Faith, Worship, and Ministry

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE THEOLOGY OF MONEY

Over the last two years the ethics task force on the theology of money has been meeting regularly to, as per its terms of reference, "produce resources to help the church to reflect on the nature of money and the church's relationship with money."

After many discussions, reflections, individual and group work, a document was drafted by the Rev. Maggie Helwig entitled *Non nobis Domine: A Theology of Money*. Her writing took account of the work in the form of a theological reflection. Drawing on the bible, patristic sources, contemporary theologians, and political theory, the document is an attempt to map out our current relationship with money through the lens of our faith.

The task force responded to this document with enthusiasm. They felt that the paper was able to identify and communicate the difficulty of our situation with a grace that calls us to a place of greater faithfulness in concrete ways.

It was the task force's belief that this primary document was needed in order to move forward with any meaningful and cohesive practical project on the theology of money, and while the task force sees the completion of its mandate in this document, it has also identified further work that needs to be done in this area.

The task force especially sees *Non nobis Domine* as an opportunity for the wider church to reflect on its relationship with money.

Suggested uses

- For reflection in FWM, CoGS, and the General Synod;
- To be circulated to the various department heads at Church House for consideration and use;
- Perhaps to serve as the possible point of reflection for an 'in house Church House theological study group';
- To be posted on anglican.ca for use in diocesan and parish studies (along with a set of questions or a study guide [see need for further work]);
- To serve as the jumping off point in developing some of the further resources mentioned below.

Areas needing further work:

- A short set of reflection questions should be made (this could be done by a staff person or a member of the task force) that could be used to help facilitate reflection on the document;
- A series of YouTube videos should be made with leaders from various kinds of ministry within the Anglican Church of Canada, in which they could reflect on/discuss themes in the document in relation to their own area of work and life (e.g. Someone from PWRDF,

Indigenous Ministries, Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice, Resources for Mission, a parish priest, a diocesan bishop, etc.);

- Homiletic resources need to be developed to aid clergy in preaching about money from the perspective of our faith in a way that moves beyond the more common perspective of 'stewardship.'

Members of the Task Force on the Theology of Money

The Reverend Jeffrey Metcalfe (Quebec, Chair)
The Reverend Maggie Hellwig (Toronto)
Mr. Joshua Paetkau (Rupert's Land)
The Right Reverend Michael Oulton (Ontario)
Ms. Monica Patten (Ottawa)
The Reverend Jeff Pym (ELCIC Eastern Synod)

Staff: Ms. Elin Goulden

Non nobis, Domine: A Theology of Money

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to your name give glory"

In exile in Babylon, the prophet Isaiah spoke of a vision of a people restored – and more than restored, the vision of a human society truly healed. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

On a hill in Galilee, surrounded by a hungry crowd, the disciples of Jesus suggested, reasonably enough, that he send the people away to buy food for themselves. No, Jesus responded, "you give them something to eat." (Matthew 14:16, Luke 9:13). And all the crowd on that field of green grass was fed, no one turned away hungry.

In 2011, a movement calling itself *Occupy Wall Street* moved into Zuccotti Park, in the financial district of New York, and soon similar encampments were set up around the world, including several in Canadian cities. The movement, diverse and confusing as it was, came together around an awareness of the drastic economic inequalities of modern society, and the number of people unable to live decent lives in our economic system. *Occupy* was often criticized for failing to offer clear alternatives – but in the event, what many of the camps offered was a glimpse of that same vision we see in Isaiah and in the Gospels, as academics and homeless people shared living space, and food was served generously to anyone who needed it.

Sometimes, as in Toronto, *Occupy* camps were set up in churchyards; and though the response of the church varied, there was often an immediate recognition that, though many Occupiers were not attached to any particular faith tradition, they and the churches had a common vision and, to at least some degree, a common cause; the vision of a world in which bread and fish, wine and milk, the basic requirements of human thriving, are available to all.

It was the experience of Occupy in particular which inspired Faith, Worship, and Ministry to set up a task force to consider the theology of money. In part, this is because the Occupy movement brought to the attention of the developed world just how very far we are from the vision we profess to hold. There have been many excellent analyses of the staggering levels of existing economic injustice and inequality, both nationally and globally, and it is redundant to go over this ground again here in detail. But it is necessary to think about the deep systems in which we live, by which we operate, and consider the possibility that we are called to something more than adjustments of detail; whether we are called, by the vision of the prophets and the Gospels, to a deeper critique of beliefs and practices so embedded that we can hardly, any more, recognize them as our own constructions.

To become controlled, to become possessed, by a human construct is, of course, the precise definition of idolatry, which was and remains a singularly defining human sin. The writers of our scriptures had very keen understandings of the dynamics of idolatry. The structuring inspiration for this reflection is Psalm 115 (*Non nobis, Domine*), which may prove to have more to say about our contemporary economic system than it might appear at first glance.

"Their idols are silver and gold; even the work of men's hands"

A money economy barely existed at all in the centuries during which the Hebrew scriptures were written, and was only beginning to emerge in the early Christian period. We cannot, then, expect much direct guidance in how to think about money, but deeper scriptural principles are available and they can guide us. We must begin, however, by defining what it is that we are talking about.

We have conventionally thought of money as a neutral tool for counting value, which may be put to good or bad uses; and in the earliest development of the money economy, it did perhaps function in this way. As the money economy has developed, however, it has become far more than that; "money" is now a sort of self-governing construct, largely unrelated to concrete goods, and behaving according to laws of its own, laws with many highly troubling features, especially from a theological perspective.

These features include the degree to which economic/numerical value exists in a highly abstracted form, lacking any clear connection to material well-being or human flourishing; the degree to which this highly abstracted system is self-maintaining and self-defining; and, most important, the hegemony which this system exerts, worldwide, upon our lives, and the degree to which we are compelled to live according to its structure of values, rather than those values to which we, as Christians, are vowed. Finally, we must consider the damage done by this system to those who are marginalized or excluded by it and to the planet itself, and the fact that the system itself depends upon this damage as a necessary part of its operations. The nearly complete control which the economic system exerts upon us suggests that we are enmeshed, largely beyond our conscious choice, in a system which may be defined as idolatrous, and indeed a system of structural sin.

As Lutheran theologian David Pfrimmer writes, "'economic actors,' with their organizing principal of market competition, have come to colonize – or simply to dominate – the public commons, imposing their economic order and market logic on every person, every community, and every thing, foreclosing all other human choices and possibilities. ... To many economists, there are no questions that the market cannot answer ... I chose the term 'colonize' because this market logic has become so culturally ingrained, we may not even be aware of how profoundly it alters our worldview and excludes alternative possibilities. It has become a new hermeneutic for offering answers to life questions that are supposed to provide meaning and purpose in the lives of people and communities."[1]

"They have hands and handle not"

Our modern economy has developed far beyond the simple use of money as a token of exchange, based upon actual material goods. Instead, the global economy is built almost entirely upon debt, speculation, and the use of essentially notional value to create more notional value. Our modern global economy depends absolutely upon the creation of debt, upon systems of borrowing and interest which create more economic "value" divorced from actual goods – and dependent upon constant "growth" in this circularly self-maintaining system, which, like cancer, can only grow without limit and cannot operate according to a concept of sufficiency or "enough." The real value of real goods to real persons is relatively unimportant within the operations of a numerically-driven system which creates ever-expanding "value" out of ever-expanding debt.

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[1] "For the market tells us so ...", a presentation *published by Lutheran University Press in conjunction with the Lutheran Teaching Theologians 2013 Colloquy at Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC., p 7*

As Philip Goodchild expresses it, "[t]he money economy parasitically inhabits the 'real' economy of produced goods, determining its growth and flow. ... [M]oney, as the principle of mediation of all demands, ensures that priority is given to the creation, acquisition, maintenance, and investment of money."[2]

The scriptural vision of human life is, precisely, a vision of "enough." When God leads the children of Israel out of Egypt, out of the empire of their day, they are also led into a period of formation, which includes a reshaping of their desires, away from the material comfort which they remember (perhaps inaccurately) as a distinctive feature of their time of slavery (Exodus 16:3, Numbers 11:4-6), and into the pedagogy of the manna – good and sufficient nourishment from God's hand, nourishment which is available in precisely the quantities needed for all to be well-fed, but which cannot be stockpiled or accumulated, cannot become surplus value (Exodus 16:14-31). Persistent complaints about manna are met with a clear lesson about the virtues of "enough," according to one account, when God delivers quails in such quantity that the Israelites become sickened by them, and some die (Numbers 11:31-34, Psalm 78:27-30). They are to become, not a people of captivity and of material comfort, but a people of freedom and of appropriate desire, adequacy, enough – and these things cannot be separated.

Slavery and material excess are cognate; it is our desire for more than we need which holds us captive. Material excess is built on slavery, and makes us into slaves; this is an understanding which echoes as well in Revelation 18:11-14, as the long and detailed list of material goods and luxuries of the fallen empire of Babylon climaxes with "slaves, and souls of men."

The vision of "enough," in contrast, is the vision of the prophets – basic food and water available to all, "without money and without price." It is the vision Jesus puts before us of a life in which we do not stockpile excess goods, do not worry about food or clothing, but live with the simplicity of birds (Luke 12:16-31; cf also 1 Timothy 6:8) – a vision which recalls also the words of a member of the Aamjiwnaang tribe, speaking about the environmental devastation brought to his community by industrial development, who noted that "[t]hese plants, these animals, they're still carrying on the way we're meant to carry on. The laws of creation haven't changed. ... But what can you do with your lives? The economy controls everything. You have to pay to live on the earth. Think about that. We're the only species that has to pay to live on the earth."[3] It is the vision of the earliest Christian community described in the Acts 2:44-45, where all goods were held in common and none were in need.

Good food, good work, health and community are the things to be desired in this world, the life God intends for us, a way of living with God's values in anticipation of the reconciliation of all things. One of the most evocative of the resurrection appearances (John 21:1-14) shows us Jesus frying a simple breakfast of fish on the lakeshore for his disciples. There is more to this image than it might appear – by the time of Jesus, fishing on the lake of Galilee was an industry, primarily dedicated to producing highly fermented fish sauce, a luxury good, for the imperial elite.[4] The breakfast on the shore reclaims basic food for those who produce it, shared in a small, sustainable community, and this is given to us as a vision of resurrection, the restoration of the world in Christ.

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[2] *Theology of Money*, Duke University Press, 2009, pp 22-23

[3] Kelly Kiyoshk, speaking at the Toxic Tour of Aamjiwnaang, September 5, 2015

[4] K.C. Hanson, "The Galilean Fishing Economy and the Jesus Tradition," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27, 1997, pp 99-111

This vision of "enough" is not only very different from the ever-spiraling growth of the money economy, it is actually inimical to it. If we are satisfied with simple, basic human lives of good work and mutual care, we will "fail" in the terms of our economy, which requires us to consume beyond our means, which requires us not only to engage in endless economic growth, but to also, and quite necessarily, to place ourselves in debt. Without debt and interest, economic "value" cannot increase.

That this system is built upon the charging of interest and the creation of debt, which are considered sinful by definition throughout our scriptures, should in itself be enough to give us pause. While the witness of scripture may be ambiguous in many areas, usury – the lending of money at interest – is not one of these; it is universally and clearly condemned (e.g. Deuteronomy 23:19, Leviticus 25:36-37, Psalm 15:5, Ezekiel 18:8-17, 22, Isaiah 24:2, Nehemiah 5:7-10), and indeed for many generations Christians were barred from lending at interest.[5] The Hebrew scriptures demand a regular system of debt forgiveness, so that no one can be locked into a permanent debt cycle (e.g. Deuteronomy 15:1-6). For it is in the system of usury that "money" first begins to escape from being a token of real goods for human thriving, and to become a self-sustaining and self-multiplying autonomous value, which can entrap human beings, undermine human good, and impose its own rules of value and practice. And yet, in the contemporary world, interest and debt are the absolute basis of our modern economic system, and this is so deeply and thoroughly established that we are hardly aware of its hold upon us, and can barely imagine any other way of organizing an economy.

Further, the inability of the market alone to ensure adequate human lives for the majority of the population is increasingly clear, as the gap between rich and poor, both globally and within nations, increases more and more, with greater and greater material resources concentrated in a tiny percentage of the population, and more and more people unable to meet the basic material needs required for human flourishing.

According to an Oxfam report from 2013:

> Over the last thirty years inequality has grown dramatically in many countries. In the U.S. the share of national income going to the top 1% has doubled since 1980 from 10 to 20%. For the top 0.01% it has quadrupled to levels never seen before. At a global level, the top 1% (60 million people), and particularly the even more select few in the top 0.01% (600,000 individuals – there are around 1,200 billionaires in the world), the last 30 years has been an incredible feeding frenzy. This is not confined to the U.S., or indeed to rich countries. In the UK inequality is rapidly returning to levels not seen since the time of Charles Dickens. In China the top 10% now take home nearly 60% of the income. Chinese inequality levels are now similar to those in South Africa, which is now the most unequal country on earth and significantly more unequal than at the end of apartheid. Even in many of the poorest countries, inequality has rapidly grown.[6]

To speak of "inequality" alone may hide the real issue – what these statistics mean is that most of the people of the world are unable to live adequately human lives. What these statistics speak of is hunger and malnutrition, children unable to learn because they are inadequately fed, homeless and housing insecurity, crushing debt levels, inability to access appropriate health care, constant economic anxiety, work which is in some cases literal slavery in sweatshops and coffee plantations (largely producing

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[5] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question LXXVIII, for a Scholastic formulation of the issue.

[6] "The cost of inequality: How inequality and income extremes hurt us all," Oxfam Media Briefing, January 18, 2013 at http://rt.com/news/oxfam-report-global-inequality-357/

substandard consumer items for anxious buyers in the developing world), and in some cases precarious employment, often providing those same shoddy products for sale, in retail and service industries – human lives stripped down to the voracious needs of an economic system's implacable internal logic.

In the fourth century C.E., Saint Basil the Great, in one of his homilies, spoke to the economic injustice of his day:

> Tell me, what is your own? What did you bring into this life? From where did you receive it? It is as if someone were to take the first seat in the theater, then bar everyone else from attending, so that one person alone enjoys what is offered for the benefit of all – this is what the rich do. They first take possession of the common property, and then they keep it as their own because they were the first to take it. But if every man took only what sufficed for his own need, and left the rest to the needy, no one would be rich, no one would be poor, no one would be in need. ... He who strips a man of his clothes is to be called a thief. Is not he who, when he is able, fails to clothe the naked, worthy of no other title? The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of him who is naked; the shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot; the money that you keep locked away is the money of the poor; the acts of charity that you do not perform are so many injustices that you commit.[7]

Basil could scarcely have imagined our contemporary economic situation; and yet his words remain as true now as they were nearly two thousand years ago.

"They that make them are like unto them"

Market economics depend upon certain assumptions about the human person, and the unavoidable force of market economics serves to shape the human person in the market's own interest. We need to be aware of this, and to be concerned about it, because many of the ways in which we are shaped (usually unconsciously) by the money economy are deeply opposed to the values of the Gospel.

First, the human person in the money economy is not considered as having intrinsic ontological value, but is measured according to ability to participate in this economy. Those unable to participate fully, whether due to disability, age, or other conditions, may be partially accommodated, but always suffer some degree of deprivation and exclusion (it is only necessary to look at the situations of the disabled or the elderly to see this). Those who may choose not to participate are stigmatized, or diagnosed as in some way pathological. At best, as in the case of the surviving religious orders, they may be regarded as quaint anachronisms, harmless as long as they remain marginal.

Those who do participate more or less effectively in the market economy will necessarily internalize, at least to some degree, the belief that money is a primary, if not the exclusive, measure and marker of value. Money, and acts of material consumption, come to represent importance, status, value, safety and security, even love. Basic human interactions are reduced to exchanges of money and goods, and we become increasingly unable to engage in, or even represent to ourselves, relationships with other human beings or with God, except through some version of monetary exchange.

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[7] Trans C. Paul Schroeder, *St Basil the Great on Social Justice*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009, p 69

Further, the human person under the market system is assumed to be, and must be shaped to be, guided by self-interest, competition for limited resources, and, at the same time, a limitless desire for the consumption of goods. The global economic system can only function if persons act according to these principles, and perhaps most of all the principle of limitless consumption, without which the economy could not continue the limitless "growth" upon which it depends. We are formed as consumers relentlessly, through what is now nearly omnipresent advertising, through social expectation, until nearly everyone, from the richest to the poorest, believes that happiness, success, dignity, and even spiritual development are best obtained through purchase; and not, for the most part, through purchase of durable goods, but through the constantly repeated act of consumption, which requires that goods be short-term and disposable.

As task force member Joshua Paetkau expresses it:

> For the world's wealthy, at least, most material goods are highly expendable, and, indeed, they are made to be so. Cheap goods are produced in faraway places at terrific costs to human life and freedom for someone to consume; consumer desire must constantly be manufactured in order to continue the demand. ... We consume the process of commodification itself. If it can be sold then *someone* will buy it, no matter how useless or even imaginary the item is. Capitalism thrives on this pattern of colonization, repeatedly usurping our desire for the fullness of life by filling the space of our desires with an endless supply of commodities.[8]

This endless, unslakeable desire for the act of consumption itself is not a side-effect of market economics, but the absolutely necessary process which sustains the system.

David Pfrimmer points out that market forces, and the political interests supporting them, in fact greatly restrict the agency of persons and societies who may wish to live differently:

> Markets foreclose on the choices people are allowed to make in their pursuit of a "better life." People may want to secure "public goods" – like clean air and water – not available in the market. Communities may want to provide services like universal health or childcare, which are not "cost effective" in a market calculation. Others may want to exempt a way of life, a culture, or protect indigenous knowledge from the vicissitudes of supply and demand. The imperial market marginalizes human exigency when people are limited to being merely passive but voracious consumers, rather than being family, neighbours, and citizens with responsibilities for one another, their communities and for Creation itself.[9]

This foreclosure happens not only through the limits on our imaginations and our self-understandings, but also through direct legislative and political controls, mostly imposed through processes in which the ordinary citizen has little or no voice.

And this is crucial to us as Christians, because the formation to which we are subjected by the market, the constraints which are placed on our imaginations and our choices, actually prevent us from living out our baptismal vocation – prevent us from becoming the people we are meant to be, reborn in the image of Christ.

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8 "Ecclesial Economies: Resurrection and Christian subjectivity," unpublished thesis, 2009, p 53

9 Pfrimmer, p 10

The first promise of the baptismal covenant, to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" is, in fact, drawn verbatim from the same verses of Acts where we are shown the early church holding all things in common and sharing as each had need, and our understanding of what that first promise means should not be detached from that context; it is, implicitly, also a promise to live in a very different kind of *economic* relationship with each other, and yet one which the money economy makes essentially impossible.

The fourth and fifth promises call us to "seek and serve Christ in all persons," to "strive for justice and peace among all people," and to "respect the dignity of every human being." The demand of the money economy to measure all persons by their economic productivity, the prioritization of individual self-interest and competition for resources, and the structuring of the economy so that debt and poverty are not only widespread but actually necessary for economic "health", all make it impossible for us to live out these promises fully.

The sixth, recently added, promise binds us to "safeguard the integrity of God's creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the earth," promises which are in direct conflict with the principle of unlimited and constantly growing material consumption which the money economy requires for its operation.

The values of market economics, then, are not simply non-Christian; they are effectively anti-Christian, and the operations of the market economy actively prevent us from living Christian lives with fullness and integrity.

"The dead praise not thee, O Lord"

We are embedded in a global money economy from which we simply cannot remove ourselves; the options for living outside this system, or even at the margins, are almost non-existent, though some religious communities achieve at least a certain degree of detachment. Nor are we able to create major rapid change to this system; and we lack, at this time, a clear vision for what might replace it. We are shaped – and distorted – by our unavoidable participation in this system. Insofar as the modern global economy is fundamentally based on sinful values, we are unavoidably participants in sin by virtue of our birth; indeed, this may be as close to a direct example of original sin as any we can find.

And yet, we believe that we are saved from this matrix of sin, that we are transformed, by an act of free offering on the part of God, an act that entirely defies all the principles underlying the modern economy. We know that this transformation cannot be fully known to us now, and that we live in the hope and expectation of God's great reconciliation of all things, a reconciliation beyond our power to achieve; but as persons made new in Christ's death and resurrection, we must live within that transformation, within this Good News, to the best of our abilities.

We cannot, and should not attempt to, escape this world, but we are called to live according to values which are profoundly different from, and in fact contrary to, those of the world as it is. We must be witnesses to another way of being, seek to show forth the shape of God's kingdom, and, where we can, make changes that will move the world towards the values of that kingdom.

We may see this calling as made up of two (though inseparable) components: the healing or re-ordering of desire, and a return to a fuller understanding and practice of "the works of mercy," as described by theologian Daniel Bell.

The healing of desire involves those practices which can free us from the insatiable need to consume, re-orient us towards an understanding of “enough,” and develop what Roman Catholic theologian William Cavanaugh calls “a sacramental view of the world [which] sees all things as part of God's good creation, potential signs of the glory of God,” but also “signs whose meaning is only completely fulfilled if they promote the good of communion with God and with other people.”[10]

It has long been known to monastics that the tiny practices of everyday life contain within them theological imperatives, and are one of the primary means by which we reshape ourselves into children of God rather than children of money. It may seem undramatic, in the fact of global inequality, to train ourselves in these micro-practices, and yet they are essential. We engage in a countercultural activity every time we refuse to throw away food, or repair a damaged shoe rather than buy a new pair, or make our own clothes or jam or books or music; every time we ride a bicycle or take public transit rather than driving a private car; every time we refrain from consumer activity because we already have enough. Those of us with some economic privilege may find it hard, even within ourselves, to recognize “enough,” to wean ourselves from the transitory pleasure of purchase, even the purchase of small, shoddy, disposable things.

When we do engage in consumer activity, we can still make choices that lead towards greater spiritual health. Cavanaugh points to the importance of the fair trade movement in “helping us have a proper relationship with things ... [to] understand where our things come from and how our things are produced.”[11] Fair trade, then, is not only for the benefit of producers but also of consumers, one small aspect of a re-ordering of our distorted selves. To make a simple commitment such as refusing to purchase new clothes likely to have been produced through exploitative labour can have far-reaching effects – not so much, perhaps, on our social system in any immediate way, but on ourselves as participants in that system.

Other small but important practices may include declining to participate in interest-based investment profits, or at least investing in credit unions which support community initiatives; making direct connections with local producers through institutions like community-supported agriculture programs; participating in or purchasing from workers’ cooperatives, or indeed participating in, and extending the reach of, a variety of social institutions or community activities which are cooperative rather than competitive in their principles.

Not all of these are possible for everyone, and almost all assume some degree of economic privilege.

For the very poor and marginalized, a healing of relationship to the material world is largely about having the opportunity to experience the real goodness of materiality; to be warm, to be dry, to have nutritious, fresh food, to be given access to privacy, space for contemplation, beauty and the opportunity for creative expression. To the extent that faith communities can create these experiences and opportunities, we – like the free kitchens and libraries at the Occupy camps – are helping to show forth the shape of the Kingdom.

Faith communities can also serve as a place in which those who are “efficient” economic actors can build relationships with those who cannot participate economically. Coming to a lived understanding of

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[10] *Being Consumed*, Eerdmans, 2008, p 58
[11] p 58

the true value of human persons who are without much economic worth – the very elderly, the severely disabled, the socially marginalized – can change all parties involved in the relationship. Jean Vanier's L'Arche communities have done some of this work, but we are called, as communities of faith, to do much more.

Cavanaugh also points to worship, and particularly the Eucharist, as a key practice in healing desire: "The very distinction between what is mine and what is yours breaks down in the body of Christ. We are not to consider ourselves as absolute owners of our stuff, who then occasionally graciously bestow charity on the less fortunate. In the body of Christ, your pain is my pain, and my stuff is available to be communicated to you in your need. ... [W]e are simultaneously fed and become food for others. ... The endless consumption of superficial novelty is broken by the promise of an end, the kingdom towards which history is moving."[12]

This connects with Daniel Bell's thinking on the "works of mercy," which he defines far more broadly than most contemporary writers. He calls us to return to the idea of voluntary poverty as a real and meaningful vocation, and renunciation of material goods as a positive value recommended for all who have more than sufficiency; for an understanding that "charitable practices" are "neither private nor optional but public and expected"; and that these practices involve, "not merely redistributive philanthropy" but active work towards a more just ordering of public life, in areas including taxation, redistributive economic policies, usury, global debt, just wages and fair labour practices.[13]

The works of mercy, then, under this conception, include political and social advocacy, as well as protest against "free trade" agreements which limit the ability of persons and societies to make choices for the common good, against unjust structures of taxation which exempt large corporations from paying their fair share, against usurious business practices and coercive global debt arrangements, among other things; and include, as well, attempts to build better institutions, better societies, a better human world.

"All the whole heavens are the Lord's"

Bell reminds us that, "even as Christians live in accord with the divine economy now, they do not expect that economy to be manifest *in its fullness* until Christ returns in final victory. ... In other words, that the Christian alternative to capitalism is incomplete is not indicative of Christianity's failure." But in this situation, the choice to live mindfully in a "diaspora or pilgrim economics ... is a missionary or evangelistic opportunity to redeem the time."[14]

We cannot wrench ourselves out of the global money economy; but with enough prayer, work and commitment, we may be able to live "in the world but not of it," signs of God's economy. It requires a significant re-orientation of our values, shaped as we have been by the inescapable order of the world; but it is a Gospel imperative.

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[12] p 56
[13] *The Economy of Desire*, Baker Academic, 2012, p 201
[14] pp 188-189