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can also consider how their p. 228 views might be applied to other features of the modern Western economy, for example, the banking system and the housing mortgage industry.

Although their emphases differed, Luther and Calvin were in agreement on the foundations of property ethics. Both Reformers were profoundly committed to the Golden Rule and love for neighbour as the fundamental principles of all human relationships, including economic ones. Calvin had a generally more positive view than Luther of economic affairs. In particular, Calvin believed that property relationships could be redeemed to play a significant role in promoting human solidarity and community.

Both men strongly opposed communistic arrangements of ownership because common property vitiates the moral responsibility of the individual. They opposed as well the unrestrained operation of the free market as unjust and unchristian. Calvin's belief that the economic interdependence caused by trade is part of God's design for promoting social harmony is an interesting foreshadow of Adam Smith's invisible hand. It is, however, certain that neither Calvin nor Luther believed that the invisible hand by itself could produce economic and social justice.

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Property and the Gospel

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Unlike the last article, this article compares the theology of property in the Reformation (John Calvin) with that of an Anabaptist tradition (Hutterites). It is rather an extended article with detailed footnotes (here also footnotes have been omitted for similar reasons), but also has precise theological analysis and new insights to compensate. Calvin shaped his views toward an ethic applicable to an entire society while the Hutterite brethren cared only about justifying their views for the Christian community that share goods in common. One's ecclesiology as a key to one's theology of property is the fresh insight here.
Editor

Scholars have debated for years about the economic impacts of sixteenth-century religious movements. In his landmark study of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber argued that John Calvin's understandings of predestination, Sanctification and vocation contributed to the creation of a social climate in which modern capitalism could develop and flourish, gaining ascendancy over a traditional economic system. Karl Kautsky has studied the Hutterites on the radical left wing of the Reformation and claimed them as forerunners of modern socialism. The debates surrounding Weber's and Kautsky's theories are sufficient to establish the fruitfulness of studying Calvin's works and Hutterite documents with attention to economic considerations.

But such a study need not be undertaken solely from the standpoint of later socioeconomic developments, to try to establish causal connections or historical

origins—*à la* Weber or Kautsy. It may also be instructive to look at the place of views on money and property in Calvin's larger theological and ethical framework and in the writings of representative Hutterite leaders of the mid-sixteenth century: Peter Riedemann, Peter Walpot, Claus Felbinger, Leonhard Dax, Jakob Hutter. Comparison of Calvin's and the Hutterites' views on sin, salvation, Scripture and the social order—as these relate to economic matters—reveals not only specific differences but also a general divergence in assumptions about or orientation toward reality. p. 230

SIN

Calvin understood Adam's failure, and consequently the whole of the human predicament, as a problem of unbelief and disobedience. God's Word had brought a world out of chaos into ordered existence. In that order humanity had a place. But Adam also had a will: he 'was denied the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to test his obedience and prove that he was willingly under God's command'. As a result of his act of rebellion, 'he consigned his race to ruin' and 'perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and on earth'.

In the context of this general view of sin as disobedience resulting in disorder and corruption, Calvin frequently referred to sin specifically as 'inordinate desiring'. As a result of the depravity of nature, all human faculties are 'so vitiated and corrupted' that in all our actions 'persistent disorder and intemperance threaten'. God created people with well-ordered inclinations, but because of the fall 'these inclinations cannot be separated from … lack of restraint'. In short, human desires 'are evil … not in that they are natural, but because they are inordinate'. Thus, for example, in Calvin's view sin is not connected with property *per se* but with immoderate, inordinate desire for or attachment to it and with failure to recognize God's providence in it.

In common with Calvin the Hutterites held that Adam's sin was primarily a matter of disobedience. But they departed from Calvin's emphasis on the resulting corruption of the entire race, stressing instead the inheritance of physical death and inclination toward evil. And the accent in Hutterite treatments of sin is not so much on 'original sin' or death or generalized sinful tendencies; sin is usually intimately connected with one's behaviour with regard to this world's goods. Jakob Hutter pointed to greed as the root of all evil. Peter Riedemann echoed and elaborated: 'All sin hath its source and origin in wrong taking, that man taketh what he should not and what is not his and leaveth what he ought to take, loveth what he ought to hate and hateth what he ought to love'. These words refer not to absence of moderation, as in Calvin, but instead condemn all private possession as wrong in and of itself. An old Hutterite codex provides this graphic description of the evils of private ownership: 'Man suffocates in *Eigenthum* [possession/ownership]'; his situation is analogous to 'leaving a child with a knife, to its harm and ruin'. 'As the beetle has its home in horse manure … so covetousness has its home, its work, its being in *Eigenthum*.'

It is precisely this sense of sin as rooted in self-interested private possession that Hutterite sources connect with notions of order. God p. 231 created a natural order in which people held everything in common. Riedemann wrote that 'God from the beginning ordained naught private for man, but all things to be common'. In wrongly taking everything short of sun, air and light to themselves, people stepped out of God's order.

THE LIFE OF FAITH

The way out of this state of disorder and alienation from God, for both Calvin and the Hutterites, was preeminently a matter of grace. Riedemann insisted that 'we in our own strength are able to do neither what is small nor what is great, without the working of God in us'; 'true and well-founded faith … is not of men but a gift of God'. Likewise for Calvin, 'the human will does not obtain grace by freedom, but obtains freedom by grace'.

Justification and Sanctification

Calvin used the Pauline categories of justification and sanctification to describe the transformation that God in Christ effects in the life of the elect person. Justification is a matter of forgiveness of sin. Sin makes all people enemies of God. Since the corruption of human nature is so great that our works can never atone for sin or merit our reconciliation with God, we are restored to communion only because God imputes to us 'the righteousness which Jesus Christ has gained through His obedience unto death'. Therefore, one who 'grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith … appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man'.

But this grace in Calvin's view is not limited to Christ's accomplishing something external to us on our behalf. It also works powerfully in the life of the justified person, regenerating and sanctifying: 'The Lord freely justifies his own in order that he may at the same time restore them to try righteousness by sanctification of his Spirit'. Calvin understood sanctification not as a vague state of sinlessness but as an active life of obedience. As sin is primarily a matter of disobedience, so Christ 'has been given to us for sanctification in order that he may bring us … into obedience to God's righteousness'. Likewise, regeneration is not an absolute once-and-for-all event but a process of subjugating 'inordinate desires' and growing in obedience which continues throughout the believer's life.

Self-Denial

One way Calvin wrote about this transformation was with the p. 232 language of self-denial. A chapter of his *Institutes* bears this title: 'The Sum of the Christian Life: The Denial of Ourselves'. It continues with the assertion that 'we are not our own masters'. 'The duty of believers', as Calvin quoted the Apostle Paul, is 'to present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice'. In a similar vein Wilhelm Niesel has summarized Calvin's position on discipleship as one of holding fast to the rule which Christ gave in Matthew 16:24, consisting essentially of such self-denial. It 'reaches its climax in the fact that we allow our whole life to be controlled by the will of the Lord'.

At several points Calvin expressly linked this self-denial with what he viewed as proper use of money and possessions. One element of his approach connected self-denial with giving up 'desire of, or reliance on' possessions. 'It remains for us not greedily to strive after riches' but 'always to look to the Lord so that by his guidance we may be led to whatever lot he has provided for us'. In addition to adopting this posture of reliance on God's providence in economic matters, Calvin exhorted the believer to exercise stewardship: 'We are the stewards of everything God has conferred on us'; this awareness ought to be 'our rule for generosity and beneficence'. An attitude of trust and awareness of obligations of stewardship, love and generosity, then, are manifestations of self-denial in money matters, as is curbing 'avarice, or desire' or 'other evils that or self-love spawns'.

For the Hutterites, too, self-denial was an important (probably the most important) element of the graced life. As one Hutterite testified before his martyrdom, 'we have given, surrendered, and sacrificed ourselves wholly to God'. The word that they along with other Anabaptists used to designate this reality was *Gelassenheit*, 'a complete self-denial and voluntary surrender to the will of God whereby the individual was content to resign all

aspects of his life to God'. When they confessed Jesus as Lord, they meant that 'he controlleth, ruleth over and useth our members according to his will'; he 'liveth and doeth all things in us'; 'we have completely surrendered our members to him, to wait upon him, to endure his working and to suffer his will'.

Unlike Calvin, the Hutterites believed that in the life of one who had surrendered, sin could be completely eradicated—and not just at the end of a lifetime of struggle. Riedemann wrote that 'Christ came to dwell in us by faith, and through his strength and working in us weakened, quenched, killed and took away sin, that we might be without sins'. With Calvin, the Hutterites gave God's Spirit credit for their righteousness, and they were well aware of the ongoing reality of temptation: 'the rising urge in flesh suggesting sin, the inclination or p. 233 desire, evil occurrences and sinful thoughts through which man is tempted to do wrong—from these the devout are not exempt'. But 'because a devout man does not stretch out his limbs to do wrong, he is no sinner'. By the Spirit's power he 'crushes the sinful suggestion … that sin may not be living and active' in him.

These Hutterites believed that *Gelassenheit* had definite—even preeminent—expression in economic matters. They called their persecutors blind and mixed-up people who 'know nothing of spiritual poverty and of true *Gelassenheit*, how the human must go out of himself and must hate and leave himself, as Christ says and speaks: He who does not deny everything that he has cannot be a disciple of Christ'. Being *gelassen* in effect meant not merely cultivating an attitude of detachment or a practice of moderation but being rid entirely of private property. Private possession necessarily meant personal attachment, they believed. Therefore, one could not have at the same time both temporal riches and heavenly treasure, 'since one chokes out the other'. Being Christ's disciple implied quite literally for the Hutterites that one must 'sell all, forsake and give up [one's] own temporal riches, and lose [one's] heart therefrom'.

Bearing the Cross

Both Calvin and the Hutterites wrote about the life of discipleship and self-denial in conjunction with 'bearing the cross'. For Calvin the content of cross-bearing was diverse: poverty, exile, prison, insult, disease, bereavement, 'tribulations of mind'—virtually any adversity which comes to one. In his treatment of this aspect of self-denial, Calvin attributed all 'crosses' to God's providence: 'none of these [adversities] happens except by the will and providence of God … He does nothing except with a well-ordered justice'. Unlike Jesus, whose cross-bearing only demonstrated his obedience, 'we must pass our lives under a continual cross' for many other reasons. Among these are learning to trust God rather than ourselves and developing fortitude and moderation. In sum, our cross may be any sort of misfortune, not necessarily persecution for the gospel's sake (Jesus' cross), and we bear it with a view to growth in sanctification. It comes to us from God to overturn our good opinion of ourselves (not Jesus' problem) and teach us 'to rest upon God alone'. Outwardly the cross we bear may be no different from the adversity God sends alike to 'the evil and the good … yet only those who gladly shoulder the burden can be said to carry it'.

With regard to economic matters, Calvin believed an individual's cross might be poverty or financial difficulties, 'lest in the unmeasured p. 234 abundance of our riches we go wild'. Calvin's characteristic economic concerns emerge here, too: the cross curbs inordinate desire for property, teaches us to rely on God rather than on riches, trains us in moderation and restraint.

In the Hutterite writings the focus is narrower: the cross of the Christian is borne by Jesus, the prophets and the apostles. Jakob Hutter comforted his sisters and brothers with the words: 'It has gone like this with … all the faithful from the beginning'. The cross is not

adversity in general, sent by God to train and discipline the elect; rather it is the response of the evil world to righteous people. Remaining faithful in the face of such persecution is the sign of a true disciple.

How does this view of the cross relate to money matters? Again quoting Jakob Hutter:

> All who leave and abstain from evil and all unrighteousness and fear God from the heart, serve him and keep his commandments, must be robbed and driven from their homes and cast out … By this we can recognize with certainty that we are God's children and he is our father, that we are co-heirs of his glory and that we are dear and pleasing to his heart, like all the saints.

'Incorporation'

This sense of sharing a common destiny with all God's children marks a central feature of the Hutterite conception of *Gelassenheit*. The sixteenth-century Hutterite gospel was of salvation understood primarily in corporate terms. The significance of Jesus' death is often described in Hutterite documents in these words: 'He gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify her, and hath cleansed her with the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle'. Other favourite images are those of 'royal priesthood' and 'chosen people'.

Organic metaphors were important, too, especially those dealing with incorporation into the body of Christ. Sometimes the metaphor of choice was botanical: The Spirit of Christ plants believers into Christ, making them 'of his character and nature, so that they become one plant and one organism together with him: he the root or stem, we the branches'. As the memorial of Jesus' death, the Lord's Supper also was for Hutterites a celebration of the oneness of the members of his body, an occasion for hope in the knowledge that as those members share in his death they can also expect to live with him. Clause Felbinger, a blacksmith, explained the Hutterite understanding of the Supper this way: p. 235

> By means of bread and wine He has shown the community of His body. Even as natural bread is composed of the coming together of many grains, ground under the millstones, and each giving the others all it possesses, they have community one with another, and thus become one loaf; and as, likewise, the wine is composed of many grapes, each sharing its juice with the rest in the wine press, so that they have become one drink. Even so are we also, in that we become completely … one in Christ: He the vine and we His branches, He the head and we His members.

This eloquent testimony makes clear the close connection between *Gelassenheit* and *Gemeinschaft* (community) in Hutterite thought and life. For some Anabaptists the corporate expression of *Gelassenheit* was much weaker; in no other group was *Gelassenheit/Gemeinschaft* understood so exclusively in terms of community of goods. For the Hutterites, *Gelassenheit* came to mean definitively the surrender of private property and incorporation into a community which practiced total economic sharing. 'Unencumbered and *gelassen*, [believers] have yielded themselves to the obedience of Christ … and have been incorporated into the church of Christ.' This, for Hutterites, was the meaning of salvation.

Calvin also relied heavily on a notion of incorporation in his description of the life of faith. For him the language of participation for 'engrafting' did not so much refer to church life as guarantee the priority of grace in justification and sanctification, undercutting any human claims to righteousness: 'Our righteousness is not in us but in Christ … we possess it only because we are partakers in Christ'.

For Calvin as for the Hutterites, however, church membership was essential to salvation. One of his favourite metaphors for the church makes this clear; 'There is no way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and … keep us under her care and guidance'. Indeed, 'away from her bosom one cannot hope for … any salvation'. The essential marks of the visible church, by which it nourishes faith and so can be recognized as a true church, are pure preaching and hearing of the Word of God and proper administration of the sacraments.

Thus, Calvin's treatment of the Lord's Supper concentrates on the way in which Christians receive Christ's body and blood as food for the soul: 'The chief function of the Sacrament … is to seal and confirm the promise … that his flesh is food indeed and his blood is drink, which feed us unto eternal life'. In this corporate act of being 'fed by the flesh and blood of Christ', Christ 'grows into one' with believers.

Like the Hutterite Felbinger's account of the church's Lord's Supper p. 236 observance, Calvin's refers to becoming united with Christ. But union is differently construed. For Calvin, who distinguished between the invisible, perfect church of the elect and the present, visible *corpus permixtum*, it was also crucial to differentiate within that unity between the head (Christ) and the members (the believers). The Hutterites, however, made no distinction between visible and invisible churches, between present defects and future perfection. Likewise, they did not emphasize the difference between head and members in the body of Christ; the unity they experienced in the Supper was undifferentiated, their identification with each other and with Christ complete.

The Hutterites viewed their nearly total communion in material things as a necessary aspect of their spiritual unity celebrated in the Lord's Supper. Calvin, on the other hand, was convinced that the unity of believers in the church—though it entails generosity and sharing—does not disturb 'civil order … which allows each individual to own his private possessions, since it is necessary to keep peace among men that the ownership of property should be distinct and personal among them'.

SCRIPTURE

That Calvin believed preaching the Word to be fundamental to ecclesiastical fidelity is an indication of his high regard for Scripture's authority. The Hutterites shared that high regard, which was rooted for them as for him in the conviction that God's will, his law, could above all be found there. Not that his will could be discerned in Scripture apart from the activity of the Spirit. Both Calvin and the Hutterites were convinced that Spirit and Word were inseparable. As the Spirit is to be known in the Word, so the Word is enlivened by the presence of the Spirit. Scripture preached apart from the Spirit is dead letter; the living Word in contrast, 'pierceth soul and spirit'. Likewise suspect were all claims to visions and revelations which diverged from what could be known in Scripture. As Calvin wrote:

> By a kind of mutual bond the Lord has joined together the certainty of his Word and of his Spirit so that the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit, who causes us to contemplate God's face, shines; and that we in turn may embrace the Spirit with no fear of being deceived when we recognize him in his own image, namely, in the Word.

In other respects, too, Calvin's and the Hutterites' understandings of the proper approach to Scripture coincided. They agreed that a straightforward, common sense interpretation was preferable to an p. 237 allegorical or 'twisted' one. They also agreed that Christ is the key to understanding the implications of both Old and New Testaments

for Christian life. But beyond that their understandings of the relationship between the Testaments diverged—with profound consequences for their respective views of economic matters.

The Hutterites believed quite simply that the old and new were two distinct covenants and that the new covenant in Christ was 'far superior [to] and stronger than the old covenant of Israel'. They saw discontinuities between the two precisely because they thought Jesus 'changed things' from the Old Testament when he introduced the new 'covenant of grace'. That new element lay not just in the possibility of a different status before God but in the content of what is commanded. The Hutterites in effect saw Jesus as a new lawgiver, a new Moses. They located the new reality in specific behaviour, not just in disposition: true Christians should not be rulers, fight in wars or shed human blood under any circumstances; they should not take people to court or swear oaths. The Hutterites understood Jesus' teaching on these subjects as recorded in the New Testament to be quite simply binding. Jesus' teaching replaced Old Testament commands and examples 'because Christ is considered worthy of greater honour than Moses'. With Jesus 'the old kingdom and reign came to an end, and a new one began'.

The language the Hutterites used to describe the relation between the covenants played up the discontinuities: the old revelation decays; it is imperfect, dark, and must give way to the new one brought to light in Christ in strength and clarity. The most common way Hutterites pointed to the difference was to use the Pauline distinction between servanthood and sonship. The new covenant is a covenant of sonship because 'God in Christ has separated the children from the slaves, that they might all serve him … not in outward ceremonies, but in the Spirit and in truth'.

Calvin expressly attacked the Hutterites' assumption that Jesus introduced a radically new standard, declaring that people who misunderstood Jesus' teachings (in Matthew 5, in particular) did so precisely because they 'fancied Christ another Moses, the giver of the law of the gospel, which supplied what was lacking in the Mosaic law'. In fact, Calvin believed, Jesus did not add to or overturn the Mosaic law: 'he only restored it to its integrity,' freeing and cleansing it from the falsehoods and defilements of the Pharisees. Thus, Jesus' teaching is distinct not from the Mosaic law but from the Pharisees' corruption of the old legislation. Jesus restored rather than replaced the old law. p. 238

In fact, Calvin believed that the moral teachings of Jesus, the Decalogue and the natural moral law were virtually synonymous. Jesus 'had not the least intention' of altering the law or making innovations. God 'appointed once and for all the rule of life, which He will never repent of'. Hence, Jesus' task was not to give a new law but to act as 'faithful interpeter' of the law, 'teaching us [its] nature, its object, and its scope'.

These basic assumptions about the relationship between old and new—of continuity in Calvin's case and discontinuity in the Hutterites' case—are formative for interpretations of biblical materials on property and money. Several other hermeneutical principles and devices also come into play.

While Calvin and the Hutterites agreed in general that the simplest sense of a text was to be preferred to one that required 'twisting', Calvin explicitly acknowledged the church's need for people whose task is interpretation. His commentaries are 'saturated with phrases which emphasize the simplicity of the [exegetical] task'. Still, he devoted an enormous amount of time to that task—an indication of his conviction that interpretation is important and that not all people are equipped to do it.

Hutterites, on the other hand, gave less attention to exegetical problems. They seem to have assumed that the New Testament addressed them directly. The only hermeneutical devices they saw operative were ones they thought other people used

perversely to avoid being bound by what the Hutterites viewed as the plain sense of New Testament teaching.

Calvin, more sophisticated than the Hutterites about exegesis, interpreted Scripture with several operative assumptions. Most important, related to his conviction of the continuity between old and new and to his high regard for the authority of the entire Bible, was an assumption of unity, perfection, harmony. He wrote the *Institutes* to provide students with an orderly summary of Scripture's contents; there he expounded 'a synthesis of the contents of Scripture'. With a similar bent he arranged some of his commentaries in the form of 'harmonies'; wherever he encountered apparent divergencies in biblical texts, he reconciled them.

Along with this belief in harmony, Calvin seems to have interpreted Scripture with what Jackson Forstman has called a 'rule of moderation' in mind. Consequently he often understood the law as teaching moderation and pointed to Jesus as an example of 'pure moderation'.

Calvin used several other hermeneutical devices in interpreting Scripture. One, also related to his understanding of the relation p. 239 between the Testaments, was 'accommodation'; God has 'accommodated himself to men's capacity, which is varied and changeable'. Another device on which Calvin relied in exegesis was 'synecdoche'. In his treatment of the Decalogue, Calvin used this device to 'expand the scope of the commandments in two directions'—he inferred a general prohibition from a specific one, for example, and a positive injunction from a prohibition. Finally, Calvin's interpretation sometimes rested on the assumption that the words of a command are only truly understood when one appreciates the purpose for which it is given.

Listing these general assumptions and specific exegetical tools sets the stage for examining how the Geneva reformer and the Moravian communitarians interpreted key biblical texts on money and property. The passages dealt with here are among many which the sixteenth-century Hutterites included in article three of the 'Great Article Book' (ascribed to Peter Walpot), on true *Gelassenheit* and Christian community (*Gemeinschaft*) of goods. The article begins with 'the congregation's grounds for Christian community from holy Scripture'.

Manna in the Wilderness (Exodus 16)

The Hutterite reading of the account of God's provisions of manna for the children of Israel emphasizes these elements of the story: God's leading of the Israelites into the wilderness and the equal distribution of manna which all (unequally) helped to gather—so that 'when it was measured out … he who had much had nothing left over, and he who had little had no lack'. What relevance did this text have for their sixteenth-century community? The church also has been led by God out of 'the present Egypt' and into 'the wilderness of this world', and their life together should reflect the same egalitarianism: 'The rich one should have no more than the poor one, and the poor one no more than the rich one'. Instead, in their *Gemeinschaft* everything should be offered for common, equal use. This interpretation dramatizes the Hutterites' willingness to see themselves as heirs of the children of Israel, making what was for the Israelites a temporary experience in a literal wilderness a norm for the church as long as she sojourned in the spiritual wilderness of the age.

Calvin's commentary on this passage criticizes the Israelites' failure to trust God, 'whom they had found to be in all respects a bountiful Father', then moves to a discussion of the significance for sixteenth-century Christians of the gathering and distributing of the manna. Ironically, at this point the Hutterites played up continuities where p. 240 Calvin also found some continuity but with an important difference. The manna was special food,

given to the Israelites virtually without work on their part; because of these unique qualities, 'it is not to be wondered that God should have called each one of the people to partake of it equally, and forbade any one to take more than another'. Ordinary food which we work for is a different matter: 'It is necessary for the preservation of human society that each should possess what is his own'. Thus, the passage in Calvin's hands became a justification for private property, with exhortation to remember that all we have comes from God's bounty and 'spontaneously and liberally' to relieve 'the wants of [the] brethren'.

The Rich Man (Matthew 19:16–26; Mark 10:17–27; Luke 18:18–27)

The Hutterites saw the rich man who asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life as one who wanted to have treasure both on earth and in heaven, who tried to serve both God and mammon. The 'Great Article Book' follows the Matthean account of this narrative, in which Jesus says, 'If you want to be perfect/complete, go and sell everything you have'. The Hutterites believed this passage confirmed that completeness (*Vollkommenheit*) consisted not in having both material and spiritual goods but in selling everything: 'For love is a bond of completeness; where it dwells it produces not just half but complete [*vollkommen*] and total community'.

Jesus' teaching which follows, about the great difficulty the rich have in entering the kingdom, was also understood in corporate terms, and—predictably enough—the themes *Gemeinschaft* and *Gelassenheit* were linked: 'If Christ did not require *Gelassenheit* and community of goods in his church from all those who … wish to inherit the heavenly goods together, it would not be difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God'.

Calvin discussed this narrative and teaching at two points in the *Institutes* and at length in his commentary on a harmony of the Synoptics. All three treatments of the passage contain explanations of the apparent connection that Jesus and the rich man made between observing the law and inheriting eternal life. Calvin construed Jesus' answer as a 'legal' reply—'accommodated' to a lawyer's question. The intent of the response was to expose the man's 'blind confidence in his own works', 'so that he might be convicted of his own weakness and make use of the help of faith'.

With reference to issues of money and property, Calvin gleaned several things from this account. In line with his concern to locate the p. 241 purpose of a command and to deal with attitudes and intentions, he wrote, 'We see that Christ's only purpose was to correct the young man's wrong attitude'. The law does not command us literally to sell all (after all, rich people under the old covenant were blessed); rather 'it intends us to *be prepared* for … poverty'. Using the device of synecdoche, Calvin even extended the command beyond attitudes toward wealth: in commanding 'the covetous rich man to give up all that he has', Christ also commands 'an ambitious man to give up all his honours … or a shameless man all means of lust'. Calvin's characteristic emphasis on charity crops up here as well—'Christ is commanding him not simply [!] to sell but to be liberal in helping the poor'—as do warnings against inordinate desire (avarice, in this case), and praise for moderation and thrift. Also typical is Calvin's assertion that it is easy to recognize the true meaning of Jesus' words—certainly 'not all are indiscriminately commanded to sell everything'. Rather, 'to hold what God places in our hand is a greater virtue than to waste everything'.

The Jerusalem Community (Acts 2:40–47)

This passage, with Acts 4 and 5, was an absolutely fundamental warrant for the Hutterite practice of community of goods. It stands virtually without comment in the section of the 'Great Article Book' devoted to explicating the scriptural grounds for the Hutterites'

communism. They saw themselves quite simply as the 'last church', reformed on the pattern of the 'first church', as given in the text. Their 'Great Chronicle' narrates the origins of their practice in this fashion: some Anabaptists who migrated because of persecution from the Tyrol to Moravia, with limited financial resources, 'laid down a coat before the people, and each person put what he had on it willingly and uncoerced for the support of the needy, according to the teaching of the prophets and apostles. Isaiah 23; Acts 2, 4 and 5'. The words of the text applied to the community's origins and ongoing life with directness and immediacy. Certainly the defining feature of the model in their own experience was community of goods: 'God still has such a church on earth, which acts according to His law and walks in true community of spiritual as well as temporal gifts and goods'.

Calvin believed that this passage delineated not one but four marks of the true and genuine church—and community of goods was not among them. They were apostolic doctrine, fellowship (especially alms), celebration of the Lord's Supper and prayer. Foremost among these in Calvin's view was apostolic teaching, and in his description of p. 242 the way the believers 'willingly embraced the word of the apostles' one observes not an immediate sense of commonality but rather rueful distance from the early church model:

> This example ought to cause us no little shame. For whereas there was a great multitude converted to Christ through one sermon, a hundred sermons can barely move a few of us; and whereas Luke says that they continued steadfast, scarcely one in ten shows even a moderate desire to advance in the faith; indeed the majority soon come to loathe our doctrine.

Calvin did desire some guidance from the 'striking example of love' manifested here: 'Luke records it so that we may learn that we are to relieve the poverty of our brethren *out of our abundance*'. Calvin was careful to add that the object of the sale of property was 'relieving immediate necessity' and that 'community of goods' was only partial and did not do away with private property among the believers in Jerusalem. The language 'all things in common' must not be understood literally but is only a manner of speaking—as in Pythagoras' words, 'All things are common among friends'. The motivation for Calvin's clarity on this point is clear: 'A sound exposition of this passage is necessary, on account of fanatical spirits who devise a koinonia of goods whereby all civil order is overturned'.

THE CHURCH AND THE CIVIL ORDER

Calvin's comment points to another set of assumptions which informed his views on economic matters and his reading of biblical texts on money and property, assumptions about the proper-relationship between the church and the civil order. A very different set of assumptions on this subject was operative in the Hutterite interpretation of these texts.

The basic outlook of the Hutterites on the relation between church and civil order was radically dualistic. In the works of virtually every Hutterite writer of this period, emphasis on separation of the church from the world is strong. Claus Felbinger testified that 'complete oneness [*Einigkeit*], separation from the world, and fellowship [*Gemeinschaft*], is only to be found in the perfect kingdom of Christ, for one sees how Christ separates all those whom He has ordained for life'. Likewise, Hutter wrote: 'We have separated ourselves from the *Gemeinschaft* of the world and their abominable life and have gone out from them.... Therefore the world hates us, and has persecuted us. This separation they saw was not merely spiritual or psychological; it was to be outwardly, visibly, concretely

manifest, absolute: ' "What p. 243 concord hath Christ with Belial?" In the same way … the believer hath no part with the unbeliever'.

Calvin's work, on the other hand, manifests a conviction that because God's providence encompasses the whole of human society the church has an important social function. The Hutterites identified redemption in Christ with his creation of a pure, unblemished, separated church. For Calvin, redemption meant not separating Church and society but 'bringing [all things] into proper order'. As Christ is the 'perfect pattern of order', so 'he overcomes … social confusion and disorder'. In this vision of harmonious existence the political order for Calvin was relative and provisional but 'not without relation to God's order'; it ought to approximate the order of God. Along with the church and the sacraments, the civil government ranks as one of the three external helps to faith in Christ. Magistrates' duties include protecting and vindicating 'public innocence, modesty, decency, and tranquillity'; the function of civil government 'is no less than that of bread, water, sun, and air'. But, above all, it exercises duties in relation to the church: to government's protection and care the condition of the church is entrusted. It ought to aim 'to prevent … true religion … from being openly … violated and defiled with impunity'.

Against Anabaptists (including the Hutterites), who held that 'it does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate'. Calvin wrote that because government is ordained by God to preserve order and protect the church, 'civil authority is a … holy and lawful [calling] before God, … the most sacred and by far the most honourable of all callings in the whole life of mortal men'. Unlike the Hutterites, who understood Jesus' words about the sword as implying a prohibition on Christian exercise of civil office, Calvin maintained that, in continuity with Old Testament kingship, 'the Lord has … testified that the office of magistrate is … acceptable to him'; indeed he 'sets out its dignity with the most honourable titles'. Therefore, magistrates 'are occupied not with profane affairs or those alien to a servant of God but with a most holy office, since they are … God's deputies'.

The biblical texts on money and property, read from the point of view of Calvin's vision of society-wide harmony or from the perspective of Hutterite dualism, issue in drastically different positions on economics. Hutterite dualism, combined with an initial experience of pooling resources to meet immediate need, developed into a full-blown theology of radical communism. The separated people of God could not conceive of community in higher, spiritual things when people were unwilling to share totally in lesser, material things: 'The p. 244 communion of saints … must show itself not only in spiritual but also in temporal things … that there may be equality'. The Chronicle echoes Riedemann's words: 'It is a principal article of Christian faith to confess a holy Christian church and a community of saints, which is not a half but a whole community, both in spiritual and temporal goods and gifts'. The Hutterites radicalized even early Christian communism, instituting a communism not only of distribution but of production as well.

Calvin's convictions about God's concern for total social order coincide with his reading of biblical texts on economic matters as supportive of moderate (at least relative to the Hutterites') economics, practicable by a whole society and not just by those empowered by God's Spirit. Thus, people are enjoined to avoid temptations 'from the right or from the left. From the right are … riches, Power, honours … so that … drunk with such sweetness, men forget their God. From the left are … poverty, disgrace … [so that] they become despondent' and 'estranged from God'. Extremes are to be avoided, moderation practiced. At almost every point where a text could be read as critical of private property, Calvin insisted that God had not in fact condemned private ownership. On the contrary, God is concerned for the preservation of human society, and for that preservation

> it is necessary … that each should possess what is his own; that some should acquire property by purchase, that to others it should come by hereditary right, to others by the

> title of presentation, that each should increase his means in proportion to his diligence, or bodily strength, or other qualifications. In fine, political government requires that each should enjoy what belongs to him.

Within this economy, people are to exercise their callings responsibly, be grateful to God for all good things that come to them, practice stewardship and display generosity (rather than avarice and prodigality). Far from advocating egalitarianism, Calvin believed that God willed economic inequality (within limits) to provide occasions for the exercise of charity.

While the Hutterites relegated trade to their list of forbidden professions, in the belief that 'as a nail sticketh fast between door and hinge; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling', Calvin viewed commerce as 'necessary for the realization of the harmonious social order which God has prescribed'. Economic relations can reflect human perversity, but they ought to be organized to mirror God's desire for the restoration of harmony and order in society.

In sum, Calvin's all-encompassing social vision, coupled with his p. 245 convictions about moderation and the basic harmony between the universal moral law of the Decalogue and the teachings of Jesus, enabled him to lay out an economic model for an entire society, believers and unbelievers alike. The Hutterites, stressing the radicality of Jesus' words on money and property, constructed an economic model for a radical minority, a separate society whose interaction with unbelievers was limited to mission work and contacts necessary to maintain community life. Certainly both Calvin and the Hutterites grounded their understandings of the relationship between the church and the wider social order in Scripture. It is also evident that their convictions about church and society reacted on their readings of the texts we have examined—in Calvin's case moderating and extending them into an economic ethic for a whole society, in the Hutterites' case further radicalizing them to support a complete communism of production and consumption practised only by the community of saints.

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Good News For The Poor

Elsa Tamez

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This is a theological analysis of poverty from a Latin American Christian—though referring to all the important passages in the Bible on the subject, the article however bases its analysis on rather an unlikely passage—Luke 2:10, 'I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people'. The direct application of the passage to the Latin American economical situation makes absorbing reading.
Editor