
As the editor, John A. Coleman, S.J., explains in the Introduction, the essays in this volume were the fruit of a conference at the University of San Francisco in June 1991 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*. The experts gathered at the conference were challenged to project the future of Catholic social thought in the area of the Family, Labor and Peace. On the basis of their projections they were asked to produce written mini-pastorals or encyclicals that would celebrate and challenge the tradition in the light of the contemporary American scene.

In turn, the editor asks each reader to approach the collected essays in the same active, challenging spirit so that the tradition will not only be celebrated but also evaluated and updated. In our fast-changing world the tradition has to manifest the contemporary relevance of permanent Gospel values.

The common historical error of arbitrarily assigning *Rerum novarum* as the first of the Catholic Church’s social encyclicals is refuted by Coleman as he celebrates the tradition. The social teaching of the Church started with Christ “bringing good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind” (Lk 9) and his teaching in Matthew 25 showing his concern for the hungry, the homeless, strangers, prisoners. These texts, so forcefully invoked in Latin America today in Liberation Theology, were thundered from the rooftops by the Fathers of the Church against the social evils in the early centuries after Christ. Coleman con-
cludes that it would be historically correct to entitle the volume: Two Thousand Years of Church Teaching.

COMMON DENOMINATOR

Down through the centuries papal teaching has been on the side of justice and continually opposed every movement, philosophy or ideology that threatened the family or marriage, or exalted the individual at the expense of society or tried to subject the individual or family to the state, or privatize religion and keep it in the sacristy. Papal teaching would never allow the separation of the economy and polity from moral judgment and human measurement. The modern papal predisposition for democracy, however, came with Pius XII, replacing the earlier paternalism and the romantic ideal of a corporate society.

LIMITATIONS

Popes teach and write on social matters within the human limitations of their era. Their successors move beyond the limitations, opening up new horizons, new treasures from the unsearchable riches of Christ. Thus no one should be surprised at the changes and developments in Catholic social thought in the past hundred years, from the pioneering efforts of Leo XIII to the far more extensive and sophisticated teaching of John Paul II in our era. The cataclysmic changes in the world and the extraordinary changes in the Church, especially in the Second Vatican Council, called for a new synthesis, a new vision of concern for justice amid the unprecedented dangers and opportunities of our nuclear, hi-tech world. John Paul II strives to chart a course through perilous seas, having already written more than any of his predecessors on social problems which touch the lives of suffering millions around the globe. He even calls for a New Evangelization as the year 2000 approaches and the world appears far removed from the justice and peace that seemed so certain at various periods in recent history, e.g., at the end of World War II and, again, with the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe.
DEVELOPMENT IN CHURCH SOCIAL TEACHING

Rerum novarum represents the first stage, dominated by "Christian Philosophy" and a "rigidly deductive" method, leaving no room for the relevance of the sciences (economics, sociology, political science). As a consequence the elaboration of the doctrine was reserved to the hierarchy with the laity as merely "faithful executors" as Richard A. McCormick, S.J., notes in his chapter on Human Sexuality (p. 192). Under Pius XI and Pius XII there was greater emphasis on the historical moment and application of principles and the beginnings of reevaluation of the role of the laity, but still it was "social doctrine," rigidly deduced from social ethics. The final (third) stage began with John XXIII, moving from the deductive to the inductive method, with the "historical moment" as his point of departure in the light of the Gospel, reading the signs of the times. The result was a complete reevaluation of the role of the laity. "Lay persons do not simply apply the church's social teaching; they must share in its very construction" (ibid.).

Having praised this development in official Catholic social teaching, McCormick expresses his regret that the same development has not taken place "in all areas of Catholic moral theology, for instance, familial and sexual morality" (ibid.). As he had written before, McCormick lists some of the characteristics (personalist, inductive, ecumenical, pluralistic), all of which he would hope to find in social, moral theology in the year 2000. These characteristics which enrich and strengthen the social teaching of the Church might possibly do the same in the area of sexual morality which causes so much friction in the Church today.

LABOR/CAPITALISM

Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., of Milwaukee gives a very interesting analysis of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1986 pastoral letter on the economy. It was a response to the challenge of Pope Paul VI in Populorum progressio to make an analysis of the application of his teaching to the individual nation. His historical and phenomenological approach opens rich veins of thought concerning the very nature of modern capitalism.
Archbishop Weakland analyzes the 1985 talk in Rome of Cardinal Ratzinger, where he came close to labelling capitalism as intrinsically evil (p. 203), showing a deep distrust for the capitalist system "especially as manifested in the United States" (ibid.). Weakland believes that the liberation theologians "might be surprised by his (Ratzinger's) defense of their criticisms of capitalism" (p. 204). The liberation theologians have the deepest misgivings about the capitalist system, suspecting that it is intrinsically evil, that poverty is an integral part of the system, that it exploits the poor to benefit the rich.

Weakland points out the deliberate rejection by the U.S. Bishops of the dependency theory that makes Third World poverty the result of First World exploitation, ignoring the corruption in governments and enormous capital flight. The lack of an acceptance of class warfare in the American Bishops' document vitiates their whole analysis, according to some Brasilian authors.

VARIETIES OF CAPITALISM

The new kinds of approaches to capitalism in Japan, Korea, and now the Eastern bloc, are accepted by Weakland as reasons for a more penetrating analysis of the "basic philosophical foundation from the Enlightenment upon which capitalism and free market economies are based . . . " (p. 205). Have Korean and Japanese and Eastern bloc capitalism any roots in the Enlightenment? The scandals of the last decade on Wall Street and the pathetic and tragic situation of the Savings and Loans bank failure make Weakland wonder how indigenous to the capitalist system is greed and the tendency to monopolize, and when good self-interest turns into pernicious greed (ibid.).

The lack of a systemic approach is one of the big defects in the American Bishops' pastoral letter. Weakland sees the questions of monopolies and chronic recessions and unemployment, the rich seeming to get richer in the system while the poor lack the capital to enter the system, as urgent matters for consideration. A biblical vision is proposed as a must for this deeper analysis of capitalism as a system. His reflections on the principle of subsidiarity are also stimulating, asking how it fits into a biblical perspective and what its source is in the Catholic tradition. It seems
to have been the brain-child of Pius XI and is used by every subsequent pope “but its source in Catholic tradition is not clear” (p. 206).

These few lines should manifest the richness of Archbishop Weakland’s contribution to this volume. Philippine capitalism seems to share the same problems in many areas. We might all profit from applying Weakland’s questions and concerns to the local scene. With the majority living below the poverty line, with minimal social welfare or unemployment benefits, with overseas’ employment as the only hope for so many, with the economy rated as the poorest in the area, the capitalists have nothing to boast about. Maybe capitalism as it is accepted and practised has to be totally reexamined or remodelled to suit the local scene. Without a biblical vision the dark side of capitalism, the greed, the drive for monopolies and power will prevail, with the poor getting poorer each year.

THE FAMILY AS DOMESTIC CHURCH

That Catholic social teaching is pro-family, and that the family should be more open to involvement in social action is the main thrust of this very interesting and inspiring chapter by the husband-wife team, James and Kathleen McGinnis, founder and co-ordinator of the Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (an international Catholic group). They are authors of numerous books, their best known being Parenting for Peace and Justice (1981, 1990).

Since all families in the modern world are affected by the violence which may appear in any neighborhood or any household, all must be concerned with the social problems that generate such violence, usually because of the injustices in the economic system. The authors stress the need to make explicit the links between family and social action by analysis, and the need for the Church to help provide services for the survival of families. Moving beyond survival, families should engage in the Church’s social mission, being empowered by a vision and a support system. The vision will come from seeing themselves as “domestic church.”
CURRENT SOCIAL EVILS ENDANGERING EVERY FAMILY

In their analysis showing the link between families and Catholic social teaching the expertise of the authors is readily manifest. Examining five of the many social forces “pounding away at families ... materialism, individualism, racism, sexism, and violence ...” (p. 121), the reader in the Philippines will often resonate with the arguments presented. Affluence and the “good life” definitely have their downside and are threats to a Christian view of life.

The crisp, readable style of the authors highlights and emphasizes the message. Objects are becoming more important than persons. Paul VI’s warning is recalled that superfluous goods may be enslaving modern men and women. Today objects are advertised as the source of identity, companionship, joy and intimacy — all values traditionally associated with persons. “Persons, on the other hand, are often treated as objects — sex objects, sales targets, units of labor” (ibid.). Within the family materialism sends the message that “more is better; happiness is having” and family recognition and affirmation can center on what we have rather than what we are. If security is sought in money, goods and huge insurance policies, the less we find it in Our Lord and in one another. The fear of economic consequences can make us afraid to take risks for the Gospel. “This constant message to possess more and to enjoy the ‘good life’ tantalizes children as well as adults, poor as well as rich ... This can lead to looking down on the ‘have-nots’, ... the economically poor, the elderly, those with disabilities, the not-so-beautiful people of our society ...” (p. 222).

A VISION OF THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

To counteract these actual or threatened evils the authors spell out their vision of the family as domestic church. They insist that the understanding of “church” is critical. It is not to be considered as a safe harbor to which we can withdraw when storms threaten. Rather it is a leaven to permeate society as the Gospel parables indicate, deeply involved in transforming the world, bringing about God’s kingdom on earth. Thus Catholic families are called to move
more fully into the world, not to retreat from it.

HELPING THE CHILDREN TO MATURE SPIRITUALLY

Nurturing the full human and spiritual growth of the children is a primary concern. A loving, caring, supportive family atmosphere is essential. Adults and children reflecting together on TV programs and commercials can develop a critical awareness of modern materialism and violence.

Unsupervised TV or video recordings can gradually undermine Christian values. Today the enemy is not outside the home but within, propagating materialism, consumerism, sexism, violence through television’s seductive appeals to human weakness, almost the antithesis of Christian values which so often lose out by default.

FAMILY SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

The authors are excellent in spelling out ways and means of giving spiritual inspiration to the family, always including the children in a faith community. They stress the impact on children who see their parents and other adults concerned about social problems, and striving to provide family support for youth in preserving their values in spite of peer pressure and a corrupting environment. Parents need to have their imagination stretched in approaching problems. Family meetings, family discussions of outstanding films are some of their suggestions.

LABOR

Robert L. Kuttner, author, economics correspondent for The New Republic, columnist for Business Week, examines many of the challenges facing employees in today’s hi-tech business world where cutthroat competition seems to prevail more and more cost-cutting threatens jobs in an age of intensified global competition. Unions have lost much of their influence and companies have become more anti-union, even though collaboration between labor and management is more important than ever before. Old skills are no longer sufficient for workers and old ideas and
approaches are no longer effective for management as they try to 
revitalize the sluggish economy or prevent recession from be-
coming a fullblown depression.

NEW TRADE BLOCS

The world dividing into trade blocs of unprecedented sizes (the 
European Community, the free trade pact between Canada, the 
United States and Mexico) sends shock tremors around the globe 
and leads to yet other regional trade blocs, e.g. Asian Free Trade 
Agreement. Some workers feel threatened as never before and in 
some cases seek government protection in subsidies, as farmers 
in Japan and France. Companies are in danger of hostile corpo-
rate takeovers which lead to radical reorganizations at times. 
Kuttner sees hostile takeovers as the principal engine of restruc-
turing today (p. 232). Uncertain as to the long range beneficial or 
harmful effects, Kuttner sees this threat of hostile takeovers as 
contributing to the turbulence of the financial climate with neither 
the workers nor society having a seat at the bargaining table 
(ibid.).

Facing these basic problems of the modern American econo-
my, Kuttner sees the weakness of the "peculiarly American 
conception of capitalism as radically individualist and social" (p. 
235). He contrasts it with Sweden's approach to its unemploy-
ment problem. Upgrading the skills of the unemployed is a top 
priority in Sweden, plus a concerted effort to attract new em-
ployers without bargaining away a needed local tax base, as is 
often done in the United States (p. 237). Kuttner sees much to be 
learned from other nations. Perhaps the Philippines could also 
profit from borrowing other models. Kuttner offers a choice 
economic aphorism: "A firm that lives by the free market risks 
perishing in the free market" (p. 234). Thus the "free market" can 
boomerang even on the capitalist. In his _Urbi et Orbi_ message for 
New Year's Day this year, John Paul II warned all of us that "the 
rules of the market are not sufficient to ensure just and equitable 
distribution of goods: society must accept its own responsibili-
ties." The "free market" can hurt all of us if left to itself. For a 
century the popes have been trying to supply the moral guidance 
and sense of social responsibility, precisely to prevent the harm
that comes from a runaway free market.

**FEMINIST AWARENESS: MARRIAGE**

The Church is often accused of ignoring the opinion of women, but in this volume five distinguished women have made significant contributions, in addition to the wife-husband team cited above. Lisa S. Cahill, internationally known moral theologian, writes on marriage as an institution, a relationship, a sacrament, moving competently through historical changes and the influence of canon law on the understanding of marriage as a sacrament. The influence of “personalist” philosophy in the last fifty years is examined and the “ambivalent if not schizophrenic” (p. 108) practical applications are noted while stressing the modern emphasis on interpersonal love between the spouses which “replaces both the contractual approach of canon law and the theological-moral approach, which subordinated spousal love to parenthood and family” (p. 109).

Cahill argues that the specifics of a Christian marriage should be worked out in the particular cultural contexts. Choosing the example of the culture of the United States and comparing it with the African, Cahill spells out the many differences, pros and cons, that characterize marriage in these strikingly different First World-Third World cultures. The differences are so great that they can scarcely fit into one code of canon law. Each approach has its strong points and notable weaknesses. The liberal or progressive opinions of Cahill will challenge the reader.

**MARRIAGE IN CHANGING HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Stressing the biological, economic, and demographic aspects of society as it impinged on marriage in the Middle Ages and comparing them with our modern world, S. Ryan Johansson reflects on the moral imperatives of Christian marriage. Drawing on her great wealth of knowledge, she reveals many of the hidden forces that shaped Christian marriage morality.

Life expectancy at birth today is more than twice what it used to be, so that the average marriage can expect to last forty to fifty years before being broken by death. Thus, with death no longer
a substitute for divorce, she sees a close relation between the
decline of death rates and the increase in divorce rates. The
problem of second marriages followed almost naturally.

Women's biological clock is very different in modern times.
Early maturity and a much improved level of health bring on
menstruation at the age of 12, which is prolonged until 50 years
or so (p. 148). This increased span of fertility almost of necessity
makes clear the need for some form of responsible parenthood
to limit the size of families which before were regulated by dis-
ease and death. Social and economic changes in the West rein-
force that necessity.

Unfortunately, the author shows her strong bias against the
Catholic celibate hierarchy when it comes to discussing marriage
morality. "A church hierarchy run exclusively by unmarried men
has no demographic, social, or political basis for entering into
a moral dialogue with family men, married women . . . " (p. 150).
Again the author denies any value to modern papal encyclicals
concerned with Catholic family morality: "[it] is not really a form
of social thought. It is a set of dogmas, which are being asocially
conceptualized in some context-free manner" (ibid.). Going fur-
ther she accuses the papal encyclicals of expounding "an antiso-
cial family and reproductive morality that works against the welfare
of married couples and the children they must raise under modern
demographic, biological, and economic circumstances (ibid.).

Including such biased observations in this volume seems, to
this reviewer, to be a mistake. It does not celebrate the tradition!
It is closer to ridicule! It puts the author on the far left of the
theological spectrum, diminishing her authority and credibility.

PEACE

As most advocates of peace, Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of
Chicago, stresses the role of economic justice, "essential in build-
ing a lasting peace" (p. 276), and respect for human rights, "at
the very foundation of an authentic peace" (p. 277).

Reconciling a very limited but real right of self-defense with the
Christian tradition of pacifism and the modern concept of deter-
rence is the concern of the Cardinal's reflections on the U.S.
Bishops' pastoral letter, The Challenge of Peace, against the
background of economic justice and respect for human rights. In reading the Cardinal's and others' writings today we have to be aware of the rapidly diminishing threat of nuclear war between the former Cold War enemies (Russia-United States), and the danger of other nations acquiring nuclear war capability. Cardinal Bernardin acknowledges this rapid change of events on the global political scene and on the level of technology (p. 283).

The rapid changes in the political world, as welcome as unexpected, were so profound that they bring us a new possibility: "shaping fundamental political change is now present for the first time in fifty years" (p. 284). All the writings of the 1980s are "a starting point for the agenda of the 1990s. A profound and potentially very hopeful change has occurred" (p. 285). This challenges all to use "the transition to the millennium creatively in the pursuit of the values which the social tradition has taught us: peace, justice, truth, love, and freedom" (ibid.).

PLURALISM, CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND PEACE

The historical insights of Mary Evelyn Jegen, S.N.D., Vice-President of Pax Christi International and professor in the department of Graduate Religious Studies of Mundelein College, Chicago, help us to come to grips with the complexity of the modern quest for peace. Our twentieth century of total war longs earnestly for peace but the evening television news from around the world reminds us constantly that ours is a very dangerous world.

Pluralism in theology today brings us a more problematic, more challenging, but more hopeful approach. Following Vatican II, we seek a new evaluation of war in an entirely new attitude, a whole new level of understanding. Television has made its own contribution by bringing the ugly reality of war into everyone's living room. Her constant insistence on the newness of our situation, like Bernardin's essay, echoes the call of John Paul II for a New Evangelization.

CONCLUSION

Time and space constraints prevent further comment on this rich and inspiring volume. With but the one noted minor excep-
tion it truly celebrates and challenges the tradition and opens many avenues to possible development. The authors chosen are very much aware of the exceptionally rapid pace of change of our historical moment. Their awareness and vision harmonize very well with John Paul II’s call for a New Evangelization as we approach the 21st century.