons would care for the sick and the poor.

Calvin's ideas were based on his belief that God has, from before time, already decided on whether or not each person is to be saved or not saved. Nothing people do themselves can change this. People should accept that God's ruling on them is just even if they do not know what it is.²³ On the other hand, logic tells them that since God made the world He expects this to be run in an orderly way. Where order, discipline, justice etc. exist then it is apparent that God's will is being done. Those who are working along these lines are doing God's will and therefore they show themselves to be amongst God's elect.²⁴

The followers of Calvin used these ideas as a basis for their way of life. They tried to show glory to God by working as well as possible. They tried to prove the value of their work by producing and increasing their profits. So, while they continued to admit that their salvation to eternal heaven or hell relied on God alone, they would produce profits and impose order so as to 'prove' that it was most likely they were bound for heaven.

Weber, a 20th century sociologist and arguably the first sociologist, says in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that Calvin's doctrine of predestination was a major motivation for the growth of capitalism. He showed how capitalism or the drive for profits had developed and was this stronger in Protestant countries rather than in Catholic ones.²⁵

Calvin's Church-state of Geneva was a model to Protestants of the day. It showed how Christians could work in both Church and State with the sense of being agents of God. The more they extended social order and achievement the more God's glory and God's will was proclaimed. In their daily work people could honour God by extending social order and achievement as well as possible. They could put aside 'selfish spiritual' worries about whether or not they were gaining enough spiritual merits to get themselves into heaven. They would leave the question of their spiritual future up to God.

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Chapter Five

THE MODERN CONTRACT

(a) Hobbes

T Hobbes (1588-1679) was born about a century after Luther and Machiavelli. The latter reformers (as well as so many others) had been concerned to strengthen secular government so that order would prevail. But in many quarters even more violence erupted because of divisions between Catholic and Protestant thinking. Hobbes himself was born at the sound of the guns of the Spanish Armada. In 1640 he had to flee England because of his ideas. Later he fled France and came back to England where his ideas and writings were banned as being atheistic.

Hobbes put forward a rationale for the organisation of government. He did not relate this to religion. He said people are born free with two great drives - fear for one's life and a range of desires. In terms of strength, people are largely equal. But they naturally want to take from each other and will gather forces to do so. Endless battles ensue. Hobbes said that the only way to obtain order is for each individual to hand over their freedom to a central sovereign. The sovereign in turn, will protect the right of the individual to live in peace.

Hobbes conceded that sovereigns can be tyrants and the title of his book *Leviathan* (meaning the monster), shows this. But Hobbes claimed that at least the sovereign makes and enforces laws that allow his subjects to live and work

together. On their own they could not achieve such peace (c/f *Leviathan* Ch 13)¹ He argued that it is reasonable that people are grateful, adjust to each other, avoid cruelty, contempt and oppression and treat others as they would have others treat themselves (Ch 15).²

Despite the opposition to him, the ideas of Hobbes have been reflected to a large extent in the working world of today. People there do have a range of self-interests that they hold as being their right. But on entering the workforce they give up many of these rights and submit to the decisions of their employer e.g. in relation to what is done, time-use, methods of working, standards etc. In return they expect and are enabled, to make a decent living. As in Hobbes' proposition, the central means for such an exchange is a contract.

(b) John Locke

Locke was born in England in 1632 and died 1704. The times were still violent and he had to flee England twice during his life time. Yet Locke retained an optimistic view of human nature. Like Aristotle, he was strongly influenced by a medical approach to life and its functions.³ He saw this as varied yet being closely interconnected, and working in a natural harmony.⁴ Also like Aristotle and Aquinas, Locke believed that a reasonable pattern for working together could be designed by the people themselves.

Locke did not believe that people are born with innate ideas (as Plato did). Rather, he claimed ideas are formed by experience. People then sort out such ideas into categories which they call knowledge.⁵ Thus people realise God exists because they must have come originally from some Source.

This Source from beyond, must be life-giving, more intelligent, caring and personal than they are.

Locke sets out some of his key ideas in a short chapter called "of the State of Nature". He says that in In his ordinary state of nature, man is peaceful and free. He is able to choose what he wishes to do with his person and the goods, which by his labour, have become his private property. The freedom of man has been given to him as a right and is therefore according to the law of nature by virtue of who he is. According to the law of nature other people also have these rights and these should be respected and if necessary defended. Also, according to such natural law every person has the right to enforce respect for the private property and person both of himself and others.⁶

Locke reasons that it is not likely, that if people are unjust enough to steal from others, they will then be so just as to punish themselves for infringing the law of nature. It is therefore reasonable for people to jointly set up a political body which will enforce the law for them. This political body will be answerable to the people.

Locke's rationale for setting up a Government is, at its most obvious, based on common sense. In fact the common sense of Locke's ideas has been a major force of influence in Western Government ever since his time. When he was writing, the American colonies were rebelling against English rule. They took over Locke's political philosophy so completely that many of his phrases in *The Second Treatise on Government*, are repeated word for word both in the American Declaration of Independence and the American Constitutions. Locke's ideas are also reflected in the

constitutions of Australian, France and elsewhere.⁷ They are reflected in the ordinary processes of democratic government. People elect representatives to make the laws for them. An executive carries these out. Yet the people are the final rulers. If they do not like their government they then elect another.

Locke was not completely satisfied with his own position. He saw knowledge as coming from experience. But ideas about experience tend to over-stress the reason of the individual person. They tend to ignore types of knowledge that come directly from experience and insights.⁸

Perhaps some of the dilemmas now faced in the working-world come from a similar over-stress on the individual's reason. Individual persons and corporations accumulate too much private property and they convince themselves that this is fair. Also the idea that people can freely dispose of their property leads to abuse of the environment - the air, animal life, waterways, levels of radioactivity etc. Again the idea that people can dispose of their bodies, as a possession, leads to drug abuse and, some would say, to infanticide. The idea that so many possessions of the individual can be freely rejected can lead to a "disposable mentality" in relationships, especially marriage.

It seems that reason can be so over-stressed that what could be judged as unreasonable behaviour, devoid of common sense, is accepted.

Locke Himself was a very religious person and he had a strong influence on the Anglican tradition. While he provided Western countries with a rationale for using

common sense, to some extent the abuse of this (rationalism) can sap a country and its economy, of its vitality. Life (and work) can be too pre-determined. On the other hand Locke's approach has helped to keep the Western World on a steady keel.

(c) **Rousseau**

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1702 - 1778) moved to France early in life. France at the time was moving towards a revolution. In contrast to England there was a wide gap between the nobility and peasants here. To some extent this difference dated back to the time of Henry VIII. In England, Henry VIII established the custom of taking his court around the country to stay with the nobles. This encouraged English nobles to build castles on their land and it reduced the king's costs of supporting his court. It therefore defrayed taxes. But in France the nobility moved to Versailles where Sovereign and court grew more remote from the people and charged heavy taxes.

In England, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the independent yet loyal nobles set up industries and became industrial magnates.⁹ Meanwhile in France the starving peasants were looking for an inspiration and momentum to reject their kings and nobles. Rousseau supplied this for them.

In his *Social Contract* he systematically puts forward a model for a Republic. He says here that the family is the major model of a society. Just as slavery is alien (to the individual and family) so slavery is alien to humanity (Bk 1 Ch). Man is naturally solitary and free (Ch 4). People join

together for self-defence and by their joint contract they form a collective and moral body(6). By such a contract the individual is committed to co'operate with the whole (7). Yet in carrying out this contract they still retain their free will (8).

Rousseau says the true Sovereign discerns the corporate will over the State (Bk2). This is like the individual's will over their own body (2). The general will as expressed by the true ruler, is the sum of individual wills. Rousseau says that the general will tends to be fragmented by smaller associations (and in this way they are a threat) (3). He says the Sovereign can enforce the general will through execution (5). Laws are the guidelines of the general will (6) and Religion serves this (c/f 7). He said smaller states are more likely to stay united, as shown for example, by the rapport between people of Corsica. Rousseau sees liberty and equality are basic to a republican state (10) and says it is most important that laws are attuned to the heart of the people (11).¹⁰

The French caught hold of Rousseau's romantic notion of the individual and state being much the same. Perhaps this is reflected by the extent of enthusiasm with which they welcomed Napoleon from the small island of Corsica.

Rousseau's understanding of the corporate spirit was applied to theories about the State in the times to follow.

As the industrial revolution advanced the modern corporation was to evolve. It has reflected a similar idea. The corporation acts as a body and the law treats corporations as a single legal body. In recent decades the concept of corporation has developed further, especially with the notion of corporate guilt in relation to environmental destruction and

the oppression of the Third World poor.

END NOTES

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Chapter Six

MATERIALISM

(a) Hegel

Hegel was born in Germany in 1770 and died 1831. He was concerned that by the end of the 30 years war, Germany was divided into many municipalities, He admired the aims of Machiavelli to unite his country of Italy into a strong state. Hegel also admired the work of Rousseau who had helped unite France into a common spirit of nationalism. Also, as the son of a civil servant he placed great store in the role of the State.¹

Hegel began writing as a theologian. He attempted to provide a philosophical rationale for the sense of oneness in the state as perceived by Rousseau. He reflected some of the thinking of Plato who saw truth as translating itself into its imperfect image in the material order. He also reflected ideas of Augustine who understood the Trinity of God as being the Ultimate Reality with the Godhead knowing Itself in the Son. An infinite love, generated between these two 'persons', produces a third person which is (the Holy Spirit).

Hegel said when that the individual person moves from consciousness to self-consciousness when he is confronted by another being. It is through such alienation that the person comes to realise who they are. In his book *Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel says that in a similar way God experiences and expresses Himself in creation. In a sense therefore God relies on creation to reflect back who He

is so that He can know Himself.²

Such an idea of God and creation allowed Hegel to perceive an Absolute which was dependent on creation and which therefore is the sum of all its parts. In this approach therefore he does not recognise a mystical reality or Being beyond the existence of creation.³

From this position Hegel then perceived that the individual person in the wider community is in a similar situation. The individual is separate from the wider community and he feels alienated from it. Yet he also realises that he somehow exists in the wider state as well. It is in the process of reaching out to this wider state that he is to realise who he is.

In his major work, *Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel sets out the role of work in such a situation.⁴ He says that on one hand the individual works for himself. Yet in doing this he also works for everyone and benefits all. Hegel claims that an individual can enter a noble type of consciousness when he perceives the needs of the State and he works for the cause of the State rather than for himself. It is in this way that the individual can truly find himself. Also the State exercises power to unite the interests of all members into common action.⁵ Also again, State-based language and wealth would help individuals to do this.⁶

Hegel provided a philosophic background for submerging self-interest-in order to work for the advance of the whole. He provided a framework whereby the State could be seen as the Absolute Reality in life - where it alone could interpret what reality is. Marx was to follow on from Hegel in building a political and economic system that would

approach life only in terms of its materialistic needs. Because this system would be Absolute, all the work of individuals could be controlled in a totalitarian kind of way. All individuals would be focussed on achieving the goals of the State.

(b) Karl Marx

Marx was born in 1818 and died in 1883. He first tried to get work as a theologian but was considered too radical. He moved to England and he spent most of his life in the library of the British Museum. To a large extent Marx was a romantic. This can be seen in the volumes of poetry he wrote to his wife.⁷ These were discovered in 1930 after the impact of his political, economic and socialist writings had already changed the face of Europe, especially Russia.⁸ With the discovery of the poetry it was then realised that Marx had a very strong imagination and much of the writing and theories he claimed were scientific, were in fact more suited to the realm of metaphysics. That is, his ideas were based on theory rather than solid evidence. His projections for the future were also theoretical rather than practical. But by 1930 Marxian economic theories had been tried in Russia and were to be tried further afield as in China and elsewhere.

As a private person Marx could be described as a hopeless economist. At one time he gave an inheritance away. At least one of his own children died of hunger. He lived in dire poverty all his adult life and was partly supported by Engels, the son of a manufacturer who shared and developed his theories. Marx was strongly influenced by Hegel who had taught that the Gheist (Spirit) created the material world. He was also influenced by the philosopher Puerbach who held

that instead of the Spirit of God creating the world, man creates his own idea of God.⁹ In either view God (or the Gheist) does not exist beyond creation. Marx took up Hegel's ideas of a dialectic between man as an individual and man as he exists in the social world.¹⁰ He applied these to the world of work. Marx was very aware of the negative social effects of the Industrial Revolution. He said the old style of worker had become alienated from his work. As a poet Marx believed the worker creates an extension of himself in his work and he somehow shares in its existence. But the industrial system had forced artisans and skilled craftsmen to work for wages in boring and fragmented jobs. They now had to sell their labour and, as this was part of themselves they were, in a sense, enslaved.

Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, a year in which revolutions were taking place around Europe. In this piece of brilliant journalistic writing he claimed "A spectre is haunting Europe," that is, communism. In the *Manifesto* he tells the new industrial magnates, that is, the Bourgeoisie, that right through history there have been class struggles. For now they as a class have succeeded by their industrial revolution. They have overthrown the old feudal system of work. Now more and more workers were relying on cash payment or wages. This was spreading around the world. Control of work was becoming more centralised.

But Marx also claimed that the commodities that capitalism was producing were also enabling the increasing numbers of paid workers to unite. The workers themselves were gathering forces to oppose the control of wealth and work by the Bourgeoisie class. In Part II of the "Manifesto" Marx said the communists represented the increasing numbers of

poor workers, that is, the Proletariat. This Proletariat was organising the masses to take control of monopolised wealth and to change this wealth into social property. They would also bring in a social education.¹¹

Marx listed the aims of the communists such as abolition of private monopoly of properties, abolition of rental systems and interest rates. There would not be inheritance. The State would run factories and agriculture according to a common plan. The State would control communication and transport. Industrial armies, especially for agriculture would be established. Distribution of population would be controlled. There would be free education for children.

As it turned out all these programs were adopted by Russia after its revolution in 1917. The *Manifesto* was used as a blueprint for communist societies.

In the *Manifesto* Marx said the Church may oppose in theory private monopolies of wealth. But in practice it sides with these.¹² He then contrasted the commonest forms of socialism in his day with his own description of communism. He claimed that the latter is aimed at attaining results.¹³ Marx was convinced the communist revolution would take place because he saw that this to be part of an historical law. He said that of its nature, capitalism requires the worker to spend extra time at a job in order to create a profit for the capitalist. The profit from this is invested to buy more machinery, produce more goods and so force smaller businesses out of existence. Thus the wealthy capitalists become wealthier and fewer. Competition between them becomes sharper. Then to keep profits up, the capitalists force down wages making the poor workers more numerous.

Eventually the poor will rise up and take control of the wealth of the country for themselves. They would unite as a socialist state.

Equality would then be established. Production and the well-being of all would surge forward. The work and interests of the individuals would be submerged into the interests of the State. And, since the being of a person exists in a social rather than an individual self, then everyone will be able to overcome their alienation. Once again the workers will, by working for the State, be really working for themselves.¹⁴

The extent to which Marxian theory has been adopted is evidenced by the fact that over a third of the world's population came to live under a communist regime.¹⁵ Ironically enough the number of people queuing up for food each day in regimes of "pure" communism shows that the 'scientific law' Marx claimed to be following has not worked as well as expected. Marx claimed universal prosperity would definitely arrive. Marxist governments (as in Russia) insisted with decreasing conviction that such a time would still arrive. Marx's 'law of inevitable revolution' against capitalism has also broken down in capitalist countries. Instead of making more people poorer (in developed countries at any rate), the poor people have become middle class. Also, new technology was introduced to mass produce goods with hardly any manual labour at all. So production has gone up independently of the 'surplus labour' of workers.

It might be claimed that China has been an exception to Marxist failure. Its economy has made extraordinary strides forward. But China's claims to be communist and its realities such as private ownership suggest there is a Chinese

version of communism, (as also it is said, is the case in India and Italy).

Although Marx's economic theories have been found wanting, he has given an accurate description of effects that capitalism can bring about - especially in an undeveloped country where social structures are not sophisticated enough to protect people against the inroads of capitalism. Before some countries (c/f Brazil) adopted large scale capitalism, the people were fed and housed. But then, as in other developing countries, people were starving. Cash crops have been grown for profitable export by the few. Also in some such countries a unionist movement to protect the workers has been outlawed.

Marx proposed an aggressive movement to protect people from this capitalist aggression. But even so, in taking such an approach, he tended to despise the simple, basic style of ordinary village-style living.¹⁶

END NOTES

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4. Ibid. pp 111, 508
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7. c/f Rose, M *Reading the young Marx and Engels: poetry, parody and the censor*, Croom Helm, London 1978
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- 11 McLellan, D (ed) *Karl Max, Selected Writings* OUP 1977, p 231
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- 16 Ellas, D "Brave New World" (North Korea), *The Age* 19/9/87

Chapter Seven

FINDING COMMUNITY

(a) Durkheim

Durkheim was born in France in 1858. At that time practically all philosophies were caught up in the fashion of seeing everything in terms of the individual and/or the general social spirit. Hegel described the general social spirit as the 'Gheist' and the State. However, Durkheim's background distinguished him from others in that he had experienced an intense community life. He was the son of a Jewish rabbi and was trained to be a rabbi. Just as the Hebrew tradition that he came from revolved around the law and the will of God, so also Durkheim was absorbed by questions of morality and morale in a community. He believed that morale was disintegrating in France after the 1870 revolution and changes to industrial society. At the same time, as a Jew, he was conscious of the great bond that was felt between his fellows when the public eye at the time was focussed on blatant discrimination against Jews. Such discrimination was shown in the case of a Jewish public servant called Dreyfus who was used as a public scapegoat.¹

E Durkheim believed that a society functions as a community first of all, rather than as a number of individuals bound by contract, or even as an individual writ large. Durkheim claimed that a community is like an organism. Everyone contributes in their own special way. He claimed in *Division of Labour* (1893) that industrialisation can improve community rather than destroy it. This would be because

people take on more specialised roles. They then need to work in more with other people. Because they work in complementary ways, there should no longer be need for restraints and impositions. Rather the interdependence of modern work in itself can create order and harmony.²

Half way through the writing of *Division of Labour* Durkheim realised that in fact harmony in a modern society with its complementary roles, needs to grow first of all out of other binding social networks and forces.³ He realised that religion and its symbols and the family ties, traditions etc. should not be dispensed with. Rather the long term success of the modern industrial work world depends on the presence of such primary uniting forces. So, the rest of Durkheim's work was spent on proving that these primary, uniting forces do in fact exist. He showed in his work *Suicide*⁴ that the basic unit in society is the community rather than the individual. He showed by statistics that those who commit suicide do so, not only by their own decision, but also because of their external situation. In Ch IV for example, he shows that people integrated into community are less likely to suicide than others. Wives who have children, suicide less than other wives without children. Women in general suicide less than men, especially unmarried men and men without children. In Ch V of his study he shows that divorcees have a high suicide rate. He shows that Jews suicide less than Catholics and Catholics suicide less often than Protestants.

By his use of statistics Durkheim showed scientifically that social facts exist apart from individual people. He showed that such facts can be measured.⁵ He focussed the major part of his life on proving the existence of an organic society. He had intended to show how moral values are found in a social

context and these become universal values.⁶ Had Durkheim survived to do this work he may well have returned to his first theme in *Division of Labour* and showed how values emerge within different environments and functions of the workforce. Then such values gradually affect the social whole. However Durkheim died of a broken heart when his sons and confreres were killed in the war in 1917.

(b) Weber

Weber was born in Germany in 1864 and died in 1920. He was aware of the writings of Marx and his stress on submerging personal ideas into those of the State. Weber said ideas are not secondary but rather they are in themselves driving forces. He said Marx was tone deaf and colour blind as far as religion was concerned. Marx therefore did not recognise the importance of ideas. Marx for example could not explain why capitalists had a profit motive in the first place. Weber did a study on capitalism which was Marx's major subject. He showed that the religious spirit of the Puritans was a major force in establishing capitalism and its profit focus.⁷ Weber said that religion may, as Marx also said, cause set ideas and so block out people's understanding of the realities around them. Yet Weber pointed out that such ideas can also be a driving force to create new realities.⁸

In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber showed that capitalism is highest in Protestant rather than Catholic countries. He contrasted the countries of the United States and England with the countries of Spain and Italy which lagged behind in industrialism. Weber showed that Protestant regions were more likely to be capitalist. Protestant individuals were more likely to be successful

entrepreneurs. Amongst Protestants, the Calvinists were more profit-minded than the Lutherans and Evangelists.⁹ In the last Chapter of his book, Weber outlines major tenets of the Puritan ethic which explain their inner drive towards capitalism. He said that Puritans held that it was activity that gave glory to God and not leisure.¹⁰ They said that everyone has a calling towards something they should labour in.¹¹ One should follow more prosperous jobs in order to be a faithful steward of God.¹² Entertainments such as sport and theatre were a waste of time and such time should be spent on work.¹³ One should also be mindful of what money is spent.¹⁴

Weber held that the Puritans were driven towards material success because this was a proof that they were destined for heaven. He argued that over the course of time, such a motive has largely lapsed and now many pursue wealth for its own sake. Also, the Puritan self-discipline has largely lost its motivation. But the original impetus of the Puritan ethic has had a major impact on the world.¹⁵ Weber closes his argument by insisting that while there are materialist causes for what happens, there are also spiritual causes as well. These should not be ignored. In his writings Weber reflected his belief that there are two major types of social structure called *gesellschaft* and *gemeinschaft*. The former was related to a business world while the latter was related to family relations.¹⁶ Marx had focussed on the former model as being the total kind of society. But Weber saw the values and structures of *gemeinschaft* as being more basic. He therefore saw the small community as the basis of society rather than the individual.¹⁷ It was Weber who, as a private scholar gradually formed the first group of sociologists and he outlined the major points to be studied in coming years.¹⁸

(c) Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons was born in America in 1902. He shared the view put forward by Weber that ideas have a pervasive effect on the shape of a society rather than the other way around. He therefore opposed the Marxist view that the material environment and the control of it are the more important realities.

Parsons used the examples of ancient Israel and Greece to illustrate his understanding. Israel had a covenant or contract-relationship with God similar to that of a vassal state with its Lord. Israel would obey Yahweh who in turn would protect it. Such a sense of covenant gave the Israelites a sense of mission to the world. They had a task to do. The covenant gave them a sense of unity and interdependence as they were all bound by the law that Yahweh had laid down. This spurred them on to teach reading to their sons so these could know the law. Thus the Jews were the first people with universal literacy. The covenant gave an aura of authority to state laws and rulers as these extended the authority of God's law. The sense of a covenant gave the Israelites a sense of importance in showing the rest of the world, over which God reigns, the value of living by the moral law.

Parsons argued that the whole of Israel's society was affected to some extent by its belief that it had a contract or agreement with its God.¹⁹ Parsons also held that the Greeks had a unique contribution to the world in the realm of ideas. They believed there was an Eternal Order beyond the world and even beyond their many gods. If this Order was to be

breached, tragedy would follow. But if it were maintained, the society could reflect the Eternal Order in its own structures. Parsons argued the Greeks set up a democracy of citizens who were equal and could govern their small state in a way similar to the circle of Gods that were part of their religious system. The Greeks were motivated to seek out the eternal order of things in the realms of mathematics, philosophy, ethics, biology, science etc. The artisans of this society sought to reflect this eternal Order in their art, poetry, music, buildings etc. The effort was made to pattern all the activities of the community on a sense of sublime order.

Parsons noted that the covenant idea of the Israelites and the Universal Order idea of the Greeks were united into the theology of the Christians. St Paul for instance the first Christian theologian, was both Hebrew and Greek. In the centuries to follow, Christianity has had an enormous effect on Western Society. Also it has been in the West rather than in the East that the industrial world has evolved. Parsons claimed that modern society has to recognise its essential impetus as coming from Christianity.²⁰ Yet he also admitted that as a society develops it tends to differentiate its ideas. Thus religion is expressed in culture and gradually this takes on an independence of its own. Modern society therefore tends to look to its culture - its art forms such as literature etc. for the key to its motivations.²¹ Moreover, these art forms tend to become more generalized, in order to reflect a code of ethics and values which will allow for more diversity. Such a generalisation will allow the society as a whole to adapt more easily to the changes that it faces.

Parsons contrasts generalised values with forms of fundamentalism, of the extreme of right or left, which reject

other perspectives.²² In his book the *Societies* he provides for society an organic, cybernetic model. The word cybernetic recalls the crucial part played by the tiller of an enormous ship. One slight move of the tiller will re-direct the whole. In Ch 1 Parsons also recalls the role of a tiny gene in a cell (of an embryo). This is the center which determines what form the cell and developing organism will take on.²³

Yet even while Parsons stresses the importance of key ideas and key perceptions of reality for a society, he says these need to be institutionalised in some way if they are going to affect the whole.²⁴ Thus there has to be a channel of communication for key ideas. There needs to be a tight 'cybernetic' control as in a ship. He notes that if key ideas are expressed in cultural art forms they are more likely to survive. Thus, the ideas of Israel have continued on in their influence despite the destruction of the first Israelite state and the comparatively small numbers of Jews. In turn the ideas of Greece have also continued on through art forms and philosophical teaching and social structures.²⁵

Parsons claims that if a key idea is developed and expressed in a society, then this idea gives the society extra scope to adjust to the big changes that it faces. However Parsons sees that a key idea and its expression could be isolated in some kind of niche. Or, it may be absorbed into the mainstream of society without any real effect upon it.²⁶

In order to clarify his views Parsons took a sketchy outline that Weber had made of society as based on its major functions.²⁷ He then drew a graph to show that at one level of society is "Ultimate Reality". He said this is expressed in

the realm of values and cultural art forms. Further down in this graph or further separated from such a cybernetic control, is the society's "community integrating activity". This takes place in a realm of functions geared to unite people into the whole. Further down again, there is the "personality system" which is geared to the achievement of goals. Parsons calls this the "polity". Further down again there is the "realm of adjustment. This takes in the lowest level in the cybernetic model". Parsons says this is the 'physico-organic' level. That is, it is high on physical energy (like the bulk of the ship). But it is low on the generation of seminal or "seed" thinking. This is in the realm of economics. It contrasts with the top realm of "ultimate" reality.

Parsons said it is at the top level, as with the Israelite and Greek cultures, that the key thinking is carried on. Key thinking is expressed through art forms in particular, and this enables people to understand insights into realities of their world and it helps them build a world that is based upon these.²⁸

It is interesting to note that in the old Hebraic culture a great fear, constantly voiced by the prophets, was that the Hebrew people should 'water down' their key insights into reality and then be absorbed into the cultures around them. This in fact is what did happen with the Northern Kingdom of ancient Israel.

Parsons argued that when people have worked out a sense of direction for their society in terms of their surroundings, then they will be able to work together for a better world.²⁹

(d) Vatican II

The Catholic Church Council of Vatican II began in the early 1960's when Bishops from around the world came to Rome at the invitation of the new Pope, John 23rd. The uniqueness of Vatican II is shown by its name. That is, it was only the second one of its kind in the 2,000 years of the Church's history. At the time the Catholic Church was in need of new ideas to help it adjust to the modern world. This in itself was illustrated by the dwindling number of ageing cardinals who ruled in the church.³⁰ . When Pius XII died, the cardinals could not agree on who should become Pope. They picked an old cardinal who was, it was said, an interim Pope who would 'hold the fort' till someone more appropriate came along.

But when John XXIII came to power he announced there would be a Vatican Council. The Church was to re-think its basic philosophy from top to bottom. Decades later the Church continues to grapple with what it all meant.

To illustrate, John XXIII, as Pope, had the power to select the people he believed could herald in a fresh way of thinking in the Church. At that time, in America, there was a theologian named Courtney Murray who had closely based his thinking on that of John Locke. Locke's thinking in turn (as described in previous pages) is akin to the thinking of Aristotle and Aquinas and also Weber and Parsons. Courtney Murray therefore had an approach which perceived society as being similar to an organic whole. As with Aquinas, Courtney Murray he recognised the reasoning autonomy of the secular sphere. But his ideas were so different from the Church mentality of the day that he had been banned from publishing

any more of his writings.³¹

It therefore caused great comment when such the discredited theologian was invited by the Pope to write the Council's Document on "Religious Freedom".³² In the style of Locke (Aristotle, Aquinas, Parsons etc) This document claims that people have the right to act in accordance with their religious belief.³³ Such a right should be expressed in a country's constitution.³⁴ (Ch 1 Par 2). The document says that the divine, natural and human laws are interconnected because they are based on the truth which people can seek out through their own reason. People have the right to act according to their conscience and they cannot be coerced into acting against it (c/f Par 3).³⁵ Parents have the right to educate their children (par 5).³⁶ The document says that religion as such is geared towards a social expression. Therefore Governments do not have the right to quash formal religion. The Document also reminds religious communities that neither can they in turn coerce other peoples. Religious groups have the right to form organisations that are geared towards educational, cultural, charitable and social ends. They have the right to express their insights about social organisation and activity. At the same time one religious group cannot expect favouritism over others (par 6).³⁷

The document points out that Governments should provide favourable conditions for religion as this helps the common welfare.³⁸ Religious freedom and free action should be protected. Governments should also maintain public order (par 7).³⁹

It may be asked how such a document bears on the understanding of the Church in the world of work. In this

document as in others, the Church recognises that working world has validity in its own right. It can classify and analyse its experience and work out its direction and guidelines in terms of this. In fact, business ethics would be largely worked out in the context of business. The working world is the means whereby people can improve the world in general and grow towards a life of happiness themselves. The Church would support them in this.

Prior to the time of Vatican II the Catholic Church had already accepted a position similar to that taught by Aquinas centuries before. But it had to a large extent shifted back to a two-world view. On the one side there was the Church with its sacramental life while on the other side was the secular world.. It was generally thought that religion required separation from the world rather than involvement in and dialogue with it. A total range of religious language in use at the time as well as customs etc. could illustrate this.⁴⁰ In contrast to this Vatican II taught that religion should be interconnected with the day-to-day work and efforts of all people.

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5. c/f Ibid. Bk 3

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- 7 c/f Parsons, T., Tawney, R., Weber, M *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Scribner, 1958
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- 9 c/f Vander Zanden, J W *Sociology* ed John Wiley & Sons, NY, 1979 pp 464-5
- 10 c/f Weber, M *The Protestant Ethic Op Cit* (Quotation of Benjamin Franklin in Introduction)
- 11 c/f *ibid* pp 154, 181
- 12 c/f Weber *The Protestant Ethic.. Quotation.. Op Cit*
- 13 *Ibid.*
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- 16 Nisbet *The Social Philosophers Paladin*, 1976, Ch 3
- 17 *Ibid.*
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- 31 *c/f Ryan Lectures on Sociology of Religion II (Jesuit Theological College Parkville Melbourne 1983)*
- 32 *Ibid*
- 33 *c/f Courtney-Murray, J Introduction to "Religious Freedom" The Documents of Vatican II (Gen Ed Abbot, W)*
- 34 *Ibid. Par 2*
- 35 *Ibid. Par 3*
- 36 *Ibid. Par 5*
- 37 *Ibid. Par 4*
- 38 *Ibid. Par 6*
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Note: An overview of pre-Vatican popular piety books shows words such as "spiritual life", "devotions", "merit", "flesh", "worldly" etc. that reflect a belief in the dichotomy between body and spirit, Church and world. This language largely disappeared soon after Vatican II.*

Chapter Eight

THE LIBERATION APPROACH

J Segundo

J L Segundo was born in South America in 1925. In the 1980's he was working in Paraguay¹ though he was banned by the government from publishing or teaching openly.² As a South American through the C20th he had been very conscious of the great gap between rich and poor. He believed many religious ideas held by poor people caused and worsened their situation. They tend to think injustice is inevitable: they can do nothing about it because this is the will of God. Segundo's ideas are set out in his book *The Liberation of Theology*³

Marx had a similar criticism of religion and Marx therefore rejected it as an obstacle to progress. However Segundo and other liberation theologians have claimed that the Scriptures can be reinterpreted to help rather than dissuade people from understanding that they are meant to struggle for more equal social structures.⁴ In his book Segundo says that Christianity has taught over the centuries that Jesus Christ is God. But from this it also follows that God is Jesus. Thus the Gospels tell something about the inner life of God Himself as acted out in the life situation of Jesus. The Gospels stories show that Jesus sought out poor people in preference to the wealthy. Segundo says that this surely means that God has a special love for the poor and, as in the life of Jesus, he wants

their situation to improve.⁵

Segundo claims that religious faith should not be a static thing. Rather it should urge people on to work for justice in their lives. *Liberation of Theology* (Ch 1)⁶ sets out a method for doing this. Poor people should make themselves aware of their present situation and the reality of the problems they are facing. They should reflect on these in terms of their belief that God wants all people to live and work with dignity. They should then commit themselves to doing something practical about their situation and set about trying to overcome it. Whatever action that they take (or fail to take) shows what they really believe rather than the set of ideas that they may have about life. Segundo points out that a Church life that is based on a sacramental system without reference to historical events that are taking place is not enough. He says that, as well as stressing unity, note should also be taken of real economic divisions between groups of people. He reminds people that God is involved in day to day reality rather than being removed from it. He says much of what is said and taught in the Church tends towards making divisions between groups of people. It tends to ignore economic realities.⁷

As yet, Western Christians cannot pinpoint injustice as clearly as the South Americans have been able to do. Every day the latter could see luxurious homes side by side with scrap-iron or cardboard humpies. The sight of this would give a clear view of what injustices to work at. In Western society forms of oppression can be more complex. Some suggest the greatest problem here is anomie or loneliness.⁸ Yet such a situation often results from too much planned action and efficiency rather than the lack of it. For example

broken homes often result from affluence and pressures of business. Using the terms of Weber ('gesellschaft' and 'gemeinschaft'), it might be claimed that Western anomie is a general result of over-stress on 'gesellschaft'. Gesellschaft tends towards a technological, impersonal approach. By contrast the plight of the poor in undeveloped countries often comes from the vulnerability that is part of a heavy stress on 'gemeinschaft' or homeliness and simplicity. It is largely because of a difference in "types of oppression" that a question still remains open as to whether or not the "poor" of the Western societies can use the methods that the liberation theologians of Latin America have put forward. Stress on action may improve the social situation in developing countries. A basic community already exists here. But in the West if the major problem is isolation or anomie, then action in itself may need to be toned down rather than put to the fore.

END NOTES

1. Note: This was stated in an Introduction to a Public Lecture by Segundo in Melbourne, 1984
2. Ibid.
3. Segundo, J L *The Liberation of Theology* Gill & Macmillan, 1977, p 4
4. Ibid. p 47
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. "The Ideological Infiltration of Dogma" pp 40-47ff
7. Note; Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Penguin 1970's, said this in response to a question at a public lecture given in 1974
8. Nisbet *The Social Philosophers* Paladin, 1976, Ch 3

Chapter Nine

COMMITMENT BY THE ROMAN CHURCH

John Paul II

Pope John Paul II was born in Poland in 1920. His life prior to being Pope was dominated by struggle against totalitarian systems of government and work. As a youth he resisted the Nazi regime by continuing underground Polish theatre and by helping the Jews.¹ He was hunted by the SS and lived as a student in hiding. The Auschwitz death camp was built thirteen miles from where he had lived as a child. After the War the Communist regime replaced the Nazi one.² During his term as priest and bishop John Paul confronted the communist government about freedom in education and work. Later as Pope he took on a role cautious encouragement to the struggles of the Poles to establish the Solidarity union movement amongst the workers.³

For John Paul II, work and the worker has been a central theme of his teaching. He has spoken of work as being a key if not the issue to the social questions of the day.⁴ The ideas on work that he has put forward in his writings have, naturally enough, been influenced by his background. It is not surprising that he in his teaching he has been wary of accepting systems of thinking that parallel a Marxist approach. An example of this would be liberation theology. The Vatican has warned that liberation theology tends to confine its understanding of God to history. The Vatican has objected to its stress that only the poor can really know the

truth. This type of approach claims that justice consists in taking the side of the poor in political action. In contrast to this approach the Vatican insists that God is beyond history and is transcendent. Also all people can know God and open their hearts to Him (even the wealthy).⁵

In some ways liberation theology can be seen to parallel the Platonic/Marxist approach in that it maintains an elite i.e. the philosophers (in Plato), the communists (in Marx) or the oppressed (in liberation theology) are the only ones who can know truth as it really is. They therefore have the right to enforce order on others according to their view.

John Paul II on the other hand has based his approach to work on the position of Aquinas and indirectly therefore, on Aristotle. This can be seen at the start of his encyclical *On Human Work* (1981). Recall that Aristotle defines the person as a social being. In the opening of the encyclical John Paul II notes that work is "the mark of a person operating within a community of persons." The encyclical starts with an 'organic development' of social teaching and a stress on experience with the statement "that human work is *a key*, probably *the essential key*, to the whole social question. There is an introduction of topic of 'social morality' which has been worked out, (through experience), over a long period of time. There is also an opening focus on 'making life more human.' The encyclical as a whole has a focus on the 'rights' of a worker to 'self-determination'. Thus from the beginning of this encyclical parallels with Aristotle are readily given.

Recall that Aristotle claimed that life forms are not removed from pure truth in the way that Plato claimed. This is

because they have within them the potency to grow and develop. Aristotle said that people have a special character of dignity because the person, even as a baby has the potential to grow in their understanding of God. Their reason enables them to do this.⁶ Aristotle used the image of two eggs to illustrate his ideas about potential life. One of these eggs could have a baby snake inside while the other egg has a chicken. Both look the same but they are "called to be" according to their own largely pre-determined differences.⁷ Aristotle taught that as people grow in their own experience they can also grow in virtue and so in the knowledge of their Maker. In this way life experience brings them closer to God rather than removing taking them further away from Him.⁸

In **Part 1** of *On Human Work* John Paul II not only uses an Aristotelian approach to define work and the person. He also links this in closely with the first chapter of Genesis in the Bible. Thus he closely connects the Hebrew sense of a call with Aristotle's idea of potential growth. In Para. 4 John Paul recalls that the human is made in the image and likeness of God.⁹ He says that as such, the person is called by God to "subdue the earth" through his or her work.¹⁰ Because of their likeness to God and this call, people are able to work in a way which is distinct from that of the animals.¹¹ In this sense therefore only a person can work. Work is the distinctive mark of the human.¹² Just as Aristotle and later Aquinas say that reason enables the person to grow in the knowledge of God, so also John Paul claims, the potential to work enables the person to share in the activity of the Creator. He says "In carrying out this mandate ("to subdue the earth"), man, every human being, reflects the very action of the Creator of the universe. (para 2).¹³ John Paul uses the idea of a call to work as the basis of an attitude and approach

towards work in modern society.

In **Part II** of the encyclical John Paul II claims that the call of the person to work continues to dominate, no matter how complex the work world may become. He says this call never ceases to be relevant, despite the acceleration of changes.¹⁴ Thus work remains at essence the response of the person to God. People are called to work in community with other persons. In their response they remain the subject of work and therefore remain more important than what is being done.¹⁵

In **Part III** John Paul II says that people are more important than things. He says it is a mistake to think of capital (a thing) as dominating labour (that is, people). There is not much point in a state bureaucracy taking over private property in order to assert the primacy of people. The participation of people in decisions about work can be just as removed from the workers as before a takeover or more so.¹⁶ He says private property should be allowed yet also be subjected to the common good.¹⁷ He again quotes Aquinas to support this view.¹⁸ He that suggests forms of joint ownership such as co-operatives could be tried.

Because John Paul stresses that people are to be the subjects of work he looks to the importance of nurturing workers as persons. He notes the importance of working at building up what sociologists would call a "gemeinschaft" kind of community, especially the family.¹⁹ He stresses the need for building relationships in the home. He insists that mothers should have the time and scope to work at nurturing their children.²⁰ He says this kind of work is vulnerable to the many pressures imposed by the demands of a materialistic

society. This stresses the status and consumer power of the paid job.²¹ John Paul points out that the work of nurturing children is basic to their becoming mature and responsible adults. Therefore this work is primary.²² He also says that since people doing work take priority over what is done, so handicapped people should be given scope to work. Emigrants also should be catered for.²³ The encyclical underlines the need for all associations to work for the common good.²⁴

In **Part IV** of *On Human Work* John Paul he claims that since people are the subjects of their work they have rights that should be defended. These includes the rights of the unemployed to work, the right to a just wage, the rights of a mother to work at home, the rights of unions, the rights of the disabled and the rights of immigrants.²⁵ He also says people have the right to rest.²⁶

In **Part V** he sees work, with all its toil as the opportunity for the person to share in the hardships of Christ, especially on the cross. Throughout this encyclical, the person and their call to work as given by God, is put at the centre of focus. John Paul stresses that work is intended for people in the whole of their personhood.

It is from such a starting point that he talks of the health and happiness of the person, the health and happiness of their personal relationships and the wellbeing of people in general.

Decades after the encyclical the question can be asked if the Church itself can understand and adjust to this message of its Pope. Will it ever develop more realistic structures for providing a direct support for people at their work?

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- 2 Note: c/f News Reports of visits between John Paul II and Waldesa, leader, Poland's Solidarity Movement
- 3 John Paul II *Laborem Exercens* Encyclical Letter on Human Work, ACTS Melbourne par 3
- 4 - "Dispelling the Myths of Liberation Theology" NCP Newsletter Sept 1984
- 5 c/f Ross, W (ed) Aristotle "Inner Side of Moral virtue" *Ethica Nichomachea* Oxford Uni Press, London, Book 3
- 6 c/f Ross, W D Aristotle Methuen and Co, London, 1945, pp 117, 175
- 7 Aristotle "Relation of philosophical to practical Wisdom" *Ethica Nichomachea Op Cit Bk VI*
- 8 John Paul II *Laborem Exercens Op Cit Par 4*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid. Par 7*
- 11 *Ibid. Par 6, Par 12*
- 12 *Ibid. Par 6*
- 13 *Ibid. Par 2*
- 14 *Ibid. Par 13*
- 15 *Ibid. Par 14*
- 16 *Ibid. Par 15*
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid. Par 19*
- 19 *Ibid. p 42*
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid. par 22, 23*
- 23 *Ibid. par 23*

24 *Ibid. c/f Par 16*

25 *Ibid. par 25*

26 *Ibid. par 27*

SECTION TWO

Chapter Ten

Two Major Streams of thinking re social structures

In any attempt at making a broad overview of currents of thinking, the limitations of generalised thinking have to be admitted. When comparisons are made between philosophies of work it has to be conceded that there are many contrasts between these writers as well. However if one were to avoid comparisons because of the limitations of generalizing this would avoid facing up to the fact that there are general streams of looking at life. Such streams of thinking or life-views are reflected in similar ways through similar types of people facing similar situations. Even the problems that arise from such views are similar. It could be said that such 'similar' problems might have been avoided to some extent if it had been recognised what was likely to result when a particular life-view was being stressed.

In is argued in these pages that many figures in Western social philosophies have largely followed one of two patterns. They either tend toward Plato's view of the world. Or they tend towards Aristotle's view. It is ironic that these two Greek thinkers spent twenty years together at Plato's Academy. They had plenty of time to debate and work out their differences. Yet these were never resolved. It appears that throughout the history of philosophy the two positions

remain fairly distinct (at both ends of a continuum line?). How are they different? The teasing out of such a question could result in an attempt at the impossible. But as said above, the strands of Plato's thinking as well as Aristotle's can be detected in the views of social philosophers over the last twenty-five hundred years. To some extent at least these strands could be considered.

(a) A Platonic Approach

Consider the position of Plato. He sets this out in a uniquely brilliant way in *The Republic*. This book claims that the administration of justice requires skill (Part I).¹ It aims to enable every person to exercise their skills and also carry out the duties of their occupation.(Part I) Guardians are needed to facilitate this (Part II).² Plato says Guardians should be given a quality education which in its early stages monitors music and poetry studies and provides training in arithmetic, geometry and physical prowess (Part III).³ He says the membership of the Guardian class should only be open to those with the ability to develop the skills and insights needed for their task. They should be able to focus upon their role without the distractions of private property (Part IV)⁴ He says harmony developed in such individuals is the same kind of harmony that should be reflected in the State (Part V)⁵ He says the informalities of family life would detract from this order. Men and women therefore should lead the same lives without the complementary differences found through family bonding. Breeding should be impersonal and selective (Part VI).⁶ He says the Philosopher Ruler would be trained in every branch of learning so that he could perceive the eternal reality beyond this world. Because of his clear vision it is he who should have the final say (Part

VII⁷. Plato says the education of the Philosopher Ruler would be largely influenced by mathematics which more than any other subject, reflects the eternal order (Part VIII).⁸ He says other societies with different models of leadership are imperfect (Part IX⁹). So also are art forms (Part x).¹⁰ In the final chapter Plato says the soul, as reflected so well in the Philosopher Ruler, has an immortality about it.

The Platonic Approach Repeated

When one reads philosophies after Plato, many appear to reflect a similar theme.

Augustine put value on the transcendental order. He claimed that the City of God has a perception of the truth of God which is distinct from the more selfishly-minded City of the World. Though Augustine accepted the worldly pursuits of secular work as being necessary, he saw this, as well as involvements of sexuality, as being less perfect than the pursuit of God in 'pure' truth.

Luther who had been an Augustinian monk claimed the world of the church and the secular world should remain separate. The secular prince should be allowed without hindrance, to establish order in his realm. His methods may contrast with the practice of love in the personal life of a Christian. But it is better to allow him authority to impose order rather than suffer the disorders of different or 'impractical.' opinions.¹¹

Machiavelli exalted the role of the Prince and argued the Prince should ignore the sincere practice of religion. He saw meekness as being detrimental to the effectiveness of the Prince. He said that ruling requires skill in being able to

observe causes and effects in the realm of politics. He said that morality consists in the exercise of this kind of scientific skill. A Prince with skills that Machiavelli describes was needed to unite Italy and to oblige its cities to conform to an imposed order.¹²

Calvin saw the role of the Church elders as being vital to a State. These people could perceive the will of God more clearly. He said the city magistrates should heed the wishes of Church elders while imposing order over all the functions carried on in the state.¹³

Hobbes claimed order was needed at all costs. He said the individual should forfeit their personal freedoms and make a contract with a central ruler who could protect their life and property. Such a central ruler and state (a Leviathan) would make judgments about what is just and would have the right to impose laws on everyone.¹⁴

Rousseau believed all the members of a state make up a collective being. They should give over their wishes for personal freedom to the ruler of the state who would discern the general will. This ruler could therefore impose laws on all individuals in the state. In such case they would in fact be obeying themselves because their own wishes are part of the general will which the ruler would be discerning and applying.¹⁵

Hegel said 'the absolute' consists of the sum of all realities. Therefore the 'absolute' as such does not exist beyond the finite realm. He said God (the Absolute) sees his glory reflected in creation. In this sense he relies on creation to find out who he is. In this sense, therefore, God does not

exist beyond creation. Thus for Hegel, the ultimate truth could exist in the generalised spirit of a nation. He saw this understanding of "gheist" or Spirit as a great uniting force for the Germany of his day. Hegel said the civil servants were especially suited for understanding how the 'gheist' or Spirit of a State works. Therefore civil servants could work out the laws to be imposed on the country to bring it to greater prosperity.¹⁶

Marx followed the philosophy of Hegel to a large extent. In a way similar to Hegel he claimed Reality only exists within the material world.¹⁷ One's understanding of the world therefore is largely self-made. Such understanding can be changed to perceive the realities of the world more clearly.¹⁸ He said insofar as some people accept a 'clearer' view they can impose rules on their society and the rest of the world to make it what they judge to be a fairer place. An elite, with a clearer view than the rest, would control the education of the young.¹⁹ The State would oblige all individuals to be answerable to it (the State) rather than to sub-groups within it like the family.²⁰ The State would abolish private property with all its self interest.²¹ It would abolish religious 'truths' as distractions from the 'pure' realities of the economy.²² In a communist society the position would be held that the individual, in working for the State would thereby be working for themselves.²³

Liberation Theology, does not go to the extremes of Marxism, but it does reflect some of the position of Plato. Liberation Theology claims the partisans or poor people are able to interpret reality.²⁴ Their views should be asserted whether the other classes, namely the wealthy, are happy about this or not.²⁵ In Liberation Theology stress is placed

on social sciences as a means for revealing facts and taking action.²⁶ Focus is put on the establishment of an order in which the extremes of poverty and wealth can be removed.²⁷

In Summary about a Platonic Stream

In some senses there is an urgency expressed by the writers mentioned above. Some of them were facing social chaos. They were concerned to stop violence and the exploitation of vulnerable people and communities. It seemed the imposition of order was the only way to do this.

Yet an over-imposition of order on a country results in totalitarianism. Ultimately it results, not in protecting the rights of people to go about their daily business, but rather undercuts this. When force is applied to protect and supply the material needs of people, their spiritual and personal needs for freedom are taken away.

Words in common that emerge in a comparison between philosophies which have similarities with Plato include 'elite', 'see the truth', 'impose order', 'freedom from family ties', 'mathematics', 'the ideal ruler' 'skill', 'the enclosed state', 'individual and state' "contract" 'blue print' etc.

In looking at a different series of philosophers who compare with Aristotle, it is likely problems of a different kind can be seen. If the followers of Plato tend to be over-bearing in applying a 'blue-print' of order, then an Aristotelian model can tend towards over diversity of self-determination. Then, a Platonic model of government may emerge to protect the weak. Hence the suggestion of a 'continuum line' between the two approaches.

What are the strands and similarities in the Aristotelian tradition?

(b) An Aristotelian Approach

In contrast to Plato, Aristotle wrote a great many works, though not in the same clear artistic style that Plato used. Aristotle tried to show how everything in the world was interconnected. His approach was largely influenced by his father who was a doctor. The world as Aristotle saw it, not only had a beginning. It was also going somewhere. Humankind in particular, was meant in the course of life to find happiness.

Aristotle sets out his view of society in his work on *Politics*.²⁸ Whereas Plato begins his major work *The Republic* with a dialogue on ideas about justice, Aristotle begins by saying people are by nature social. He says that therefore the household is the basis of society (Bk I). Private property, differences and families, endorse the authentic position of the social person and enable them to develop generosity. With Aristotle these things are therefore in a position of contrast to Plato's view and they are to be valued. (Bk II). Aristotle claims a wide range of people should have political power and they should act for the good of the state (Bk III).²⁹ Aristotle believed power should be shared by many people as well and especially by those in the middle class (c/f Bk IV). He said insofar as people want to gain power by a revolution and/or a change in government it should be in accord with a set-out constitution (Bk V). Aristotle allowed for a sharing of power in democracies that suited the people concerned (Bk VI). He held that people are destined by their practice and development in virtue, to find

true happiness. Their virtue would develop in accord with their state in life. They would be helped towards such virtue by a general and useful education (Bk VII).³⁰

The Aristotelian Approach Repeated

Aquinas re-presented the teaching of Aristotle to the Western World towards the end of the Middle Ages. Like Aristotle he held that ordinary people can understand their duties in life by the exercise of their reason.³¹ They should practice these by working for the common good. In this way they will find happiness.³² People have the right to establish a Government which represents them.³³ The laws of such Government are binding in conscience if they are in accord with natural and human law.³⁴

Locke based his ideas about government on the premise that people in general can reason out a sane approach to government.³⁵ They have natural rights to peace and diversity.³⁶ They also have a right to property and to set up a government which is responsible to them.³⁷ As with Aristotle, Locke saw constitutions as being essential to a common sense and fair government. Also like Aristotle, Locke had a medical background and tended to think of society with an organic kind of perspective.³⁸

Durkheim was a Jew. He was concerned about the breakdown of morality and the spread of anomie. He said that roles in a modern society which complement each other produce an organic connection between people. But then he saw that the kind of society he termed "mechanistic", was in fact, more basic to society than the social networks formed around the workplace.³⁹ He devoted his life to showing this.

He demonstrated that if the most basic forms of society break down (especially with family links) people become isolated. They become inclined towards the final anonymity of suicide.⁴⁰

Durkheim set out to show, as Aristotle stated, that the family and belonging relationships are primary. The rights and duties of people need to be considered in terms of this sort of community first of all.

Weber lived round the same time as Durkheim but they knew little about each other.⁴¹ Weber followed Aristotle's approach of claiming that the intimate social links such as the family are basic to society. He called this sort of community, with its extensions, a 'Gemeinschaft' community.⁴² He said this Gemeinschaft community is shown to exist when people are implicated in each other's total existence, usually over a long period of time.⁴³ He said this contrasts with 'Gesellschaft' which is an association brought about by an agreement about interests and goals but which is fairly temporal and impersonal.⁴⁴

Weber showed that pre-existing social ideas are basic to what shape a business world will take on. To illustrate. A capitalist system of work has been developed from a group of people, who for religious reasons, wanted to be "saved" by putting priority on earning profits.⁴⁵

Parsons like Weber, has taken a biological approach to society. Thus he has seen society as being interconnected in an organic kind of way. He has also said that key ideas have a great impact on the shape that a society takes on.⁴⁶ Thus in his view cultural values are of prime importance.⁴⁷ Next

comes the functions of community integration, then achievement of goals and then adjustment to change. Parsons says all these differing functions complement each other in a society and so they bring about the functioning of the whole.

Vatican II has stressed that all sectors of humanity are linked into a community relationship with each other. The Church is one of these sectors (only).⁴⁸

This Council of the 1960's has endorsed the rights of people to act according to their conscience.⁴⁹ It says Governments are to recognise such personal rights and are to respect the rights of the family as being the primary social unit.⁵⁰

John. Paul II has claimed, like Aristotle, that people are called to work towards the betterment of themselves, their relationships and their world, in union with their Maker. He has said they retain the right of working towards such an end regardless of technological change.⁵¹

Words in Common In these comparisons amongst social philosophers in an Aristotelian mode words such as 'organic', 'constitutions', 'rights', 'fulfilment', 'virtue', 'character', 'happiness', 'nurture', 'family', 'creative', 'diversity', 'biology', are more likely to be found.

Emphasis Around the Year 2,000

It would appear the appropriateness of stressing a Platonic or Aristotelian approach to the world, largely depends on the approach that is already established at a place or time in question. Either approach when over-stressed, creates problems. People tend to justify, because of these problems,

using a counter approach to balance up the situation.

In a world in which technology is capable of destroying it, it seems that one or other approach has been over-stressed. Consider for instance a US ship coming into Sydney harbour. It has the capacity to carry 100 bombs, each of which has the destructive power of two or three Hiroshimas. An observer from outside the present social system would surely consider the very act of building the ship to be lunacy. There must be an imbalance of values and approach somewhere.

Social Frameworks

(1) Vatican II and Pope John Paul II have claimed there is need to build up the organic dimensions of society as being the most basic priority. In the words of Weber and others, this could be termed the 'Gemeinschaft' kind of community.

(2) The sociologist Parsons has presented a model of the workplace as being in a two-dimensional frame with the realm of ideas and cultural values at a hierarchical top. These have a pervading influence over the whole. But it is not clear how 'Gemeinschaft', namely the family and personal relationships, fits in with this.

(3) Some sociologists would still opt for the two-world view of a Marxist approach. They see society as being in a constant state of class conflict. People across society are constantly brought against each other in conflicts about control and order. Such sociologists would view organic social structures such as family (ethnic groups, sports, neighbourhood etc) as being inferior to the economic work world and apart from it.⁵²

(4) Perhaps a way of viewing society and its work world could be expanded from the hierarchical two-dimensional view of Parsons and the two dimensional conflict model of Marx. Perhaps it could be seen in a three dimensional way. Thus an organic, *Gemeinschaft* type of community could be seen as being at the back of a society. Then the *Gesellschaft* or business community would be viewed as being built from and in front of this. Then from top to bottom in a hierarchical way, influence could be spread throughout the functions of a society and its work world. Such influence could be taught through values and culture.

Even though Marx did not use the '*Gemeinschaft*' and '*Gesellschaft*' terms he was conscious of the contrast between these. He aimed to protect the most basic type of society, that of the proletariat, from the exploitation of business.

The question arises. How can a *Gemeinschaft*/caring community, reach into the many diverse sections of the business world in order to make the latter serve it better and be more successful itself? How can the *Gemeinschaft* dimension of the work world assert its presence to prevent the action of the *Gesellschaft* style from taking over society completely and destroying the foundations of what it is based upon?

Parts of such questions will be considered in the next Section.

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Chapter Eleven

Plato & Aristotle - Male & Female

In the process of searching out a more organic work style it is necessary to have a clear image of what is being looked for. It has already been shown that there have been two fairly distinct approaches or themes which, in Western views on work, can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. At the same time the limits of generalising about differences and comparisons between writers has to be faced. They cannot be pinned down completely into one or other category.

Rather what they are saying seems to reflect two general sorts of principles that are in the background. These would have probably found expression in Western thinking whether a Plato and an Aristotle had ever lived or not.

Another look at the latter two however, clarifies how they reached the two different positions. (For clarity the Platonic position in is italics.)

Plato and Aristotle

Plato began his Republic with a dialogue on ideas. Aristotle began his Politics, by referring to the family household. Plato educates an elite to perceive truth and impose order. Aristotle upholds the need for widespread sharing of power according to the situation and wishes of the people concerned. He proposes that constitutions be framed for this. Plato opposes private property and family as an obstacle to harmony and order. He argued the sexes should work in the same equal way. Aristotle says private property and family

life provide motivation to work and opportunity to develop in virtue. And so they are to be valued. *Plato said works of art are less perfect than the pure idea they express. Yet his own work the Republic is a masterpiece of art.* Aristotle said art develops reality because it adds meaning to this.¹ His own writing style however was not as clear as Plato's. *Plato's approach pictured pure spirit as being separate from matter and superior to it.* Aristotle saw the two as interconnected. Thus *the ideal Platonic citizen was an individual, free-moving, logically thinking and highly educated member of a ruling elite.* The Aristotlean citizens were family-minded and enmeshed in a social strata of work positions. They were working for the common good according to a democracy.

Plato's mentor was Socrates the philosopher who constantly asked questions about truth. Aristotle's major student was Alexander the Great who by the age of twenty-three had spread the culture of Greece throughout the known world.

Augustine and Aquinas

The differences between Plato and Aristotle are reflected in similar ways in the differences between Augustine and Aquinas. *Augustine points out the inadequacies of the ancient world and its culture.* Aquinas encouraged cultural learning.² *Augustine saw human laws and the secular world as inferior to that of the "city of God". This is because people in the secular sphere act for selfish reasons.* Aquinas on the other hand claims sane human laws at every level are linked in with the Divine law. This is because people are born with the potential to reason out what direction in life God means them to follow. *Thus Augustine looks back to the purity and perfection of God.* But Aquinas looks forward to

God's intentions for the world. *Augustine tends to negate the material side of life. For example sexuality was viewed as being imperfect and bound up with sin.*³ But Aquinas sees that experience provides the opportunity to develop virtue.⁴ He also sees that the sacraments e.g. Holy Communion, nurture people in their lives. So they can continue to use their reason in following out God's will for them and follow out God's will for them.⁵

In one sense Augustine accepts the world as being imperfect but necessary. Aquinas expects the world to conform to God's designs. In one sense Augustine's person is unique, free-wheeling and idealistic. Aquinas' person is mindful of the common good. Such a person is fairly tied down to a particular place in life and yet are slowly moving forward. Some feminists would argue, (like Augustine to believe in his own life) that equality be found if sexuality is negated. In Aquinas the feminine/fertile side of woman is accepted although it ranks her as inferior.

Marx and Talcott Parsons

The differences between Plato and Aristotle as also between Augustine and Aquinas can in some senses be compared with the differences between Marx and Talcott Parsons. *Marx (in his writings) focusses on the 'purity' of the absolute spirit which is the sum of aspirations of the masses in a society. He contrasts this with the imperfection of a society where there is unequal distribution of wealth and power. He advocates educating an elite to impose order on the situation.*⁶ Parsons on the other hand has a 'cybernetic' model in mind. He sees key ideas as spreading throughout the whole of society and gradually affecting it. This perception

might be compared with Aquinas' idea about the Divine law. Parsons says that society with its communities of persons will evolve towards a better situation. They therefore should share power and decision-making to enable them to do this.

Marx negates the family-based community of persons who are looking to the interests of their own household properties in favour of other more powerful groups.⁷ He says the individual should be directly answerable to the State (or 'total spirit').⁸ His education of the individual would be based on the State's interpretation of reality.⁹ Parsons on the other hand sees the family community as being basic to a society. He says that seminal and key ideas come from beyond the ideas held by the total group. He says these can be expressed in cultural art forms. They can gradually be spread out through art and small groups to affect the whole.¹⁰

Thus Marx had a clear-cut blueprint for both social order and harmony within the individual and the state. Parsons had an organic understanding of society. He sees it as consisting of differing types of people and groups that are interconnected.¹¹ People contribute through their range of work forms to the common good of the whole.¹²

Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft

The differences between the above pairs of writers can be traced to differences, that Tonnies, (also) known as the first sociologist, saw in approaches to work. Tonnies, a German, expressed these differences in two untranslatable words called 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft'.¹³ 'Gemeinschaft' reflects to some extent the approach put forward by Aristotle, Aquinas and Parsons. Here community and its work are

based on tribal and kinship ties. Workers have a shared life-experience through their family life and neighbourhood and/or collective ownership. Often these people share all of these factors, as for example on a family farm.¹⁴

On the other hand 'Gesellschaft' reminds one of the approach put forward by Plato, Augustine and Marx. For Plato and Augustine, final truths about life and reality are perceived by the individual at an abstract level. For Marx the 'absolute truth or sum of reality of the State and as perceived by the State, is the basis for thinking and acting. In these cases the individual, is seen as the social unit of the state. Use of the rigours of logic are central to this style of operation.¹⁵ (it should be noted here that what "logical" is not always reasonable and vice versa.)

In Tonnies' definition of a 'Gesellschaft' society the individual is seen as striving to acquire, by competition, more property for himself. This drive for individual ownership may appear to conflict with Marx's view of State ownership and Plato's negation of property for his Guardians. Yet in many ways such ideas of 'ownership' have more in common with their individualised and state (and corporate) focus on ownership than they have with the 'gemeinschaft' sense of shared ownership amongst a network of relatives and friends.

In the 'Gesellschaft' society, jobs between males and females are to be equally open. Also people rely on state assistance for their welfare rather than on supports from long-term social networks.¹⁶ Again, in the gesellschaft society, order is maintained by an inner circle of politicians, civil servants or entrepreneurs etc.

This has much in comparison with Plato's elite, the rulers of Augustine's City of the World and also Marx's communist party.¹⁷ It has contrasts with the interconnected decision-making of a 'gemeinschaft' or tribal group.

The Women's Movement - male and female approaches

As the differences between two major approaches to work and life become more evident, the question has to be faced. To what extent do these differences compare with the approaches of the male and female principle?

A major reason why asking this question has been delayed is that discussion on the male and female approach becomes caught up with debates about the approach of male and female persons. It is hoped to focus here on the principles of approach rather than being caught up with some of the confusion that has prevailed during the years of the feminist movement. The fact that the very leaders of the women's movement in the 1960's drastically changed their own position in the next decade, shows that sorting out what the Women's Movement really entails is no easy task.¹⁸

How do the male and female principles compare with the approaches of Plato and Aristotle. *The male principle is usually seen as more active. Men are considered to use logic more and in males the side of the brain where logical thinking takes place is considered to be more developed.¹⁹ Tests have shown this. Males appear to be more interested in studying mathematicss.²⁰ They are more individual. They appear to be more demanding of themselves in reaching for perfection in the expression of their art.²¹ Thus they will give themselves totally to remote and isolated pursuits of what*

*they see is the truth.*²² *Men tend to operate organisations. The latter are often seen to be closed elites that control the rest of a society. All these factors, it is noted here, are reflected in Plato's Republic.*

On the other hand the general view is that the female principle is more passive.²³ It tends towards peace rather than accepting war as a permanent state.²⁴ It operates by association of ideas rather than logic.²⁵ Its organisation is based on networks rather than bureaucracy. It is creative in art but at multiple, rather than at specialist levels.²⁶ Also this 'principle' is closely geared to daily living.²⁷ Attention is caught up with the life-rhythms within a small but open-ended community setting.²⁸ Work (c/f the female principle) is oriented towards the common good. Everyone shares in decision-making. This is informal rather than formal though common assumptions or expectations or standards of conduct are shared by the people involved.²⁹ People are interconnected in the whole of each other's lives. The list goes on.

Some comparisons can be seen between this and Aristotle's approach. He endorses the household and small group. He endorses a general movement, through experience, towards the development of virtue as understood by a general norm. Once again it is necessary to point out that the female principles cannot be easily or totally identified with female persons. A female in a 'hyped-up' world of the 'gesellschaft' style may not, in many ways, reflect the feminine-type principle in the way that a male may, when he works in a close-knit family and/or farming community.

When people speak out in the cause of women it does not

mean that their style represents the 'feminine principle' that is talked about here. On the other hand they could be defending and trying to assert the rights of people in a 'feminine' (or 'gemeinschaft') situation. One of the most divisive debates in the Women's Movement has been around the question as to who actually does represent the cause of women. Part of this debate connects with the question as to whether or not it is in the interests of women to act in a 'feminine' way. In doing this they may be allowing themselves to be vulnerable. Does true femininity lie in this sort of 'weakness'?

A tendency towards the Marxist approach can be found amongst women who take a feminist position. Marx saw that the women and children of the industrial age were vulnerable to exploitation.³⁰ He saw the 'gemeinschaft' farming communities being destroyed by the inroads of the 'gesellschaft' industrial world.³¹ It seemed to him that order had to be imposed to protect people from this exploitation. That is, a 'gesellschaft' (or) communist blueprint of society had to prevail, which would keep other exploitative forces in control.

The danger here, as pointed out previously, is that the totalitarian rule of an elite is likely to finish up exploiting and destroying the 'gemeinschaft' or tribal dimension of community itself, instead of protecting it.

When the 'male' attacks the 'female'

This situation reflects something about the male and female principles (as defined in the above discussion). In so many ways the 'male' principle is needed to defend the 'female' principle. It is needed to establish and maintain order. It is

needed to provide a dynamism and freedom of movement to the individual. A feminine or 'gemeinschaft' community on its own is too passive. The people there are too stereotyped. Their lives are largely pre-determined.

Yet while the male (or Platonic or even Marxist) principle gives and protects life for a 'gemeinschaft' community it can become too dominant. It can then exploit, attack and even destroy the very life on which it really depends.

Consider primeval days when aggressive males fought wars and killed the women and children. They still do. With the latter gone, the tribe would then die out. Twenty women and one male had a potential for the re-birth of the tribe. But there was not much hope for twenty males and one female. This is a simple fact of life. One tends to forget the modern parallels.

In primeval family life the role of the male was to protect the women and children. He would band with other males into hunting parties to catch food. He would provide a dynamic to push the family out and beyond its boundaries when they faced problems such as drought. He would impose order and a sense of security, direction and the sense of right and wrong.

But at times the male could and still does exploit the women and children, for example by wife-bashing and total control of income. He can force the woman to stay at home for his own interests rather than for the common good. He can belittle the status of the woman and her potential for self-development and contribution.³² He can band with others into a corporate system that "rips-off" the ordinary householder.

A relevant question in this context would be whether or not wife-bashing increases in proportion to a drop in the status of woman as home-maker? Common Statistics that show how much house-work a female does as compared with the house-work that a male does, is evidence that he does not consider this to be important.

An Illustration of the Gemeinschaft Lifestyle

An illustration of what has been talked about here as a 'gemeinschaft as distinct from a 'gesellschaft' approach to life and work can be seen in the following letter written in 1953.

Address
Victoria

I am sorry you have a cold

well as there is nothing to say I must close,

I remain

Yours

sincerely

Maureen

Dear Marie

Looks to me she had plenty to say The small fry go to Mass each day since lent started. I'm afraid I'm the only one does nothing. Mrs Robby is going Friday. We gave the clock £17 beaut night we had as E has told you

in her letter. The sheep have trace of flute so John & Dad are drenching today. He goes Wednesday to B. Hill. Wish he'd stay & clean the dams out but he's going. Dad had Doc Biggs laying super. The S. M. Mothers club cut red for Batchelor & Spinsters ball for £60. We provided the sandwiches. They provided oyster patties sas rolls chick cooked & turkeys dressing. Salads, cheese straws, ice cream, cakes, milk, cream, coffee. 2 niners & an 18 for 500 people. What slugs? and India starving. They provided taxis for us to go home. I put a bottle of cream up my sleeve & slipped round the corner. We had the same trouble with the old hands & the chicken disappearing in the tea towels. must go now I intend to write you a letter on the Anti Com Lecture that was given to us at S Mary's. They needed funds but we were all sick when it was over. We are 6 hours flying distance from the Atom Bomb. Just a few Catholics were picked out so our pockets were hit hard as everything was hush hush (Burn this letter) They got £3,500. The Dean can't get past 50 quid for his direct appeal, he doesn't know yet. We have no wall of steel between us & and enemy as we did during the last war it has been withdrawn. Satan is stalking through Europe in the minds of men ruthless & so on. France has no army & not preparing one but thousands of troops are spread throughout Europe just waiting. He advised us to say the rosary, prepare the families etc & hope for the best while they work day & night with the unions to clean out the foe. Michael your friend must be sweet on one of you girls to go to London. Prue Biggs married last Sat. & her sister is engaged to Baron De Fugely. I hope poor Aud gets enough to eat & your

cold Marie is a wet blanket along with the ears.

Love from all

Mum

END NOTES

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- 4 Note: See teaching framework on sacraments including marriage, - *New Catholic Op.Cit.* Vol 14, p112
- 5 c/f Ibid
- 6 McClellan, D (ed) Karl Marx "Communist Manifesto" *Selected Writings* OUP, 1977, p 231
- 7 Ibid pp 235, 237
- 8 Ibid
- 9 c/f Parsons, T *Sociology theory and Modern Society* Free Press London 1967, p 495
- 10 c/f Parsons, T *The System of Modern Societies* Prentice-Hall N J p 8
- 11 Ibid Ch 11
- 12 Ibid
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- 16 c/f Ibid. p 184
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- 18 c/f Freidan, B *The Second Stage* Joseph, London, 1982
- 19 c/f Stassinopoulos, *A The Female Woman* Fontana/Collins, 1973, pp 32, 105
- 20 c/f Ibid pp 31, 105
- 21 c/f Ibid pp 93, 94
- 22 c/f Ibid p 117
- 23 Ibid p 35
- 24 Ibid
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- 25 Stassinopoulos, Ibid p 34
- 26 Ibid.p 95
- 27 Ibid.p38
- 28 Ibid. p 38 c/f also, M Fox *A Spirituality Op.Cit* p 45
- 29 c/f Stassinopoulos Ibid p 31 and M fox Ibid
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- 31 McLellan, D (ed) Karl Marx "The Communist Manifesto" *Selected Writings* OUP 1977 p 222-223
- 32 c/f Ruether, Rosemary Radford *New Woman, New Earth* Dove Communications 1975, p 11
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- 35 Ibid. Bk 1, Ch 6
- 36 Ibid. Bk 1, Ch 10
- 37 Ibid. Bk 1 Ch 16