I. The continuing church's attitudes toward money and justice

A. How the church has continued to determine its appropriate economic response:
   1. Not by insisting on community of goods
   2. Not by looking for a timeless economic theory.
   3. Answer is always related to particular contexts and concrete problems and in memory of Jesus.
   4. The economic order is not independent of the claims of Christ.

B. Traditions of giving and attitudes toward money in the early church fathers:
   2. Development of a common fund for the poor in the churches – Justin Martyr, 
      *First Apology* 67.5-6; Tertullian, *Apology* 39.5-7; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.43
   3. When Romans blamed Christians for evils of the day, Cyprian said the source of Roman Empire’s problems were the greed of the wealthy – “Treatise V, An Address to Demetrianus”).
   4. Julian the Apostate, Roman emperor in 361 AD, hated the Christians, but urged a pagan priest to imitate their care for the poor (Julian, “Epistle 22: To Arsacius, High Priest of Galatia”).

C. Working in memory of Jesus
   1. Working without glorifying work. Avoid allowing our identities to be built on our work.
   2. Work can be sacred as the gift and calling of God. (See Calvin’s concept of vocation which is the origin of the “Puritan” work ethic, as well as William Perkins, the Puritan writer).
   3. Sweatshops and child labor are forms of theft because they use power against a poor neighbor to the advantage of those exploiting them.
   4. To work for a living in memory of Jesus involves sharing with the needy, working without being anxious, and remembering that in spite of the fact that we are working, all that we have is still a gift from God.

D. Affluenza – belief that a person’s life consists in an abundance of possessions. It is caused by weakness of the heart and will to resist seductions of the culture in which status is measured by possessions.
E. To remember Jesus is to remember his mission to share and live in the “measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). The full stature of Christ requires a community that transcends social and economic divisions (Eph. 2:14) – 315.

F. Communion/Eucharist as an economic model - Sharing koinonia (fellowship) involves sharing economically. Eucharist is a time of sharing and a foretaste of the eschatological banquet that gives us hunger for justice and generosity – 316. The bread from heaven points to a manna economy that trusts God and rejects hoarding 316.

G. Scripture is silent about Christians’ responsibility to affect economic policy, but biblical prophets protested injustice (Amos 5:24 – “Let justice roll down like waters”). The church that remembers Jesus nurtures prophetic voice against economic injustice as well as managers and policymakers in the care of the poor 319.

H. Four goals of a Christian economic policy –

1. Creating wealth
2. Blessing the poor
3. Sustaining the quality of human life
4. Sustaining natural and social resources (325).

For Further Reading:


