Reforming Political Reformation:

The challenges of Christian political responsibility: affirming "normativity in its own sphere" with a hopeful socio-economic legislative policy.

The *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* Articles of Bob Goudzwaard from 1959-1979.

with footnoted critical commentary

Edited with Commentary: Bruce C Wearne PhD

Ballarat August 2026

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*The translated articles of this collection are from journals published 1959 and 1979 by the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij - **Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde** and **Nederlandsche Gedachten**. They were obtained from the* on-line repository of Dutch political party documents *at the University of Groningen. Thanks for the help provided by that repository is hereby noted. The Preface and in the various pieces of commentary found in Footnotes designated "BCW Note" remain the responsibility of the compiler and translator of this collection. Readers are welcome to make use of this important collection and are advised that while every effort has been made to give a true sense of the original, the translations remain provisional. Corrections and suggestions are welcome. It is a requirement of use that any fragmentary use of text or commentary must be accompanied proper referencing. The Preface and Commentary of the editor and translator can be quoted so long as proper credit is given. Free use of this material by quoting translated text or commentary should be accompanied by accurate reference to its original Dutch publication with journal details, author and this commentator ascribed due respect. For more than fragmentary use requests should be directed to the compiler bcwearne@gmail.com. BCW 5.8.26*

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Preface:
Bob Goudzwaard Writes for *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*

This collection contains English translations of Bob Goudzwaard's contributions to *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde (ARS)* from 1959 to 1979. These are articles that help us appreciate the young scholar's efforts to encourage a reinvigoration of Christian political thinking within the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (ARP)*.

They provide us with wide-ranging discussions that help us identify his emerging approach to public policy. They can also help us deepen our appreciation of Bob's contribution to the science of economics, by learning about the public-policy background to his formulation of a "caring economics of sufficiency". These certainly help us track his response to a shifting social and cultural environment, with changes that were also evident in the the *ARP* came to view its contribution.

These articles can help us chart an important dimension of his maturation as he became a leading Christian "public intellectual". They may help us discern his answer to the question: How should economic analysis make its contribution to public policy and political responsibility?

By working through these articles, we become aware of Bob's view of his own contribution to the political party that also say itself in reforming itself. These articles give us a sense of how Goudzwaard developed an understanding of public-justice, of the normative pathway by which the ARP had to find its contribution to Dutch political life as a prominent political party.

Three other documents should be included in an assessment of Bob Goudzwaard's contribution to the ARP and the task of forming a Christian political option. His extensive contribution "Economische Politiek" on ARP's Article 17 is found in the 1964 publication **Anti Revolutionair Bestek**.[1] His 1969 ARP handbook was titled **Grote Taak voor Kleine Mensen**.[2] **Niet bij brood alleen**[3] provided a basis for

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1 "Economische Politiek" **Anti Revolutionair Bestek: toelichting op het beginsel- en algemeen staatkundig program van de anti-revolutionaire partij,** woord vooraf van Dr. W. P. Berghuis. N.V. Uitgeversmaatschappij de Graafschap - Aalten 1964, pp. 248-315. An extensive exposition of the party's Christian outlook and policies by reference to Article 17 of the ARP's statement of principles. ("Economic Policy". Anti-Revolutionary Blueprint: Exposition of the statement of principles and program of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, foreword by Dr. W. P. Berghuis - n.b. the term "Blueprint" in the title of the ARP book is found in **Capitalism and Progress** 1979 pp.187-189 where Goudzwaard suggests the term can aid misunderstanding about the normative path to be followed by a Christian "diagnosis" and search for "disclosure".

2 **Grote Taak voor Kleine Mensen** was published by the party to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the ARP. It was subsequently translated by Herman Praamsma and published in 1972 as **A Christian Political Option**, Wedge Publishing Foundation, Toronto.

3 A translation of **Not by Bread Alone** by Perry Recker can be found at AoLR.

Christian democratic (ecumenical) parliamentary co-operation from 1977-1981 prior ro the formal launch of the Christen Democratische Appel.

The ARP had been set up to contribute as a Christian democratic political party, committed to demonstrating in its policies the political pathway that was opened up to it from the Bible. That is crucial for understanding the political discourse that is integral to Bob's articles. For this reason I have included some other documents from 1963 and 1964 (from other publications: *Patrimonium* and *Nederlandse Gedachten*) that also help us understand how the ARP saw its task in relation to the Bible. There was a crucial debate going on in which Bob explained why he was affirming the following statement: "The Bible does not give directions but direction."

After a brief explanation of how this collection has been assembled, I will look at each of these articles, one by one, to view them in terms within the context of the editorial aim to "promote the study of anti-revolutionary principles." *What were the major public policy issues* when Bob penned these articles and how were these principles to be given form in concrete policy?[4]

The Method and Approach to these Translations:

The "heavy lifting" for this work was not the initial translation. Dutch language documents had to be scanned to provide text that could be put in word-processing format. The feeding of this text into on-line translation robots (Google and DeepL) provided data that had to be checked to correct where the scan misread original copy. The results of robotic translation had to be grammatically smoothed to give a readable English result. And all the while, with my "pidgin Dutch", noting how the resultant text seemed to be consistent with what I knew of Bob's political and economic outlook. I had gained this from his many translated articles and books in English.[5] And I gained help from others who knew Dutch language.

Many words had to appear with *italics*. Bob's published articles in Dutch regularly resorted to italics for emphasis. I added footnotes to clarify and occasionally give the original Dutch wording. I sometimes checked my resultant paragraph with what could be rendered from an alternative translation robot.

That work on these *ARS* articles may seem complete, but I do not rule out further

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4 Digitized versions of *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*, from its founding in 1925 to 1979 are available at the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties

5 I have produced an on-line annotated bibliography of Bob's English-language work, **Cultivating Care within a Vulnerable Economy** 2008. https://tukampendatastore.blob.core.windows.net/neocalvinism/allofliferedeemed/Goudzwaard/BGBibliogJune2008.pdf

editorial work and critical commentary. I am hopeful other English-speaking economists, Christian and others, also Dutch scholars, will be able, in time, to read and digest this material. Corrections will be gladly received.

Readers will note commentary added via my footnotes to the text (designated BCW Note:) alongside footnotes from the original Goudzwaard article (**BG Ftn**.)

This *ARS* collection as part of my effort to better understand Bob's contributions to the *ARP,* is then exploring what is "background" to his economic theory and public-policy formulations and perspective developed in his major publications.[6]

Reading the content of these collected articles has taught me much about the academic discourse that, to this day, characterises the discipline of economics. It has given me a glimpse of the public policy debate within the *ARP* over the two decades in which Bob wrote for the party's journal (1959-1979). 1980 saw the founding of the *Christen-Democratisch Appél* - formed by the merger of the 3 major Christian political parties of the Dutch Parliament. It might be said that Goudzwaard functioned as mid-wife for the CDA.[7]

Working with these documents, I have detected Goudzwaard's career-long emphasis to infuse a fresh "Christian political option" not only into the warp and woof of Dutch politics, but also into the lives of Christian people at home and abroad. As a university student, he became immersed in the specialised scientific study of economics. From the outset, he seems to have done so with a desire to learn how the investigation of economic stewardship must also take into account ***all*** dimensions of our human responsibility for public justice. There is a strong tendency in his writings to seek to overcome the disciplinary isolation of economics from the scientific insights of other disciplines. Bob's mature focus also points beyond the Netherlands and, even in these early writings, we can sense his support for the nurture of Christian political and economic stewardship world-wide.

My footnotes will show my own efforts to "think along with Goudzwaard". This is shown by editorial notes by which I try to clarify or contextualise what may need clarification about his contribution. Such comments may be historical, political or social. They might also refer to the Christian context in which he laboured.

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6 There are two other collections I have worked on. One titled "Slow Reading" is an exegesis of the various prefaces written for his "diagnosis of Western society" **Capitalism and Progress.** The other is "A Collection of Translations of Bob Goudzwaard's Articles for *Economisch-Statistische Berichten* 1963-1968, 1980,1999. His articles that were published in the magazine *Beweging* should also be translated and collected together.

7 See https://npo.nl/start/afspelen/bob-goudzwaard_2 "The Interrogation" Annemieke Schrijver interviews Bob Goudzwaard, Jan 15, 2012

The phrase "thinking along with" comes from an article "Thinking along with Mekkes" written by Goudzwaard's colleague, Sander Griffioen.[8] In that article Griffioen discusses the critical orientation of Goudzwaard's mentor Johan Mekkes[9] who encouraged a scholarly technique of "critical solidarity" with the theorising of fellow thinkers. This is an important aspect of his approach, his method, that helps us understand the "critical solidarity" with those with whom he disagreed, that is so evident in Goudzwaard's academic contributions. It is not just a viewpoint to guide the careful analytical critique of a philosophical or theoretical opponent. It is evident from these articles that Goudzwaard believed that "critical solidarity" as a dimension of a "Christian political option", should be part of a Christian citizen's contribution and it should not be left to parliamentarians and those in public office. It should become evident in the critique of the public policies put forward by political opponents. It is a crucial dimension of Goudzwaard's approach that is evident in his ARS contributions as much as in his other writings in economics and public policy.

Articles Itemised

I will now proceed to the next task of this Preface: a brief description of the 19 ARS articles and a few others, numbered according to the list given above.

1. *"Economic policy and the business-cycle"*

Bob had recently been appointed as a public policy researcher for the *Dr Abraham Kuyper Stichting*. With this initial 1959 contribution, we get a sense of how he, a graduate from the Rotterdam School of Economics, understood his educative role within the party. Party leaders had decided that competent economic analysis was needed by the party membership. And so an analysis of the so-called "business cycle" was produced because it had such an important impact upon the way the party formed its economic policy, and contributed to legislation by parliamentary debate. Considerable attention is given in these essays to how legislation needs to take note of the statistics that identify trends of both inflation and employment/unemployment. This then is his initial effort to throw light upon the resultant legislation in economic, financial, industrial and business concerns.[10]

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8 Sander Griffioen "Thinking along with Mekkes" *Philosophia Reformata* 82 (2017) 26-42

9 Johan P. A. Mekkes (1898-1987) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Mekkes and https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/blnp/#source=6&page=187&view=imagePane

10 A measure of the respect his work was given can be seen in the paper he co-authored with PM Jelle Zijlstra for a European Community assessment. **Economische politiek en concurrentieproblematiek in de EEG en de lidstaten** (Economic Policy and Competition Problems in the EC and Member States), Serie Concurrentie, Brussel 1966.

2. *"Calvin's ethics of socio-economic life"*

Goudzwaard's second contribution, from 1960, is important from many angles. Those trained in the social sciences will note how this piece contributes to the academic reception of the debate about Calvin, Calvinism and the rise of capitalism. This debate, arises from the hypothesis of Max Weber (1864-1920) about economic history. Weber knew about Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper and the anti-revolutionary movement but his famous thesis *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1904-5) and subsequent writings on the sociology of religion gave little if any attention to the 19th century Calvinistic revival. He framed his analysis of the *Protestant Ethik* by reference to a mid-17th century Presbyterian and Puritan theological outlook. Calvinism for Weber is a world-view that perpetually seeks to revive a past rigour centred on the doctrine of predestination. Weber's thesis is not only about the "fate" of Calvinism but also about the way Calvinism prepared the way for the emergence of a consumeristic modernity. It is an hypothesis that has dominated the disciplines of economics and sociology over the 20th century. And it has to have had a significant 'trickle-down' impact upon how a Calvinistic anti-revolutionary political party (i.e. the *ARP*) understood its own historical relationship to capitalism and free-market economics. Weber and the scholarship that follows in his line may have paid little attention to 19th century Calvinism, not even to Kuyper's Stone *Lectures* from Princeton University of 1898. But Bob's essay provides a critical view of the underlying methodological assumptions of Weber's thesis, that Capitalism is deeply indebted to Calvinism's this-worldly ethic and spirituality. But he does so by laying the ground for a critical review of his own political party's accommodation to capitalist economics and its view of business. That accommodation had been regularly justified by appeals to Calvinism's relationship to capitalism's free market ideology; and in the 1960s Max Weber's thesis would be part of any Christian justification for such an economic. The essay helpfully points readers to ongoing debates about the historical connections between religious belief and economic development.

Goudzwaard's "theoretical momentum" can be identified in these earliest *ARS* essays. His grounding in reformational philosophy, that began with a student club involvement while an undergraduate and encouragement from Mekkes, meant he would seek ways to challenge views that presume economic life to be religiously "neutral". It is not only political life that is not neutral in relation to economic life; his task was emerging to show that economic life is normatively constrained and hence

not neutral in *any* religious sense. Goudzwaard's "political economy" was developed with deep conviction. He needed to deepen his own understanding of how economic stewardship comes to expression in public life. We can infer that his intellectual development occurred with concurrent appreciation for how the *ARP itself needed to reform(!) its understanding of economic stewardship and public life*.

The essays show that the young graduate had been at work seeking, in an *empirical scientific* way, to explain how economics is never separate from religious "values".[11] Readers should evaluate this significant essay about a foundational doctrine of 20th century social science for themselves.

3. *"Is the balanced budget requirement outdated?" Q&A*

As a public-policy researcher for the *Dr Abraham Kuyper Stichting,* Bob was expected to contribute to the education of party members and *ARS* subscribers. Here we read the first of his two contributions to a column *"Vraag en Antwoord"*.[12] Vital political questions are raised within the life of the party and presumably from members seeking clarification of Christian "anti-revolutionary principles." Here, as the graduate in economics, he explains the history of the budgetting overseen by the Parliament and thus answered the question, "Is the balanced budget requirement outdated?" The *ARP,* through its leader Jelle Zijlstra (1918-2001), had made a deep impression upon the internal economy of the State. Its ongoing management involved strict fiscal discipline and an approach to planning that carefully anticipates fluctuations of business cycles. Any extremes in these fluctuations were ameliorated with astute legislative intervention. This had been outlined in Goudzwaard's second contribution, as listed above.

4. *"A Priority List for Parliament"*

This is the first of two contributions for 1961. The public-policy researcher has been at work in an extended essay. He explains how the elected members arrange the Parliament's legislative agenda. In doing so, they also have to reckon with the legislative agendas of their political opponents for policies that have been outlined to their electors. Legislation emerges from a process of negotiation. The essay identifies how the Cabinet of the governing coalition is constrained as it goes about its work. *ARP* MPs not only need to remain aware of their own electoral mandate from their voters, but need to stay alert to the electoral promises that constrain their political

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11 BCW Note: In his writing Bob, following the influence of his mentor Mekkes, and thus indirectly of Dooyeweerd, usually avoids equating "religious commitment" to "values".

12 Trans: Question and Answer

opponents. And so the wider membership of the *ARP* have to be helped to understand and interpret the important legislative decisions for the country that result from the great complexity of issues needing attention. The parties of the governing coalition form legislation, as best they can, in line with their respective electoral promises. But such promises and such legislation has been made in a changing social and political context. Mutual compromises seek to deal with the continual changes in economic life that require wisdom and foresight.

5. *"Socialistic Idealism and Opportunism"*

Goudzwaard's second 1961 contribution aims to assist members develop a critical understanding of the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid - PvdA*). The PvdA had often been a coalition partner with the *ARP*. The *PvdA* had developed its view of socialism to accommodate parliamentary democracy. A critical evaluation of the principles undergirding its socialistic political outlook is therefore needed by the PvdA's ARP opponents.

A critical evaluation of the *PvdA*'s contribution to legislation requires a sympathetic appreciation of how *PvdA* MPs are constrained by the policies and commitment of their party and their electoral promises to voters.

6. *Review of ARJOS booklet*

Of Goudzwaard's four contributions to *ARS* in 1962, the first is a brief review of a brochure published by the *Anti-revolutionaire Jongeren Studieclubs* (*ARJOS*), youth arm of the ARP. The brochure is written by a political science student enrolled in a PhD programme at the Vrije Universiteit. It outlines a view of the future alignment of Dutch political parties. In Goudzwaard's review, he signals his understanding of *theoretical* critique. He confines his discussion to pinpoint the author's dogmatic claim to be simply presenting "the facts", laying aside his own political preferences. Goudzwaard was also thinking about the members of *ARJOS*. He explains the dogmatism implicit in such a "non-dogmatic" scientific and positivist approach. Political science is not somehow neutral with respect to political outlook.

This review was written in 1962, and the author of the booklet received his Vrije Universiteit (VU) doctorate in 1964 for a thesis entitled "Protestantism and Progressiveness". One wonders how the author's "fact-oriented" approach to political science was evaluated by the examiners of a university that was developing a Christian social philosophy. Not only does the title of Hoogerwerf's thesis remind us of Weber's "protestant ethic" hypothesis; we note the similarity with Goudzwaard's later *magnum opus* (Capitalism and Progress).

7, 8 & 9 *"Economic policy as a Politics of Principle"*

The second 1962 contribution is a discussion in three parts. Bob discusses how Christian thinking about politics proposes to deal with a common notion found in political discourse, particularly among members of the *ARP*. This is the supposed wall of separation between practice and principle. Goudzwaard confronts the view that there is a chasm between practice and principle that needs to be bridged.

His critique will be elaborated further in his later writings.

It is related to his exposé of the method that seeks so-called "derived principles" from the Bible.[13]

Goudzwaard's 3-part series seeks to provide a framework for charting the major contours of a Christian political-economy. Human responsibility involves remaining true to the stewardship of public justice within God's Kingdom. The series concludes with affirming that there is no need for building a bridge to overcome the chasm.

Evidently, Goudzwaard is also addressing the supposed "chasm" he had found among party members after taking up his post as public policy researcher for the *Dr. Abraham Kuyper Stichting*.

10. "How do we respond to "Answer to this Time"?

What follows next, from 1963 and 1964, is Goudzwaard's extended critical analysis of *Patrimonium*'s handbook.[14] The handbook consists of an attempt to formulate a basic orientation to political issues. It claims to be based on the Bible. This extensive handbook is titled ***Answer to this Time.***

Bob begins his response with subtly taking the handbook's title into the title of his article: "How do we give our Answer to this Time?" We have included here, in our collection, an essay entitled "Clarity and Unanimity" by a regular contributor to *ARS,* M W Schakel published in *Patrimonium*, challenging Bob to develop his view of how the Bible as the Word of God should be read in relation to political life.

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13 We have already referred in the Preface to Bob's re-statement of the view of Evan Runner: "The Bible does not give directions but direction". See also Bob Goudzwaard **A Christian Political Option** Wedge, Toronto 1972 chapter V, "The Unique Radicality of the Gospel" pp.25-30 especially the discussion pp.26-7 on 'Derived Principles'. A footnote on p.27, relies upon a statement by Herman Dooyeweerd **Roots of Western Culture** 2003, p.60 *Those who think they can derive truly scriptural principles for political policy formation solely from explicit Bible texts, have a very mistaken notion of the nature of Scripture. They see only the letter, for getting that the Word of God is spirit and power which must penetrate our whole attitude of life and thought. God's Word-revelation puts people to work. It claims the whole of our being; where death and spiritual complacency once held sway in us, it wants to conceive new life. Spiritually lethargic people would rather have the ripe fruits of God's revelation fall into their laps, but Jesus Christ tells us that wherever the seed of God's Word falls on good soil, we ourselves must bear fruit.*

14 In the list of Goudzwaard's articles, I bunch those concerned with the *Patrimonium* handbook (10, 11 and 12) together with replies by Schakel and JJRippen.

11. "Bible and Politics" was published in *ARS* 1964 following J J Rippen's "**Answer to this Time** and Drs Goudzwaard".

12 "Postscript" is Goudzwaard's 1964 conclusion, with J.J.Rippen's "A Last Word".

Although I have not been able to peruse the original *Patrimonium* Study Manual, there is enough in this exchange to give us Goudzwaard's understanding of his approach to the Bible. Rather than giving *directions* to apply to "issues", Goudzwaard says that the Bible gives reliable *direction* for political life and public-policy formulation. He dissents from the approach suggested by the manual, in which clearcut *a priori* directions are assumed to be given with the text of Holy Scripture.

13. Mining Natural Gas Question & Answer

A two-page 1964 contribution follows for the *Q&A* column on the way in which natural gas is to be developed under legislation within the Dutch polity.

14. "Epilogue on the Election"

Goudzwaard's 1967 contribution is an analysis of the election after which he took his seat in the Dutch House of Representatives ("Tweede Kamer"). For 1965-1967, as part of his *AKS work,* he served as researcher for the *ARP* parliamentary "fractie". This article discusses recent electoral trends. It is an outline of Goudzwaard's view of how Dutch parliamentary parties were facing their electoral challenges.

In 1967 Goudzwaard had taken his seat in the Parliament. This article provides his view of *ARP* prospects. He is aware of *ARP* evaluation of its ongoing contribution. Here these prospects are described alongside the prospects of other parties.

Was there a blurring of the lines of demarcation between the former "pillars" of Dutch society? Did not a new electoral situation face Roman Catholic (*KVP*), Protestant (*ARP* and *CHU*), Socialist (*PvdA*) and Liberal (*VVD*) parties? As an *ARP* parliamentary member, Goudzwaard took part in the "Group of Eighteen". This grouping of MPs from Christian parties explored the possibilities for their future Christian parliamentary contribution.[15] The discussion gained momentum throughout the 1970s to finally see the *Christen Democratisch Appèl* (*CDA*) formed in 1981.

15. ***Book Review - PhD of Dr. Bas de Gaay Fortman***

Goudzwaard's review of Dr. Bas de Gaay Fortman's *Theory of Competition Policy* appeared in 1968. It was the publication of a Vrije universiteit PhD dissertation; the author was an *ARP* member.

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15 BCW Note: This is part of Goudzwaard's recognition that he was part of an initiative that was becoming deeply ecumenical.

16. ***"Environmental Manifesto" and Symposium***

The 1971 *ARP* "Environmental Manifesto" was jointly authored with his colleague, Dr H Rebel, the then public policy researcher at the *Dr A. Kuyper Stichting*. The *ARS* features the symposium, with Goudzwaard's participation, convened to consider the ARP's environmental policy.

17. ***Book Review "Income Formation and Distribution"***

This 1971 essay briefly reviews a book co-authored by two MPs, one from the *ARP,* the other from the *PvdA*. The topic is income formation and distribution.

18. ***"Christian politics and the principle of sphere sovereignty"***

Two articles from the late 1970s are noteworthy. Goudzwaard's 1977 article attempts to correct misunderstandings of the Kuyperian principle of "sphere sovereignty". He focuses upon the way the term is used as a shibboleth to endorse the conservative liberal dogma that Government should stay out of business. The question, says Goudzwaard, (repeating what he had affirmed previously) is not *whether* Government should be involved in economic matters, business and commerce, but *how* it is to fulfil its vocation of maintaining and ensuring public justice for all. It cannot avoid dealing with economic life, with commerce, business, labour and industry as a whole.

19. ***"Starting Points for Political Action"***

Goudzwaard's 1979 contribution was written for the centennial celebrations of the *ARP*. He provides a suggestive reframing of Kuyper's "sphere sovereignty" doctrine. His modification of the terminology would read "normativity in its own sphere". This then enhances clarity, while reckoning with the normative, vocational task. This was also published in a new "magazine format". The *ARS* no longer appear in a form resembling an academic journal. Along with the 1977, this is a fitting conclusion to Goudzwaard's *ARS* contributions as it anticipated the merger to form the *CDA*.

Educating the Readers of *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*:

Bob Goudzwaard's *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* contributions provoke us to ask: *"**Who** did he have in mind when he penned these articles?"* Of course, he and the editor had *ARS* readers in mind when he put pen to paper, as he then typed it up, had it proof read, all before the editor sent the finished article to the printer. All this activity presupposed those who would read the *ARS* articles. The writing and editing of journal articles is a taxing exercise. By examining the journal's presentation, we can see the rigour by which *ARS* editorial standards were applied. Care has been taken to ensure effective presentation of articles for readers.

As we read Goudzwaard's *ARS* articles, we keep in mind the editorial aims of this remarkable journal. For whom was *ARS* published? It first appeared in 1924-5. It took its name from the famous volume of the party's founder and leader, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).[16] Its initial format had all the characteristics of a scholarly journal. With Bob's final contribution in 1979 we note change in *ARS* format. By then articles are it presented in "serious magazine" style. So, we can presume that Goudzwaard penned the bulk of his contributions when the journal was itself *in transit* in its "academic journal" appearance to the "serious magazine" style of its latter years.[17]

So, in seeking to clarify for ourselves *who* the *ARS* editor and Goudzwaard had in mind as he penned his articles, we note the the journal's sub-title: *monthly organ of the dr. abraham kuyper foundation to promote the study of anti-revolutionary principles*. This journal was therefore set up to assist those who would *study and learn* "anti-revolutionary principles." It was envisaged as an organ of anti-revolutionary education. It's function within the life of the party was to educate members and voters, and to be a means of informing fellow citizens of what it was that the *ARP* was keen to promote. It would assist the paid-up members of the party, as well as those who attended local chapters across the country to discuss party policy. It was an organ of a "grass-roots" Christian political movement. It was established to assist those taking their seats in parliament and in various positions of public responsibility at national, regional and local levels. It was also for those who voted for these office-bearers. As much as it was for the political education of members, it's Tables of Contents over this half century, reveal how it functioned as as a means of political exchange within the party. It's articles not only discuss the content of policies, but how policies should be developed and applied to legislation. It had local government and international relations in its sights as well.

In 1959 Bob Goudzwaard began his work as public-policy researcher for the *Dr. Abraham Kuyper Stichting*. The first of his contributions is from that year. This facility had been established in 1922. Its task was to serve the party by undertaking research and public-policy investigation. Thus the readers would include those elected to the Dutch parliament, those serving in various public offices across the Netherlands, and party members generally. The *Stichting* would assist the party by having its policies and programmes explained to a wider public. And, of course, those

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16 Abraham Kuyper Antirevolutionaire staatkunde : met nadere toelichting op Ons program 1917

17 BCW Note: The full significance of this change cannot be explored here. It has to do with the development of mass media, of changes in popular culture and publishing, in the way political parties disseminate the insights of the "thinktanks".

interested in *studying* anti-revolutionary principles were not only *ARP* members.

This gives some indication of the social and cultural context in which Goudzwaard penned his contributions to the *ARS*. The readers were to be educated in the party's principles, but not necessarily always in articles of a "scholarly" nature. We therefore gain a glimpse of *who* he had in mind as he penned his essays. As the journal of the *Dr. Abraham Kuyper Stichting*,[18] it had been published on a regular monthly basis since 1924-5 (in abeyance during the Nazi occupation from 1943 until Liberation Day, May 5, 1945),[19] with publication resuming in 1947. After its 1980 edition it would cease publication when the *ARP* merged with other Christian parties to form the *Christen Democratische Appel* (*CDA*).

The *ARS* was a major organ of the *Dr. Abraham Kuyper Stichting*. It was the party's means of education for the *ARP* members across the country. The coverage of policies was broad, including questions about the responsibility for colonies and then also about decolonisation. It was important for informing members how the party viewed the Dutch contribution on a European and inter-national stage. Goudzwaard's review article of 1962 gives us a brief glimpse of how the party related to the study of anti-revolutionary principles in the *ARP* young people's study clubs. ARJOS could publish booklets from its own resources.

The 19 contributions of "Goudzwaard the writer" are therefore an embedded part of the editorial effort to marshall contributions in the journal's pages that could assist in fulfilling the journal's mandated purpose. But, from these varied contributions and other related articles that exist alongside them, we begin to develop a sense of how the journal's purpose was undergoing change as the political landscape changed.

Kuyper had died in 1920. In 1922, the immediate "post-Kuyper" years, the party launched the journal for helping members see themselves historically. The *ARP*

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18 BCW Note: Established in 1922, the first edition of the *ARS* was from 1924-5.
AI generated accounts of both the *Dr Abraham Kuyper Stichting* and the Wikipedia account of the *ARP* do not show the impact of serious social and cultural study in the line of Kuyper's *reformational* contribution but instead reproduce views of conservative English-speaking "Calvinists" who see the development in terms of Kuyper's "theology" and thus tend to misunderstand the *ARP* contribution let alone the reforming character of Kuyper's political contribution. It is also necessary to point out that the *Stichting* is *not* the "Kuyper Foundation" - "promoting the renaissance of Christian culture" that can be found at www.kuyper.org.

19 BCW Note: From 1927 until 1940 a parallel journal of a distinct scholarly character appeared, *AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde - Driemaandelijks Orgaan*. Both then ceased publication. The editorial of Vol.17, 1947 written by J. Schouten, "Ter Inleiding" reads: *The Dr. Kuyperstichting can once again publish the monthly edition of the journal "Anti-Revolutionnaire Staatkunde". This fact is greeted with joy. The first issue of this journal was published in October 1924. Kok of Kampen acted as publisher, always taking excellent care of the publication. A few months after the Germans occupied our country, they stripped the Kuyperstichting of its staff, which ultimately also forced the publication of "Anti-Revolutionnaire Staatkunde" to cease. Had this circumstance not arisen, the Germans would undoubtedly have soon prevented the further publication of our journal in other ways.*

members not only needed to understand the distinctiveness of their party in comparison with other parties - reformed, Roman Catholic, liberal and socialist - but they needed guidance to understand how the party was contributing to the historical struggle for Christian statecraft that predated the emergence of Christendom.[20]

1959 is the year our collection of Goudzwaard's contributions begins. Since 1922, there had been a deep economic depression, a second world war, the Nazi occupation, and the subsequent peace followed by the extensive post-war reconstruction. So we look again at Goudzwaard's *ARS* articles to identify the part they were to play.

What follows is a brief chronological account of Goudzwaard's *ARS* contributions that help us appreciate the party's development over the years 1959-1971, along with two systematic pieces that appeared in the late 1970s prior to the party's merger with other Christian parties to form the *CDA*. By considering Goudzwaard's analyses of we glimpse the party's view of itself as it contributed to Dutch political life.

Reading Bob Goudzwaard's Articles in Terms of *ARS* Editorial Aims[21]

- **1.** 1959 **Business Cycles, Taxation and Unemployment**

Policies relating to taxation and unemployment have an impact upon the other. This cannot be avoided. The *ARP*'s parliamentary contribution to legislation on taxation and employment has become known as part of the success of the Government's management of "business cycle" fluctuations. *ARP* PM Jelle Zijlstra's strict financial management, along with the party's commitment to ascribe due respect to both the "captains of industry" and the "national workforce", needed to be clearly explained in relation to both of these national interests. [22]

- **2.** 1960 **Calvin, Calvinism and Capitalism**

The *ARP* is known for its Reformed Christian "world-view" and of "Lectures on Calvinism" by its founder Abraham Kuyper. This article appeared in a context where powerful financial, intellectual and cultural forces were assuming that the *ARP* was "of course" a defender of "free market" capitalism. The article is also a pertinent contribution to social history and economic scholarship.

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20 Herman Dooyeweerd "In den strijd om een christelijke staatkunde; proeve van een fundering der calvinistische levens- en wereldbeschouwing in hare wetsidee" *AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde* 1,(1924-25), 2 (1926), 1(1927). (15 separate articles)

21 BCW Note: I am assuming tha readers will refer back to the list for the item under consideration. By the following headings I give to the 19 contributions, I have tried to suggest something of the article's editorial aim, and hence for those for whom the article is primarily intended.

22 BCW Note: See ftn. 7 above for how this article related to study of the problem by the European Community.

In the modern academy, Calvinism is readily identified as a major contributor to the ethical soil from which Capitalism has flourished. How then are anti-revolutionary citizens and *ARP members* to view the socalled "Weber thesis"?[23] How does the *ARP*'s reformed outlook compare with the Puritanism of the 17th and 18th centuries?[24] Unlike Weber, who effectively construes Calvinism as an earlier form of utilitarian economics[25], Goudzwaard, the 20th century Calvinist, seeks to identify the religious and idolatrous motif of materialistic economics. This was obviously a concern for the *ARS* editors in 1960, when Goudzwaard's essay, "Calvin's Ethics of Socio-Ethical Life" was written. With the pragmatic socialist accommodation to capitalism, the *ARP*, it's potential partner in any Governing coalition, would have to come to its own appreciation of its contribution to the moral foundations of the welfare state economy.

- **3.** 1961 **Setting a Legislative Agenda**

A political party's Election Manifesto may get it public support. But then, when its endorsed candidates are elected by the voters, the parliamentary members have to reckon with the complex task of government and legislation. A new governing coalition will have to iron out their difference in the necessary inter-party negotiations if an effective legislative agenda is to arise.[26] Party members, party voters, as well as all those not directly involved in parliamentary debate and party negotiations, need to be informed about the legislative process. How does a Cabinet set legislative priorities? Political parties need to engage in such education for their members and the general public, if public trust in parliamentary politics is to be maintained.

- **4.** 1961, **Balanced Budgets?**

Part of any political party's task is the political education of its members and answering their questions. The *ARS* Q&A column is found in the journal from the outset. Though the *ARS* maintained a style similar to a "scholarly journal", it was also formed sensitive to its task to providing careful and educative *journalism* for "grass-

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23 Max Weber **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism** (trans Talcott Parsons) 1930.

24 R H Tawney **Religion and the Rise of Capitalism** (1922) 1926.

25 It is notable that Weber relies upon the Westminster Confession of Faith for his "ideal-type" Calvinist and hence the term "end" in the first answer in the Westminster shorter catechism "Man's *chief end* is to glorify God and enjoy him forever?" will easily view Christianity as a life-long arrangement of ensuring means confirm to ends.

26 BCW Note: The *ARP* and the KVP (Catholic People's Party) were regularly in coalition governments with the PvdA (Labour Party).

roots" supporters.[27] As a case in point, members of the party might recall a time when a balanced budget was taken-for-granted, but with recent developments in fiscal management techniques these may seem to suggest that such an "ideal" had become outdated. Here is an early indication of the *Kuyper Stichting* researcher seeking to develop a *normative* view of fiscal management within economic policy as a whole. Past practice may be indicative but it is not the norm for *just* legislative action.

- **5.** 1961 **Understanding Socialism**

The aim of *ARS "to promote the study of anti-revolutionary principles"* could not be maintained if there was not also an "anti-revolutionary" account of the principles of political opponents. And so, the journal's editorial commitment was in recognition of the fact that many of its articles would be of interest to political opponents as much as for *ARP* members and voters. Members also need education about the political outlook of non-*ARP* parties and ideologies. The *ARS* was taking up its leadership role in political education.

The *ARS* editorial assumed that non-*ARP* fellow citizens could also benefit from *"the study of anti-revolutionary principles"*. They might then appreciate *the principles to which they found themselves in political disagreement*. They might also come to appreciate how the *ARP* construed their opponent's political principles and why they were in disagreement at that level, even if on specific legislation they might come to some compromising agreement. Socialism had accommodated the demands of parliamentary democracy, even while that was not part of its founding vision. Goudzwaard explores the pragmatism that is evident on that side of political debate - the socialist populist principle of the "rule of the people" is limited by the *PvdA*'s submission to the rule of law as decided by parliamentary democratic processes. This deserves the respect of *ARP* members and voters.

- **6.** 1962 **Review - Can political science remain neutral?**

Mention has already been made of *ARJOS*, the association of Anti-Revolutionary youth study clubs. The *ARS* editor was evidently concerned to feature a review of the results of political research that would be read by the party's youth, including its university student membership. How should such research be undertaken and is it merely a matter of leaving one's values to one side and simply following the so-called facts to wherever they lead?

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[27] BCW Note: See previous ftn. no. 12. The early development of a "3 monthly organ" seems to suggest that from the outset the party leadership understood that the *ARS* should, as much as possible, be the journal for all members of the party and not just for its "intellectual wing." Nevertheless, there are "academic" interests that also require due respect.

There are questions about the character of Christian political science. How is such research to be developed? Clearly *ARS* is viewed by its editor as a journal for raising such critical questions. And so the articles are not just for the benefit of the party, but for the wider Christian political movement itself. The *ARS* sought to provide material of benefit to younger members of the party, also those in higher education and not just those studying economics and political science.

- **7. 8 & 9** 1962 **Principles for Christian Public-Policy**

From its earliest editions, *ARS* had developed discussion concerning the character of "Christian politics". The *ARS* was also publishing the occasional article that could be called "political philosophy". With each generation, discussion would be needed to explore the meaning of the term "principle" or "starting point" for political involvement. Another way of saying this is that *ARS* saw itself contributing answers to "basic questions". Rather than considering that the task has been completed by previous efforts to give firm assertions of "principle", the *ARS* editorial wanted these "basic questions" to be related to the issues of practical politics. How should the anti-revolutionary principles guide legislation concerned with income distribution?

Goudzwaard offered the *ARP* a rationale to confirm its founding (Kuyperian) vision with Christian principles as a political party committed to a distinctively different way of forming the social order from both liberal-capitalist and socialist.

- **10,**1963**; 11,**1964**; 12,**1964 **The Relation of the Bible to Politics**

The *ARS* existed in a context in which various *Christian* political parties and movements were making their contributions. Due to the turn of the century leadership of Abraham Kuyper, there was a broad array of associations that could claim this "reformational" heritage. *ARP* was one group that could claim an anti-revolutionary political heritage. One of these Christian groups was *Patrimonium* that had published an extensive handbook outlining an approach to contemporary issues. The discussion featured by the *ARS was* about the disagreement concerning the way the Bible relates to political and public life. *ARS* published the contribution of the ARP's *Kuyper Stichting* researcher as well as the responses on behalf of *Patrimonium*.

With Goudzwaard's exchanges with *Patrimonium,* we begin to detect changes in the political landscape. From reading the contributions from 1964 until 1971 it would seem to suggest a recognition of a "pluralism" within the broad Dutch movement of "anti-revolutionary politics". That diversity would also manifest itself internally in the *ARP.* And, as with Goudzwaard's emphasis upon the relation of the Bible to

political life, it is not difficult to see now that a new way was then emerging of configuring a Christian political contribution on the landscape of Dutch politics.

We have added to the collection an exchange between Hendrik Algra, the editor of *Nederlandse Gedachten* with "Bible and Program" and Goudzwaard's own front-page response to the comment. This debate must have been part of ARP life and it is referred to in his 1969 book published by the ARP **Grote Taak voor Kleine Mensen**.[28] (see discussion on 1967 election below).

- **13,** 1964 **Natural Resource Exploitation. Q&A**

This second contribution to the Q&A column, discusses how legislation should balance public interest with commercial enterprise. The Q&A column was an explicit part of the *ARP*'s *effort to* show it was neither socialist nor capitalist.

There is discussion in that 1969/1972 book, where he explicitly refers to the mishandling of Scripture by assuming a Christian political option requires "derived principles." He had given attention to this in his extended critical review of the *Patrimonium* handbook.

In his 1974 contribution "What is normal in social-economic life?" he refers to how he made his own decisive break with this approach:

> *During my time at the Kuyper Foundation, I was busy developing towering structures that were intended to explain, as precisely as it was possible to give, of what could be called normal in state and society. But the strange thing now is, as I look back, all such concern seems but a pedantic worry, and relatively fruitless. Why? Because, if I understand the Bible correctly, all of God's norms for our lives are much more direct, simple and disarming than we will usually refer to them, and as we, in some way or other, try to formulate a plan for the way ahead. God's commandment, His standard, is not as far from us as we tend to think: "No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe." (NRSV Deut 30:14). In the vast majority of cases we know full well what the LORD asks of us; even today in modern society. Also now, for example, in this time, justice must be done to the poor, mercy must prevail in economic relationships. Also now, workers and entrepreneurs must be valued as responsible image bearers of God, consumers must not be toyed with as unwilling and disenfranchised objects, and nature must be handled with good stewardship.*[29]

In 1970 his Doctorate from the University of Rotterdam was conferred, and in 1971 he was appointed Professor at the Vrije Universiteit.

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28 The English translation of this 1969 ARP publication - **A Christian Political Option** 1972 does not explicitly refer to this but it is in the background when Goudzwaard discusses "The Unique Radicality of the Gospel" (chapter V pp.25-30) and specifically when he discusses "derived principles."

29 'Wat is Normaal in het Sociaal-Ekonomische leven?' from H. Algra et.al. Wat is Normaal? Bosch & Keuning N.V. Baarn 1974 pp.20-33 at page 23. There is also a comment in his retirement interview where he notes his indebtedness to Mekkes who "took distance from any overly scholarly elaboration" of the Philosophy of the Law idea. ("By no means have I had a dull life" Interview met Bob Goudzwaard with Sander Griffioen and Herman Noordegraaf in **Bewogen Realisme: Economie, cultuur, oecumene - bij het afscheid van Bob Goudzwaard** Kok, 1999 pp.28-43 at pp.29-30). His critique of the search for "derived principles" has affinity with his explanation of a Christian political option without trying to give an overly scholarly elaboration that would derive public justice from a rigorous "application" of Dooyeweerd's "general theory of modal law spheres." Besides, that book was written for the Christian citizen, not specifically for the student of political science.

• **14,** 1967 **Interpreting an Election Result**

The *ARS* was committed to assist *ARP* members and *ARS* readers interpret political trends that were evident in election results. As well as assessing their own party's standing in the electorate, the article gives a perspective on long-term trends and what they might mean for *their* party's future.

We can appreciate that the members of the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* were concern about how their party would continue on. Would it still be in a *anti-revolutionary* direction? And then the 1967 General Election signalled a significant political re-alignment within the Dutch polity. It shows that the horizon was widening.

Goudzwaard's political reflections in these years were informed by his service as a research officer serving the the *ARP*'s parliamentary caucus (1965-1967). From 1967 to 1971 he would take his seat as an *ARP* member of the House of Representatives.

• **15,** 1968 **Review of De Gaay Fortman PhD dissertation**

It is of interest to note Goudzwaard's 1968 review of de Gaay Fortman's 1966 PhD dissertation from the Vrije Universiteit, "Theory of Competition Policy".[30] The *ARS* editorial assumed that AR readers of the journal should be engaged in reading works that discuss political life.

• **16,** 1971 **Environmental Manifesto**

The *ARS* also featured discussion concerning the environment and climate. Goudzwaard's involvement in the *ARS* symposium coincided with his co-authorship of an *ARP Environmental Manfesto*.

• **17,** 1971 **Review of an ARS/PvdA Publication on Income**

The *ARS* would also publish Goudzwaard's 1971 review of a joint publication by two professors of economics. One was an *ARP* member of the Dutch Senate. The other was director of the *Dr Wiardi Beckman Stichting*, aligned with the PvdA. The work is concerned with legislation related to income, how income is generated and then how it is distributed. It examines the policy that should guide income related legislation.

• **18,** 1977**; 19,** 1979 **late 1970s reformational contributions**

Goudzwaard's final contributions to the *ARS* were from 1977 and 1979. They show the journal still publishing articles that relate to the distinctive character of politics

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30 BCW Note: Bas de Gaay Fortman was a reformed dissenter from the *ARP*'s coalition with the VVD (Liberal Party). In 1970, regretting the Christian democratic/liberal coalition, he left the ARP to join the Political Party of Radicals (PPR), a Christian-radical party set up by former members of the Catholic People's Party (KVP). Bob Goudzwaard's account of the aftermath of leaving the CDA, which included being aligned with his friend de Gaay Fortman is given in "By no means have I had a dull life!" (ftn.24 above. *op cit*. pp.39-40)

inspired by Kuyper's "sphere sovereignty" idea. They are also explanations of the emerging "reformational" view of the relation of the Bible to politics. The *ARS* would cease after its 1980 edition. Goudzwaard had made a significant and distinctive contribution to a remarkable journal that made an important contribution in the struggle for Christian state-craft.[31]

BCW Tuesday, 14 July 2026

[31] Thanks to Dr David Hanson for his proof-reading of earlier drafts. Thanks to some truly valuable comments from Sander Griffioen that help deepen the references to context. Special thanks to my valuable critic Val for corrections and critical suggestions.

1959-AR Staatkunde jrg-29 pp. 264-285

1. ECONOMIC POLICY AND THE BUSINESS CYCLE[1]

Bob GOUDZWAARD econ. drs.

§ 1. **Introduction**

Government interference in economic life is not unique to this century. One could even argue that it is as old as economic life itself, pointing to Joseph, who cultivated agricultural surpluses in ancient Egypt, or around the same time to Hammurabi in the ancient Babylonian empire who subjected business to far-reaching regulations.

[265] Yet, one should not downplay the differences with today's economic policy. To do so would be to lose sight of the fact that such Government intervention was a *rarity* in earlier days, while today it has become a normal phenomenon in everyday life.

This latter point compels us to reflect on what a sound economic policy, one based on a Christian outlook of life, would be. This is all the more urgent now that so many people have apparently taken hold of the opinion that such a question about a Christian outlook, has little to do with considerations of sound economic policy.

This view is undoubtedly partly facilitated by the language, the "jargon", in which most economic discussions are conducted, making such scientific conversations difficult for outsiders to follow. This article involves a specific attempt to extend the circle to include such "outsiders". While the jargon will not be entirely eliminated, any use of it will be accompanied with the necessary clarifications.

We propose to start from the question of economic cycles. After discussing the causes of these cycles, we will then incorporate into our argument the possibilities by which Government intervention may mitigate the problems generated by them.

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1 BCW Note: At this time Goudzwaard, 25, having just completed military service in the Dutch airforce, had begun work as a researcher at the *Dr. A. Kuyper Stichting*, the ARP's public policy research institute. He therefore also writes as an economics educator. The translation on this first page, as well as elsewhere throughout this article, takes liberties to expand the discussion beyond merely a word-by-word translation to ensure Goudzwaard's pedagogical intention is adequately conveyed. This article should also be read for comparison with the 1966 contribution he made with PM Jelle Zijlstra on how economic cycles thus identified were being understood across the European community. Zijlstra, J. en Goudzwaard, B, **Economische politiek en concurrentieproblematiek in de EEG en de lid-staten,** Brussel, 1966. Goudzwaard also mentioned this matter in his interview upon his retirement. See the interview 'Ik heb bepaald geen saai leven gehad' by Sander Griffioen and Herman Noordegraaf (eds) **Bewogen Realisme: Economie, cultuur, oecumene - bij het afscheid van Bob Goudzwaard** Kok, 1999 pp.28-43 at p.34.

It will explained that there are two types of "tension" that give rise to economic cycles - tensions concerned with *spending* and tensions concerned with *remuneration, wages* - and these require different approaches if they are to be combated effectively. Regarding the fight against wage tensions, there will be an opportunity to address the issue of responsibility in business, as well as the difference between guided and freer wage formation.

§ 2. Economic Cycles as a Human Phenomenon

So what exactly is an economic or business cycle movement?[2]

The answer to this question follows from the components of the word for "economic cycle" - *conjunctuur* - which conveys a sense of "co-ordinated movement". The economic cycles can therefore be described as a rhythmic movement in which numerous economic variables (prices, sales of goods, incomes, employment) fluctuate together. Together they will be pushed upwards in an economic expansion and together they also decline with what is known as a depression.

Certainly, the economic cycle should not be seen as something "out of date." Even in our own time, we experience periods of economic growth and prosperity alternating with periods of rising unemployment, with businesses facing cutbacks. In this sense, nothing has changed since the 1930s. Of course, there are also differences from the past: the ups and downs of the economy are now shorter and, fortunately, less severe. But the economic cycle, as such, is still very much alive.

Over the years, a wide variety of theories have been proposed to explain the causes of the cyclical phenomenon. Some link it to the increase and decrease of sunspot activity or even to the periodic cyclones on the planet Venus; others trace the entire economic cycle movement to alternating optimism and pessimism within the business world. To uncover the true causes, however, we must dig a little deeper.

We have already noted that the cyclical movement occurs throughout [266] economic life. Now, economic life is nothing other than the sum total of all human actions in the economic sphere. So the cause of that cyclical movement must therefore lie in these actions themselves. Are these actions always in tune with each other? Is there never any disharmony in evidence?

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[2] BCW Note: Goudzwaard is examining the components of the Dutch term *conjunctuurbeweging* which we have translated as the *movement* of the "economic/business cycle". It refers to the *dynamic* character of economic life and economic policy.

Let us turn our attention to the business sector. There, a certain amount of production is generated, both of consumer goods and investment goods. Consumer goods serve to satisfy *current* needs, investment goods serve to satisfy *future* consumer needs. The people creating this production - whether workers, entrepreneurs or shareholders - are rewarded for their efforts: they receive an income. The total sum of all these incomes is called *the national income*,[3] and the total value of all national production is called *the national product*. National income and national product are equal, because the proceeds of production are entirely distributed among those who are "contributors".

The income earned in this way is spent by households for the purchase of consumer goods. However, not 100% of this income will be spent; a portion will be saved, reserved for *future* consumption. Thus, earned income is divided into a consumption amount and a savings amount.[4]

But it has just been shown that businesses apply a similar division: their production capacity is used either for the production of consumer goods or for the production of what we can call goods of investment.

These two different distributions occur independently of each other. They can therefore very easily work against each other and when they do we encounter a very significant disharmony. It's worth thinking some more about this. Suppose households want to consume 90% of their earned income and save 10%, but that businesses, on the other hand, have allocated only 80% of their productive capacity to the production of consumer goods, because they wish to use 20% for the production of investment goods. What would be the consequence of such a situation?

First, the demand for consumer goods (90% of income) exceeds the supply (which only accounts for 80% of production). This creates tension in the consumer goods market. Part of the demand simply cannot be satisfied. Second, entrepreneurs want to invest more (20%) than consumers have saved (10%).

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3 BCW Note: i.e. in a particular *national* economy. For the purpose of this article, Goudzwaard assumes his readers have experience of "an economic system", a nationally formed economy subject to national laws. By making this note, we anticipate what Goudzwaard will later go on to say about the way "other" formed national economies may have an impact upon the momentum of an economic cycle in its own national economy. This is a critical point and indeed needs to be pointed out not least because of the presistent assumption that economics is the study of the free and frictionless momentum of any one market that needs to be left alone by Government refraining from any "interference" (Dutch: *bemoeiingen*). Readers will note that Goudzwaard has mentioned this *a priori* appreciation of economic dynamics from his initial paragraph. And so what is demanded of a free market in one polity can severely "interfere" with the movement of free markets in other polities. See Warren Pengilley https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/vjtl/vol16/iss4/2/ "Extraterritorial Effects of United States Commercial and Antitrust Legislation: A View from "Down Under"" *Vanderbilt Law Review* (1983) 834-885.

4 BCW Note: Readers will note that Goudzwaard, without saying so explicitly, is assuming that the analysis of the economic cycle - *conjunctuurbeweging* - is an analysis across time challenging any static view of economic life. Economic decisions imply a temporal process of disclosure. Hence the concept of "*future* consumption".

Therefore, households do not transfer enough of their savings to businesses to finance the entrepreneurs' investments.[5] Consequently, tension also arises in the financial market (the capital market)! These tensions arise from the need of entrepreneurs for more capital than savers are offering them.

Both tensions occur simultaneously, mirroring each other. The remarkable thing is that they both stem from excessive demand; consumers demand more consumer goods than what is available from their production; entrepreneurs demand more to invest in future consumption than is available from consumer savings. Economic life is characterized here by an excessive urge to spend: [267] a disharmony has arisen between *resources* and *expenditure*. We summarize this with the term *spending tension*.[6]

This spending tension, which manifests itself in what are two markets, is released in a similar way in both. In *the consumer goods market*, the tension - evident in excessive demand - is resolved either in a price increase or in increased supply from businesses. The *price increase* is the most obvious effect: consumers bid against each other to acquire the desired goods. Prices only stabilize once supply and demand have equalized. But excessive demand can also lead to *an increase in supply*. We can expect this effect if businesses still have unused production capacity, and they will meet increased demand with increased production!

Thus, price and/or production increases restore the balance between supply and demand in the market of consumer goods. Here, we already see some of the contours of the economic cycle: prices and production get going together![7]

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5 BCW Note: We keep in mind that this is an *abstract* example, assuming that for this "disharmonious" economy to be in "harmony" would have households wanting to consume 85% of their incomes with 15% for savings, while businesses operated on the same 85/15 for their production and investment.

6 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is here expounding how economic life is manifest in terms of movement of cycles as the different elements - prices, sales of goods, incomes, employment - fluctuate in terms of each other. He is doing this for the readers of *ARS* so that they can grasp something of the complex responsibility of ARP Parliamentarians who have to contribute on these matters to legislation and Government policy. We may be reading Goudzwaard's attempt to provide a view of business cycles for "beginners" in economics, but we should read this as his 1959 treatise even while he was also busily developing a critical analysis of the way economics as a science has construed economic life. So when he writes that economic life is characterised "by an excessive urge to spend", as a basic factor of the disharmony between *resources* and expenditure, we can detect that he is at the beginning of a project that will see him, decades hence, expounding an economic science that deals with this excessive urge as an ideological violation of stewardship on all sides and hence his future analysis of "economics and the progress idea", and the dogmatic assumptions that economic science is normatively subject to GDP Growth as its abiding standard. The way ahead for that *theoretical* development in economic science is, at this 1959 stage, suggested by this reckoning with "an excessive urge to spend" that is almost stated "en passant". What is stated here for general education of *ARS* readers suggests the need for delving deeper to see how this "syndrome" has also been generated within our economic life in an ongoing way due to human (ir)responsibility with the mutual fluctuations from the sides of business production and consumer spending.

7 BCW Note: Dutch: *prijzen en produktie komen op dreef!*

The *capital market* is also facing excessive demand. How will this tension be resolved? We see a remarkable similarity here with the reactions occurring on the consumer goods market. Here, too, we can distinguish the effects of price increases and increased supply.

The *price increase* arises because those seeking capital (the entrepreneurs) are bidding against each other to acquire the desired funds. This price increase is called an interest increase, as interest is, after all, the price paid for acquiring capital.

However, *an increase in the supply of capital* is also a possibility. But it will not be on the side of savers; they will not reverse their decision. The increased supply comes primarily from *the banking system*! Banks will want to provide entrepreneurs with the additional capital they need to finance their investments.

This last element is extremely important. Here we encounter the role of *money* in the entire economic cycle. When banks grant credit to entrepreneurs, money enters circulation that hadn't previously been "involved". The flow of money expands![8]

Before addressing this further, it's helpful to take a preliminary look at what has been discussed so far.

We assumed a disharmony between the distribution that households and businesses each make for themselves between the current and future supply of goods. It became apparent that this can lead to a spending squeeze, which can lead to higher prices for consumer goods, as well as to an increase in the interest rate, and even to increased production. We just saw that, in addition, an increase in the money supply is to be expected. Where is all this headed? Will all these factors together create a new equilibrium?

Let us assume that the spending squeeze occurs during a period of unemployment. It is likely that in such a period, entrepreneurs will still face difficulties with sales of products and therefore will have a degree of unused production capacity. But then, when there is an increased [268] demand for *consumer goods* this will then be mainly met by *additional production*. This is a favorable development! After all, in this way unemployment decreases.

Therefore reactions in the consumer goods market, in a situation of unemployment, need give no cause for concern.

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8 BCW Note: So the borrowing of capital is also part of economic life in which money is a "consumer good" which comes with its costs.

If we now consider the development of the capital market, it appears that the pressure on spending there has led to “money creation”, and to a greater flow of money. What are we to think about this?

In general, money owes its value to its character as a claim on the social stock of goods. Owning a 10-guilder banknote means that the holder can claim 10 guilders’ worth of produced goods. But now more money is coming into circulation. There is an increase in the number of claims on national production. Is this to be regretted?

In a time of unemployment, which is what we have assumed here, we should not view this as a negative development. It has just been shown that an increase in production can be expected on the consumer goods market. The greater number of claims is therefore also offset by greater production. The value of each “claim”, of each guilder, therefore remains unaffected.

But how completely different these matters are if we imagine a situation of full employment. Here, a spending pressure primarily causes a price increase in the consumer market; after all, the opportunity for expanding production is limited under full employment. But money creation nevertheless takes place from the capital market. This money creation, which therefore amounts to the addition of new claims to existing ones, is not justified by a proportional increase in production. In other words: more claims on production have arisen than can ever be satisfied. Here we see the full picture of spending pressure. People want to spend more than is produced. This is, of course, an impossibility.

In this situation, a judge intervenes, bringing the claims back into line with production by making all claims slightly less valuable. The name of this intervention is: devaluation; its verdict: price increase. This development cannot be reversed. A general price increase means that everyone can do less with their money, so that all claims lose some of their value. Thus, the equilibrium between production and spending propensity is restored through the operation of money. The price increase that has already occurred in the consumer goods market is further reinforced and perpetuated by this *general* price increase.

Let us now turn our attention to the consumer. He, in particular, has been the victim. The careful administration of saving and consuming that he has devised has done him no good: through price increases, he is presented, as it were, with the bill for having saved too little! The money he set aside for extra consumption

must be spent entirely to pay for the price increases that have occurred in his normal basket of consumer goods![9]

[269] Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, have been able to maintain their administration dividing between consumer goods and investments: the latter have not suffered any damage, thanks to the willingness of the banking system.

We can now summarize. In a situation of unemployment, pressure on spending leads to an increase in production and to an increase in money supply. The situation of excessive demand is countered by an increase in supply. *Production rises to the level of the propensity to spend*. In a situation of full employment, a pressure on spending leads to an increase in money supply without a corresponding increase in production. The price increase reconciles supply and demand. *The propensity to spend is depressed to the level of production*.

We can already draw a practical conclusion from all this. The cause of overspending is that (too) little is saved. In a period of unemployment, this isn't a problem; on the contrary: unemployment decreases due to spending pressures, and saving less is even advisable. In a period of full employment, however, spending pressures must be avoided. Saving is absolutely essential in such a situation. Since we are currently experiencing a period of full employment, saving must be emphasized.

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It might be noted that, up to now, something has been said about tensions, which have certain consequences, but that this does not yet address the *movement* of the economic cycle. Indeed, the question of how a real *movement* can arise from these tensions has thus far been left unanswered. The answer can be brief. The movement arises because the new situation, in which the adjustment between production and consumption has already taken place, need not be a final destination, but can itself serve as a starting point for new tensions. For example, the resulting price increase gives entrepreneurs reason to continue investing and, if savings are insufficient, to take out bank loans for this purpose. A potential increase in production leads to higher incomes and can thus lead to such an additional demand for consumer goods that further increases in production can be the result. The release of one tension, therefore, provokes

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[9] **BG FTN 1** In economic theory this is called "forced savings". It should also be noted that the function of money has only been very briefly outlined here. The complication of the velocity of currency has been ignored. However, what matters to us in this context is that the monetary question is inextricably linked to the economic cycle. Only through the presence of money does the economic cycle have a chance; without money, production and consumption, supply and demand, would automatically be in equilibrium. *Money acts as a veil; it makes claims appear real, claims that in fact can never be fulfilled.*

another. It is these mutually inciting tensions that give rise to the *movement* of the economic cycle.

The end of the economic upswing doesn't always come in the same way. This is also a source of disagreement among economists. *Keynes* and his followers defend the theory that this reversal is caused by a declining propensity to invest among entrepreneurs. *Hayek*, on the other hand, attributes the reversal to an excessive propensity to invest among entrepreneurs, so that banks have to apply credit restrictions, etc. This is not the place to discuss these difficulties. It should be noted, however, that this economic downswing creates a situation precisely the opposite of the one just discussed: the propensity to spend is then too low compared to the quantity of goods produced - [270] and the tension between these leads to *falling* prices and *falling* production. The entire process then occurs in reverse: the adjustment of production to lower consumption leads to lower profits and/or wages, so that consumption must also decline further. This is a painful adjustment process that continues to fester! It is these self-propagating processes that make the economic cycle so dangerous, and intervention so difficult.

Besides the role of the Government, which will be discussed in the next section, two other elements are missing from the picture presented thus far.

The first element concerns the influence exerted on the economic cycle by the *costs* of the production process. This is a very interesting point that has only received necessary theoretical attention in recent decades.

What is the case, in fact? Once the national product, i.e., the total national output, has been produced, the question arises as to how the factors of production (labour, capital, entrepreneurial capacity) should be rewarded for their efforts. Even at this stage, even before a disharmony arises between the plans of family-household and those of entrepreneurs, a tension can arise between what has been produced and what each believe their entitlements to be! If, for example, the trade unions stipulate a wage that entrepreneurs perceive as an erosion of their profit share, this tension will already be very acute. We can call this a *wage* tension.

Now, entrepreneurs have a lever at their disposal that allows them to more or less safeguard their own (threatened) share: they can raise the selling price of their productions. The wage increase is then offset by an increase in gross revenue. The unfortunate consequence for the workers is that they've bought a pig in a poke: the higher wages ultimately prove to be worth little more than the wages earned thus far! After all, everything has become more expensive again.

It appears, then, that this kind of tension also finds an outlet in ... price increases.

This then exacerbates the movement of the economic cycle. If spending tensions and wage tensions converge, the national economy could even be sucked into the abyss. This would create a combination of so-called spending inflation and so-called *cost inflation*, a combination that is especially worrisome in a situation of full employment. For example, suppose that spending tensions arise because entrepreneurs want to invest more than they have available in savings. As we have seen, in a situation of full employment this leads to price increases. Because this causes real wages to fall, the trade unions will advocate for a wage increase. However, higher wages result in higher costs for entrepreneurs. They will have to raise prices even further to maintain their profits. This, in turn, erodes the wage increase, and so on. This is how the infamous wage-price spiral arises. A spiral that is the inevitable consequence of the excessive demands on the national product. When first entrepreneurs and trade unions, and then, in a slightly different sense, entrepreneurs and families, each assert their high demands on [271] the produced goods against each other, money becomes a judge, which, through constant price increases, reduces the demands back to what is realistically possible. And it is an unjust judge: the most powerful suffer least. The economic cycle can therefore rightly be called a *human* phenomenon. It is the fruit of the disharmony between human actions, sometimes unintentional, but sometimes also very conscious.[10]

Another element deserves a place in the outline of the economic cycle we have thus far given. It is the role of *foreign countries*.

International relations introduce a remarkable element. Resources and expenditures no longer need to be precisely equal. For example, if expenditures exceed production, it becomes possible to supply the necessary quantity of additional goods through additional imports. The consequence, however, is that the balance of payments (i.e., the difference between exports and imports) becomes negative, thus creating a debt to foreign countries. And paying this debt reduces our *foreign exchange reserves* (our national stock of foreign currency).

However, our relations with other countries do provide us with a certain outlet. Foreign countries can, “for a fee”, relieve us of some of the tension between production and consumption. This also means that excessive demands on the national product are now not only noticeable in price increases but can

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10 BCW Note: ref. ftn. 6 p.4 above.

also be manifest as a balance of payments deficit. A deterioration in the balance of payments position is therefore an indication of excess national spending.

Economic relations with other countries also have a downside. Just as we can transfer some of our tension abroad, foreign countries can, in turn, cause us considerable tension.

This can happen, for example, in the form of a price increase on goods we import. Such a price increase has a knock-on effect on our national economy and can, in turn, be a reason for unions to demand higher wages, with all the attendant consequences.

Naturally, the economic picture presented thus far has been very brief and no more than a rough sketch. But it has already raised enough points to be able to say something about the role the Government occupies in this whole picture.

§ 3. Cyclical Policy as the Administration of Justice

A. The Need for Cyclical Policy

The Government is intertwined with economic life by a thousand threads. *It is so even before any economic policy is in place*, i.e., regardless of whether the Government intentionally interferes with economic life. This is sometimes forgotten. People then argue that the Government has nothing to do with economic life and should stay out of it. But the Government is right in the middle of it, and whether it wants to or not, it influences economic phenomena. The question, therefore, is not whether the Government should interfere with economic life, but how it interferes.[11]

[272] This becomes very clear when it comes to the influence the Government already exerts on the economic cycle. We have already seen that the economic cycle arises from the disharmony between the volume of production and the magnitude of spending propensities, and also that any harmony between rpduction and spending is made possible by the role money plays in our economic life. The Government, at any rate, having to deal with both the volume of production and the magnitude of spending propensities, also has to manage the monetary phenomenon. After all, Government enterprises also produce, and when purchasing goods for Government services also spends. And as for its relationship with money: every Government expenditure can be seen as the injection of money into circulation that had not previously "played a role"[12] -

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11 BCW Note: This distinction about Government involvement in the economy - "not whether but how" - is a constant theme in Goudzwaard's economics pointing to normativity of the State calling to ensure public justice, while reckoning with the stewardship normativity implicit in economic life.

12 BCW Note: Dutch: *meedeed*, participated.

and every tax levy as a withdrawal of money from the monetary flow, a transfer of purchasing power from economic life into Government coffers. Government expenditure expands the monetary flow; taxes narrow it.

Now that we consider this, it is nothing more than self-evident that we should expect the Government to consider the cyclical consequences of its actions. This is especially so when, as in our country, approximately a quarter of the national income, not even counting the costs of Local Government, is itself from Government expenditure. Again: the question is not whether or not the Government will intervene in economic life, but *how* it should do so. But then, from an Anti-Revolutionary perspective, only one way remains: to connect the *how*-quality of such economic Government action with and test it against the standard of justice. *"By me princes decree justice"*, we read in Proverbs 8:15. All Government action, including its economic aspects, is under obligation to decree justice, as is pressed upon it by this word.[13]

And indeed, a Government that fails to account for the cyclical consequences of its actions cannot possibly be said to be dispensing justice. On the contrary: it (albeit unintentionally) contributes to the creation of *unjust* situations. In effect, it then leaves the administration of justice in economic life entirely to the capricious regime of monetary policy.

Hence, we therefore advocate a clear Government stance to be taken on cyclical phenomena – and so the following guideline can apply to Government action: no cyclical tensions should arise as a result of Government intervention, and existing tensions should be "eliminated" if possible.[14]

B. The Effect of a Cyclical Policy

As we've just seen, the Government primarily influences the economic situation when it spends and when it levies taxes. Therefore, we primarily require these two things from it:

a. *a spending policy* tailored to the specific economic situation;
b. *a tax policy* tailored to the specific economic situation.

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13 **BG FTN 2.** Historically, this positive Government intervention only became unavoidable after the fall of the gold standard. Under the gold standard, it was assumed that the effects of gold would *automatically* neutralize existing tensions at home and abroad. The Government could rely on this effect of gold and thus adopt a "neutral" stance toward money. Abandoning this mechanism implied that from then on, a conscious *policy* had to be pursued regarding emerging tensions.

14 BCW Note: In subsequent *ARS* articles, Goudzwaard will go at some length to discuss how the ARP has, albeit unintentionally, endorsed a view of neutrality to economic policy under the "business is business" rubric. Here he suggests that his attempt to describe the economic "conjunctuur" process, for all its abstract complexity in its account of the economic rhythms by which numerous variables (prices, sales of goods, incomes, employment) fluctuate together, is in no way "neutral", nor is it a description of a phenomenon that occurs autonomously as if it is a mechanism (or organism) that keeps grinding away apart from human stewardship responsibilities.

[273] Together, these two constitute the so-called *countercyclical fiscal policy*. Countercyclical means acting against the economic cycle, thus attempting to alleviate existing tensions.[15]

What does this mean in concrete terms, for example, in the case of a spending squeeze, which, as we have seen, can be particularly damaging in a situation of full employment? It means that the Government can take no fewer than three different approaches to contribute to the relaxation of tensions.

First, while taxes remain unchanged, it can cut back or temporarily suspend its own expenditure. This means it will limit its own spending, thereby leaving more room for private consumption. It will therefore relinquish a portion of its contribution to national production to enable consumers to make the additional expenditure they desire. Naturally, this reduces the spending squeeze.

Secondly, while expenditure remains unchanged, Government can increase the tax burden. This affects the monetary side of the spending squeeze. Because in this way, part of the purchasing power, the monetary claims on the national product, is neutralized and rendered harmless: the money disappears into Government coffers.[16] This automatically results in a lower demand on the total national product; the tension also diminishes in this way.

Thirdly, it can simultaneously *reduce* its expenditures and taxes an equal amount. The effect of this is somewhat less obvious than in the previous two cases. It relies on the fact that the Government spending *reductions* (due to lower expenditures) will be greater than the spending *increases* in consumer spending caused by lower taxes. The Government must reduce its expenditure by the full amount it forgoes in taxes; but consumers, on the other hand, will not spend more with tax reductions by the full amount, because they will set aside part of this extra discretionary power for their savings. On balance, the national economy therefore spends less than before.

It should be noted in passing that the three options mentioned - namely: expenditure reduction, tax increase, and a reduction of both expenditure and taxes in equal measure - can also be combined. In particular, a combination of the first with the second option, i.e., expenditure reduction with a certain tax increase, could prove useful.

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15 BCW Note: What is noticeable here is the first-person plural "we". Goudzwaard is assuming that the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* as a political party participating in the Government from the Dutch parliament has its own responsibility to outline its view of what the citizenry requires the Government to do to address the tensions brought about by the cyclical phenomena that arise from legislation concerned with spending and taxation.

16 **BG FTN 3** This money is not spent again by the Government. After all, we assume here that Government expenditure will remain the same.

Let us now also consider the "converse" case: that is, when the propensity to spend is *too low* to consume the entire national product, as it can be produced under full employment. Is the Government able to stimulate spending in such a case?

Indeed, there are great opportunities here. The Government can, as it were, *artificially* create spending pressures, which in turn increase production to the point of full employment. For example, while taxes remain the same, it can increase its own expenditures (e.g., by carrying out public works), thereby increasing overall expenditures. It is also possible, while expenditures remain the same, to reduce taxes [274], hoping that people will not save this extra money but will want to spend it. In that case, expenditures will indirectly increase. Finally, it can increase taxes and expenditures equally; the Government then spends money, partly derived from savings, so that expenditures will increase on balance. The Government, as it were, activates the money that until now had been "dormant"[17] with savers.

It goes without saying that combinations of these measures are also possible. Linking higher Government spending to *lower* taxes is expected to have a particularly powerful effect.

If we review the possibilities listed, both manipulations of the level of Government spending and manipulations of the tax burden appear to be important tools for sound economic policy, both in situations of unemployment and full employment. If the third option is chosen, namely, a combined expenditure increase (or decrease) and tax increase (or decrease) to the same extent, some effect can still be expected, but it will not be substantial. This makes the public entirely dependent on uncertain savings habits.[18]

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We haven't yet faced a consequence of countercyclical policy. It's that the use of tax and expenditure policies as cyclical policy instruments can disrupt

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17 BCW Note: ref. previous comment about money that had not previously "played a role" (*meedeed)*. Here the Dutch term is *sluimerde*: slumbering.

18 **BG FTN 4** In the literature, varying the size of Government expenditures is simply called *expenditure policy*, while varying the tax burden is called *tax policy*. This is confusing in that the terms "expenditure policy" and "tax policy" are used here in a much narrower sense than is normally the case; they refer only to the *economic* aspects of expenditures and taxes. We will use these terms in this narrower sense here.

budgetary balance.[19] Clearly, raising (or lowering) taxes and expenditures together doesn't have this drawback. Does this perhaps mean that, despite its lower effectiveness, the latter method should be chosen for the sake of a balanced budget?

This question raises another: to what extent is a balanced budget preferable? It is not possible to say without further examination. It's a matter of propriety toward future generations and of leeway on the capital market, to name but a few reasons. But an unbalanced budget needn't be seen as something that is *in itself* objectionable. It should be remembered that the adage of a balanced budget stems from the classical school of economics, which assumed harmony in economic life and held the belief that if everyone acted out of self-interest, an optimal society would emerge naturally. The Government was absolutely forbidden from disrupting this beautiful whole: an unbalanced budget, resulting in a deficit in ordinary services (which must be covered by loans or money creation), would disrupt this harmony; borrowing to cover this deficit, after all, means withdrawing money from the capital market that would otherwise have been put to *productive* use. This course of action, according to the classical school, would harm the harmonious production plans in economic life! This idea of harmony has been refuted conclusively by Keynes. He rightly pointed out how [275] high unemployment can arise from this so-called harmony. This does not mean, however, that by rejecting this idea of harmony, we must now fall into the opposite extreme, which, in our opinion, Keynes himself fell into: the idea that economic life is inherently disharmonious and chaotic. Such ideas lead to objectionable views of the Government's role, which tend towards viewing a re-creation of economic life through a providential order of Government. We will return to this later.

A budget deficit need not be rejected *a priori*. However, what is of utmost importance is how the deficit is going to be *covered*. This will, in principle, have to be done through borrowing. Covering it through money creation is dangerous; it can cause the economy to spiral out of control[20] and trigger inflation.

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19 BCW Note: The term "Intrument" is regularly used in relation to economic policy and can be found in Goudzwaard's subsequent writings. See "Economic value and the purposes and instruments of economic policy" from "Economische waarde en de doeleinden en instrumenten van economisch beleid" in B de Gaay Fortman (ed) **Economie en Waarde** Samsom Uitgeverij, Alphen aan den Rijn/Brussel 1982, 137-162. It would seem to be a crucial term for the evaluation of public policy. The term "instrument" does not negate the necessary judgement and evaluation that is necessary if such implemented policies via these instruments are to have a healthy upon economic stewardship and public justice. Nevertheless, discernment is needed to avoid a too-mechanistic view of such "instruments".

20 **BG FTN 5** See C. Goedhart, **Hoofdlijnen van de leer der publiek financien**, Leiden: Stenfert Kroese., 1958 p. 339, and D. B. J. Schouten, **De overheidfinanciën in de volkshuishouding**, Stenfert Kroese. 1950 pp. 58 et seq. BCW Note: Goudzwaard was born in 1934 and thus grew up in the context of the Dutch peak of the Great Depression 1933-1936. He here relies on works of prominent Dutch economists.

Since only a minor effect can be expected in the case of a balanced budget, and since the necessary flexibility in Government finances regarding taxes and expenditures will likely never be achieved, it is logical to limit ourselves to two possibilities for a non-balanced budget. The question arises whether one instrument might not be preferable to the other. Is there reason, for example, to prefer tax policy over expenditure policy?

In our opinion, tax policy should indeed be given priority in the majority of cases. Prioritizing expenditure policy inevitably leads to an ever-increasing role for the Government in economic life, because combating a depression always requires a stronger dose of Government measures than curbing a boom.[21] Each depression therefore requires more expenditure than can be eliminated in the subsequent economic upswing; with regular application of this policy, Government expenditure will therefore, on balance, always increase. Therefore, the instrument of expenditure policy must be used with caution. This does not mean, however, that expenditure policy should be dismissed as worthless. Especially during a boom, *reducing* expenditure is highly recommended. But *prioritizing* expenditure policy in all circumstances is to go too far; especially in times of depression, it is *tax* measures that should be considered first.[22]

Armed with this knowledge, if we subject the 1960 national budget to a brief examination, it appears that the Minister of Finance, in the current economic situation, is using both the instrument of expenditure and that of tax policy. Our economy is currently characterized by threatening expenditure pressures, coupled with a situation of full employment; there is therefore every reason to expect the Government to pursue a budgetary policy that counteracts these expenditure pressures. This is indeed the case to a certain extent. The tax increase of the previous year has not been reversed, but continued. Government expenditure has lagged behind in relation to national [276] income, which has also had a dampening effect. Both private and Government spending growth has thus been hampered, and the Government has to some extent countered the expenditure pressure.[23]

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21 **BG FTN 6** C. Goedhart, *op cit*. pp. 205, 341.

22 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's third major article for *ARS* to be published in 1961 is "Prioriteitenschema en parlement" *AR-Staatkunde* jrg-31 pp. 21-36, written as a researcher for the *Dr. A. Kuyperstichting*, it is clearly written as advice to the party members and the party's Parliamentarians.

23 BCW Note: This confirms that Goudzwaard has not forgotten what he has written in his Introduction concerning the way "the man in the street" is an "outsider" to the bewildering discourse of politicians, public policy analysts and economists, particularly when it comes to the crucial question of policy in the face of the economic cycle phenomenon. We note here his awareness that his contribution is to not only maintain policy coherence within the ARP, but also membership coherence so that members of the party do not see themselves as "outsiders" to the complex and vexed issues of economic policy that have to be dealt with by those elected to Parliament.

In concluding the argument at this point regarding the functioning of countercyclical budgetary policy, a further observation regarding tax policy must be made. It is necessary to do so in order to avoid misunderstanding. In our view, the fact that taxes can serve as an instrument for countering cyclical tensions does not detract from the nature of taxes themselves, which is determined by the criterion of public justice. "Tax policy", as used here, merely means that the *timing* of assessment and the level of the *general* tax burden have to be adjusted to the economic situation. The further internal, technical, and legal structure of these taxes is less relevant here. Similar arguments can be made regarding "budget" and "expenditure" policies.

Before discussing the limitations imposed on countercyclical budgetary policy as a means of combating economic fluctuations, another group of options for pursuing a cyclical policy deserves some attention. We refer here to *monetary policy*.[24] A brief description will suffice.

Monetary policy is concerned solely with the functioning of money in economic life. *Interest rate policy* is a component of monetary policy. The manipulation of the interest rate is the attempt to influence the size of the money flow. An interest rate increase, for example, slightly increases savings and slightly slows down investment, thus reducing the expansion of the money flow and counteracting the pressure on spending. Another component of monetary policy is *an active credit policy*. This allows entrepreneurs to be denied the opportunity to borrow money, thus making this method of financing additional investments impossible.

C. The Limits to a Cyclical Policy

Until now, we have limited ourselves to outlining the workings of budgetary and monetary policy. It is now appropriate to reflect on the *effects* of these factors. Can we expect success from a budgetary policy combined with certain monetary policy measures? Can the economic cycle be managed by this?

It is increasingly recognized that this is possible to a *limited* extent.

Regarding *credit and interest rate policy* (monetary policy), this is quite clear. This policy only allows for crude, free instruments, which can slow an economic upswing but cannot re-start a depression. Indeed, even adverse effects are possible!

[277] But *tax policy* also has its limits. And tax reductions during a depression, for example, are strongly linked to the size of foreign exchange reserves. Lower

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24 **BG FTN 7** A third option for cyclical management is an active wage and price policy. This will be addressed further below.

taxes increase consumption, including the consumption of imported goods. If exports do not increase, these additional imports will have to be paid from foreign exchange reserves. However, this is not the end of the story. The literature also points to the *inertia* of taxation as a cyclical instrument: prior parliamentary approval is required.[25]

Related to this is the fact that continuity in Government policy imposes its own requirements and can conflict with the need to raise taxes in a specific, measured amount. Furthermore, tax increases can also encounter resistance in parliament. It is to be hoped that ways can be found to reconcile the political and economic perspectives. Fortunately, *the speed* at which taxes are collected is not so strongly tied to political factors and is therefore easier to adapt to economic conditions.

However, a further limitation of the scope of a countercyclical policy must now be addressed. Specifically, the fact that tax and monetary policies can combat and contain spending pressures, but are practically ineffective against wage pressures.

These wage tensions were discussed in Section 2. They arise because the factors of production each claim too large a share of the output. We saw that the entrepreneur can "take revenge" on the erosion of his profit share by raising his selling price, thus causing wages and prices to fluctuate. This development is practically impossible to halt through budgetary and monetary policy! Once a wage increase has been agreed upon in the business sector, it would be absurd to deprive businesses of the necessary funds for wage payments through higher taxes or credit restrictions. This would lead to bankruptcies or breaches of contract[26] and make matters even worse than they already are.

All this leads to the conclusion that these wage tensions can apparently only be curbed through deliberate wage *and/or price-fixing policies!*

This brings us to a critical point in the argument. The line we have followed thus far breaks off abruptly. We saw the following. The economic cycle arises from the tension between production and expenditure. The Government participates in both and must participate in them with policy, so that no new tensions arise but, on the contrary, existing ones are removed. The Government must promote the general interest in all its actions, including when it participates in economic life. Through "tax policy" and "expenditure policy," the Government can achieve responsible participation in economic life. However, it

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25 **BG FTN 8** Cf. J. Pen, **Moderne Economie**, pp. 214ff.

26 **BG FTN 9** Cf. C. Goedhart, *op. cit.*, pp. 336, 337.

now appears that this *cannot sufficiently* combat the tensions in terms of rewards. They can only be removed through more direct Government policy intervention. But does [278] such intervention still belong to the Government's task? Isn't it better to simply let these tensions play out and let economic life take care of itself in this regard?

From an Anti-Revolutionary perspective, the primary goal should be that the Government should not interfere with the economic activities of the private sector. However, the Government must ensure that these economic organizations, through their actions, do not harm public life but rather contribute to the well-being of the entire nation.[27]

We must therefore first ask ourselves what the consequences would be if the Government were to refrain from direct intervention. We have already partially considered the consequences of higher wage demands. If wages rise faster than labour productivity, labour costs for the entrepreneur rise, and their profit-share falls. If the entrepreneur subsequently wishes to resist this erosion of their own share, it becomes clear that there are more claims on the output than can ever be satisfied. Such a conflict between the claims of employers and employees, therefore, has no other outlet than continuous price increases and will eventually lead to a restriction on spending.

We see, therefore, that the disagreement over the remuneration of labour has consequences for the *entire* national economy. And we are not guilty of exaggeration when we call these consequences very harmful, and see in them an infringement on the well-being of the entire nation.

This well-being is primarily affected because the general rise in prices undermines the existence of specific social groups. One should think here of those social groups that must subsist on a fixed income expressed in a specific amount (the "forgotten" groups). These groups lack an arsenal of reprisals to defend their own share of the national income; they thus bear the full brunt of the devaluation of currency.

However, it doesn't stop there. Furthermore, those serving in all social structures are hindered in making the necessary private provisions for the future. Consider, for example, life insurance policies, which are always denominated in nominal amounts. Professor Witteveen rightly pointed to this aspect.[28] The desire to create private provisions fades; people are increasingly driven to

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27 **BG FTN 10** J. P. A. Mekkes "Wijsbegeerte en staatsleven". in: **Wijsbegeerte en levenspractijk, de betekenis van de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee voor velerlei levensgebied**. Kampen, Kok, 1948. p. 76-96.

28 **BG FTN 11** In *Economisch-Statistische Berichten*, July 1959.

Government provisions, the value of which is guaranteed by the state, for example, by linking them to the wage index. Witteveen argues

> *Continuing inflation is therefore life-threatening for a free society; it is a drive toward a collective society.*

Furthermore, the weak position of future generation must be pointed out. By imposing on the *future generation*, through the General Old Age Act, the duty to care for the elderly according to the purchasing power the currency[29] will then have, those driving this have thereby absolved themselves of the accusation that price inflation was making things increasingly difficult for the "forgotten groups" [279]. The future will have to try to honor their claims on the national product; for today, at least - so the reasoning goes - it is one less worry.

It is these and many other factors that make the ever-increasing price increases (the "lingering" inflation) a monstrosity. The desire to save is undermined. Even building up assets is out of the question.

It should be clear that inflation is a convenient way out of a conflict between those with power, and it makes the *powerless* pay. It is the public interest that the Government must serve in this matter and must not allow life within certain social structures to become virtually impossible. It must administer justice between "pressure groups"[30] and forgotten groups, as well as between the current and future generations. Even in relation to such circumstances, the Government must be a shield for the weak.

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Does the foregoing mean that the Government must pursue a conscious *wage policy* under all circumstances? We believe not. So far, the only argument has been that the Government must not allow wage tensions to find expression in *inflation*. Therefore, as long as there are no wage tensions in the business sector, any direct wage policy can certainly be dispensed with. In other words: as long as the business sector recognizes its *responsibility*, direct Government intervention is unnecessary. This responsibility, therefore, boils down to consciously preventing the emergence of such wage tensions.

Now, this is easier said than done. In any conflict over rewards, the parties involved will believe they have the right to their own share and, when called upon to take responsibility, will tend to deflect attention by referring to the opposing party. We will only make progress by formulating the *respective responsibilities* of both parties, i.e., trade unions and employers' organizations.

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29 BCW Note: That is the Dutch Guilder, but clearly the argument applies to other currency régimes.

30 **BG FTN 12** Literally: pressure groups; i.e., groups that can impose their will.

Now, this responsibility can only be concretely defined against the background of the actual development of economic life in recent years. It is particularly interesting to note this because it is an almost established fact that the most recent spending restriction (1956) was caused to a significant extent by the emergence of significant wage tensions.

The recently published report from the Wiardi Beckman Stichting,[31] *The Lesson of Thirty Months*, confirms this. On page 11, we read:

> *There is no doubt that the combination of wage increases achieved in 1956 played a significant role in the process of exacerbating overspending.*

The report immediately adds:

> *The relatively large wage increase in 1956 was, however, justified by the trend in the employee share of national income.*[32]

An accompanying table shows that the employee share of national income, which in the years 1949-1950 was still 69.3%, was "only" 67.4% in 1955, but already 69.8% in 1956. This claim of a decline in the employee share is not new; the Social and Economic Council (S.E.R.) worked[33] and works[34] [280] continually. However, please allow us to quote the following from the Dutch Central Bank:

> *It must be regretted, and for the sake of clarity in the formulation of the problem, as well as with a view to the possible future consequences, that in the wage debate that has arisen from this tension* [i.e. in the labour market, BG], *both on the part of employees and employers, the wage issue has been posed exclusively as a question of catching up on a supposed gap in wage development compared to the development of national income, and that the question has not been openly raised as to whether, and to what extent, economic circumstances might permit a certain increase in the employee share. Instead of assuming the actual achieved employee share in the recent past, a series of calculations of the gap have been discussed on the basis of this premise....*
>
> *The only way one can reasonably calculate a gap or a lead, and assign it any relevance, is by comparing it with ratios that actually occurred in a not too distant past period of at least a full year. However, when calculated this way - and there's actually no disagreement on this - there's no real existing or expected significant*

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31 BCW Note: https://www.wbs.nl/ The Wiardi Beckman Stichting is the public policy research institute of the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiardi_Beckman_Stichting

32 BCW Note: **De les van dertig maanden: Rapport van de Dr. Wiardi Beckman-stichting** Amsterdam, De Arbeiderspers voor de Wiardi BeckmanStichting, 1959, p.11

33 **BG FTN 13** Report 1956, no. 1.

34 **BG FTN 14** Report on the economic policy to be pursued in 1959 and 1960.

gap in wages other than for 1953, 1955, and 1956, unless one were to go back to 1947 and 1948 with the basis for comparison, when our national economy was still in significant deficit.

It is therefore necessary, in assessing the possible consequences of the wage agreement reached in March 1956, to realise that this agreement represents an attempt to increase the workers' share of national income above the level actually reached in any year of the period 1949-1955, but that only the future can tell whether and to what extent this objective can actually be achieved.[35]

About a year after these words from the president of the Dutch Central Bank, the spending restriction became a reality.

The truth of his words was recently confirmed by State Secretary Roolvink in the House of Representatives, where he stated that from 1954 to 1957, productivity per employee rose by 10%, while the wage rate, in contrast, rose by no less than 26%.

We want to draw a slightly different lesson from this entire development than the Wiardi Beckman Stichting does in its *Lesson of Thirty Months*. The main lesson presented to us there is that,

... an effective institutionalization of our society, whereby it becomes possible to assert the general interest in the process of production, "will be able to help us out of the current impasse".[36]

Elsewhere, it is stated as follows:

The necessity of responsible action therefore requires institutionalization, which, on the one hand, enables accountability and, on the other, increases the governability of this complex economic system.[37]

In our view, this is a degeneration of the idea of responsibility, which must then be experienced as a standardization of freedom. Another lesson must be learned from this entire development: namely, that *the policy of guided wage formation* has proven to be a flawed instrument.[281] For what does the course of events show other than that the crisis ultimately arose from the *sudden* increase in the labour share of national income? But it was precisely inherent in the structure of the guided wage policy, as followed thus far, that the necessary corrections regarding the employee share could only occur in fits and starts! *The Lesson of Thirty Months* itself addresses this on page 53. It states explicitly that it was repeatedly necessary to correct the gradually skewed income distribution with a

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35 BCW Note: Verslag over het boekjaar 1955 uitgebracht in de algemene vergadering van aandeelhouders op april 1956 pp.15-16. (Annual Report 1955)

36 BCW Note: **De les van dertig maanden:** p.54

37 BCW Note: *ibid*. p.45

single national wage increase. It was precisely these general wage increases that *suddenly* threw the economic tide out of balance. We do not need *guided* wage formation, but rather g*radual* wage formation, without shock therapy.

What does this mean concretely with regard to the responsibility of both entrepreneurs and trade unions? In our view, this entire course of events demonstrates that balanced development can only be achieved if mutual respect is shown for each other's share in the total national income. Only with such a stable balance between those with power can inflationary reprisals - wage increases for (perceived) erosion of the employee's share, and price increases for (perceived) erosion of the profit share - be avoided. Steady wage formation cannot be achieved by applying abrupt corrections to constantly offset growing imbalances, but only through continued respect by both parties for each other's share in the national product. In this spirit, we would like to formulate what we consider is the responsibility for both entrepreneurs and trade unions in a free society. And as long as this sense of responsibility is not present, wage formation cannot progress without Government intervention.

Now, one might ask: All well and good, but can this equilibrium ever be achieved in practice? Isn't this just daydreaming? And moreover, isn't the solution offered here highly unsatisfactory? How could it ever be possible to achieve a better income distribution by requiring a constant ratio between wage and profit shares?

If we may dwell upon this last remark: there is a misunderstanding in it. A fixed division between wages and profits does not necessarily imply a fixed ratio between entrepreneurs' and workers' income. For by sharing in profits, the worker can, in addition to his wages, also count a portion of the national *profit* share as income. Profit shares for the worker do not affect the national division between wages and profits, but they do increase the workers' income.

Regarding the possibility of achieving a consistently constant ratio between wage and profit shares, a distinction must be made between two completely different paths.

First of all, the balance of power can be continuously maintained by entrepreneurs, of their own accord, reflecting every increase in labour productivity in lower selling prices. This is the ideal method, which has three major advantages: first, the price reduction benefits not only the workers, but *all* segments of the population; this method is therefore strictly fair; second, the [282] export position suffers no damage; on the contrary, because the wage increase does not occur, the export position even improves; third, effective price

competition among entrepreneurs is initiated, which will further increase prosperity.

All artificial systems are no match for this method. But can it be achieved? In West Germany, under Minister Erhard, they came a long way, because they recognized that in the long run, *everyone* benefited from price reductions, including the entrepreneur and the workers themselves.

In the Netherlands, entrepreneurs in particular have made virtually no attempts in this direction. This is not surprising. Until now, entrepreneurs have shown little inclination to lower prices because they could almost certainly expect further wage increases, which would have made all previous price reductions a financial fiasco.[38] This does not mean that entrepreneurs are entirely exonerated. It is regrettable that they have still not sufficiently passed on the reduction in import prices in a corresponding decrease in selling prices.

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There is, however, another way that can lead to a balanced ratio between wage and profit shares, and thus, in principle, prevent wage tensions: we are thinking here of the *freer wage formation* system, as currently implemented in the Netherlands. The increase in labor productivity is then expressed not in lower prices, but in higher wages. However commendable this attempt may be, it misses the major advantage of the aforementioned method, in which increased prosperity benefits *everyone* through lower prices. With this freer wage formation system, price increases (due to higher import prices) are expected, but probably never price decreases; the price rigidity is not broken in this way.

Yet, freer wage formation is far preferable to guided wage formation. Not only because it shifts the focus to the private sector, but also because it essentially frees us from national wage *shocks*, thanks to wage increases spread over time *by industry*. This makes balanced development possible in the long term. This method can bring about a lasting equilibrium between wage and profit shares.

The two main rules of freer wage formation - wage increases commensurate with increased labour productivity, and not passing on this wage increase in (higher) sales prices - lend themselves as guidelines for truly responsible behaviour by employers' and employees' organizations. In the future, they will have to be established by businesses *on their own initiative* if they do not wish to permanently lose the freedom granted.

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38 **BG FTN 15** This cause of "price rigidity" is not mentioned in *The Lesson of Thirty Months*.

Meanwhile, several complications arise that would not completely justify freeing up wage formation at this time. We mention a few points.

1. Investments lagged somewhat behind last year in [283] total national expenditure. This has created the illusion that there was considerable "room" for expanding private spending (through wage increases). We could also put it this way: the recent relative calm could well be due to the "balance" between a spending depression and cost inflation, which thus offset each other. If investments rebound strongly in such a situation, this will likely lead to a new surplus of spending over resources, in which case spending restrictions and/or price increases will again be unavoidable.

In the Budget Memorandum, the Minister of Finance notes:

> *There are several symptoms that indicate that the increase in spending is now faster than in 1953, and that the expansion could soon again lead to a collision with the limits of productive capacity. It must also be taken into account that the consequences of differentiated wage formation have been ignored.*
>
> *The expected financial and economic developments for the near future lead to the conclusion that both the Government and the private sector must exercise great caution to prevent a repeat of the situation of 1956/57, and a further disruption of our economy due to excessive spending growth. The basic premise must be that an increase in spending can only be justified by an increase in production.*

The Government's awareness of this situation is also evident from its attitude towards the question of which productivity increases from the past year should and which should not be included in determining the size of wage increases. It must not be too lenient in this regard. Incidentally, it is questionable whether it has not already been too lenient. If, in this initial situation, labour's share of total national expenditure is chosen too high for the sake of freer wage formation, this will remain a source of inflation, even if all future wage increases are carefully weighed against higher productivity. An unhealthy initial situation, which harbours tendencies toward overspending, will inevitably take its toll later.

2. A potential complication is the change in the price level of imported goods. Especially now, when the global commodity market is recovering, price increases can therefore be expected. It may be somewhat reasonable to assume that entrepreneurs will not discount these price increases into higher sales prices. They have, in any case, only partially passed on *price reductions* for imported goods. In the long run, however, the impact of higher import prices on the domestic price level will be unstoppable. Is there the realisation that these price increases may result in *no* higher wages? Such a wage increase would erode the profit share to such an extent that new price increases from entrepreneurs are expected. Everything would then return to an inflationary gallop.

3. Finally, the already infamous "magnet effect" is to be feared. [284] This means that a new wage regulation in a particular industry will certainly not induce other industries to agree to *lower* wages. This is obvious in a period of high employment. In such a situation, "lagging behind" in wages carries the risk that workers will "desert" to companies where larger wage increases have been granted; thus, they lose their workers. This is a dangerous phenomenon. This magnet effect can lead to wages being set higher than is compatible with increased productivity, which means potential overspending.

The Government will need to guard against this phenomenon, especially during this transitional period. First, the formation of "very strong magnets" can be countered. If an exceptional increase in productivity is observed in a particular industry, this will also partially result in lower sales prices. However, if such an increase in productivity is expressed entirely in higher wages, it will make things very difficult for other industries. Furthermore, the rule should be that if the increase in productivity cannot justify a specific wage increase, the entrepreneur will have to choose the path of improved efficiency and the replacement of labour with capital (mechanization). Any other reaction in this regard will have serious consequences, and that for the entrepreneur, moreso than merely a temporary turnover of labour.

§ 4. A Distinctive Direction in Cyclical Policy

We can now take stock and attempt to reach conclusions. To this end, we will proceed from the distinction already made between expenditure factors and cost (remuneration) factors in the economic cycle.

I. With regard to *expenditure tensions* caused by greater demand (for consumer and investment goods combined) than what corresponds to the national product, budgetary and monetary policy can contribute to decompression. The reader will recall that this is particularly necessary in a situation of full employment. If this situation has not yet been achieved, the tension will resolve itself into increased *production*, and therefore, no Government contribution to decompression is necessary.

Furthermore, we have expressed our opinion that in budgetary policy, *tax manipulation* (regarding collection periods, the severity of the tax burden, etc.) should generally be preferred.

In our view, an Anti-Revolutionary cyclical policy can be based on the principle that the Government should strive to *neutralize* rather than *compensate*

for existing tensions.[39] In other words: cyclical tensions should, in principle, be combated in the area where they arise, and not by counter-movements from another sector. A few examples can clarify this.

Overspending can arise because entrepreneurs excessively increase their investments. [285] For example, due to a major threat of war, they attempt to build up large additional inventories using bank credit. In such a situation (which we experienced in the Netherlands during the Korean crisis), this overspending will primarily have to be addressed by raising interest rates or restricting credit. Increasing income tax, for example, is certainly less likely.

Another example: if private spending is too low to fully reduce potential national production, the obvious solution is to stimulate spending primarily by lowering income taxes. Measures in the area of monetary policy (interest rate reductions) or expenditure policy (higher Government spending) will be discussed subsequently, they are of secondary concern.

A neutralizing policy, therefore, intervenes where the wound is; a compensatory policy, on the other hand, attempts to heal the wound by administering an antidote elsewhere.

It seems to us that in an Anti-Revolutionary policy, this neutralizing intervention should be preferred. If economic life were nothing more than a mechanism, the choice between compensatory and neutralizing intervention could be dictated solely by considerations of expediency and effectiveness. However, since this concerns the relationship between the Government and *people,* the economic agents, the criterion of effectiveness cannot be sufficient. Moreover, Government action must remain *transparent* to citizens and must always be open to scrutiny for its justification. Such neutralizing intervention makes this possible. The purpose of Government action remains clear to citizens because the economic "error" is corrected *on the spot*. Compensatory intervention lacks this transparency.

It might be noted here, as an aside, that Keynesians - and almost every economist is a Keynesian these days - ascribe a very prominent place to compensatory Government action. The plans of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) are even based on this principle. Keynes's own conviction that economic life is inherently disharmonious[40] is perhaps not

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39 **BG FTN 16** C. Goedhart, *op. cit.*, p. 338, demonstrates the economic advantages of this principle. We refrain from addressing emergency situations.

40 **BG FTN 17** The proof for this proposition cannot be provided in this space. Readers who are somewhat familiar with Keynes's theory may be reminded that Keynes, in fact, bases his theory on equations of an overdetermined system.

unrelated to this preference for compensatory intervention. In an inherently disharmonious whole, neutralizing, that is, corrective intervention, is not sufficient; economic life as a whole must be *managed*. Compensatory intervention is then the only option.

II. A few words regarding *wage tensions*. Implementing a direct wage and/or price policy is practically the only way to prevent existing wage tensions from leading to inflationary developments. However, the emphasis must be on the individual responsibility of the organizations involved; they will have to prevent these tensions *from arising*. Only in the case of irresponsible reactions will the Government be allowed to remain impartial, but must safeguard the general well-being of the people.

AR Staatkunde jrg-30 1960 pp.137-152

2. CALVIN'S ETHICS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE

B. Goudzwaard, ECON. DRS.
researcher for the Dr. A. Kuyperstichting

Calvin's Time:

A medieval legend tells us how a certain person once found devils in every nook and cranny of a monastery, while in the marketplace he saw only one, perched atop a pillar. Astonished by this, this expressed his amazement to a clergyman[1] who, however, was ready with an explanation:

> "In monasteries, a large supply of devils is needed to tempt the monks. In the marketplace, one is more than enough, for every person there is inherently a devil."[2]

This is a decidedly unflattering assessment that we can take as typical for how people in the Middle Ages thought about the trade and the merchant class. Merchants were simply not respectable, viewed as those who sought to enrich themselves at the expense of others; by virtue of the occupation they practised, they must have already lent an ear to the devil.

Where did this so very negative view come from? We can only properly understand this by giving attention to the prevailing circumstances of that time. It was the daily life practise as well as the life outlook[3] of those days that gave rise to this negative attitude to the merchant class.

In their daily affairs[4], people in the Middle Ages were confronted with the excesses that occurred in the trading cities of Northern Italy. There the Renaissance was emerging, with a new spirit of human self-awareness that would permeate all areas of life and soon would unsettle all of Europe. In economic life, this new sense of human self-worth led to a significant expansion of trading activities. This expansion, however, was accompanied by increasing lawlessness and immorality. For medieval Christians, such

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1 BCW Note: Dutch: *een geestelijke*

2 **BG FTN 1** Cited by J.B. Kraus, **Scholastik, Puritanismus und Kapitalismus, Eine vergleichende dogmengeschichtliche Übergangsstudie**. München & Leipzig 1930. Duncker & Humblot. p. 78. (Scholasticism, Puritanism and Capitalism: A comparative historical study of the development of dogma.)

3 BCW Note: Dutch: *levenspraktijk als de levensbeschouwing* . Goudzwaard is emphasizing to his readers that to appreciate another time, perhaps in another place, one has to keep in mind that there are "ways of life" and "worldviews" that are being consider.

4 BCW Note: Dutch: *praktijk*

accompanying practices served as a deterrent. So one did well by avoiding the merchant's occupation; one should not lead oneself into temptation.

As well, the teachings and life-outlook of those days meant that trade and the merchant class were not held in high regard. *Scholasticism* - the church's system of doctrine in the Middle Ages - gave respect[5] to a social outlook that could not, in fact, tolerate the dynamic and progressive merchant class. (138) Following Paul's image from 1 Corinthians 12, *scholasticism* viewed human society as a beautiful organism in which the various parts, the noble and the less noble, are united into one purposeful whole, simultaneously serving one another in mutual aid, while each maintained their own place and value. Thus, the different *classes* were expected to assist one another and respect each other's place and value.[6]

In this scheme, trade was more or less out of place. *Scholasticism* could only justify the activities of the merchant class if the merchants did not elevate themselves financially above the other classes; they had to be aware of their modest place in the organic whole of human society. And that was precisely what was lacking with the merchant class. They were always wanting more and more than they deserved.[7] The merchant was naturally inclined to benefit and advance himself at the expense of others. No wonder Scholasticism regarded the desires of merchants with suspicion; their greed was seen as a malignant tumor in the beautiful organism of human society.

Scholasticism's attempted to keep trade in check via the principle of the "just price". This principle stipulated that in every purchase agreement, the price had to be set so that both parties would enjoy *equal*[8] benefits from the transaction. Therefore, a good could not be traded above its value; that would disadvantage the buyer. The value of a good was seen as primarily determined by the amount of labour expended on it.

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5 BCW Note: Dutch - *huldigde*

6 BCW Note: Goudzwaard here does not completely rule out the (social) possibility of the *scholastic* outlook viewing the merchant class in terms of its construal of Paul's teaching of the organs of the body contributing to each other, but his subsequent discussion will be his attempt to explain, while giving an account of Calvin's distinctive social ethics, how the respective views of Scholasticism and Renaissance concerning economic life were incompatible.

7 BCW Note: The moreso because of the emergence of a life outlook (*lebensbeschouwing*) that found its inspiration in the emergeing idea of human independence, autonomy.

8 BCW Note: Dutch: *gelijke* - **equal**. As throughout, this is a key term for the coherence of Goudzwaard's discussion. It is compared later on in his exposition with the term **equity -** Dutch *billijkheid* and matched with **right** (*recht)*.

So the *scholastic* idea amounted to the teaching that no price should deviate from the total production costs of the good in question. This was an impossible demand; it effectively tied trade hand and foot. For where price is linked to costs, the chance of a real commercial profit is zero. Thus, any opportunity for the merchant to prosper in his business by making a profit was cut off.

The principle of the "just price" stems from the static character of the *scholastic* social outlook. Class relations must not be compromised! Therefore, no purchase contract could be tolerated that offered more advantages to one party than the other. For when that happens, the balance is out of kilter: the social equilibrium between the classes is threatened with disruption.

As an aside, we should mention here that the principle that both parties should benefit equally from the purchase (exchange) - the so-called *principle of equality*[9] - was also applied by *scholastics* to *the charging of interest*.[10] Lending money entails no additional labour or expense for the borrower; therefore, no price may be charged for the loan. If this were to happen, the advantages and disadvantages of the contract would not be distributed equally among the contracting parties, and the harmony of the classes would be undermined. After all, was money capable of producing money as a horse produces a foal?

The same idea of maintaining social harmony also provided the background for the so-called *prohibition of competition*,[11] which was (139) imposed on trade and guilds. To compete means to deprive someone of their livelihood; and that is a direct violation of the prescribed social equilibrium. Yet, medieval society had an exception to the rule that one should not enrich oneself at the expense of others. It was the church and the clergy who violated this rule. Once, upon seeing the majestic splendor of the Gothic cathedrals, St. Bernard exclaimed:

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9 BCW Note: Dutch: *gelijkheidbeginsel*

10 BCW Note: Dutch: *rentevorming*

11 BCW Note: Dutch: *concurrentieverbod*

"So money begets money again! O vanity of vanities! The church is full of splendor in its walls, but a beggar in its arms. She clothes her stones in gold, but leaves her sons naked and bare."[12]

As already mentioned, economic life could not develop in this way; it remained paralyzed as long as it remained captive to this ecclesiastical ethic and forced to move within this straitjacket. Is it any wonder that, when economic life finally had the chance to spread its wings, people, in reaction, refused to acknowledge any single connection and surrendered to economic *licentiousness*?

This is indeed how the development in the Italian merchant cities can be characterized: people no longer recognized any limits to their pursuit of profit; "business is business" was the principle; a rigid, rationalistic attitude to life emerged. The static and organic structure of medieval society was transformed so that its social shape became that of a dynamic and radically individualistic character.[13]

In his book **The Sociology of the Renaissance**,[14] Dr. Von Martin recounts how even one's personal life was reduced to economic thought patterns. For example, a certain merchant had a feud with another merchant and "recorded" it in his normal business accounts as a debit entry with the description: "N.N. owes me his life." A few days later, in the same accounts, we find a credit entry: "N.N. debt now paid." Even life and death were placed within the framework of economic profitability.

When John Calvin wrote his **Institutes**, the Renaissance had already been underway for some time. Machiavelli had already written that the state need not submit to morality, but can create *its own*. America and the Indies had already been discovered. The center of gravity of European trade was shifting to the Netherlands (Antwerp). However, the Roman Catholic Church still wielded considerable spiritual power over people; the principle of equality, and the resulting prohibition on interest, still hampered economic enterprise.

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12 **BG FTN 2** Cited by R H Tawney. **Religion and The Rise of Capitalism** Pelican 1948 p. 42.
BCW Note: The quote reads: *"Thus,"* exclaimed Bernard, as he gazed at the glories of the Gothic architecture, *"wealth is drawn up by ropes of wealth, thus money bringeth money ... O vanity of vanities, yet no more vain than insane! The Church is resplendent in her walls, beggarly in her poor. She clothes her stones in gold and leaves her sons naked."* The footnote and reference reads: From a letter of St. Bernard c.1125 printed by Coulton *A Mediaeval Garner,* 1910 pp.68-73.

13 BCW Note: Dutch: *De statische en organische structuur van de middeleeuwse samenleving sloeg om in een maatschappijvorm van dynamische en radicaal-individualistische aard.*

14 **BG FTN 3** Published in Dutch in the Aula edition Alfred von Martin **De Sociologie van de Renaissance.**
BCW Note: English edition **Sociology of the Renaissance,** International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, Ed. Karl Mannheim, New York: Oxford University Press. 1944.

What attitude does Calvin adopt toward all this? Does he side with the Roman Church on the issue of the ethics of socio-economic life? Or does he, in effect, surrender himself to the libertine Renaissance? The dilemma seems inescapable. Does Calvin want economic life regulated[15], or does he leave it free?

Calvin's Path

Six months ago, a book was published that can provide us with further information about Calvin's thoughts on the ethics of socio-economic life: (140) **Calvin's Economic and Social Thought**.[16] It was written by theologian and economist Dr. A. Biéler, student chaplain at the University of Geneva.

The great advantage of this book is that it consists of approximately 50% citations from Calvin's own work. While other books often simply cite references in a footnote, here all relevant evidence is fully included within the text. The author deserves praise for not prioritizing his personal thoughts on Calvin, but for limiting himself to an objective presentation of Calvin's own intentions.

The book's title is somewhat misleading. Calvin never aimed to provide a comprehensive system of economic thought; he only touches on economic issues as they have arisen in his pastoral work, when he has to advise the faithful on their stance in social life. It is therefore an *ethics* of economic life, something Biéler, incidentally, does not deny in his preface.[17]

Calvin's sermons, letters, and Biblical commentaries provide[18] a clear picture of the great reformer's vision for the social and economic life of his time. Furthermore, significant are the practical measures he recommended to Geneva's city council, in order to achieve healthier socio-economic conditions. It is not, however, our intention to dwell at length on these measures here. We will confine ourselves to mentioning the most important

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15 BCW Note: Dutch *reglementeert*

16 BCW Note: Andre Biéler **La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin** George 1959. English edn **Calvin's Economic and Social Thought** E. Dommen (Editor) J Greig (Translator) WCC 2005.

17 BCW Note: By putting it in this way, by emphasizing Calvin's *pastoral concern,* Goudzwaard is also avoiding the view that Calvin was developing a "theology of economics".

18 BCW Note: The word "provide", translating the Dutch term *verkrijgen,* is an important concept in Goudzwaard's systematic argument. It is found 5 more times in this article and is used of scholarship that "obtains", "gets" or "provides" particular insights. It is instructive that Goudzwaard's discussion is disciplined in this use of words, giving structure to his account of Calvin's social ethics, but in a way that will also allow his critical comparison and contrast of Calvin's economic ethics with that of scholasticism and Renaissance. This piece is such a three-way comparison and contrast.

ones: the provision of free medical care for the poor[19]; the fixing of the prices of bread, wine, and meat; the regulation of working hours; the obligation of primary education attendance; the rehabilitation of the disabled and sick; public works and retraining for the unemployed; assistance to strangers passing through the city; the establishment of the diaconate; the prohibition of begging, as there was no longer any reason for it in Geneva.

The price fixing of bread, wine, and meat (the necessities of that time) is particularly interesting. This was necessary because prices kept rising, causing the less fortunate to suffer. Calvin, therefore, lived in a time of inflation! The cause of this lay not only in the large influx of precious metals into Old Europe due to the discovery of the New World, but also in the large influx of immigrants into Geneva, resulting from religious persecution in France. Moreover, merchants kept prices *excessively* high; they exploited the scarcity of all these goods.

Such trading practices found no favor with Calvin. From the pulpit, he rebuked them: by engaging in such conduct, one is not only a thief, but also a murderer, for this is nothing less than endangering the life of one's neighbour. In these ways the poor are seized by the throat!

Calvin's actions already demonstrate that the unbridled Renaissance spirit is not his, for he certainly recognizes standards that have been established for the conduct of trade. But the scholastics before him also saw this. In that respect, there is nothing new under the sun. But what then is the real difference between Calvin and scholastic teaching? Or are there no differences between the two?

(141) It is particularly to the credit of Professor Bohatec of Vienna[20] to have uncovered the fundamental idea of Calvin's ethics of socio-economic life. This can be summarized with two short expressions:

1. the idea of *society as an organism*;
2. the idea of *right dealing and fairness* in personal relationships.

Calvin's view that human society is an organic relationship is shared with the scholastics. Like scholastics, he distinguishes different classes and groups within society, "in that holy bond of community", in which "all are

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19 BCW Note: Dutch: *De verlening van gratis doktershulp aan de armen*.

20 **BG FTN 4** See Josef Bohatec: **Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche**, **Buch IV: Die einzelnen Stände in dem Staatsorganismus**. Breslau : M. & H. Marcus,1937. Also from Bohatec: **Calvin und das Recht** Neudr. D. Ausg. Feudingen 1934 and various articles in *Philosophia Reformata* and *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*. Sadly, Bohatec is not mentioned in Dr. Biéler's extensive bibliography.

each other's neighbours", because they are all human.[21] However, there is a striking difference between the two. In *Scholasticism*, we find the idea that the classes have different values and can be ranked accordingly. The lowest classes are those that provide for people's livelihood; the highest class is the clergy. Thus, there is a gradual ascent from the realm of nature to that of grace. It is the church that takes all classes and forms of society under its control, assigning to each individual class its own place, regulating the appropriate partial tasks for each class, with a view to the God-ordained goal of the whole.[22]

In Calvin, the classes are equal before God. They are not placed above one another, which would lead them to ascend to God in a hierarchical order, but they all stand directly in front of God. Therefore, there can be no difference in value between the clerical and worldly classes.[23] The path to God's grace is no longer blocked by the necessary mediation of the church. Buying and selling, daily work, all take place right before the eyes of the living Christ.

This signifies a turnaround in the ethics of economic life. It is a step of enormous significance. The schema of nature and grace is broken through to its roots.

Already in the early church was this schema in operation. The error that there was no salvation outside the institutional church began early. It was canonized by dogma that sacraments are the vehicles of grace: if there is no salvation outside the sacraments, and it is the priest who administers the sacraments, then there is also no salvation to be found apart from the priest, and therefore outside the church.[24]

But the more salvation was identified with ecclesiastical office, the more life outside the church as a whole was called the world.[25] And with that, the state and the entirety of socio-economic life was viewed as in principle to lie within the domain of evil. They needed to be sanctified by the church

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21 **BG FTN 5** Calvin, on Luke 10:30. Biéler, op.cit, p. 234. This confirms Calvin's view that community among people did not stop at the church, as sometimes suggested (e.g. by Troeltsch and Kraus).

22 **BG FTN 6** Troeltsch, **Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen**, p. 322.

23 **BG FTN 7** Bohatec, **Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche**, p. 635; Biéler, pp. 413ff.
BCW Note: Goudzwaard is indulging the language of the scholastic schema, higher and lower, nature and grace. The phrase in Dutch reads: *de geestelijke stand en de wereldlijke standen - the spiritual and the worldy classes*. In other words the language used does not denote a difference in standing - both are before God, *coram Deo*..

24 **BG FTN 8** Troeltsch, **Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen**, p. 89.

25 **BG FTN 9** Troeltsch, *ibid* p. 93.

(142) before they could take their place before God. Nature needed the light of churchly grace.

Calvin, on the other hand, assumes that both the state and socio-economic life are sanctified in Christ Jesus and therefore do not fall into the domain of evil. He therefore speaks with the greatest boldness about the *Christian* state, about *Christian* council chambers, about such a *godly* occupation.[26] In a letter to the Duke of Somerset, he states that rulers must subordinate the insignia of their dignity to the spiritual scepter of Christ. To Edward VI he writes:

> *It is an inestimable privilege, Sire, that God has granted you to be a Christian king, which means that you are willing to serve Him as your leader. For all things belong to God and to our dear Redeemer, who bought us at such a high price.*[27]

And regarding socio-economic life, he says in a sermon on Matthew 3:11-12 that it is God himself who calls us to our calling.

> *The word 'call'*[28] *can also be rendered 'appeal': and this appeal implies that God points with His finger and says to each one: I want you to live this way and in no other way.*[29]

In an inimitable way, Calvin demonstrates the significance of creation, the fall, and redemption for socio-economic life. His concept of society as an organism is permeated by this fundamental motif.

In His creation, God did not make all people equal. They differ in ability, sex, disposition, and therefore also in power. God did not do this without great wisdom. These differences mean that people are obligated to maintain fellowship with one another and to achieve a steady exchange of spiritual, material, and cultural goods. Calvin approvingly quotes the ancient rule that people are born for one another.[30] This exchange, including of material things, must occur spontaneously. Such is God's will: God has destined the fruits of creation for *everyone*. In God's creation, no one is superfluous.

It is *sin*, however, that has destroyed this intention. Because of it, this spontaneous exchange is hindered, and the glaring difference between great wealth and deep poverty has arisen in the world. The natural order of

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26 BCW Note: Dutch *beroep*. Calling, vocation.

27 **BG FTN 10** W. de Zwart, **Calvijn in het licht zijner brieven**, pp. 120, 130.

28 BCW Note: Dutch: *beroep*

29 **BG FTN 11** Biéler p. 404.

30 **BG FTN 12** Biéler, p. 235.

society, which rests on economic solidarity among people, has been undermined to its very roots.

It is in Christ that society will once again be able to fulfill its purpose; through Him, the possibility of true community service has been restored. It is in this broken world that the church may bear witness to this unique restoration through Christ. It is here, if all goes well, that the consequences of Christ's redemption will be revealed: there, the spontaneous exchange that the world has lost will be rediscovered. Redemption in Christ does not mean that all differences between people should disappear. On the contrary: precisely through them, God wants to establish community among his creatures. But differences are stripped of the divisive character that sin has given them. In Christ - still: (143) if all is well - right relationships are rediscovered. In Him, employer and employee find a good understanding. In Christ, the rich come to the aid of the poor because they know they are poor for Christ. If Calvin emphasized one thing, it was the provision of spontaneous help for the poor. No wonder, because for Calvin this was the attested evidence to the world that Christ had indeed redeemed creation.[31]

For Calvin, the poor person is the site manager,[32] who, in a life of gratitude, may stand in for Christ until He returns, having been given the divine office to test the faith of the rich.[33] Generosity to the poor is the condition upon which God grants wealth. The white robes of those who bathe in luxury are stained with the blood of the poor.[34] It is nothing but a *lie* when a spiritual life does not manifest itself in material deeds.[35]

Thus, the members of the one organism should help each other.

It is in connection with this idea that Calvin also arrives at an assessment of the merchant class that is more positive than the scholastic view. He assigns commerce a very important role; it is as an *intermediary* in the exchange of goods between people.

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31 BCW Note: Dutch: *Geen wonder, want voor Calvijn stond of viel hiermede het getuigenis aan de wereld, dat Christus inderdaad de schepping heeft verlost*.

32 BCW Note: Dutch *procureur* - a legal officer whose task is to oversee the conduct of tenants.

33 **BG FTN 13** Biéler p. 327.

34 **BG FTN 14** Cited by Bohatec. **Calvins Lehre van Staat und Kirche**, p. 738.

35 **BG FTN 15** Biéler, p. 346.

Biéler calls the meaning of merchantship: *"expression of human solidarity and the sign of spiritual communion."*[36] The merchant too conducts business in the presence of Christ. But then the merchant is no longer free to do as he pleases.

Then all his actions must be *just and fair* if he does not want to shame Christ in this life.

Here we encounter the second fundamental principle of Calvin's ethics of social and economic life: the idea of *right and equity*[37] (*droit et équité*). Bohatec translates this principle as follows:

> *equity is the requirement that everyone receive their due, that to which they are entitled; that one person will understand others in true brotherhood, humanity, and loyalty, to do everything to others that he expects from others.*[38]

This principle is derived from the Gospel rule of Matthew 7:12: *"All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do also to them."* It is therefore not new. But the use Calvin makes of it in this context opens up new perspectives. With this rule, he connects socio-economic life to Christian ethics, *without hindering the development of that life!* This is the answer to both *Scholasticism* and the *Renaissance*. *Scholasticism* sacrificed economic development to its ethics, while the *Renaissance* abandoned ethics for the sake of economic development. In Calvin, neither is abandoned. *For equity and economic development are in perfect harmony.*[39]

Two applications of the principle of equity may clarify this. The first takes the form of a question: for how much may a merchant sell his goods? You recall the scholastic answer: at a fair price, with the understanding that [144] buyer and seller enjoy equal benefits.

Calvin, on the other hand, would have said: at a price that is just and fair; that is, the merchant must *be fair* to the buyer. He must put himself in the buyer's position and act as he would wish to be treated himself. Should he then offer the goods at the cheapest possible price? No: for the merchant

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36 **BG FTN 16** "Uitdrukking van menselijke solidariteit en teken van geestelijke gemeenschap", op cit., p. 414. "Expression of human solidarity and sign of spiritual community"

37 BCW Note: *de gedachte van recht en billijkheid*

38 **BG FTN 17** Bohatec, **Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche**, p. 695.

39 BCW Note: The Dutch terms *billijk and billijkheid* is found throughout this article. It is often twinned with *recht*, as in - justice and fairness/ equity - and is used to explain Calvin's ethic of ascribing what is due to a person, whoever they are, in the office in which they are called *Coram Deo*. It is a central term of Goudzwaard's interpretation of Calvin's economic ethics.

also has his due; it would be unfair were he not allowed to build and prosper his business. So, a certain profit is certainly permitted to him.

What, then, is the essential difference from the *Scholastic* answer? The answer is that the right to develop one's own enterprise is included in the principle of equity, while it is not even addressed in the principle of equality. Profitability considerations, *as such,* are to be given their due! Calvin creates space here for economic and dynamic development.

Calvin himself provided a second application of the principle of equity when he addressed the issue of interest. *Scholasticism* generally condemned interest but permitted it in exceptional cases. Calvin, on the other hand, generally permitted interest but disapproved of it in exceptional cases. This difference arose because *Scholasticism* proceeded from the principle of equality[40] while Calvin proceeded from the principle of equity.[41] For, as Calvin argues, interest in itself is not proscribed.[42] It would be *unfair* if the lender, who must forgo this money, were never allowed to demand compensation from the one who benefits from the loan! It is fair when the lender enjoys some economic return on his money.

In this context, Calvin's exegesis of Deuteronomy 23:20 is interesting. This refers to the instruction to the people of Israel not to charge interest from fellow countrymen. But they are permitted to charge interest from foreigners. The reason for this, according to Calvin, was that lending at interest was common practice among other nations. Therefore, it would have caused the Israelites great harm in their economic dealings with other nations if they had not been allowed to charge interest from foreigners. It would have placed them at a disadvantage. The economic balance between the countries would have been disrupted to the detriment of Israel.

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40 BCW Note: Dutch: ge*lijkheidsbeginsel*

41 BCW Note: Dutch: *billijkheidsbeginsel*

42 **BG FTN 18** For the following reasons, Calvin does not consider the Old Testament prohibition of interest to be valid for his time: 1. The prohibition was part of the political laws of the people of Israel, which no longer apply as such in the new dispensation; 2. Times have changed completely. The Bible, therefore, understands the word "interest" differently than we do. The relatively new phenomenon of interest on loans for productive purposes is not yet referred to there; 3. It would be legalistic to take this prohibition literally. The Bible only means that justice and fairness must be observed between creditor and debtor. When this requirement is met, taking interest is permitted according to the spirit of the law. (Calvin, **Commentary on Leviticus** 25, Psalm 15, and Ezekiel 18. Biéler, op. cit., pp. 453 ff.)
BCW Note: In other writings, Goudzwaard demonstrates his competence as an analyst of comparative economic systems by reference to the Deuteronomic prohibition of interest.
see Johan J Graafland "Calvin's Restrictions on Interest: Guidelines for the Credit Crisis" *European Banking Center Discussion Paper No. 2009-22*. Tilburg University Nov. 2009. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225946021_Calvin's_Restrictions_on_Interest_Guidelines_for_the_Credit_Crisis

Therefore, *fairness* dictated that the prohibition of interest should not apply to foreigners!

The same idea underlies this again: economic life has its own requirements, obeys its own laws, which are recognized as such in the principle of equity.

Regarding mutual aid, the principle of equity means that one need not assist another beyond one's own capabilities. [145] One need not completely undermine one's own position. It would be unfair to ask such a thing.

Some might see all this as a weakening, a partial capitulation to the ruthless principle of the Renaissance: "business is business". Doesn't this completely free up the formation of prices and interest rates? It might seem so, yet, this would be an incorrect conclusion because *the principle of fairness works both ways*. Not only in the interests of the seller, but also those of the buyer must be considered! In business, the interests of *both* parties must be weighed. This is best illustrated by Calvin's handling of the question of the permissibility of interest.

It has been said that Calvin treats interest like a pharmacist deals with poison. Indeed. For he strives to avoid at all costs the idea that one now has free rein in this area. Therefore, he considers the charging of interest to be permissible only with the greatest possible reservation. He clearly states that charging interest is absolutely wrong when lending money to a poor person. This would be contrary to all *fairness* and constitute a departure from the evangelical rule of charity. Charging interest, however fair in itself, must yield to the interests of the poor. Calvin even goes further than Scholasticism. When a rich person lends money to a poor person, the rich person not only may not charge interest, but must even give the entire principal to the poor person if the latter is in need. This is the requirement of Christ. Under such circumstances, considerations of profitability must completely give way to the duty of charity. And this rule applies not only to taking interest, but also to normal business practices. Profitability considerations are undoubtedly justified, but they must be limited by what is appropriate for one's neighbour. They must *never ever* be implemented merely as a matter of course.

Thus, Calvin's principle of equity replaces[43] the *Scholastic* principle of equality. It expresses itself in a completely different attitude toward socio-economic life. It not only manifests a different attitude toward the

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43 BCW Note: Dutch: *vervangt* in the sense of a teaching that replaces another view in its contribution to the prevailing economic ethos.

merchant class, but also in a different appreciation of poverty in society. The *Scholastic* rule was that even in contracts with the poor, equal benefits should accrue to both parties, so that the ordered inequality across the various estates can be maintained. Opposing this, Calvin posits the rule that equal compensation from the poor should not be expected in order that greater equality between the classes can be gained.[44]

(146) Can this principle of fairness now be seen as a new ecclesiastical rule of obligation? Certainly not. It is a principle that Calvin gave to those who asked him how they should also profess their faith in economic life. It can only be applied freely, in the personal faith relationship with Christ. Calvin says in his commentary on Psalm 15:

> *It is a rule that the faithful must have written on their hearts... This rule gives us more than the longest disputes in the world.*[45]

If one were to characterize Calvin's ethics of socio-economic life in but two words, they would have to be *organic* and *dynamic*. First, the principle of fairness, freely applied, fosters a correct understanding toward other members of the organism concerning their duties. Secondly, it makes possible the possibility that economic life will develop according to its own laws. It was primarily this last element that laid the foundation for the great prosperity from this ethic, the "golden age" of the Calvinist countries in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Business could only develop according to its own nature.

To conclude this section, we would like to briefly consider the role the Government plays in all of this. It must preserve and maintain the order established in society by God's foresight. This order, which Calvin calls the civil or political order, is expressed in the natural social relationships between people, ranging from marriage and family to trade and employment. This external order must be protected by the Government

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44 **BG FTN 19** Cf. Bohatec, **Calvin's Lehre von Staat und Kirche**, p. 699. One should not conclude from the above that the *scholastics* were unconcerned with the poor. They considered help for the poor of utmost importance, but saw this primarily reflected in the duty of "almsgiving". This, was help therefore that went beyond the economic contract, which was assumed to be based solely on equality. On the other hand, the presentation of Calvin's rule should not be understood to mean that he aimed for complete equality in material circumstances between the different classes and individuals. On the contrary: Calvin sees no objection to the wealthy living in comfort from their wealth. (Biéler, *op.cit*, p.320). This concerns what Calvin, following Aristotle, calls "analogical equality", which is measured by qualities and possibilities. Calvin himself summarizes it in the following words: *God wills that there should be such an analogy and equality among us that each should give to the weak according to his ability, so that one will not have excess while others suffer want*. (Commentary on 2 Cor. 8:13, Biéler, *op.cit*, p. 349).

45 **BG FTN 20** Biéler, p. 467.
BCW Note: In other words this simple rule provides greater wealth than all the long-winded negotiations and ambit-claims about who should get what.

against the destructive effects of sin,[46] so that material, spiritual, and cultural exchange between people can be maintained. In this sense, the Government is the *head* of the organic whole of society.

The question of property is also interesting for our time in this context. If the rich refuse to support and help the poor in society, may the Government, as head of the organism, then use coercion and redistribute wealth? Isn't this implicit in the requirement that the civil order be protected against the ravages of sin?

Calvin discusses this question in a sermon on how Israel were fed with manna during their journey through the desert. The Israelites gathered this among themselves and divided it proportionally according to the number of family members: an omer per head was allowed (Ex. 16:16). Calvin points out that Paul also cites this story in 2 Cor. 8 and offers it as an example for life in the church: the church members must provide for one another's needs.[47] Calvin then continues:

> *The manna, however, was provided to the people every day, without labour or effort. Therefore, it was not surprising that God wanted everyone to receive an equal share and therefore forbade anyone to hold back. A different rule applies to everyday life. To provide people with food in friendship* (147) *and peace, it is necessary that everyone have their own; that buying and selling take place; that heirs inherit what is their due; that there is room for gifts; that everyone can enrich themselves according to their zeal, strength, diligence, or other means. In short, civil order demands that everyone enjoy what belongs to them. Therefore, it would be a great absurdity to impose a similar law for ordinary life as we read here about the manna.*

And elsewhere he writes:

> *What confusion would not arise if the rich were robbed of what they have in order to help the poor? Let us take good note that God leaves to everyone what they have, whether by inheritance, purchase, or any other just claim (juste titre). God does not want civil order to be confused and justice to be perverted. If the rich fail to fulfill their duties, if they are so inhuman as to allow the poor to die of want, then they will give account of it; but that will be before the* ***heavenly*** *judge. (*BG: *emphasis added).*

The state will therefore have to protect property rights; they are included in the civil order, which the Government must uphold.

This does not mean that Calvin upholds an absolute concept of ownership. The right to property must indeed be protected; but the fruits of

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46 **BG FTN 21** Biéler, p. 281.

47 **BG FTN 22** Biéler, p. 322, 336.

ownership are certainly also intended for the poor. For example, in his sermon on Deuteronomy 23:24-25, Calvin says the following:

> *Everyone shall reap from his own land, pick from his own vineyard, and gather his own produce. God wants everyone to enjoy his possessions without being disturbed. This does not mean at all that there should be such cruelty that the poor cannot be supported at all. God allows those who reap to gather and pluck the ears of grain by hand.*

Biéler rightly concludes from this that the legal form of ownership must therefore be such that it does not hinder service to one's neighbour.[48]

Calvin's Place

It is a well-known fact that, among the great historians, sociologists, and economists, Calvin generally fares worse than Luther. Max Weber expresses the (value) judgment that Calvin did not, as Luther did, experience the *"decretum horribIe"* (God's eternal decree), but rather conceived it.[49] This is in contrast to Calvin's own words:

> *I am convinced in my conscience that what I have written did not originate in my mind, but was received from God.*[50]

Tawney believes he is entitled to say:

> *If the only Christian documents remaining to us were the New Testament and the records of the Calvinist churches of the Reformation period, it would in all likelihood be a presumptuous extravagance to suppose a more intimate connection between the two than a coincidence of (148) words. Legalistic, mechanical, without imagination or compassion, the work of a jurist and a genius organizer, (because of all this) Calvin's system was more Roman than Christian, and more Jewish than either of these.*[51]

Prof. Bouwman, in our country, adds the following:

> *Calvin showed not the slightest inclination to recommend the radical ethics of the Sermon on the Mount for everyday life. Anyone who wanted to honor God in the fullness of life, even in all corners of political and economic activity, could not always be scrupulous.*[52]

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48 **BG FTN 23** Biéler, pp. 380 ff.

49 **BG FTN 24** Weber, **Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus,** in: **Gesammeltete Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie,** p. 92.
BCW Note: **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism** (trans Talcott Parsons) 1930, p.102 "With Calvin the *decretum horribile* is derived not, as with Luther, from religious experience, but from the logical necessity of his thought; therefore its importance increases with every increase in the logical consistency of that religious thought."

50 **BG FTN 25** Calvin, Letter to the Geneva Council, in: W. de Zwart, **Calvin in het licht van zijn brieven**, p. 130

51 **BG FTN 26** Tawney, **Religion and the Rise of Capitalism**, pp. 138-139.

52 **BG FTN 27** P.J. Bouwman, **Van Renaissance tot Wereldoorlog**, p 45 (pocket-edition).

It is not our intention to refute these accusations here in detail. That would be repetition. We must, however, pay some attention to Max Weber's suggestion, adopted by Troeltsch and many others, that "the capitalist spirit" emerged from Calvinist thought.[53]

Weber bases this statement on an internal contradiction he believes he can identify in the capitalist mentality. On the one hand, he argues, the capitalist lifestyle is characterized by a high degree of rationality and calculation; on the other hand, we also encounter the idea that making as much profit as possible should be considered an ethical duty.[54] This latter point, however, does not demonstrate calculation and rational deliberation. A rational person will never see making profit as anything more than a *means* to an end, namely, to achieve a higher standard of living. Making as much profit as possible, both as a *goal* and as a *duty*, is an "irrational" element in capitalism. How is it possible, Weber then asks, that capitalism unites these two elements? How did this condition arise?

Weber sees Calvinism as the culprit. At its core, we find both the element of calculation (rationality) and that of a sense of duty. Calvinism contained these contradictory elements from the very beginning.[55]

Calvin's doctrine rests on the pillars of calling and election. Calvin saw the profession as a call from God and held the view that human salvation was preordained by God from eternity. These two doctrines were closely linked by Calvin's followers (particularly Beza) in the sense that humans, uncertain as they are about their own salvation, can secure their election from God through "restless professional work," and thus, by fulfilling their calling, they can thereby be assured of their own election.[56] This already presented the inherent contradiction of capitalism.

On the one hand, the Calvinist sees his life as a "task", a duty; on the other hand, he is expected to fulfill this task carefully, deliberately, and

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53 **BG FTN 28** For another view: W. F. van Gunsteren, **Kalvinism und Kapitalism**, Amsterdam, 1934.

54 **BG FTN 29** Weber, *op cit* 33 pp.

55 BCW Note: As noted in ftn. 49 above the alleged contradiction within the Capitalist world-view arises from a "calculation" of Calvin, says Weber, that posits what is logical in his own theological outlook with what is decreed by God and therefore gives a basis for the irrational basis of the capitalist view of the vocation to make as much money as possible. As pointed out by Goudzwaard's exposition of Biéler this proceeds to a systematic construal of Calvin's teaching that renders it merely the system with the *decretum horribile* at its centre. Calvin scholarship has long contested this reductionist view of Calvin's outlook.

56 **BG FTN 30** Weber, *op cit* pp. 94, 105.
BCW Note: corresponding **Protestant Ethic** pp. 102-105, and especially p.112: "in order to attain that self-confidence intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace."

according to a fixed methodology, because he will have to render an account of every last cent.[57] Thus, among Calvinist peoples, great professional zeal is combined with an extremely frugal lifestyle. (149) Here, making a profit arises as a necessary means to an ascetic duty, to the glory of God. Weber uses the striking expression for this mental attitude: *innerweltliche Askese* - asceticism *in the midst* of the world.[58]

In this way, Weber attempts to demonstrate that Calvinism and capitalism are closely related. The individualistic trait of capitalism can be partly traced back to the uncertainty concerning personal election of the Calvinist believer. The rationalistic trait is partly grounded in Calvin's principle that everything should be done for God's glory. The element of duty in the capitalist mentality stems from the Calvinist idea that everyone must make their own election certain in their daily work.

What should we think about all this?

We could summarize the criticism of this by stating that Weber narrows and distorts both Calvinism and capitalism in such an "ideal-typical" way that they actually become completely mutually exclusive. He has, as it were, in advance made them "fit for purpose".

Calvinism is distorted here. If Calvin could have read Max Weber's account of Calvinism, he would undoubtedly have remarked that he did not wish to be a Calvinist.[59] Under the name "Calvinism", Weber does not even offer a sketch of Calvin's own thoughts - as he himself admits - but of Puritanism, as it developed in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Biéler rightly calls Puritanism a bastard child of Calvinism.[60] There is a

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57 **BG FTN 31** Weber, *op cit* p. 135.

58 BCW Note: Despite his sharp critique of Weber's systematic deconstruction of Calvin's thought, Goudzwaard is still capable of acknowledging Weber insight into the way Weber saw Calvin's teaching encouraging engagement with the "secular" realm.

59 BCW Note: There is an echo here of the statement said by Engels, ascribed to Karl Marx that "I do not wish to be a Marxist!"

60 **BG FTN 32** Biéler, *op cit*. p. 495.
BCW Note: Perhaps it is the problem of historical study when one is also dealing with the history of the historiography of a particular movement that is then traced to a prominent initiator, so that in one's attempted social-historical account one is dealing with successive reconfigurations of how a "movement", as with the Reformation, but also of the Renaissance and Enlightement, let alone Scholasticism, got under way.

huge gulf between Calvin and the Puritan.[61] To mention just one point: the doctrine of election, which Calvin first develops in the latest edition of the **Institutes**, and which occupies a very modest place in his teaching, is absolutized and made central by Puritanism.

Calvin himself explicitly states that our election rests solely in Christ; thus it is never dependent on the extent of our professional zeal. Moreover, he condemned the rejection of wealth for its own sake, so condemning the ascetic attitude; wealth should not be rejected, but rather placed at the service of the poor. It was therefore primarily because of the dire poverty of his day that Calvin urged frugality. Calvin, incidentally, is the last person to be accused of individualism; his fundamental principle is, not for nothing, that society is an *organism*.

But capitalism is also distorted in Max Weber. It is unacceptable to reduce the capitalist spirit to the idea of rationally fulfilled duty, as Brentano, Kraus, and Sombart rightly objected to Weber. One would then only single out a single aspect of a complex whole.

One comes closer to the truth when one considers the essential characteristic of the capitalist spirit to be its *economistic* attitude: the phenomenon that one questions, above all, whether something is economically advantageous. Economic life then becomes an [150] ethically neutral arena, with which religion has no connection. Economic problems are then cast exclusively in terms of monetary profit.[62]

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61 BCW Note: Dutch *Er gaapt een enorme kloof tussen Calvijn en de puritein*. Here Goudzwaard is reliant upon Biéler for his conclusion from comparing and contrasting the 16th century Calvin (1509-1564), noting his significant differences with the Renaissance vision of economic life, and the later 17th century Puritanism that had absolutized his teaching of election as the basic axiom from which all other aspects of his contribution could be derived. As he will go on to say, "More than two centuries elapsed between Calvin's time and that of Puritanism. These two centuries were decisive for the Western European mentality." Tawney however sees Puritanism in terms of "the divorce between religious theory and economic theory" that had "long been evident" by the end of the 16th century. (**Religion and the Rise of Capitalism** p.197). He identifies "Puritanism" as a pervasive inheritor of Calvin's teaching, one of the three major streams of English "descent" from Calvin with Presbyterianism, Congregationalism. As the third major stream it also had a significant impact upon the ethics of Anglicansm in its concern for "the *minutiae* of personal behaviour." Puritanism, deriving itself from Calvin, is identified as the "most fundamental movement of the 17th century." (198)

62 **BG FTN 33** According to Tawney, **Religion and the Rise of Capitalism** p. 21.
BCW Note: The passage from Tawney comes after a discussion of *"the secularization of political theory as the most momentous of the intellectual changes which ushered in the modern world"*. The 16th and 17th centuries have been so described by J.N.Figgis **From Gerson to Grotius** 1916 (p.19) Tawney explains his focus upon *"the emergence of an objective and passionless economic science [that] took place more slowly"*. *"It was not till a century after Machiavelli had emancipated the State from religion, that the doctrine of the self-contained department with laws of its own begins generally to be applied to the world of business relations and, even in the England of the early seventeenth century, to discuss questions of economic organization purely in terms of pecuniary profit and loss still wears an air of not quite reputable cynicism."* Here Goudzwaard's pertinent and critical point is to suggest: "This is all very well but you haven't mentioned the decisive point for economics today and that is that the making of a profit in monetary terms had hitherto been considered problematic."

But it was precisely this attitude that, as we have seen, dominated the Renaissance. The "business is business" principle already found widespread support there. Indeed, it was primarily the spirit of the Renaissance and the humanism that emerged from it that determined the economic essence of the capitalist spirit. It was the philosopher Hobbes, not the reformer Calvin, who declared trading an ethically neutral activity when he stated that the only requirement of justice in buying and selling was that both parties must adhere to the concluded contract. "No moral rule beyond the letter of law" was *the* principle of the new humanism. But with that, the free play of economic forces was declared permissible, and economic life was proclaimed an ethically neutral domain.

This, incidentally, aligns with actual development. More than two centuries elapsed between Calvin's time and that of Puritanism. These two centuries were decisive for the Western European mentality.[63] It was precisely during this period that humanism conquered the world and shaped minds. It also found its representatives in England: Hobbes, Locke, Francis Bacon, and William Petty. Locke, in particular, maintained close contact with Puritanism.[64] Thus, humanism made its contribution to the deformation of Calvinism into Puritanism.

It was thus a degenerate Calvinism that combined with the Renaissance spirit, thus paving the way for the emergence of the ruthless capitalist mentality. And it is this Renaissance spirit that must be considered the determining factor in the emergence of the capitalist mentality. It is only in the conception of vocation as a *duty* that we recognize in capitalism a trace of Calvin's original teaching.

That we cannot explain the origins of the capitalist spirit through Calvinism does not mean that Calvin's teachings were irrelevant to the flourishing of economic life. On the contrary: his thoughts contributed to the development of economic life according to its own nature.

Calvin, however, subjected this development to a pressing requirement[65] of the evangelical commandment of love. It was humanism that removed this requirement, giving unbridled economic activity a free pass.

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63 **BG FTN 34** Van Gunsteren, *op.cit p*. 207: *"Wirtschafts-historisch betrachtet bcstcht denn auch eine grössere Kluft zwischen dem Puritaner des 17. Jahrhunderts und dem Kalvinisten aus der Zeit Kalvins als zwischen diesem Puritaner und dem ökonomischen Individualisten des 18. Jahrhunderts."* "From an economic-historical perspective, there is a greater gap between the Puritan of the 17th century and the Calvinist of Calvin's time than between this Puritan and the economic individualist of the 18th century."

64 **BG FTN 35** J. B. Kraus, S.J., **Scholastiek, Puritanismus und Kapitalismus,** p. 208.

65 BCW Note: Dutch: *onder de klem*. Under the clamp. The sense is of a binding obligation.

Professor Doumergue has illustrated this with an image: explaining the origins of capitalism through Calvin's teachings is comparable to removing all the valves and brakes from a masterfully [151] constructed steam engine, which is then started to be made responsible for the damage it causes.[66].

Calvin's Enduring Significance

There are several reasons - which are, incidentally, closely related - why Calvin's view of socio-economic life - in distinction from both *Scholasticism* and the Renaissance - is so particularly impressive.

The *first reason* is that Calvin constrains economic life, yet at the same time manages to set it free. Neither *Scholasticism* nor Renaissance were able to do that: *Scholasticism,* because it only knew economic constraints without freedom; the Renaissance because it only knew economic freedom without constraints.[67]

Calvin shows that freedom need not exclude constraint, as long as the binding is done in the right way: namely, to what is required to fulfil the central love commandment, which Christ imposes on merchants and entrepreneurs, on rich and poor, in all circumstances. It is this evangelical constraint in the heart that brings freedom to economic life! Thus, Calvin counters the legalistic ethics of *Scholasticism* and the secular[68] ethics of the Renaissance with an evangelical ethics, which can never become outdated.

The *second reason* is that Calvin respects the dynamism of economic life without severing its connection with the organism of human society. This distinguishes him from the Renaissance, which, in its unbridled individualism, only achieved dynamism at the expense of all organic cohesion, but also from *Scholasticism*, which only achieved organic cohesion at the expense of dynamism.

Calvin's mastery lies in his ability to acquire the "advantages" of both the Renaissance and *Scholasticism* (respectively both dynamism and organic cohesion) without incurring the disadvantages of either (the individualistic and static tendencies). Is this a coincidence? Or has Calvin secretly achieved a synthesis between *Scholasticism* and the Renaissance? The answer is: neither.

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66 **BG FTN 36** E. Doumergue ***Le caractère de Calvin***, in Dutch as *Calvijn als mens en hervormer p*. 149.

67 BCW Note: Again Goudzwaard's sharp analysis involves a word and its derivatives: *bindt* and *binding*

68 BCW Note: Dutch *wereldse*

Here, Calvin merely portrays the beautiful harmony of creation, in which the dynamics of economic life were already contained from the beginning: it is the magnificent structure of God's work that the dynamic unfolding of economic life may serve the free service of love to one's neighbour.

Calvin achieves this captivating combination by simply repeating the rule of love that he had read in the New Testament.

The *third reason* for the originality of Calvin's view - and also the deepest foundation of the two previous reasons - is Calvin's view that socio-economic life as such is sanctified and involved in Christ's redemption. This distinguishes him from the Renaissance which ignores that social-economic life as such is *sanctified*; this distinguishes him from *Scholasticism* that ignores that it *as such* is sanctified.[69]

The Renaissance undoubtedly achieved dynamic development; (152) but its great mistake is that it does not experience economic life in obedience to the Redeemer who has already arrived, who calls merchants and entrepreneurs to His service in their economic activities. Consequently, it falls short of Christ's universal redemption, which also extends to economic life as such. Moreover, the neighbour is wronged, because the organic bond with him is no longer recognized.

Scholasticism is undoubtedly concerned with this organic connection; but its great error is its belief that socio-economic life as such cannot exist in God's presence without the sanctifying of ecclesiastical-sacramental mediation. It thereby also falls short of Christ's universal redemption. The church does not mediate between God and economic life, since Christ has already done so. There are no go-betweens needed between Christ and the trading merchant, for trade is not something contemptible or unholy, but service in the Kingdom of God. In failing to see this, *Scholasticism* resorts to rigid constraints that do violence to economic life.

We just spoke of Calvin's impressive contribution. We should actually be speaking of the surprising and original message of the Gospel. For Calvin did nothing more than repeat the Gospel where it testifies to the universality of Christ's redemption. It is the Gospel, in all its simplicity, that has pointed out new paths here. For the Gospel makes us understand that economic life, while retaining its own character and nature, is incorporated into Christ's work of transformation.

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69 BCW Note: The use of italics here is crucial to Goudzwaard's argument. Calvin's teaching of sancitifcation via the Gospel is ignored by the Renaissance. Scholasticism meanwhile ignores the sanctification of social-economic life.

This Gospel remains fully relevant today. In this context, we would like to mention just one thing: the redemption of economic life, by its very nature, also has consequences for the Government. It, too, must realize that in this area of life, humanity is directly addressed by Christ. In other words: just as economic life does not need sanctification and binding by the church, neither does economic life need the "sanctification" or constraints of the state, as if economic life could only be considered "full" through this means. The question is to what extent a movement like socialism, in its resistance to the offspring of the Renaissance - capitalism - has not also fallen victim to this kind of reasoning. Doesn't socialism bind economic life to its community ideal in way that is similar to how *Scholasticism* bound economic life to the supernatural rule of God's grace?

Be that as it may, the principle of the universality of Christ's redemption seems to have lost none of its relevance. It helps us understand that socio-economic life also stands directly in the light of the Kingdom of God.

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3. *PRIORITIES SCHEDULE* AND PARLIAMENT[1]

Drs. B. GOUDZWAARD

Staff member of the Dr. A. Kuyperstichting

The so-called *priorities schedule*[2] seems to be playing an increasingly important role these days in the entirety of Government financial policy. It provides a recurring topic for discussion in parliamentary debates; it makes its appearance in virtually every proposal to increase Government spending on any specific component of state welfare. Occasionally, the *priorities schedule* even provides grounds for the Government's "non-acceptance" when it wishes to disallow a particular expenditure increase because it would constitute a violation of this *priorities schedule*. Therefore, it might well be useful to take a closer look at the significance and function of this *priorities schedule*.

Why does Government attach such high importance to the maintenance of this schedule? And what influence does it have in the relationship between the Government and the Parliament?

The meaning of the term *priorities schedule*

The literal meaning of the term *priorities schedule* is little more than a list of tasks that deserve priority over all other tasks, and which should therefore be completed before those other tasks. When a housewife decides to tackle the living room and kitchen first when doing the big clean of the house, this then already involves a schedule of priorities in the literal sense of the word.

We will not use the term in that broad sense here. We will limit ourselves here to those statements or lists that are numerical or financial in nature, and then only those

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1 BCW Note: Reading this, and the earlier 1959 piece from ARS, "Economic Policy and the Business Cycle", I wondered how to view them: are they merely "in-house" communications without great significance for understanding Goudzwaard's economic ***theory***? But in reading them, I came to the view that these are not merely compositions giving advice to party members about important "policy" matters bearing upon their membership in the party, whether it be members gaining insight to the conduct of ARP Parliamentarians, or even to ARP Parliamentarians concerning how they should understand the evolution of ARP policy in relation to the accepted processes for legislative conduct. These articles of the economics graduate from the University of Rotterdam provide an economic analysis of Cabinet decision-making in the Dutch parliament. This and the earlier document examine Government and Cabinet decision-making within an economic frame of reference. So, to read this in 2026, is to be presented with an economic analysis of the conduct of legislation comparable to the jural analysis of the role of the Cabinet in the Dutch legislature presented by Herman Dooyeweerd **De Ministerraad in het Nederlandse staatsrecht** PhD Dissetation Vrije Universiteit 1917. These two articles focus upon the Government's budget activities and how these relate to sound management of the national economy as well as reckoning with how a Government's involvement in economic life involves a stewardship subject to its normative vocation to ensure and maintain public justice. It is about the way a Government - presupposing in this case the coalition of parties each with their respective accountability to their electors for their electoral promises - proceeds to shape the parliamentary agenda in ways that remain accountable to the realm's electors.

2 BCW Note: Dutch: *prioriteitenschema*. In what follows I have chosen to translate it as *"priorities schedule"*, and it appears in italics throughout the translated text.

that relate to the (future) activities of the *Government* budget. Therefore, when the Government, against the background of the financial resources currently available - or those that will become available in the near future - compiles a list of those activities that it deems to have priority over others, allocating a certain amount for each of these activities to be attended to in the short or long term, then we can speak of a *priorities schedule* in the sense that we here intend to discuss.

An example of a *priorities schedule* for the *short-term* is the national budget. [22] It details the amounts the Government anticipates are needed for carrying out various tasks and activities. The financial scope is set by a single year's total tax receipts and other Government revenues. So, a short-term *priorities schedule* is nothing new.

More recently, the *priorities schedule* for the *long-term,* meaning a period longer than a year, has been introduced. In Minister Zijlstra's latest budget memorandum, this long-term *priorities schedule* made its modest debut in (public) Government financial policy. On page 6 of the explanatory memorandum to the national budget, we find, what seems like a seemingly insignificant statement, in which a specific amount has already been entered for several major expenditure categories (military expenditure, expenditure on land-use projects, expenditure on investments in higher education, etc.) for 1962 and 1963, and not only for 1961.

It is this long-term *priorities schedule* that deserves our particular attention.

Back to the budget

To fully understand the meaning and value of this long-term *priorities schedule*, we must briefly examine the policy considerations underlying the 1961 national budget. These can be considered as co-determining the objectives of the long-term *priorities schedule*. We view the 1961 national budget as the first phase, the first component, of the long-term *priorities schedule* which, in addition to 1961, also encompasses the years 1962 and 1963. The long-term schedule, encompasses, as it were, the short-term schedule.

The objectives of the budget policy for 1961 were expressed by the Minister of Finance in his explanatory memorandum as follows:

1. Structurally, the policy is aimed, among other things, at reducing the tax burden and increasing Government expenditure, which is relatively lower than that of national income.

2. In addition, from a cyclical perspective, the Government's policy is aimed at exerting a certain compensatory influence on private sector spending through national finances and other policy instruments at its disposal, so that total spending remains in line with real production potential. This is partly based on the need to maintain the value of the currency.

With these words, the Minister also highlighted the objective of the *priorities schedule* over the longer term. He sees it as a tool to steer the national budget in advance into such a direction that the national budget will, in 1962 and 1963, also be in accordance with the aforementioned policy considerations.

Let us briefly examine both considerations.

[23] **Structural Budget Policy**

In structural terms, the Minister above all wants a reduction in the tax burden. This requires little explanation or justification. In prosperous times, citizens increasingly earn more and therefore automatically fall into a higher tax bracket; with higher incomes, one must pay relatively more tax. Therefore, in a boom the tax burden automatically increases. It would be unfair for the Government not to use part of its rising revenues to allow a reduction in tax rates. This is especially true because the increase in many incomes due to price rises is, in fact, largely nominal and not real.[3] It cannot be considered right for the Government to simply apply its higher tax rate to these increased incomes. A reduction in tax rates is the appropriate course of action under such circumstances. Furthermore, regarding the tax burden, one must remember that it has risen to this level in large part due to specific post-war circumstances, which in the main no longer exist. The necessity and urgency of numerous Government expenditures (particularly of subsidies) can be questioned in the face of rising prosperity. The legitimacy[4] for the continuation of the high tax rate has more or less disappeared.

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance hopes that the increase in Government expenditure will lag behind the growth of national income. This aligns with the requirement that necessary tax cuts be implemented in a situation of rising prosperity.

It must be said, however, the fact that in our time there is a certain percentage increase in Government expenditure from year to year is by no means objectionable. The ever-increasing complexity of socio-economic life demands a more refined, and therefore more expensive, Government policy, while education, water management, and regional development policies demand ever greater outlays. But this does not necessarily justify an Government expenditure increase in *to the same extent* as that of the rapidly rising national income. For while increased prosperity partly necessitates greater Government expenditure, in another respect more matters that were previously the subject of state care can be taken up by private initiative. In a situation of higher prosperity, citizens generally find themselves not so immediately in need of assistance than in a situation of lower prosperity, and so that means the

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3 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is suggesting that the higher income coincides with higher costs.

4 BCW Note: Dutch: *rechts-grond*

level of Government expenditure on social care can also, to a relative extent, be reduced.[5]

Cyclical Budgetary Policy

Furthermore, the Minister wishes to contribute, through the budget, to the restoration of national cyclical equilibrium, which is the situation in which the sum of all our country's expenditures [24] corresponds to real potential of national production. In a boom situation, such as the one in which we are still experiencing, total national expenditure threatens to exceed these production potentials.[6] In such circumstances, a budget should reflect a certain moderation in total Government expenditure, so that a kind of counter-pressure can be exerted on any excessive spending urge among the people. Achieving such counter-pressure does not, however, require the Government to actually reduce its own expenditure.

When the total expenditure of all citizens increases faster than normal - i.e. when this rate is no longer in line with real national production potential - it will be sufficient, at least in many cases, for the Government to induce a balancing effect by allowing its own expenditure to increase at a *slower* pace than normal. To induce this necessary countervailing pressure, it may suffice for the Government to slow the rate of growth of its own expenditure, enabling this expenditure to lag, proportionally speaking, behind the normal growth of total national expenditure - and this, in fact, is possible do because of the expansion of real national production - the normal growth of national income.[7]

An example can clarify this.

When we participate in a parade that, in our view, is moving at too fast a pace, we can usually achieve a great deal by simply adopting amd maintaining a pace *below* what has been normal. This then can slow down the entire parade. To slow the parade's pace, participants don't need to stand still or walk backward; it is sufficient to simply maintain a slower speed. Similarly, the Government can be said to force other spending participants in our society to slow down their spending by increasing

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5 BCW Note: Is there a sense here that the Abraham Kuyper Stichting medewerker is, as part of this article giving advice to party members is also, *inter alia* giving advice, albeit indirectly to those responsible for implementing Government policy?

6 **BG FTN 1:** For further clarification, please refer to the article *De economische politiek en het conjunctuurvraagstuk* in Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde, 2ge jrg. (1959), blz. 264vv.

7 **BG FTN 2:** We see, therefore, that in a boom situation, the Government's structural objective, just discussed, to ensure that the growth of Government expenditure does not exceed the growth of national income, also has a positive effect on cyclical equilibrium.
BCW Note: This paragraph has two rather long sentences; the second of 61 words needs to be read closely due to its many subordinate clauses.

its own spending at a slower rate than what is considered normal for the entirety of national spending.[8]

However, a complication arises. If the Government structures its budget in such a way that there is some room for a tax cut (as was indeed the case in the 1961 budget), it must take into account that such a cut can act as an independent stimulus to increase spending. After all, a tax cut can be seen as a kind of income increase for individual citizens and will therefore lead to an increase in private spending and, consequently, in total national spending. If, in such circumstances, the minister nevertheless maintains his intention to exert counterpressure on national spending through the budget [25], he must therefore ensure that Government spending lags behind the (normal) growth of national income by such a degree that the expenditure-increasing effect of the tax cut is more than offset. A few figures can clarify this.

The Minister sets the normal annual growth rate of national income at 4%; this is the normal, permissible rate for the increase in national expenditure due to the expansion of national production. To allow for some countervailing pressure on actual expenditure growth, the growth of Government expenditure must therefore be below 4%. However, this proves to be insufficient. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the Minister intends to implement a reduction in income and wage taxes effective July 1st. Such a tax reduction will mean a 2% increase in expenditure on Government spending. Therefore, for 1961, the Government can only exert cyclical countervailing pressure on the growth of national expenditure if it ensures that its own expenditure increases by less than 4% - 2% = 2%. In reality, Government spending - aside from all sorts of irrelevant items - is increasing by 1.5%, according to the budget; the budget therefore exerts a countervailing pressure of 2% - 1.5% = 0.5% on national spending, amounting to less than 50 million guilders. We see, therefore, that despite the spending-boosting effect of a tax cut, the minister has still succeeded in making the budget as a whole exert a dampening effect on national spending. The budget as a whole therefore contributes only slightly to promoting cyclical equilibrium.

It should be noted, however, that in our view, the Government's attempt to achieve a certain equilibrium in the national economy through its budget is not only justified but should also be seen as its duty. For an argument, we may refer to the author's previously mentioned 1959 article in this journal.[9]

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8 BCW Note: Of note here is the mechanical metaphor of a military parade to describe analogically something about the way in which the coherence of a Government's budgetry decisions (*priorities schedule*) can be maintained by reckoning with the adjustment of the momentum of it various components. Two years prior to this article being published, Goudzwaard was engaged in military service and the image used here may refer to marching on the parade grounds. The coherence of a military march is often utilised in sociology to describe the organic solidarity found in the co-ordinate solidarity of modern society.

9 BCW Note: Goudzwaard refers to "Economic policy and the business cycle." see above pp.1-27.

The Cynology[10] of the State Budget

In an open field, a dog sees its owner riding a bicycle in the distance. For the dog, this is a sign that it should try to reach its owner as quickly as possible. However, a dog cannot be expected to anticipate where its owner is cycling. It will constantly head towards the point where its owner is at that moment. The result is that, when it finally reaches its owner, it has traveled a much longer distance than necessary; it has taken a sharp turn.

Until now, state budgets have resembled that dog in many respects. They were merely tailored to the current situation. To the extent that the Minister of Finance still wanted to consider the budget's balanced influence upon national economic life, this involved nothing more than adjusting revenues and expenditures to the expected national economic development [26] in the budget year in question.

The conduct from budget to budget was somewhat along the lines of the rationale: whoever survives to the next budget will take care of things. The result was that budgetary policy in successive years lacked a consistent course and did not follow a straight path.

The long-term *priorities schedule* can now be seen as an attempt, in principle, to break this bad habit. The principle of this schedule is that the Government should not live from hand to mouth in successive years, dependent on the political and economic circumstances prevailing each year - just as a dog only pays attention to its owner's immediate location - but should already, to a certain extent, align its policy in advance with the desired cyclical and structural budgetary policy for the coming years.

This schedule is therefore based on the idea that, for 1962 and 1963, achieving the aforementioned goals (a further tax reduction, a lagging Government expenditure, and the necessary cyclical counter-pressure as the economic boom continues) cannot be left entirely to the prevailing circumstances at that time. Instead, some care must be taken, already in 1961, to ensure that achieving these goals in the coming years remains within reach.

In concrete terms, the procedure was as follows. The Minister first estimated the normally expected increase in national income in the coming years. Excluding cyclical influences, this increase is approximately 4% per year. This means that

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10 BCW Note: cynology - the study of dog behaviour. Having already used the idea of co-ordinate movement of the military parade, Goudzwaard now uses the image of a dog, having been taken to the park, enjoying a run with its cyclist owner. Maybe Goudzwaard is also suggesting a peculiarly untrained dog whose instincts need to be trained to economise its efforts to catch the cyclist. The *priorities schedule* is the means by which the State budget "canine" can be efficiently trained. Goudzwaard seems to be suggesting that Ministers of Finance not only function as an Officer incharge of Parade Ground to alter the speed and length of soldiers stride, nor as one who maintains actuarial oversight of Government's insurance measures, but as a Cynologist of the State Budget.

national income - the sum of all earned incomes in the Netherlands - could be 8% higher in 1963 than in 1961. This increase in earned income will also result in the Government receiving more taxes. Because higher earnings place people in a higher tax bracket, Government tax revenues will increase by more than 8%; the Minister estimates the (normal) increase in taxes from 1961 to 1963 at 11%, or approximately 1 billion guilders.

We have already seen that the Minister aims to ensure that the increase in Government expenditure lags behind the increase in national income. Government expenditure should therefore increase by less than this 2 x 4% = 8% from 1961 to 1963. This objective means that only a portion of the total 11% revenue increase may be used by the Government to increase its expenditures. The remaining portion, in accordance with the Minister's other objective, must be largely returned to citizens in the form of a tax reduction. The Minister believes that he will have to set aside *f*400 million of the *f*1 billion for such a tax reduction from 1961 to 1963.

The Government may therefore use the remaining *f*600 million to finance the additional expenditures it deems necessary; this indeed amounts to an annual increase in Government expenditure of less than 4%.

This 600 million guilders now constitutes the financial leeway within which the Government must maintain its expenditure increases if it does not want its policy objectives for 1962 and 1963 to be jeopardized from the outset. If it spends more, the increase in Government expenditure can no longer lag behind the normal growth of national income; then [27] the cyclical effect of the budget for 1962 and 1963 will also be more or less jeopardized, as the necessary tax reduction can only provide the necessary countervailing pressure.

Now, 600 million guilders may seem like a large sum, but upon closer inspection, it's actually considerably less than expected. It's already been decided that the defense ceiling will have to be raised again in 1962 and 1963. The cost of this will be 200 million guilders. The Government is therefore left with a total of only 400 million guilders for the years 1962 and 1963 combined; 200 million guilders, according to this calculation, is therefore the maximum amount the Government will be allowed to spend annually during this period.

The *Priorities Schedule* as an Instrument

Now, the crux of this entire arrangement - and this simultaneously constitutes the true meaning and value of the *priorities schedule* - is that this 200 million guilders per year can be seen, as it were, as a kind of target for all Government policy. Increases in expenditure in 1962 and 1963 must be limited to this 200 million guilders, otherwise the financial policy the Minister proposes might fail; then the cyclical and structural objectives might no longer be achieved.

In order to stay within this limit, the various ministries are each allocated a portion of this 200 million guilders to carry out their respective tasks: they must assume that they will not be allowed to exceed their allocated share in the coming period. The Government is already drawing up the *priorities schedule"* for the coming years: once it has been determined which expenditures should be given priority and to what extent, the various ministries must prepare themselves accordingly.

So, this method of prioritization can be considered a long-term *internal* budget for Government agencies, similar in design to internal operating budgets that have been in use in the private sector for years. The various Government agencies are already bound in their expenditure policies to achieving the budgetary policy goals for 1962 and 1963. This method can also be seen as a new austerity policy. The novelty is that the necessary reduction in Government expenditure does not start with cutting existing Government expenditures. Any "austerity measures" are addressed later on. But first a limit is put on the increase in expenditure by tying this increase to a maximum growth rate and as then specified for each component of state welfare.

Precisely because of this task-oriented nature, the long-term *priorities schedule* could become an important instrument in the future for monitoring and controlling the development of Government expenditure.

[28] The Relevance of the *Priorities Schedule*

As already mentioned, the 1961 national budget can be considered a component of this long-term *priorities schedule*. Based on the same objectives, they together form an inseparable whole. The link becomes clear when it is considered that actual Government expenditure for 1961 exceeds the figure projected for this year in the budget. If the Government still wishes to maintain its objective that Government expenditure in the coming period must lag behind the increase in national income, then this means Government expenditure for 1962 and 1963 will be allowed an increase that is even lower than the calculated 200 million guilders. Anything that is spent in excess of the budget in 1961 must mean, for 1962 and 1963, a rate that is *less* than currently budgeted if the established course is to be maintained.

Against this background, one can understand the Government's limited willingness to accommodate Parliament's various demands for increased expenditures. Any unbudgeted increase in expenditures means, for the cabinet, a reduction in the chance of achieving the desired structural expenditure and tax policy in the coming years, while at the same time the correct cyclical effect of the budget and *priorities schedule* is damaged or threatened to be damaged.

For the years 1962 and 1963, this diminishes the possibility of achieving any required cyclical counterbalance through expenditure policy, while with regard to the 1961 budget, each real expenditure increase "nibbles away" at the half percent rate -

the 50 million guilders - that the minister has "allocated" to achieve cyclical counterbalance. If the real financial contributions to Parliament exceed the 50 million guilders, all other things being equal, the budget's balancing effort will cause an imbalance.

Flexibility of the *Priorities Schedule*

However, this should not lead to the conclusion that the nature of the *priorities schedule* means that any amendments made by Parliament will necessarily be detrimental to both cyclical and structural Government objectives.

First, it should be remembered that a *priorities schedule* only fulfills its purpose when it exhibits a reasonable degree of flexibility in response to all occurring changes in the national economic situation. Of course, circumstances in our economy can change so that a change in the schedule's design must be entertained. The international economic situation need only show a slight reversal for this to be necessary. And achieving economic equilibrium may require the *priorities schedule* to stimulate rather than depress expenditure. And when only a slight disruption [29] is observed in the development of a harmonious relationship between production and expenditure, the schedule should be adjusted with a lessening counter-pressure less than in a situation in which more significant tensions between the two are developing or threaten to develop. So, a good *priorities schedule* should exhibit a reasonable degree of flexibility in both the *direction* and the *dosage* of the pressure exerted.

Minister Zijlstra's proposal not to make a final decision on the reduction of income and wage taxes until around July 1st of this year should be understood in these terms. It is possible that the economic situation will change so much before July 1st that the dosage and direction of the "counterpressure" contained in the budget will need to be adjusted. If the economy worsens further due to a strong increase in domestic spending, the tax reduction can be postponed for a while in order to generate greater counterpressure from the budget; if an unexpected turnaround in the economy occurs, a tax reduction then becomes highly desirable to eliminate or minimize the counterpressure from the national budget.

The flexibility of the *priorities schedule* is therefore significantly increased by the fact that the Minister can postpone the decision on whether or not to reduce taxes for some time.

It follows from the above that, given the prevailing economic situation, the Minister will find it less difficult in certain cases to accept a breach from the legislature of the *priorities schedule*. In a period of severe spending pressure, it remains advisable to keep Government expenditure within strict limits, so the Minister will likely strongly oppose any parliamentary proposals to increase expenditure in such a period; however, in a situation of cyclical downturn or when

the original spending pressures ease, the expansion of Government expenditure - aside from objections related to structural Government policy - will do little harm.

To a certain extent, such an intervention could even be viewed positively as a healthy contribution to greater flexibility in the *priorities schedule* and so also to Government financial policy.

We see, therefore, that when the economic situation changes, maintaining the structural and cyclical Government objectives may require the *priorities schedule* to be changed. But in another respect, parliamentary intervention in this scheme does not necessarily mean a thwarting of these objectives.

We are referring here to the possibility that parliament can accompany its proposals for expenditure increases with an indication of which Government expenditures it believes can be reduced as compensation. If this is done, total Government expenditure will not increase, and there is therefore little risk that the structural and cyclical objectives of financial policy will be undermined. In other words: the objectives associated with the *priorities schedule* do not preclude any changes within it, or a "shifting" of [30] available amounts from one item to another.[11] Therefore, to the extent that parliamentary groups*[12] indicate a possibility of compensation in their proposed expenditure increases, their action cannot be considered a violation of the objectives of the *priorities schedule*.[13]

It should also be noted that such interference with the *priorities schedule* could harm the structural objectives associated with it, but the cyclical effect would be almost entirely preserved. This is the case when a certain tax increase is implemented to finance the proposed expenditure increase. The cyclical effect of the budget and priority scheme then undergoes little change, as the expenditure-increasing effect of the expenditure increase is almost entirely offset by the expenditure-reducing effect of the tax increase; however, this is at the expense of structural Government policy, which is aimed at tax reductions and a decline in relative expenditure.

Parliament thus has the option of framing its proposals for expenditure increases in such a way that, while they may be detrimental to *structural* policy objectives, this does not apply equally to the *cyclical* effect of the priority scheme.

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11 **BG FTN 3:** Assuming that the increase in expenditure on one budget item and the decrease in expenditure on another are *equivalent* from a monetary point of view, i.e., have an effect on national expenditure that is approximately equal in size.

12 BCW Note: Dutch: *de kamerfracties*. This is a term referring to the various groupings - fracties - legitimately contributing to the Parliament's work. The English translated term "faction" might not do justice to the Dutch meaning in that the caucus of parliamentary members of one party are a "fraction" of the total elected to the Parliament. We will use the term "parliamentary groups" as translation rather than introduce a new term like "fraction", even if the latter does have value in its allusion to a portion of the political opinion represented. For *kamerfracties* we designate as "Parliamentary group" or group with an asterisk*.

13 **BG FTN 4:** In the remainder of this article we will develop a further qualification of this statement.

It should also be noted that not all expenditure increases proposed by Parliament will actually result in a full increase in national spending. To the extent that this is not the case, such a proposed expenditure increase cannot, of course, be considered - or not entirely - as a violation of cyclical policy.

Finally, it should be noted that the impact of a balanced state budget on the development of national expenditure does not necessarily depend on the amounts for expenditures and taxes stated in that budget. The minister can also exert a certain counter-pressure on national expenditure in ways other than through the levels of expenditure and taxation. We are referring here to the so-called "binding of liquidity".

By issuing a Government loan - or otherwise - the minister is able to transfer to the state coffers some of the purchasing power present in society, which increasingly fuels the spending spree of citizens, and thus neutralizes the urge to spend that emanates from these funds. By tying down liquidity more effectively, the cyclical, damaging consequences of unbudgeted expenditure increases can thus be partially offset. However, this approach is only feasible to a limited extent.

Curtailment of Parliamentary Influence?

The fact that the Government has, in some cases,[14] rejected a parliamentary-proposed expenditure increase in order to maintain the *priorities schedule* [31] - and thus the structural and cyclical Government policy - has led some to conclude that Parliament has thus suffered a curtailment of its influence. On press reported that this *priorities schedule*

> *makes it virtually impossible for the House of Representatives to exert its influence in favor of shifting the financial emphasis in Government policy. As soon as pressure from Parliament becomes too heavy, the priority phantom is called in to demonstrate that the minister's entire financial policy threatens to be unacceptably thrown out of context if Parliament were to push through.*

The priority system was supposedly a means of making ministerial policy

> *... more impregnable to parliamentary interference.*[15]

From the foregoing, it may be concluded that this is an oversimplification. Even if Parliament wishes to endorse the general financial objectives of Government policy underlying the *priorities schedule*, it retains some leeway to make changes to it. On the one hand, this is due to the ever-changing economic situation, which means that certain expenditure increases may no longer face immediate objection at any given point. On the other hand, there is the possibility for the House of Representatives to

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14 **BG FTN 5** What happened in the week before Christmas cannot simply be included among these cases, as the situation at the DIY store at that time was decisive for the minister.

15 **BG FTN 6** Editorial in *Vrij Nederland* of January 7th. last.

neutralize the disruptive effect of the proposed expenditure increases by indicating some compensatory expenditure reductions.

Furthermore, the House may consider a specific expenditure increase of such paramount importance that it prefers the realization of this increase at the expense of the overall preservation of the Government's structural objectives - maintaining Government spending and reducing the tax burden. In that case, it can declare that the increase in expenditure in question may be financed by an increase in taxes, or by not lowering them, a pronouncement that prevents an infringement of the cyclical objectives in Government policy.

It seems to us that the cabinet's decision to pursue this path for the House of Representatives need not be deemed unacceptable in all cases. In our view, and as already discussed in this article, it should be kept in mind that the Government's structural objective of ensuring that Government expenditure lags behind the normal growth of national income can only be justified based on actual circumstances and cannot simply apply to all times and situations. From the Government's perspective, too, tax cuts will, on occasion, have to give way to truly urgent expenditure increases.

Considering all this, it can be concluded that even with a *priorities schedule* in place, the House of Representatives still has the opportunity to "shift" the financial focus of Government policy. One might even argue that the *priorities schedule* [32] has a beneficial effect, rather than a detrimental one. It not only forces the parliamentary groups* to take the existing economic situation into account more closely, but also promotes the healthy thinking about alternatives that is so important to parliamentary representation.

The *priorities schedule* compels the House of Representatives to carefully weigh expenditure increases against expenditure reductions, or expenditure increases against tax increases. Because it compels the House to assess proposed expenditure increases more closely in light of existing possibilities, these proposals will also lose some of the gloss they will often wrongly carry. This creates the opportunity for parliamentary groups* to vote against them without too quickly incurring the opprobrium of unsocial policy. The fact that the *priorities schedule* contributes to this situation cannot be attributed to anything other than its credit.

The "Voting Paradox"[16]

However, a complicating factor also arises here, namely what we would call the voting paradox. The essence of this paradox is, in short, that when three or more

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16 BCW Note: Goudzwaard refers to his own application of "Arrow's Impossibility Theorem". https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/economics-econometrics-and-finance/paradox-of-voting. In response to Goudzwaard's "Kuyper lectures" of the Centre for Public Justice 2001, **Globalization and the Kingdom of God**, Adolfo Garcia de la Sienra of Veracruz, Mexico has written "A Note for Economists on Arrow's General Possibility Theorem". pp. 91-96.

people (or groups) must express their preferences regarding three or more alternatives through a series of votes, the majority of them may reach a decision regarding those alternatives that they themselves did not intend.

Applied to our issue, this paradox implies that it is possible for a majority of parliament to oppose a further increase in Government spending and conducts itself accordingly - and yet, despite this, the majority still achieves such a further increase; furthermore, that the entire House can, during deliberations, advocate for maintaining the cyclical budgetary policy, yet, by its own actions, make the realization of this policy impossible. This can be illustrated with an example.

Consider that Parliament consists of three groups* of roughly equal size, and that the expansion of housing facilities is the issue at stake. Group A believes that housing construction deserves priority, but because this group, partly for cyclical reasons, wishes to maintain the level of Government expenditure stated in the budget, it intends, for example, to support the Government's expected proposal to reduce milk subsidies, or even, if necessary, to provoke a statement to that effect. Group B believes that housing construction deserves priority, but that this should not be done at the expense of milk subsidies. This group advocates for an increase in Government expenditure, which, in order to maintain the budget's cyclical effect, should be financed by a tax increase. Group C's objective is to maintain constant Government expenditure, but does not wish to prioritize housing construction over other Government expenditures. This group does not want to expand housing facilities, maintain the milk subsidy, and also maintain the Government's spending level [33]. Group C therefore wants everything to remain as it is.

The issue of expanding housing facilities is now put to the vote. Groups A and B are in favor, so this proposal is adopted. A week later, the Government's intention to reduce the milk subsidy is on the agenda. Groups B and C are against, so the majority is against. The proposal to increase taxes suffers a similar fate. The result of these pronouncements is therefore an uncompensated increase in Government expenditure: housing expenditure rises without a decrease in milk subsidies or an increase in tax revenue in any way. But this is happening even though the majority of parliament (Groups A and C) did not want the expenditure increase, and all groups openly advocated during the deliberations to maintain the budget's cyclical effect! If the issue of the desirability of maintaining Government expenditure at the same level had been put to a separate vote, the majority of Parliament (Groups A and C) would have readily supported it, while any proposal to maintain the cyclical effect of the budget would have received 100% of the votes.

We see, therefore, that Parliament can declare itself in favor of an increase in expenditure that it ultimately does not desire. Furthermore, it is capable of making a

cyclical policy, which it fully endorses, completely impossible. Situations can therefore arise in which Parliament's pronouncement is not sufficiently nuanced to accurately reflect the feelings of the majority of its members. By making a statement on two issues, Parliament can reject a third option, which could also have secured a parliamentary majority. Therefore, the wishes of Parliament are not adequately expressed by voting in all circumstances.

The question now is whether this can be considered merely an exceptional case, or whether such situations occur more often. We believe the latter is the case, at least as far as statements coming from the House of Representatives concerning increased expenditure on any aspect of state welfare.

The current political situation in the Netherlands is such that the parliamentary opposition - which holds approximately one-third of the seats - will generally not be overly concerned with the Government's structural objective of limiting Government spending. We may assume that, generally speaking, they will support any parliamentary motion to increase a specific Government expenditure, although, in order to maintain cyclical budgetary policy, they will not reject a potential tax increase under all circumstances. The "Government parties", on the other hand, will generally be able to endorse the Government's objective of monitoring the overall level of Government spending, partly in support of the Government's cyclical policy.

Let us assume that they actually adhere to this objective in their actions and do not advocate an increase in expenditure without advocating a reduction in expenditure on another issue. [34]However, we cannot simply assume that the "Government parties" would not from time to time differ in their opinions about the precise distribution of the available financial resources.

One "governing party" will want to increase Government spending X and finance this by reducing spending Y; the other "governing party" will see no need for this or, for example, may want exactly the opposite: an increase in Y at the expense of X. If there were such a difference of opinion between the "governing parties" regarding the priority of various items of Government expenditure, there is a strong likelihood that both the structural and cyclical goals associated with the *priorities schedule* would be thwarted.

The Government's total expenditure level is at risk of increasing, which probably cannot even be offset by a tax increase. Indeed, if a proposal to increase spending X is put to the vote, it will receive the support of one "governing party" together with the opposition, and it will be adopted. When spending increase Y is on the agenda, the other "governing party" and the opposition will vote for it, and this proposal will also be adopted. A proposal to reduce expenditure Y stands no chance, while a proposal to increase the tax burden is unlikely to gain much support outside the

opposition. Government spending would then increase, without any mitigation of the detrimental consequences for economic and structural Government policy.[17]

In general, it can be said that, to maintain the smooth operation of the *priorities schedule*, it is not sufficient for the "Government parties" to individually adhere to the rule that every increase in expenditure must be countered by a reduction in expenditure elsewhere, or possibly a tax increase. To avoid undermining the Government's cyclical and structural objectives, it is advisable for the "Government parties" to strive to reach an agreement in advance on how the available margin within the priority scheme should be allocated among the various expenditure groups. If disagreements persist, there is a high probability that this available margin itself will be exceeded - intentionally or unintentionally - during a vote, with all the consequences that entails.

[35] **Still in a position of duress!**

Isn't this putting the people's representatives in an invidious position?[18]

Before discussing the workings of the "voting paradox", it could be argued that the possibility of parliamentary interference should not be underestimated: only certain changes made to the *priorities schedule* would necessarily be detrimental to the cyclical and/or structural policy considerations underlying this schedule. It now appears that - regardless of the fact that the parliamentary groups*, without exception, may aim to maintain the cyclical and/or structural influence of the priority scheme - the presence of a disagreement about how the schedule should be changed can be sufficient to disrupt its effectiveness.

The goodwill of these individual parliamentary groups* regarding the objectives of Government financial policy does not always prevent the disruption of these objectives. Apparently, the possibility of free interference in the *priorities schedule* is smaller for the individual parliamentary groups* than for the House as a whole.

Indeed, this does mean a restriction of the room for manoeuver of the governing parties. If they do not wish, as such, to undermine the *priorities schedule*, then they should, as much as possible, refrain from submitting separate proposals for increased expenditure without agreement having been reached among them from their own

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17 **BG FTN 7** A similar line of reasoning can be followed where the Government parties not only differ in that one party prefers an increase in expenditure X and the other an increase in expenditure Y, but also give different answers to the question of whether the desired expenditure increases should be compensated by a reduction in expenditure elsewhere or by a tax increase. Suppose that party A wishes to combat an increase in expenditure X by a reduction in expenditure Y, but that party B wishes to finance the increase in expenditure Y by a tax increase, i.e. without having to seek a reduction in other Government expenditure. When voting, it becomes clear that the House wishes to increase both expenditure X and expenditure Y (with party A plus the opposition, and party B plus the opposition in favour, respectively), while only the increase in expenditure Y can be compensated by a tax increase (party B plus the opposition in favour).

18 BCW Note: Dutch: *dwangpositie*

parties on the necessary compensation. Only when there is a consensus among them regarding the desired shift within the priorities can there be certainty that submitting such a proposal will no longer pose a threat to the economic (and structural) Government policy.

It should be noted, however, that this limitation of room for manoeuvre is not new. It dates back to the time when the Government first pursued a conscious cyclical budgetary policy, a policy that entailed the need to monitor the general level of Government expenditure and harmonize it with the tax burden. Since then, every political party that endorsed the Government's commitment to controlling economic trends has been forced to limit itself to the utmost when independently submitting proposals for expenditure increases, even if it believed it had discovered a way to compensate for these increases elsewhere. It would therefore be wrong to hold the introduction of the *priorities schedule* in Government financial policy solely to blame for the restriction of parliamentary freedom of action.

Moreover, it seems to us that even if we consider the effect of the voting paradox in our assessment, we cannot yet speak of a coercive position wielded by the various parliamentary groups.* It has already been mentioned that, in our opinion, the thinking through of alternatives, which the *priorities schedule* requires, can be considered an advantage rather than a disadvantage. The "voting paradox" adds something new [36] to this in that not only the individual parliamentary groups,* but also the House as a whole - or rather, the House majority - must adopt this way of thinking through alternatives. The further limitation of the manoeuvrability of the respective parliamentary groups* consists only in the fact that support must be found outside the parliamentary group* for both the expenditure increase they advocate and the compensatory expenditure reduction (or tax increase) these groups* consider desirable.

Two possibilities

Aside from the possibility of a change in the prevailing economic situation, which would, under certain circumstances, allow adjustments to be made to various lines of Government expenditure without cyclical-political objections, the parliamentary groups* will ultimately have two options open to them to achieve an increase in any given expenditure item without harming the Government's cyclical and/or structural objectives.

The first route is through *consultation*, in which the parliamentary groups* express their wishes regarding changes to the *priorities schedule* and attempt to reach agreement on the desired expenditure increases and reductions (or possibly tax increases). During this consultation, care must be taken to avoid undermining the cyclical effect of the budget and the *priorities schedule*. Once this agreement has

been reached, the respective proposals can be discussed separately in the House in the order established for this purpose.

The second approach is that of *combined* proposals. The submitter of a proposal will link its specific expenditure increase to another proposal outlining how this increase can be offset by a reduction in expenditure elsewhere, or possibly by a specific tax increase. With the eventual approval of the expenditure increase, the House of Representatives then simultaneously states how it intends to absorb or neutralize the associated "damage" to the cyclical and/or structural objectives of the Government's financial picture.

We believe that pursuing this approach(es) could be beneficial in preventing unnecessary tensions between the cabinet and parliament.

AR Staatkunde jrg-31 1961

Is de eis van een sluitende begroting verouderd? pp.61-65

4. Is the balanced budget requirement outdated?

Question and Answer

QUESTION:

> Before the Second World War, all public bodies were required to present a balanced budget. It was Colijn[1], in particular, who emphasized this requirement with unwavering emphasis. After the war, however, all this changed. There are virtually no balanced budgets anymore - even in municipalities - and little attention is paid to this. Many older Anti-Revolutionaries can't quite grasp this. Should the pre-war perspective then be considered completely outdated? Regarding one's own family or business, everyone is convinced that expenditures must not exceed income, otherwise things will inevitably fail. Why does this reasoning suddenly no longer apply to public institutions?

ANSWER:

The question you raised is not easy to answer. A wealth of literature has already appeared on this topic, and the debate is still ongoing. A somewhat comprehensive answer to your question would therefore require lengthy and difficult-to-digest explanations. Therefore, I can do little more than touch on a few of the most important points.

What is a "balanced" budget? This is where the difficulties begin. You yourself paraphrase it: it's a budget in which expenditures do not exceed revenue. You add that in every household, the rule that revenue covers expenditures must be adhered to; why shouldn't this apply equally to government finances?

However, the fact that other households must adhere to this rule is only true to a certain extent. An expanding business can, for many years, spend more than it receives in operating income; after all, it can take out numerous loans to fund its investments, allowing the business to spend more than it receives in current income.

So, when you state that all enterprise must ensure that expenses are covered by income, this is generally only correct for current income and expenditure. For more unusual (expansion) expenses, the company can borrow without any objection; after all, the borrowed funds are used to purchase new machinery, land, etc., the proceeds of which can later be used to repay the loan.

So when does the government economy behave in accordance with such enterprise? It does so when it finances current expenditures entirely from current revenues - this is the so-called ordinary portion of the national budget - and finances extraordinary expenditures, at least to the extent that they will generate future revenues, from loans (the extraordinary portion of the budget).

However, if an extraordinary expense doesn't offer any future revenue,[62] it's logical that the entire expense be covered by current income. If a loan were taken out for this purpose, it would have to be repaid in the future, without sufficient funds being available at that time.

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1 BCW Note: Hendrikus Colijn (1869-1944) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hendrikus_Colijn

So when you talk about an unbalanced budget, you mean that the government's current expenditure exceeds current revenue and that loans are taken out for purposes for which no future revenue - which could finance future loan repayments - is expected. In Colijn's time, these two things were indeed considered major sins against sound government financial policy. And the question then arises: why would all this so suddenly to have changed? Can current expenditure exceed current revenue and borrowing for economically unprofitable government expenditure now be considered sound financial measures?

To answer this question, we must first pause for a moment to consider why these two phenomena were seen as an infringement of sound financial policy. Colijn provides a clear answer in his **Saevis Tranquillus in Undis** (Calm in the midst of storm)[2]: they constitute, in particular, an unwarranted burden on posterity. If budget deficits are now permitted, and the government borrows without further ado for numerous items, future generations will be left to bear the burden that the current generation should have shouldered. "One then arrives at the point of burdening posterity, in the form of interest and principal repayments, with what the current generation should have paid for" (p. 269).

At this point, criticism of the newer views in economics has begun. It has been pointed out that this entire perspective rests on the following two unsound assumptions: first, that financing (current) government expenditure through taxes would only be a burden for the current generation, and second, that financing government expenditure through borrowing would be considered entirely a burden for future generations. Against this, it has been argued that taxes also burden future generations, while borrowing can also be detrimental to the current generation. If the current government decides to finance its additional expenditure not through a tax increase, but through borrowing, this can, in certain circumstances, even be to the advantage of future generations.

What is the consequence of a tax increase? A reduction in citizens' incomes, which reduces the demand for products, which in times of sub-full employment can lead to lower production. National production can therefore decline due to a tax increase. This is undoubtedly also detrimental to the future generation, who now have to catch up in the growth of the national product.

These objections apply to a lesser extent for a loan. The government can often place a loan with institutions that have unused funds (banks, life insurance companies, etc.); borrowing this money by the government therefore [63] does not reduce spending in our society, nor does it result in a smaller increase in national income for future generations. It is therefore quite possible that a tax increase will harm posterity more than a loan; that it is also better for future generations to have a current budget deficit financed by loans than to have all deficits covered by a tax increase.

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2 BCW Note: This was Colijn's commentary on ARP principles. **Saevis tranquillus in undis; toelichting op het antirevolutionair beginselprogram** Standaard, Amsterdam, 1940.

This deprives the major drawback of a non-balanced budget - namely, that future generations will have to foot the bill - of its true force. Borrowing money to carry out so-called unprofitable projects can no longer be dismissed with a single gesture. When the government borrows during a period of unemployment to keep the unemployed employed, this is not at the expense of, but also for the benefit of, future generations, who, thanks to this job creation and increased production, can enjoy a higher income than would otherwise be the case.

It's quite conceivable that after reading the above, you still feel unsatisfied, in that it's still unclear to you why, for example, a company is required to adhere to the rule of a "balanced budget" for current income and expenditure, as well as the rule of the pre-assured profitability of loans to be taken out, while the government is *not*. I would like to respond to this as follows.

When we speak of current income in a business, it has a completely different character than the current income of the government. This is already evident from the fact that a business must simply accept its income as a given - it depends on sales - but that the government can increase or decrease its (tax) revenue at will through legislative changes. Therefore, when the government chooses between a tax increase (to "balance" its budget) and a loan, it is something completely different from what a business does when it determines the maximum amount it can borrow based on its receipts.

The government must reckon with the fact that every tax places a burden on the current and future generations - a consideration the company needn't apply to its (given) income. There's something else to consider. When taking out a loan, a company must consider the future monetary return on the investments it will make; but shouldn't the government, in its lending policy, consider more than just the immediate monetary return? The Government isn't a business: it must also consider the beneficial impact such a loan can have on economic life *as a whole*. Its role may be to lend earlier and in larger amounts than would be considered immediately economically profitable by business standards.

If we dig a little deeper, it becomes clear that the "old insight" can be traced back to certain philosophical perspectives, which cannot, however, be our own. In the notion that the government must maintain a balanced budget under all circumstances and borrow as little as possible, we see the influence of the classical school of economics, [64]which was based on the idea that if the government were to allow economic life to proceed independently as much as possible, a perfectly harmonious society could be achieved. Government borrowing was seen as an infringement of this harmony, as a disruption of the proper balance between supply and demand for capital. Taxation was therefore considered the appropriate means of financing current government expenditures. An unbalanced budget was therefore seen as a dissonance in the harmonious development of the free economic life.

This idea of economic harmony without government intervention was linked to the classical school's view that in a free economy, the optimal utilization of all

production factors would naturally emerge. Any budget imbalance, any unnecessary borrowing from government agencies, could only serve to divert economic life from its path toward equilibrium; this, in turn, could lead to unemployment.

The crisis of the 1930s prompted most economists to reconsider this incorrect assumption. Financial policy, formerly considered "healthy" - that of a balanced budget and profitable borrowing - became increasingly questioned, because such a policy assumed that the rest of the economy was also healthy; but this proved to be precisely not the case. People came to understand that an unbalanced budget need not always disrupt national economic equilibrium, but can even promote it. Tax and borrowing policies can prove useful in combating economic crises.

One more point remains. Does the above mean that any policy of budget deficits and "unprofitable" loans is financially sound? This is by no means so.

Regarding current account deficits, the government should remember that these are only permissible in a situation of more or less severe unemployment. Only then will an uncovered budget deficit have a beneficial effect on the economy. When unemployment - as is currently the case - does not exist, a current account deficit in the national budget is inappropriate. As you may know, the national budget for 1961 shows a current account surplus.

Regarding borrowing, it will also be necessary to ensure that the so-called national debt - the sum of all outstanding government loans - remains within certain limits. Currently, it amounts to slightly less than half of national income; this is quite high, but not unacceptable. If the total amount of loans increases too much, an excessive burden will indeed be placed on future generations, who will be forced to pay large amounts in interest and principal on these loans. The advantage that government loans bring to future generations through faster growth of national income can also be turned into a disadvantage by such heavy interest and principal pressure.

Meanwhile, I would like to point out that the issues surrounding the national budget must be distinguished from those of municipalities. A municipality [65] resembles a business more than the central government in that its income is largely fixed - distributions from the municipal fund, etc. - and is therefore less subject to arbitrary increases or decreases than that of the central government. Furthermore, it should be noted that it is not the municipality, but the central government, that is responsible for maintaining the smooth economic functioning of the national economy. Therefore, when a municipality borrows, it must, just like a company, primarily consider the *direct* profitability of its loans. After all, it is not its primary responsibility to assess and take into account the indirect, beneficial effect of this loan on the entire national economy. It is not within the competence of municipalities to conduct independent cyclical policies. Therefore, municipalities and all lower-level public bodies should be subject to more "classic" budgetary policy requirements than the central government. For all these bodies, the requirement of a balanced budget as a prerequisite for sound financial policy must be maintained in full, unless the central

government itself deems a different approach desirable for these bodies due to a situation of serious unemployment.

Finally, it should be noted that budget deficits should primarily be covered by *loans*, and not - as textbooks often recommend - by running the banknote printing press. The latter is considered extremely dangerous for the normal development of economic life and can lead to uncontrollable inflation. This emergency measure should only be used in very serious economic crises, and then only very cautiously. In all other cases, government expenditures must be met either by taxes or by loans, whereby the choice between the latter two - and that is the difference from the past - should depend on cyclical, not dogmatic, considerations.

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SOCIALISTISCH IDEALISME EN OPPORTUNISME pp. 115-125

5. SOCIALIST IDEALISM AND OPPORTUNISM

drs. B. Goudzwaard

1. The challenge of opportunism

In 1954, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the *Anti-Revolutionary Party*, Minister Zijlstra defended the view that liberalism and socialism are increasingly converging in their practical policies and might eventually merge into one. This is a proposition that has since acquired a certain notoriety both within and outside our circles. The proposition - originating from the socialist economist Lerner[3] - has been challenged from various quarters, but has not yet been conclusively refuted. Indeed, a growing similarity between liberal and socialist practical policies can still be discerned. Both, socialist and liberal, are increasingly openly advocating a combination of free competition and government-led economic regulation. In both cases we increasingly encounter the effort to make the choice between these two forms of economic activity no longer "dogmatically" - on the basis of a principled pro and con - but rather on the basis of the "concrete circumstances of the moment" - that is, on the basis of the question of what can be considered most desirable on commercial[4] grounds in the given situation.

In other words, both movements have been characterized in recent decades by a steadily decreasing tendency toward dogmatism and an increasing tendency toward opportunism, so that it does indeed seem plausible that, as far as their practical policies are concerned, they should be on the same page - namely, that of opportunism. This is a development that poses problems not only for socialism and liberalism, but also for us. The convergence of these two movements also means that the number of practical-political points of contention between them and us is also declining. Through the process of de-dogmatization, both socialist and liberal practical politics seem to be becoming increasingly acceptable to us.

Therefore, we - like socialism and liberalism - [116] are once again faced with the necessity of proving our right to exist as an independent political party and of defining and demarcating our position vis-à-vis that of our opponents.

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3 BCW Note: It would seem that Goudzwaard is here referring to Abba P. Lerner (1903-1982) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abba_P._Lerner

4 BCW Note: Dutch: *op zakelijke gronden*. The word is also translated as pragmatic, business. One wonders whether the liberal-socialist convergence that Zijlstra referred to was with the use of a word to ecclipse the different understandings of economic life from both standpoints.

However, this last point is considerably more difficult today than it was sixty years ago. Liberalism and socialism were then both characterized by a radical adherence to their chosen specific dogmas. By combating these dogmas from the perspective of Christian principles, one could believe that the position of the anti-revolutionary movement vis-à-vis the liberalist and socialist currents had been sufficiently defined. For example, the argument to the liberals often sufficed with the argument that in their quest for freedom they downplayed the effect of sin and that their doctrine of the inviolability of property was incompatible with the Scriptural idea of stewardship. Meanwhile, with the socialists it was considered sufficient to reject their striving for socialization as a sin against the eighth commandment and to refute the idea of the class struggle by appealing to the Christian idea of solidarity.

These arguments are certainly no longer valid for defining our position vis-à-vis socialism and liberalism. That is because of the simple reason that both movements have distanced themselves from these dogmas. We will now have to pursue different paths to define our position vis-à-vis socialism and liberalism.

The question, however, is whether we are capable of doing this. Doesn't one, by definition, lose all firm grip on an opponent inclined to opportunism?

In our view, this need not be the case. Even when a political opponent lapses into opportunism, he need not become "elusive" to us. A position over against his stand can still be considered possible, provided, however, that we are willing to attempt to penetrate the driving ideas that inspire our opponent.[5]

In the remainder of this article, we will attempt to illustrate this further for socialism, also in its contrast to liberalism. We will first consider the question of what the characteristics of socialist idealism have traditionally been, so that, through an analysis of the driving socialist ideas from the early period, we can also understand something of the background of contemporary socialist opportunism.

2. Socialism as a Reaction

That socialism was born from resistance to capitalism and its underlying liberal ideology is a fact that we may assume is generally known. However, it is less generally accepted that the essential driving ideas of 19th-century socialism were

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5 BCW Note: Here we begin to detect the influence of J P A Mekkes, the Philosophy of Reformational Philosophy from whom Goudzwaard received decisive encouragement as an undergraduate student at the University of Rotterdam. From this mentor he came to understand the value of concerted intellectual effort to "penetrate to the driving ideas of an opponent." This is an important theme of "immanent critique", integral to the "transcendental critique" of reformational philosophy. We might say that here we read its outworking as the "immanent theoretical practise" of the young Abraham Kuyper Stichting worker applying it to the task of ARP members understanding the parliamentary standpoints of the Liberals and the Socialists. As part of a political party's task is the education of the citizenry concerning the political philosophy held by itself and also by its opponents and to explain how these political commitments work their way into legislation. For the approach of Mekkes, see Sander Griffioen "Thinking Along with Mekkes" *Philosophia Reformata* 82, pp. 26-42.

entirely determined by this reactionary relationship. Even so, this last point does seem no less correct to us.

To demonstrate this, we must briefly examine characteristic features of liberalism in its capitalist variant. We can roughly distinguish three of these features.

[117] First, liberalism assumed the primacy of the individual. Regarding the relationship between the individual and the community, it saw the individual as the sovereign source of the community. Liberalism upheld the right of the individual, autonomous human being to complete self-determination, and believed that if this right were sufficiently respected, the human community could also achieve maximum development. In this view, human society could only be organized in the interests of sovereign individuals, for the good of both the individual and the community. In principle, the government had no other duty than to guarantee to the individual human being continuous protection of his or her autonomous freedom.

Secondly - and this is closely related to the above - liberalism assumed the primacy of civil liberty. It saw the freedom of citizens as centered in the individual's free disposal of (innate) civil rights granted to them by nature, such as the right to freely enter into contracts, the right to own property, the right to freely choose a profession, and the right of free establishment.[6] It believed that by formally upholding these rights, the government would also materially achieve the greatest freedom and prosperity for everyone. In the liberal view, a "natural order" prevailed in the world, which meant that if every person were left free in their economic responses, a situation of optimal harmony and prosperity would naturally arise.

Whether the individual was capable of actually realizing their due freedoms, that is, materially, was therefore considered irrelevant by liberalism. Regarding freedom of choice of profession, for example, liberalism believed the government had no other duty towards workers than to ensure that they formally retained the right to refuse employment if they deemed the wages offered too low. Should it go further and, through providing material support, actually enable workers to refuse such employment, it would be interfering with society's natural progression towards maximum prosperity for all; this government intervention could ultimately only be detrimental to workers.

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6 BCW Note: Freedom of establishment refers to a freedom to conduct business beyond the boundaries of any one polity. Goudzwaard's exposition of the liberal view of freedom at this point reminds us of a dimension of the liberal "world-view" that can be ecclipsed by internal democratic debate within any one polity, namely the extension of the liberal economic order beyond the economy of any one nation state. This aspect of "liberal freedom" will not be emphasized if debate is focused upon civil rights within one's own polity. The rise of liberalism in the West coincided with the rise of colonialism from Western powers with the growth of economic enterprises, commercial endeavour, markets and supply chains that originated from entrepreneurial "overseas involvement" beyond the borders of any one nation-state.

The defining characteristic of the liberalist conception of the state was therefore that the state's purpose was to protect innate human rights in a formal sense; the liberal idea of the state was the idea of the formal constitutional state.

A third characteristic of capitalist liberalism - although somewhat different in nature from the previous characteristics - was its assumption of the primacy of capital as a production factor. This will require little explanation: the word "capitalist" is self-explanatory here. Capital directed and determined the mode of production as well as the structure of enterprises; labour as a production factor was excluded from any participation in the production process.

In summary, we believe we can say that the following were characteristic of 19th-century liberalism: the primacy of the individual, of civil rights, and of capital.

[118] Socialism now opposed this liberalism, so completely that it almost became its opposite.

Socialism countered the primacy of the individual with the primacy of the community. It saw the community as the origin of the individual; an individual can only become a human being (or person) when living in a community (Banning[7]). By starting from the interests of the community, 19th-century socialism also believed it was properly promoting the well-being of the individual. The individual could only reach his full potential within the community. Therefore, socialism argued that society should not be organized according to the rights of the individual, but rather according to the rights of the community.

Later on socialism would derive the government's role directly from this insight. The state must no longer be an organ of the sovereign individual, but must be the organ of the community, to reform and organize society into a true community of free people. Like liberalism, socialism also aimed for human freedom, but it characterized this freedom differently.[8] Since liberalism, based on its concept of freedom, lacked any internal defense against the exploitation of workers, socialism placed all its emphasis on human freedom in a material-economic sense. Therefore, against the liberal primacy of civil-right freedom, it opted for the primacy of economic freedom. People must be protected from all economic constraints; they must not be subjected

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7 BCW Note: Willem Banning, (1888-1971) a leading promoter of Christian Socialism, and of the Doorbraak movement after World War II. He also wrote "The day of tomorrow. The design of a personalistic socialism ..." He helped to form the Partij van den Arbeit (the Dutch labour party). See: A L Molendijk "Willem Banning and the Reform of Socialism in the Netherlands" *Contemporary European History* (2020), 29, 139–154. Here Goudzwaard is, for his educative purposes in writing this article, viewing socialism from within the emergent public-legal framework of The Netherlands.

8 BCW Note: A persistent theme that Goudzwaard developed over the years concerned the way in which the same words can be used by advocates for diametrically opposed political ideologies. This is stated in his essay "The liberation of the business enterprise" in **Aid for the Overdeveloped West** Toronto, Wedge, 1975 pp.33-48. It is also a useful strategy to introduce citizens to their need to think deeply about their own political responsibilities when confronted by rival viewpoints. Once more, we can witness Goudzwaard-the-teacher in this article.

to circumstances of unemployment, precarious existence, or exploitation. The government, as an organ of the community, must protect and ensure the economic freedom of people.

The socialist of the 19th century believed that only by all achieving economic freedom could other human freedoms - including those of a legal nature - develop their true meaning. Just as the liberal expected maximum economic freedom and prosperity for everyone from the protection of formal-legal freedoms, so also the socialist believed that by pursuing economic freedom, total human freedom would find optimal realization. The socialist too saw this as a necessary outworking; not, to be sure, through the operation of a natural order, but according to the law of historical materialism, according to which the economic foundation of society determines the entire ideal superstructure with its essential features. With the achievement of a foundation for the economic freedom of all, the more ideal human freedoms will also develop in harmony with it. So, in this respect, the liberal doctrine of the natural order and the socialist doctrine of historical materialism were presupposed as each other's opposites.

Finally, socialism also fought against the power of capital, as one of the most important factors that in liberalism had curtailed human economic freedom. It therefore argued that labour, not capital, should determine the mode of production and the structure of an enterprise; instead of the liberal primacy[9] of capital, it chose the primacy of labour. The socialization dogma [119] of old socialism and the idea of class struggle were directly related to this primacy.

In summary, we can say that 19th-century socialism, in contrast to and in reaction to liberalism, was characterized by prioritizing the primacy of the community over that of the individual, and the primacy of economic freedom over that of civil rights. In reaction to the primacy of capital, it also chose the primacy of labour.

3. The Relevance of Socialist Primacy

a. The relevance of the primacy of the community

The question arises whether the aforementioned prime movers,[10] those driving ideas that formed 19th-century socialism, can still be considered applicable to modern

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9 BCW Note: Dutch: *primaat*. *See concept below.*

10 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's term here and elsewhere is *gekozen primaten*. Is he referring to a member of the class of the most developed and intelligent group of mammals or is he using a term to designate a "mover and shaker" of historical development as with an ecclesiastical "primate"? No he is actually referring to what he referred to in the opening section of this article (see ftns.3&4) and which in later articles he will refer to as "principles", religious starting points that drive and give momentum to a world-view. They are ideas and yet more than ideas because they have a power to integrate a movement and in this sense socialism is described as an idealism. As we read on we note that prime among these prime movers is the commitment to community.

socialism. We believe that this question can still be answered in the affirmative, although here and there we may see a certain shift or counter-movement.

First, a word about the relevance of the primacy of the community. The notion that the relationship of the national community to business is no different from that of the whole to a specific part. This still persists in socialism, with the view of individual activities within the economic system gaining acceptance and valued when serving the well-being of the entire community. This view remains alive and well in socialism. The modern socialist pursuit of order, the systematic management of socio-economic life for the benefit of the community's interests, flows directly from this notion. The influence of the primacy of the community is clearly demonstrated, for example, when we are assured in socialist circles that socialism is indeed striving to *"enforce such a management of the means of production so that this management is primarily directed towards the interests of the community"*.[11]

It should be noted, however, that socialism no longer advocates the primacy of the community in the same *way* and to the same *extent* as it did fifty years ago. Regarding the first of these, the way in which it advocated the primacy of the community, it can be pointed out that, quite early in its development, socialism tied the community's drive for control to a specific condition: the individual's participation in the management exercised by the community. And so we are referring here to the rise of the idea of democracy within modern socialism. The position that the community's drive for control automatically maximized individual freedom was abandoned; the realization prevailed that such optimal individual freedom could only be assured in a truly democratic society, in which the individual has a say in the management exercised. Since then, the concept of democracy has been increasingly developed within socialism.[12]

But further, modern socialism no longer advocates the primacy of the community to the same *extent* as it did fifty years ago. [120] Regarding the scope of this primacy, it has gradually had to impose certain restrictions. The socialist began to attach a certain value to an individual sphere of freedom outside the (interference of the) community. The attempt was made to protect this, in a sense, against the assertive urge of the community.

In this context, one can mention, among other things, the preference of modern socialism for those planning systems which emphasize *global* community-based

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11 **BG Ftn.1** Drs. J. M. den Uyl, "Tussen dogmatisme en opportunisme", in: *Socialisme en Democratie*, april 1960, p. 214.

12 BCW Note: Is Goudzwaard here suggesting that a "liberal" view of individual sovereignty is somehow present, even if ecclipsed, in the socialistic view of plebiscitarian democracy where every worker has the right to his/her own vote directed by his/her own conscience? It would seem so.

organization, thus avoiding, as much as possible, detailed intervention in the individual sphere. It has become clear that the community can also exert its influence to the detriment of the individual, and so an attempt is made to surround community intervention with certain guarantees against any potential harm to individual interests.

Another example of this same phenomenon is socialism's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted by the United Nations. By adopting this, socialism limits the influence of the community in relation to certain individual freedoms; it thus accepts, in favor of individual interests, a certain limitation on the absolute validity of the idea of the community for all sectors of society.

In summary, we can say that modern socialism is, as it were, carrying out a certain countermovement toward the "pole" of the individual.[13] It no longer bases itself so resolutely upon the primacy of the community as the old socialism did, but has instead bound the community's sphere of influence to certain conditions and limitations. On the one hand, the modern socialist stipulates the condition of individual participation in the management of the community; on the other hand, such socialism limits the community's influence by demanding that it prevent, as much as possible, damage to the individual's sphere of freedom. Against the influence of the community, the socialist thus assigns a distinct value to the individual sphere as such. However, this does not alter the fact that, for the socialist, the assignment of such a distinct value to the individual sphere can only come *from within the community*. For socialism, this individual sphere only acquires a right to exist because it has found recognition within the community; it exists by the grace of the community. A characteristic of this counter-movement, therefore, is that it proceeds from within the primacy of the community. This also makes it a typically *socialist* phenomenon.

It is noteworthy that we encounter a similar development in liberalism, only it is manifest in the opposite direction. There, the one-sided emphasis on the rights of the individual has gradually been abandoned with a recognition of the necessity of a "social bond" for individual freedom to flourish. Liberalism, therefore, is undertaking a countermovement toward the community "pole". This countermovement arises from the primacy of the individual and can therefore be considered a typically liberalist phenomenon.

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13 BCW Note: The term "pole" here suggests an individual-community tension with both "poles" presupposing and repelling each other. The image arises from the analysis of chemical bonding in physical chemistry - the polarity is a tension between "positive" and "negative" charges, electronic in character. The analysis of socialism's development from the 19th century is in terms of a reduction in this tension brought on by a managerial control of the individual's place in a corporate context, by commitment to the pre-eminence of labour, to a community-oriented democracy and a growing emphasis upon human rights. Goudzwaard will go on to say that the primacy of economic freedom has been the best preserved (see below).

With this, we have come upon one of the causes of the so-called convergence of the two movements. Both still proceed from opposing "principles",[14] but they attempt, [121] as much as possible, to overcome the objections they have previously identified with what is "opposite" to their "pole". In this way, we can also understand the frequently expressed desire in both liberal and socialist camps to seek a synthesis, a reconciliation, between the interests of the individual and the community. Both movements seek such a possibility, while retaining their originally chosen ideal principle, of doing justice to what is their "opposite" in such a way that something of the harmony in which they once so firmly believed becomes visible. The socialist accepts and respects an autonomous individual sphere in those areas where they have lost faith in the beneficial effect of the community on the individual; the liberal accepts and respects a "social" bond in those areas where they, in turn, have begun to doubt the beneficial effect of the primacy of the individual. In this way, both hope, by their own efforts and from different points of view, to bring together the synthesis between the interests of the individual and the community.

b. The Relevance of the Primacy of Labour

In certain respects, a countermovement can also be discerned in modern socialism regarding the primacy of labour. There is a tendency toward a certain recognition of the interests of capital as a production factor. Modern socialism no longer entertains the idea of a class struggle between capitalists and workers. This can be illustrated by the fact that the report **The Reform of the Enterprise** by the Dr. Wiardi Beckman Foundation[15] recognizes the right of capital providers to a certain degree of participation in corporate management: in the supervisory board, as envisioned in the report, shareholders are also represented by 1/3rd of the seats.

However, this does not alter the fact that the primacy of labour is still alive in the socialist movement. For example, in Article 31 of the Labour Party's manifesto, we read that

> *labour relations and their regulation*
>
> - including that of strikes - must be placed
>
> *in a legal order based on the principle that labour is an important moral factor and the central moment in the productive process*. (emphasis added).

Banning expresses this primacy in similar terms when he states:

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14 BCW Note: The Dutch term here is, once more, *primaten*. Goudzwaard's discussion of tensions between ideals rendered "poles" (pool) also involves this attempt to indentify the *primate* ideas that have been ascribed with ideal characteristics. See ftn.10. The concept involves a "prime mover" with momentum potential to drive a vision in a particular direction.

15 BCW Note: https://wbs.nl/publicaties/vooruitdenken and also see this critical review that "the report offers little **more** than a few pointers, and the title is actually too pretentious, as the intended reform only concerns a suggested revision of our corporate law." https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_hol006196001_01/_hol006196001_01_0177.php?q=iet

We are united (in the Labour Party) by a common political struggle for a new, growing social order in which labour occupies the dominant position.

Elsewhere, he calls the Labour Party

the representative of labour in the production process.[16]

The influence of the primacy of labour on socialist policy is also reflected in the drive for heavy taxation of unemployed income[17], as well as in the socialist wage policy.

c. The Relevance of the Primacy of Economic Freedom.

Of the three prime ideals[18] of the socialist movement, the primacy of economic freedom has perhaps remained the best preserved to this day. For socialism, the path to freedom is still the path to economic [122] freedom, to liberation from all kinds of economic constraints for all classes of society.

Here, too, one can speak of a slight countermovement. Certain civil liberties must be preserved by the community in its quest for economic freedom for all, such as the right to free association and assembly, to free movement within the country, the freedom to choose one's education and religion, etc.; rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This unconditional upholding, however, does not apply to those civil liberties we have already mentioned in presenting the liberalist doctrine of freedom: the right to freely choose one's profession and consumption, the right to free establishment and ownership. These rights may - and must - be infringed upon when the community interest demands it. With regard to these rights, the modern socialist still holds that they must yield to the pursuit of economic freedom, because only through the realization of *this* freedom can they attain their true meaning in harmony with other human freedoms.[19]

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16 **BG Ftn 2** Prof. Dr. W. Banning, **Ons Socialisme**, pp. 22, 25.
BCW Note: see Arie L Molendijk "Willem Banning and the Reform of Socialism in the Netherlands"
The abstract reads: *"In 1947 the liberal Protestant minister Willem Banning drafted a new programme for the Labour Party, in which the party dropped the Marxist view of history and class struggle. New Labour in the Netherlands was envisioned as a party that strove for a democratic and just society. Banning's role in reforming the Labour Party was part of his broader project of breaking down structures of socio-political segregation that had existed since the end of the nineteenth century. Banning argued that the Labour Party had to abandon its atheist ideology to open up to Protestants and Catholics. This article will examine Banning's views and ideals and show how he contributed to the transformation of Labour into a social democratic party and seek answer to the question: how could a liberal Protestant minister become the main ideologue of the Labour Party?"* Of note is the application of "doorbraak" (breakthrough) after WWII not simply as a doctrine to challenge "Christian organisations" for their antithetical distinctiveness (see Herman Dooyeweerd **Roots of Western Culture 1979** "Introduction" pp.1-6) but to challenge the exclusivism of socialistic labour movement.

17 BCW Note: Dutch term: *het arbeidsloze inkomen* i.e. income from sources other than employment

18 BCW Note: Dutch term: *de drie primaten*

19 BCW Note: This is the prime mover that holds all the others in harmony with each other.

Just as the liberal state, as the organ of the individual, was tasked with guaranteeing civil freedom, so socialism advocates for the state, as the organ of the community, ensuring the economic freedom of all its citizens. Therefore, socialism holds the state responsible for achieving full employment, fair income distribution, maximum growth of national prosperity, security of existence for all, and social care from cradle to grave. The state must free people from all economic constraints that can befall them in the social, economic, and cultural spheres.

The contours of the idea of the welfare state become visible here. The idea of the welfare state can be seen as the socialist direct opposition to the liberal constitutional state; this idea of the welfare state flows directly from the primacy of economic freedom.

4. Opportunism as a Gesture of Embarrassment

We can now attempt to draw up a provisional balance sheet. We have seen that a movement like socialism still proceeds, in principle, from the same ideal principles that characterized it in the previous century, only with this difference: it now recognizes the possibility of damage to its corresponding "opposite pole" and, by imposing certain conditions and restrictions, attempts to prevent this damage as much as possible; indeed, it even seeks a "synthesis" with these "opposites" from within these ideal principles. The socialist community, in its urge for order, still strives for the realization of economic freedom for all and for a society in which labour occupies the dominant position; but in doing so, it attempts to protect the individual sphere as much as possible and to leave certain individual civil liberties completely intact, while also not unnecessarily infringing on the rights of the production factor, capital. Today's socialism, driven by its original "prime movers", [123] attempts to bring about a 123] harmonious reconciliation with the "poles" opposed to its ideal principles.

A significant portion of contemporary socialist theoretical reflection is focused on achieving this synthesis. We have already noted socialism's ever-increasing interest in those planning systems in which the individual sphere is preserved as much as possible from communal encroachment.[20] The development of the idea of democracy within socialism also deserves attention in this context. Through the formation of numerous new, democratic bodies within society, an attempt is made to protect the community *from within* against any unacceptable erosion of individual interests.[21]

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20 **BG Ftn 3** "the Keynesian system" as a "useful synthesis ... between the spheres of interest of the individual and the community." A. A. van Ameringen, '*Liberalisme en Socialisme als economische stelsels',* in: **Liberalisme en Socialisme**, pp. 34ff.

21 **BG Ftn.4** Van Ameringen, *op cit,* notes on this point that in his view both liberalism and socialism have fallen short *"in the field of organ formation in the plane between the two poles of state and the individual."*

Is it indeed possible that socialism, through continued theoretical reflection, will eventually succeed in finding this synthesis? In our view, this question must be answered negatively. It is socialism itself that stands in the way of achieving true harmony between the poles of individual and community.

And why is this? What is characteristic of this attempt at socialist synthesis? In it Socialism attempts to bring about a synthesis motivated by ideal principles that are its defining characteristic, each of which however, constitutes one of the two poles between which any synthesis will have to be established. Such an attempt, however, is doomed to failure from the outset, if this attempt at reconciliation continues having to launch reconciliation from one end of these two conflicting polarities: individual and community; economic freedom and legal freedom; capital and labour.[22]

True harmony between individual and community interests cannot be achieved if what should belong *to the individual as such* can only be viewed as a community's concession. Any reconciliation between two parties can only be brought about by a third, independent authority; this is also the case here.[23] The synthesis of individual with community cannot be realized as long as the individual's sphere of freedom is viewed and assessed under the primacy of the umbrella of community.[24]

[124] The only way to proceed from the primacy of the community and still believe in the harmony - the synthesis between the interests of the individual and the community - is to consider the interest of the community as the only true interest of the individual; thus, to see the individual interest as an extension of the community interest in all circumstances. But it is precisely this perspective that modern socialism

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22 BCW Note: This proved difficult to capture in coherent English. The difficulty arises from Goudzwaard's effort to think along with the socialistic dialectical logic and to explain it in non-dialectical terms. In Dutch it reads: *Want wat is het typerende van deze socialistische synthese-poging? Dat zij wordt verricht van uit de voor het socialisme kenmerkende primaten, welke primaten echter stuk voor stuk een van de beide polen vormen, waartussen de synthese tot stand zou moeten worden gebracht. Zulk een poging is echter van te voren tot mislukking gedoemd. Individu en gemeenschap, economische en juridische vrijheid, kapitaal en arbeid zijn niet met elkander te verzoenen, wanneer men bij deze verzoeningspoging van een van de twee met elkander conflicterende grootheden blijft uitgaan.*

23 BCW Note: Goudzwaard appeals to the empirical reality of conflict resolution rather than trying to resolve the problems of the antinomic socialist worldview in its latter-day phase seeking synthesis with liberalism via abstract logic.

24 **BG Ftn.5** In his article "Liberalisme en Socialisme naar hun gedachten-inhoud beschouwd" in **Liberalisme en Socialisme**, 1956 (Liberalism and Socialism with their thought content examined) Prof. Banning launched the idea of a *personal community* as a synthesis between the individual and the community. Person and community - he argues - are essentially connected for the socialist. Therefore, he vehemently refuses to think in the individualism-collectivism schema so easily imposed on us: "We reject both, because there is a third, truly uniquely human possibility: that of the community of persons. Democratic socialism is the political movement that gives shape to the idea of the community of persons" (p. 20ff.). Banning previously indicated the idea of the personhood of the individual as follows: "A person *only* becomes a human being by being rooted in a community and growing through 'encounter' with other persons," the idea of the community of persons cannot be the solution. Here, Banning allows the human being as a person to "emerge" from the community. The idea of the community of persons is therefore little different from the primacy of community common to socialism: the individual is wholly contained within the community as a person; he is denied any independent validity vis-à-vis the community.

can no longer fully achieve. To a certain extent and in particular circumstances, the modern socialist has had to compromise the belief in the completely harmonious functioning that arises from the community's primacy. In doing so, however, socialism finds the path to harmony has been blocked.

That socialism has not yet fully succeeded in finding the synthesis is also reflected in its practical politics. Now that the interests of the individual and the community cannot be *harmonized*, little remains in practical politics but to try to protect both as much as possible. Since the norm, the independent authority, is lacking from which both the individual and the community could be assigned their rightful place in true harmony, the most that can be attempted is to ensure that the individual and the community at least cause each other as little inconvenience as possible. The guiding standard for political action then becomes the principle of minimal friction, the principle of protecting everyone's "sensitivities" as much as possible in all circumstances.

With this, we have, after a long journey, arrived in our view at the true cause of the socialist - and indirectly also of the liberal - *opportunism*. Opportunist politics is a policy based on the principle that, in all circumstances, one must take those measures that cause the least friction. The fact that socialism has been forced to adopt such a policy, in part, betrays a crisis in its principles. In its *theoretical* reflection, it has been unable to find harmony with the tensions that arise and it is therefore forced, in *practical* politics, to limit itself to avoiding and mitigating these tensions.

Therefore, one could also call socialist opportunism a gesture of embarrassment. It attempts, in practice, on a case-by-case basis, to construct the most frictionless "solution" for existing conflicts between the interests of individual and community, economic and legal interests, and of labour and capital, as the current circumstances may warrant. After the debunking of dogmas and the breakdown of faith in the absolute salvation of the chosen prime movers[25], this is indeed the only path left for socialist politics.

At the beginning of this article, it was said that defining one's own position against that of an opponent inclined to opportunism can be considered a difficult, but not impossible, task. As far as socialism is concerned, the accuracy of this statement may have become apparent from the preceding discussion. That socialism has had to adopt an opportunist policy is a sign of a crisis in its own [125] principles. It is, above all, the crisis of a faith that has sought its fixed starting points - its prime movers - in the elements of this creation, rather than in the *Creator*. This crisis, as we have seen, finds its cause in the fact that socialism refuses, in the relationship between individual

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25 BCW Note: Dutch: *de gekozen primaten*

and community, economic and non-economic freedom, labour and capital, to proceed from a fixed *norm* outside these relations, from which all these elements could be assigned their *rightful* place.

By contrast, we may state that the pursuit of a truly Christian policy is always to be characterised by the principle of starting from the *God-given standard of justice*.

1962-AR Staatkunde jrg-32

BOEKBESPREKING pp.69-72

6. REVIEW

Drs. A. Hoogerwerf,[1] **Developments in Dutch political parties.**
Introduction for the Arjos study conference on October 6-7, 1961.
Published by *Arjos*,[2] 's-Gravenhage. Price: 1 guilder.

In a captivating brochure, written in a fast-paced style, Mr. Hoogerwerf, assistant professor of political science at the Vrije Universiteit, lays out his views on the possible future development of the five largest political parties in the Netherlands. His argument is prefaced by a number of propositions, some of which we will reproduce below.

1. Various differences in policy among the five largest Dutch political parties have become blurred over the past five years, and will continue to do so in years ahead. The most contentious political issues in the near future will concern the distribution of national income and might even concern nuclear weapons. In this regard, there is a growing tendency for political alignment along socio-economic rather than religious lines.

2. There is a trend that suggests a three-party system is being formed, with the Labour Party (PvdA), the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), and the Catholic People's Party (KVP) constituting the three respective cores.

3. Despite what Prof. Dr. J. Zijlstra[3] and Dr. S.W. Couwenberg[4] may believe, it is not likely that there will be a merger of liberalism and socialism. These movements

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1 BCW Note: Andries Hoogerwerf (1931 – 25 2024) a Dutch political scientist and public administration scholar.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andries_Hoogerwerf_(political_scientist) See also https://www.utwente.nl/nl/bms/nieuws/2024/3/1432651/een-politicoloog-in-de-bestuurskunde His Vrije Universiteit doctorate in 1964 was titled, "Protestantism and Progressiveness". His work is not listed in **Capitalism and Progress**, nor mentioned in Goudzwaard's inaugural, "Economy and the Progress Idea" at the Vrije Universiteit, 10/3/1972.

2 BCW Note: ARJOS, Anti-Revolutionaire Jongerenstudieclubs (Anti-Revolutionary young people's study clubs). Here there is no mention that this is an ARJOS brochure, nor with how the political youth clubs might relate to the future of the party or Dutch politics more generally. Goudzwaard mentions proposition 10 about the ARP's lack of clarity. Is the brochure evidence for this?

3 BCW Note: Prof. Dr. J. Zijlstra. *ARP* politician, Vrije Universiteit professor of political science, served as Prime Minister 1966-67. Zijlstra was director of the *Abraham Kuyper Foundation*, August 1963-November 1966. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jelle_Zijlstra. Goudzwaard had referred to Zijlstra's 1954 view when introducing his 1961 ARS article "Socialist Idealism and Opportunism" p.72 above. At the time of writing, Goudzwaard was a researcher at the Abraham Kuyper Foundation, a post held from 1959-1967, becoming special researcher for ARP in the "Tweede Kamer" (House of Representatives) caucus (1965-1967) and then member of parliament (1967-1971). See "Ik heb bepaald geen saai leven gehad" in Herman Noordegraaf and Sander Griffioen (eds) **Bewogen Realisme: Economie, cultuur, oecumene.** 1999 pp. 28-43 at p.33 for his account of the so-called "night of Schmelzer", the 1966 collapse of the Cals cabinet and accession of Zijlstra to PM.

4 BCW Note: Dr. S.W. Couwenberg 1926-2019. Professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law at Erasmus University Rotterdam for almost twenty years.

will maintain themselves, albeit perhaps under different names, as parties of the better-off and the less well-off, respectively.

4. Within the Catholic People's Party (KVP), the Christian Historical Union (HU), and the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), there are noticeable developments toward a deconfessionalized, Christian-inspired center party. It is expected that the majority of the supporters of the three confessional parties will eventually unite in a center party. One condition for this will require a clear political strategy, a five-year political plan.

10. The amended policy programme of the ARP does not make sufficiently clear what kind of society this party is aiming for.[5]

These propositions more or less summarize the core of Mr. Hoogerwerf's argument. It should be added, however, that the author explicitly states on page 8 that he proceed with a *"political-science"* analysis rather than presenting a *"political"* vision.

> *It is not intended to assess the facts from the author's political* [70] *perspective, but to attempt to explain the connection between the facts in terms of cause and effect; ... an attempt will be made to arrive at an objective ... analysis of political facts.*

With these words, the author gives us an important clue for our assessment of his work. So, does this brochure indeed contain an objective reflection on the developmental trends within our party system?

We do not doubt that Mr. Hoogerwerf has here attempted to account for the relevant political facts in the most honest and objective manner possible. However, we consider this brochure presents a distorted picture of the nature and aspirations of the various political parties, particularly those the author refers to as "confessional" parties. In our view, the cause of this distortion lies in the author's approach which is one-sidedly sociological.[6] The aspirations of the various parties, and the votes cast for them, are too often interpreted as matters to be explained sociologically, typically by factors such as status differences, emancipation, and the pursuit of socially progressive economic policies.

We certainly do not downplay these factors; but particularly with regard to the "confessional" parties, they do not deserve the predominence ascribed to them in this account of them. For these parties, the desire to give political form to their Christian

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5 BCW Note: There is significance in this statement since the Brochure has been written for *ARJOS*.

6 BCW Note: Dutch: *te eenzijdig-sociologische aanpak door de schrijver* - the too one-sided sociological approach of the writer

beliefs, may be sociologically inexplicable to the author, but plays at least an equally important role.[7]

In other words: reading this brochure, one cannot escape the impression that the author views the actual contradictions in the political sphere as basically sociological and that is why he attempts to reduce any "world-and-life-view" contradictions to sociological differences. Differences in faith and worldview are, as it were, not sufficiently acknowledged for their own sake.

The reason for the founding of the Anti-Revolutionary Party is thus primarily explained in terms of a social striving for emancipation by the Protestant Christian group of the population; and, to the extent that "principles" were at issue, these are seen as *"partly formulated under the influence of the emancipation drive"* (pp. 9, 10); thus, the "wings" within the ARP are not primarily viewed in terms of differences in worldview, but rather primarily determined by the social status of those involved, with either a progressive or conservative mentality. Likewise, the new ARP program of principles is assessed too one-sidedly in terms of the degree to which it embodies a progressive outlook.

This distortion is also reflected in the author's vision of the future of political parties. Regarding the contrast between liberalism and socialism, Mr. Hoogerwerf expects it to remain so in the future - despite the fact that in his first proposition he refers to a "blurring of all kinds of differences." Why then should the contrast remain in the future? Apparently, it is because of the prevailing sociological contradictions that exist between socialism and liberalism:

> *Liberalism is essentially a political movement of higher-class and status groups; socialism is essentially a political movement of lower-class and status groups*. (p. 45).

Status differences are therefore at stake here; and the author apparently considers these to be of such fundamental [71] significance that, regarding the relationship between liberalism and socialism, he speaks of *"a permanent antithesis"* (p. 46), a *"deep chasm"* (p. 45) and *"cardinal differences"* (p. 47).[8] These are words which, apparently, he does not wish to use for the "world-and life-view" contradictions between the "Christian-inspired deconfessionalised centre party" on the one hand, and the socialist and liberal parties on the other.

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7 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's analysis implies that the reason the "confessional" parties exist has been neglected by the writer. The writer seems, at the same time, to have both ignored the Christian beliefs of these parties while assuming that they are merely explainable in sociological terms. Goudzwaard will go on to elaborate this "one-sided sociological approach."

8 BCW Note: The deep irony here is that this ARP ARJOS brochure, ignoring the antithesis based upon belief, defaults to a view that *normatively speaking* the only "antithesis" to be acknowledged in political life is one that arises *sociologically* from the fundamental difference said to exist between socialism and liberalism. See his article "Socialistisch idealisme en opportunisme" *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* 1961, 31 pp. 115-125 (translated above pp.72-84)

It seems to us that if the author had avoided this overemphasis of sociological differences and given a more responsible place to *"world-and life-view"* differences,[9] his perspective concerning the future of these parties would have also been different. The convergence of liberalism and socialism might have been declared less absolutely impossible, and the convergence of the ARP and CHU on the one hand, and the KVP on the other, would have been more accurately conveyed. Also, the argument put forward about the "confessional" parties would then have been less convincing to the writer,[10] due to the fact that they currently encompass different status groups.

It is also a characteristic of this type of argument in the way the author portrays the *"Christian-inspired, deconfessionalized party"* of the future as a centrist party. Apparently, he doesn't consider it possible that the unifying force of "Christian inspiration" will be strong enough to bridge the differences between the ranks of higher and lower groups in any permanent way.

Finally, a word about the assertion in the first proposition that, in the near future, the most contentious political issues will be about the distribution of national income and perhaps even concern nuclear armaments. This "selection" of political points of contention from all possible ones is not particularly convincing. Regarding nuclear armaments: given the *"world-and-life outlook structure"* of our people,[11] it seems unlikely that pacifism will develop to any great extent here;[12] moreover, the struggle in our country on this issue will be tempered in advance by the consideration that it is not in our power to stop the arms race between the great powers.

The question of the distribution of national income, which Mr. Hoogerwerf mentions first, will likely demand more attention, but in my opinion, it will not be the most controversial political issue of the future. It should not be forgotten - as Professor Zijlstra has repeatedly pointed out - that the political means for further direct changes to income distribution have virtually been exhausted. Further increases in tax rates are often ineffective, and sometimes even have adverse effects. As is well known, the major spending cuts of 1956 were caused by the government's attempt to increase the employee-share of national income by a few percentage points.

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9 BCW Note: At this point it is perhaps relevant to say that the contrast between (and within) parties is enhanced by articulating their respective world-and-life-views so that they can be compared and contrasted with each other.

10 BCW Note: i.e. as expressions of social status striving of religious groups seeking historical emancipation. I have added the words "to the writer".

11 BCW Note: Dutch: *gezien de "levensbeschouwelijke structuur" van ons volk*

12 BCW Note: Dutch: *hier* - somewhat ambiguous but likely refers to the ARP as a party

A truly effective, direct change in income distribution can only be achieved through a strictly guided wage and price policy, something for which even today's socialist has little sympathy. When the political possibilities are so limited for further influencing income distribution, interest in [72] that distribution will itself also wane, at least politically. Today, the situation is already such that a government with a mentality that is oriented to both "employer" and " employee" with regard to income distribution, can do little more than pursue a *status quo* policy. Any other policy in our "open" economy would be punished by inflationary pressures and spending restrictions.

There are still resources available for indirectly improving income distribution over the longer term, through further provisions in education, etc. However, there is considerable agreement among the political parties on this point; this will not be the most contentious political issue of the future.

What then will be the most controversial issue? That's difficult to say. The most likely issue, in our opinion, concerns the distribution of power. This involves questions like the following:

- Shouldn't government power be further expanded in certain areas, for the sake of "better planning" of society?
- Can large private corporations be left alone with the power they currently hold?
- Should we strive for democratization and a levelling of power positions in our society?
- Is regulation needed for the issue of power within the corporation, and if so, what kind of regulation?
- Should there not be a curtailment of the power of certain pressure groups?

It will depend partly on our activity and reflection whether in the future, from the side of the Reformation, an intrinsically Christian answer can be given to these questions.

7. ECONOMIC POLICY AS PRINCIPLED POLITICS

I. THE WALL BETWEEN PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLE

Drs. Bob Goudzwaard

1. The principle at stake.

In recent years, we have increasingly been confronted with the phenomenon of the "commercialisation"[1] of politics. The political issues of everyday life have increasingly come to lie within a realm where the seeming "neutral" consideration of professional specialists[2] prevails in terms of a purely businesslike efficiency. It is a realm in which the lifeless figures of statistics celebrate their silent triumphs. Here "principles" are viewed as a hindrance: they hinder achievement of the most the practical and effective solutions.

This "commercialisation" has certainly progressed furthest in the realm of socio-economic policy. From the outset, every principled approach seems to have been eliminated. Occasionally, one gets the impression that economic-political issues have taken on a "life of their own", set apart from any existing fundamental points that require discussion.[3]

For a Christian political party, such as our own, this development poses difficulties. After all, a Christian political party's success depends on its ability to embody the *Christian principle* in political practice. But how can this ever be achieved in practice when the principle is felt to be a dead weight?

Shall we get ourselves in order?[4]

Also in our own circle, one can even hear arguments that it would be best for us to accept this development. Though political issues, to a large degree, have

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1 BCW Note: *verzakelijking* - commercializing, commodification, reification. We encountered this same term in the previous discussion of the change in the socialist outlook, the pragmatic political accomodation of "democratic socialism" to the forces driving capitalism.

2 BCW Note: Dutch: *vakspecialisten*

3 BCW Note: *buiten alle bestaande principiële tegenstellingen on.*

4 BCW Note: The heading reads "Ons Schikken?" The Kuyperstichting researcher writes to assist the party recapture its founding vision. This initial paragraph seeks to capture the "drift" in the party in its 20th century historical context, and in a brief, cogent statement. See his 1964 contribution "Economische Politiek" in W.P. Berghuis & H. Algra eds. **Anti-Revolutionair bestek. Toelichting op het beginsel- en algemeen staatkundig program van de Anti-Revolutionaire Partij,** Aalten: De Graafschap 1964 pp. 248-315. especially at *Artikel 17: twee wijzen van verklaring*. pp. 249-250 where he points out that the ARP has adopted a "pragmatic" approach, the key term is *zakelijke*.
This was part of Goudzwaard's contribution in meetings at various locations. A *Nederlandse Gedachten* (the newspaper launched in 1829 by Groen van Prinsterer) on *10 October 1964 p.12 gave notice* as follows: *On Friday, October 16th, a meeting will be held by the IJsselmonde Aid Center. The meeting will take place in the annex of the Reformed Church in Barendrecht. The meeting will begin at 7:45 PM. Drs. B. Goudzwaard of The Hague will speak on "The Principled Course of the A.R. Party."*

become "commercialised",[5] it is said there are still issues where our principles retain their authoritative appeal. Why not limit our principled policy to them?[6]

To be sure, this sounds a rather nice way of resolving the problem. But then, even with everything that can be said in favour of this position, we will still have to ask: what does this actually accomplish?

It is nothing less than *an overthrow*[7] of the party's Christian confession.[8] We will have resigned ourselves to the view that Christian profession is to be made to convey its superiority within the domain of "neutral" deal-making.[9] This attitude is unacceptable to any Christian. In this way, one argues in conflict with the confession - the confession that also is part of the introduction to our party's latest programme of principles - namely, that Christ's Kingship [262] is a *universal* Kingship; that to Him has been given *all* authority in heaven and on earth.

But just rejecting this unacceptable position doesn't eliminate our difficulty. The fact remains that today, in the realm of economic policy, we can accomplish precious little with appeals to many of our familiar political "principles."

We cannot ignore this: most of the practical problems of economic-policy that present themselves to us these days do so as if they are completely immune to the application of our principles.

So then, how can this *failure* of the application of our principles ever be reconciled with the fact that the Christian confession is, by its nature, *unconquerable*?[10]

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5 BCW Note: Dutch - *verzakelijkt*. Goudzwaard identifies the ARP's "phenomenon" of "recent years" in general terms. It is an account the vital task of contributing to state-crafting for all involved, not only in The Netherlands. The article examines how this general decline in principle is expressed by socialists, liberals and Roman Catholics, all active in the Parliamentary legislating process from their respective parties.

6 BCW Note: Goudzwaard refers to the ARP's accountability to electors in terms of its published policy programme, the *beginselprogram,*"the programme of principles" and its electoral promises.

7 BCW Note: Dutch - een *capitulatie*

8 BCW Note: Dutch: *Op niet minder dan op de aanvaarding van een capitulatie van het christelijk belijden*.

9 BCW Note: The full sentence in Dutch reads: *Men legt er zich dan bij neer, dat het christelijk getuigenis zijn meerdere heeft te erkennen in het régime der "neutrale" zakelijkheid*. This is Goudzwaard's diagnosis of the ARP's deep spiritual problem, it's effective decades-long "dealing" in a view that denies its founding vision. By affirming the Calvinist "work ethic" as the key historical reason for the development of capitalism. The party may even argue that "business is business" to demonstrate the Calvinist world-view's historical superiority. See "Calvijns Ethiek van het Sociaal-Economische Leven" *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde* jrg-30 1960 pp.137-152 (above pp.28-49).

10 BCW Note: *legt voor onze beginsel-toepassing een vrijwel volslagen immuniteit aan de dag*. Goudzwaard is ironically repeats *beginsel-toepassing* ("principle-application"). The ARParty may declare its principles but to affirm neutrality is to depart from its own basis. Goudzwaard counters this by reference to the Apostle Paul's description of those with faith in Christ who are "more than conquerors". Romans 8:37 in Dutch reads: Maar in dit alles zijn wij meer dan overwinnaars door Hem die ons liefheeft. Goudzwaard's term here is *onoverwinnelijk*.

Principle and Confession

There is only one way out of this difficulty. We must accept that the "confession of Christ" in the political sphere cannot simply be equated with the application of our ever so familiar "principles". If we were to affirm this, then every "principle-application"[11] would have to possess the same universal penetrating power that also characterizes Christian witness. In other words: there must be something lacking in our vision and thus in our attitude about our Christian principle, which prevents the fulfillment of its proper function, enabling Christian political witness.

Here, in my opinion, we have stumbled upon the root cause of our lack of power. For what is it that enables Christian witness to go beyond what we know of the "application" of Christian "principles"? After all, our witness does not rest on our *grasping at* the principle, but rather on whether *we are being* grasped by the principle.[12] Further, our witness is in the service of ***the*** principle, rather than the principles being in *our* service.

Is such a stark contrast[13] justified here? I believe it is. For what exactly is a *principle*? The word says it all: it is that which can only stand at the *beginning* of human thought and action.[14] It is that to which a person will give his or her heart which therefore directs everything they think and do. A principle, therefore, accompanies a person wherever they may go, even into the seemingly trivial problems of business.[15] For with a true principle there can be no neutrality - doesn't everyone always carry their heart with them as they go?[16]

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11 BCW Note: Here in the ARP text "beginseltoepassing" lacks a hyphen. That may simply be a typo but it also confirms that this is a truly "charged" matter. See below ftn 29 p.95, ftn 32 p.97 (**BG FTN 1**). As with the previous analaysis of socialism, Goudzwaard maintains an awareness of how, in political life, when important judgements about the viability of a political contribution have to be made, the terminology one uses to justify one's contribution is subject to subtle but very important changes.

12 BCW Note: Dutch: *Doordat het getuigenis ,niet rust op ons grijpen naar het beginsel, maar op ons door hèt beginsel gegrepen-zijn*. Zijn given emphasis as in the present-continuous tense. Goudzwaard discusses how appeal to Christian principle involves words, explanations and formulations, part of a way of life lived out in the context of God-given vocation, responsibility.

13 BCW Note: *tegenstelling*. See also above ftn.4 p. 90 in relation to the lack of discussion mentioned in the 2nd paragraph. The sense is of a debate that is inherently contentious. It may even involve allegations of failure, but it is framed in the context of much needed self-criticism to be undertaken by the ARP.

14 BCW Note: The Dutch term for *principle* is *beginsel*. This is more than merely a play on words.

15 BCW Note: *volslagen zakelijke problemen*

16 BCW Note: The picture thus stated is reiminiscent of the symbol associated with John Calvin, the "prompt and sincere" offer of the heart in the person's hand.

But neutrality can exist with respect to a "principle" that we have derived and applied. For such a "principle" is the *end* result[17] of, rather than what precedes, our thinking and actions. And there is, of course, a limit to the possibilities of applying such a derived "principle": for that "principle" owes its scope to the limited human insight involved in its "derivation".[18]

In other words: the "wall" we encounter in practical politics with "our principles" is a wall that we *ourselves*, in fact, have erected. Our impotence is primarily due to this: that we have gradually come to view "principles" as a collection of clear and skillfully drafted practical handbook procedures,[19] which require no other activity on our part than their meticulous "application"; we view them as a series of instructions, which we need only [263] to follow to the letter to ensure a favorable outcome - in this case, a Christian policy. No wonder that such "principles" fail to provide a penetrating witness in politics![20]

Perspective

This opens up a perspective, also for a Christian-economic policy.

For when the term "principle" refers what a person holds from the heart, then we are saying that there is no *single* human action possible that is *not* inspired by it. Then we face the fact that even our political "opponents" are in everything guided by principle.[21] *Then, economic policy, as such, is viewed as principle-based policy.*

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17 BCW Note: The reference to the *end result* ("het *eind* resultaat") in a context where he is discussing principle (*beginsel*) as the beginning of the path or fountain head of the river of our political life, brings into view not only Goudzwaard's artful play with words, but also anticipate his critique of utilitarian economics with its concern to match means to ends. Goudzwaard's subsequent professional contribution emphasizes the normativity of economic life subject to stewardship in ongoing critical examinaton of the goals as set, in his case of economic goal-setting subject to the progress ideology. Goals are human attempts to guide practical action which is always subject to God-given norms.

18 BCW Note: Dutch: *afleiding*. The paragraph beginning with "But neutrality can exist" seems to divert into a philosophical discussion where Goudzwaard points out that the "neutrality" cannot be embraced without its challenging the principles as formulated. He is here discussing the human activity of with-holding judgement with respect to any person's formulation of principle. One might remain "neutral", that is deferring judgement until one has made up one's mind, provided a judgement is needed.

19 BCW Note: *handleidingen* - handbooks, manuals, guides.

20 BCW Note: This may be obscure to some extent 2025 readers. This is because it is part of the party's ongoing discussion of the "principles" - *begin*selen - the beginning points - from which its policies will be framed. The key is in the third paragraph of this section: "For what exactly is a principle? The word says it all: it is that which can only stand at the ***beginning*** of human thought and action." Dutch: *Want wat is nu eigenlijk een beginsel? Het woord zegt het al: het is datgene, wat alleen aan het begin van het menselijk denken en handelen kan staan*. Any political-economy will have a principle, a starting point, and it will be held by people from the centre of their lives. Goudzwaard here challenges the view of a Party Manifesto that considers it as something like the handbook for a Meccano set - an extensive explication of how to go about building constructions, kept in check by the materials that are part of the set. Considering political issues in such terms means viewing public policy from a pragmatic and operationalist viewpoint, endorsing "business is business" neutrality.

21 BCW Note: i.e. some motivating starting point.

This shifts our entire problem. The great question at stake for us is not so much how we will bridge the gap between principle and practice but which bridge we will build, that is which principle will we act upon in practical politics! The other side of this is that when we believe we can or should do without a Christian principle in the realm of economic policy, we have in fact already given our hearts to another principle, a non-Christian one. Perhaps this is the principle of our "sober judgment" or of our own "common sense".

Seen in this light, Christian economic policy is above all a matter of continually returning to the beginning; to The Beginning, Jesus Christ.[22] It is: even in the realm of economic policy, demonstrating that in everything one's heart has been captured by Him.

But - one might ask - doesn't this open the door to a totally subjectivist view of Christian politics? Doesn't this suggest that the entire Anti-Revolutionary economic policy should be shrunk down to the proposition that every Anti-Revolutionary must decide for *themselves* what the Christian faith demands of them in this area?

The primary purpose of these three articles is to demonstrate that this is not the way to go. Any fear of a general "relapse" of Christian politics into individual opinions and convictions is unfounded, *provided* we actually take the Christian principle "seriously"[23] - which should be expressed in constant self-criticism. The danger that we will somehow allow ourselves to be overpowered by un-Christian principles is constantly present. And it is also present in the writing of these articles.

We can probably best achieve the goal just stated by first investigating which principle lies hidden behind the practical political policies of our "opponents". This detour has two advantages: first, it enables us to define our own path more clearly; second, it allows us to learn something about the *characteristics* of political principles - that is, the conditions each principle must meet in order to lead to a concrete political policy. It is useful to identify this characteristic beforehand; otherwise, we might say a great deal about the Christian principle as such, but not what is actually needed for conducting a *practical*-Christian policy.[24]

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22 BCW Note: Dutch: *naar het begin; naar Het Begin, Jezus Christus*. Though Goudzwaard is not a theologian, he is as an economist and public-policy analyst one who is "applying" Biblical teaching to his discussion. (see the prologue to John's Gospel.)

23 BCW Note: This is rendered "au serieux" in French.

24 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is not wanting to contain the discussion to a realm of an abstract theoretical system. He is here suggesting his fellow party members take time (by reading his article as an initial step) to learn from their political opponents about the character and application of political principles.

A disadvantage of this approach, however, is that the argument takes on a schematic character, [264] making it impossible to fully do justice to all the nuances of the principles of our political "opponents". Moreover, by exclusively confronting the principles of the various political movements, the differences between them will sometimes be accentuated more strongly than will be apparent from the outcome of practical action.

In this context, we would like to explicitly point out that any eventual statement of our conviction concerning the principles of our political "opponents",[25] does not necessarily mean that we, as Anti-Revolutionaries, would necessarily do better in political practice. To presume so would ignore the fact that acting according to Christian principles is never self-evident, but requires constant self-denial.[26] Moreover, Christian political action is not the exclusive right of those organized within our ARP party.

2. Principles at work.

> *"And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I consider this measure unjust and contrary to freedom, and thus also contrary to the public interest."*

Sentences like these can be found regularly in the **Proceedings of the States General**.[27] They can be heard coming from the mouths of Roman Catholic, liberal, socialist, and Anti-Revolutionary politicians alike. They all hold the opinion that a particular Government measure is or is not consistent with human freedom, justice, or human dignity; they all base their often *very different* decisions on these often so *very similarly* stated resolutions.[28]

Thus, one can observe the curious phenomenon that one party advocates greater Government intervention on the grounds of freedom, while another advocates less; that in the name of human dignity, one party prioritizes combating inflation, while another prioritizes combating unemployment; that one party believes, by appeal to justice that the fight must be for a clear further levelling of income, while another believes the battle is for a clear maintenance of existing income levels.

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25 BCW Note: *dat een eventuele veroordeling van het beginsel van onze politieke "tegenstanders"* ... In other words one needs to fully face up to the *political* situation that just as one is standing opposite to one's political "tegenstanders", so also are our political opponents viewing us in these same terms. Goudzwaard's writings here document his "field work" discoveries in the work of public policy.

26 BCW Note: *maar voortdurende zelfverloochening vraagt*. Here is an early statement of the principle that what would come to characterise Goudzwaard's work: *oeconomia politica Christian reformanda est*. A Christian political economy is always reforming.

27 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is referring to speeches made in the Dutch Parliament in either the Senate or the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) where he would later serve.

28 BCW Note: Once again, Goudzwaard stresses how the diversity of political principle can be manifest with use of the same words. see ftn 12 p.92, ftn 32 p.97 (**BG Ftn.1**)

While all parties are wholeheartedly convinced that only their own policies will realize freedom, equality and happiness for all,[29] the real cause of this confusion lies in *different interpretations* of these concepts.

Liberals, socialists, and so on, interpret freedom, justice, and equality in different ways; they give them their *own* interpretation, their own meaning.

The Socialist Interpretation

Let us, by way of illustration, consider how socialism interprets all these terms.

What does a socialist mean when speaking of "freedom"? In general terms, one can say that he is referring specifically to people's *economic* freedom. The socialist considers "freedom" to be especially compromised when man finds himself in situations of economic duress: thus, unemployment, lack of sufficient income, powerlessness of employee vis-à-vis employer, the absence of opportunities [265] to climb the social ladder, and so on. The socialist's "path to freedom" is, above all, the exodus from the bondage of economic misery and coercion.

For the socialist, it is primarily the (national) *community* that brings about this "exodus". According to **The Road to Freedom**, the socialist programme,

> *Freedom... can only be assured in and through community.*

What then does the socialist envision when he declares himself in favor of "equality"? Specifically, he envisions *economic* equality as an equality of economic conditions for human development; this is the development of life in the service of the *community*. Therefore, the socialist advocates a far-reaching equalization (levelling) of incomes and assets - at least insofar as this maintains the possibility of national *economic* welfare. This also means that "equality" must be achieved by the community and its organs.

The socialist also appears to give a similar emphasis to other concepts, such as justice, human dignity, responsibility, and so on. For example, from the outset, the idea of justice is linked to the community's aspiration to grant all people the most just treatment or the most equal opportunities possible, and with respect to their economic possibilities and circumstances; such a concept of responsibility is centered on economic responsibility to the community.

The Socialist Principle

What does all this mean? By recognising the centrality of "equality" we have begun to discover the socialist *principle*. *For only a principle is capable of*

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29 BCW Note: *de* vrijheid, *de* gelijkheid, en *het* geluk voor allen. The italicising of "de" and "de" and "het" indicate the singularity of their views ruled by their own principles.

transforming all of a person's fundamental ideas - freedom, justice, and so on - *so that they all cohere in one single direction*.[30] That socialism gives to all of its ideals such an unmistakable economic and community emphasis cannot mean anything other than that it is precisely these emphases that characterize the socialist principle. This is the source of strength from which all ideas and concepts are thereby "charged" in the same vein.[31] Those who have given socialism their heart automatically allow these emphases, the characteristic of socialism, which then resonates in all the ideas and concepts with which they operate in the political sphere. Their most "businesslike" and "opportunistic" considerations are partly determined by them, even though they may often be barely aware of them.

The Liberal Principle

Something similar can be observed with regard to liberalism. However, the emphasis or "charge" here is completely different. Liberals view the origin of [266] human freedom primarily as a freedom to exercise certain *civil rights*, which freedom belongs to the individual (the right to conduct a profession and business, the right to contract freely, the right to property, the right to freedom of establishment,[32] etc.). Where these individual rights are infringed, they will quickly be inclined to veto the infringement in the name of freedom.

Likewise, the liberal sees "equality" among all people as central to the fact that all individuals possess equal civil rights. Therefore, based on his concept of equality, he will, in principle, oppose rather than support a system designed to implement income levelling. When thinking about "responsibility", he primarily

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30 BCW Note: Dutch - *in éénzelfde richting om te buigen*.

31 **BG Note 1** We deliberately speak of "emphases." The time when socialism considered the economic aspect and the importance of the community to be the be-all and end-all is over. Today, socialism certainly recognizes the inherent value of the individual and the non-economic aspects. However, the *emphasis* on the economic and the place of the community has remained. It is striking, for example, that when socialists speak of the importance of sound cultural development (while recognizing the *inherent* place and value of the cultural aspect), they cannot help but assign predominant importance to the economic possibilities for the cultural development of the "community."
BCW Note: The Dutch reads: *Dat het socialisme aan al zijn idealen zulk een onmiskenbaar economisch accent èn gemeenschapsaccent geeft, kan niet anders betekenen dan dat juist door deze accenten 1) het socialistische beginsel is gekenmerkt. Dat is de krachtbron, van waaruit de ideeën en begrippen alle in eenzelfde trant worden "geladen"*. The theme of a "charged conversation" will be taken up by Bob in the opening lines of Goudzwaard's Vrije Universiteit inaugural in 1972 "Economics and the Progress Idea". This reference to the "charge" that is given to a form of words is also articulated in his essay discussing "The Liberation of the Business Enterprise" in **Aid for the Overdeveloped West** 1975 pp. 33-48. At p.38 where he compares the statements of a prominent European conservative Prof. Oud with the formulation of **Grundlagen des Marxismus-Leninismus.**

32 BCW Note: Dutch - *vestiging*. The concept "freedom of establishment" ascribes a right to establish enterprises and provide services. It would seem to be a conservative liberalism that seeks to protect the social space to maintain what is being undertaken by deployment of resources and enterprises that have been established by previous initiative. It is not a liberalism that focuses upon the freedom of rights of individuals, but of individual rights within a corporate context. See above "Socialist idealism and opportunism" ftn.6 p.74.

thinks of the individual, who is responsible for the manner in which his rights are exercised. Regarding human security, we see the liberal emphasizing the certainty of preserving existing individual rights. So we could go on and on. From all these ideas, liberalism is characterized not by an economic, but by a *formal, civil-rights* accent, in which, furthermore, the emphasis is not on the community, but on the individual. This, in short, is the characteristic of the liberal principle, which, like the socialist one, manifests itself in even the most objective and opportunistic[33] considerations of the politician.

The Roman Catholic Principle

Finally, a word about the Roman Catholic principle. Here we see the interpretation of the ideas of freedom, justice, equality, and prosperity tied to the *natural purpose* of society and its forms of society. "Freedom" is what a person or a social structure needs if its natural - and also through this path, its supernatural - destiny is to be achieved. "Justice" is what a social structure is entitled to in accordance with its natural purpose. And so on. Here too, however, an additional element is added. The state may only intervene for the benefit of the freedom, justice, and prosperity of social structures when it is established that these structures cannot provide for all of this on their own. With regard to lower human communities, the state has only a supplementary or subsidiary task: it need only provide for those necessities of life that the various social structures cannot provide for themselves (this is the principle of subsidiarity).

The drive for property formation, as we shall see later, flows directly from the principle described here.

Two Conclusions

The foregoing is important for two reasons.

First, it clearly illustrates the impossibility of "neutral" public policy. Every political decision is, in one way or another, aimed at promoting justice, equality, freedom, or the responsibility of its subjects. Where it has been shown that these ideas themselves are inextricably linked to driving principles, there is no conceivable political decision in which the principle does not exert its influence in some way!

[267] Secondly, the foregoing allows us to say something about the *characteristics* we sought to define for each political principle.

To begin with, it is striking that in each of the political movements examined, the guiding principle is composed of two elements.

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33 BCW Note: See the previous essay from *ARS* 31 pp.115-125 translated as "Socialist Idealism and Opportunism" pp. 72-84 above.

Socialism appeared to interpret all ideas and concepts (freedom, etc.) primarily in an *economic-collective* sense; the socialist principle thus emphasizes both the element and the place of the community.

Liberalism appeared to naturally interpret all ideas and concepts in a *civil-rights-individual* sense: the liberalist principle thus emphasizes both the civil-rights element and the place of the individual.

Roman Catholicism appeared to interpret all ideas and concepts in a *teleological*[34]*-subsidiary* sense: the Roman Catholic principle thus emphasizes both the element of purposefulness and that of the supplementary task of the community vis-à-vis the individual.

Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that these elements in the various political principles are closely related. The first element of each principle always answers the question: what should Government policy primarily focus upon? In other words: what should be the primary focus of political decision-making if society is to function properly (whether that is to continue or start to do so)? The socialist answer is: according to *economic* relations; the liberal answer: according to *civil law* relations; the Roman Catholic: according to *the goal-oriented structure* of society.

The second element of every principle always forms the answer to the question: how far should Government intervention go? How is the relationship between the individual and the community to be properly assessed? The socialist answer with the interests of the *community as* its primary concern means that far-reaching Government intervention in the individual sphere is not wrong. The liberalist answer with its primary concern focused on the interests of the *individual* means that far-reaching intervention in the individual sphere must be rejected. The Roman Catholic answer with its focus upon the relationship between the community and the individual as that of a *complementary nature*: any intervention in what the individual can provide for himself must be rejected.

Meaning

The meaning of the foregoing is clear. A political principle is characterised by its provision of clear and inspiring answers to two questions: what is the focus of Government intervention? what is the extent of Government intervention?

When such answers are absent, it is evident that a political principle does not result in a concrete political policy.

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34 **BG FTN 2:** teleological = goal-oriented, or goal-directed.
BCW Note: i.e an outlook oriented towards a destination, or outcome, ultimate rather than immediate.

The question of the possibility of a distinct Christian policy can thus be reduced to a problem in term that is much less verbose. The possibility of a Christian policy depends on whether the Christian faith entails an answer to both of these [268] questions as posed. If this is the case, then, in fact, the bridge between the Christian principle and political practice has already been built.[35]

3. Principle and Kingship.

The answer to both questions - those concerning the proper orientation and the appropriate measure of Government intervention - is contained in the Reformed confession of the universal Kingship of Christ.

The Reformed Confession!

In the great Reformation of the 16th century, people once again learned to understand the enormous and all-encompassing significance of Christ's Kingship over our entire life; a Kingship that encompasses all of creation in its magisterial diversity of all social relationships and all areas of life. The insight arose that all these relationships and areas are *directly* subordinate to their risen Lord: everywhere in life, people are addressed *specifically*[36] by their King. The reformers refused to speak of a "calling" from God as if it referred only to what are typically spiritual matters: God's call extends directly to the entire life of a person, as much in his activities as in the activities of state and family. These activities do not require ecclesiastical "sanctification" for their validity before God; they are, as such, directly subject to authority, without any intermediary or "half-way house."[37]

During the Reformation, the belief grew that serving God in this life is a multifaceted service, attuned to the multifaceted nature of creation. The family must honor Christ *as* a family, the business *as* a business, and the state *as* a state. Their own characteristic orientation[38] is not eliminated, but rather plays a full part in service to God. For that is a disposition that is part of creation, and thus also of Christ's Kingship! It would be a disservice to the universality of this Kingship if, in serving Christ, the specific nature of the area of life or the social context in which one finds oneself, were not also taken into account.

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35 BCW Note: Goudzwaard affirms that those who profess Christ do not establish the basis for their political involvement. They are involved in what Goudzwaard would affirm as "a Christian political option." The question then concerns how they are to set about building politically on the basis of their shared principle.

36 BCW Note: Dutch: *rechtstreeks*. The sense is of being directly accountable.

37 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's term is "*tussenstation*" presumably emphasizing that a person is living *Coram Deo* and any social relationship is to be lived before God without the need for a connection with a "holy" relationship such as might be ascribed to church membership.

38 BCW Note: Dutch *geaardheid*

The Right Direction of Government Intervention

What then does this confession actually imply for the *focused direction* of Government policy? Primarily it is this: the Government, in all of its actions, must demonstrate it's direct accountability to Christ in theway in which it exercises the power entrusted to it.

This confession implies that Government will use its power *justly*, that is to say that in its policies no one will be despised.[39] As Christ's servant it must direct its attention solely to serve Christ.

In other words: when numerous interests present themselves to the Government for its attention, the Government may not "identify" with any of them, meaning: it may never place its power exclusively at the service of any one particular interest. A state in which Government power is reduced to an instrument serving any particular interest or interest group comes into direct and flagrant conflict with the [269] confession of Christ's Kingship over the state.[40]

The proper orientation of Government policy is therefore to do justice to *all* its subjects; specifically, to those who, in their own living circumstances, are directly accountable to Christ for fulfilling their callings. This addition is necessary: otherwise, one cannot truly speak of doing justice.

A just balancing of all interests is impossible when the Government fails to give the various interests their proper weight; that is, when it fails to account for what its subjects actually need to fulfill their calling in the various social structures (family, church, business, association).

The Government must constantly consider what is truly necessary for the proper functioning of these structures. Therefore, behind the various interests presented to it for its protection, the Government must always see the social structures or relationships that are involved in the emergence of these interests.

Rejection

This means that we must reject the socialist and liberal views on the direction of Government action. In a certain respect, the principles of both conflict with the requirement, imposed on the Government, to act with *justice*.[41]

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39 BCW Note: Dutch: *niemand naar de ogen zal zien*.

40 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's exposition of the *ARP*'s "Reformational outlook" indicates that the State is no servant of any particular interest group within its jurisidiction. The State's legislation will ascribe due respect to what people *believe* they need to fulfil their callings.

41 **BG Note 3:** Perhaps it is unnecessary to say we are not speaking here about socialists and liberals, but about the socialist and liberal *principles*. As stated earlier, we do not wish to claim that Anti-Revolutionaries always act more justly than socialists and liberals. The point is simply that the driving *principles* of socialists and liberals as such contain the danger of "injustices", in respect of which the Christian principle is unimpeachable.

The *socialist principle* is characterized by a special emphasis on *economic* interests. This creates the risk that the non-economic interests of the subjects are not sufficiently addressed! For example, the importance of the free exercise of civil rights (the right to property, establishment, contract, etc.) is underestimated when this "principle" is compared with what the use of these rights can actually mean for the proper development of human life in the service of God. Socialism fails to recognize that a significant restriction of these civil rights may often hinder responsible functioning of family, business, etc., just as much as any lack of economic prosperity will do.

The *liberal* principle is characterized by a special emphasis on interests of a *civil-legal* nature. This threatens to lead to an undervaluation of non-civil interests in liberal politics. Even in contemporary liberalism, there is still the resonance of the old liberal position that economic abuses as such do not constitute sufficient grounds for infringing on the sovereign civil rights of the individual.

Meanwhile, one can appreciate that both socialist and liberalist principles aim to serve and assist humanity in its development. However, it must be borne in mind that the pattern of [270] human development in line with these principles is also a self-chosen pattern, owing its emphasis not fundamentally to the idea of the Christian calling, but to the idea of human self-determination. Only in this way can the fact be rightly understood that there is a consistent prioritizing of certain interests in life's development.

With the Roman Catholic principle, things are different. The Roman Catholic principle is different. Here, at least, we find a clear link with what man needs to fulfil his task in this life in the service of God. However, it is sincerely regrettable that Roman Catholicism believes it must encapsulate this fulfillment of the human task, this official service of humanity, within a pyramidal order of goals. In this way, the service rendered from the human office - at least in its "natural" aspect - is restricted to compliance with certain, pre-formulated goals for the respective social structures. The actual interests of these organizations are therefore often in danger of being distorted in an unacceptable way.

The Right Measure of Government Intervention

The question of the right *measure* of Government intervention also finds its answer in the confession of the universality of Christ's Kingship.

For this Kingship extends not only to the state, but to all social structures and relationships! A Christian Government must also serve Christ by observing and respecting the direct responsibility to their Lord of persons active in all the

spheres of work and life within its territory.[42] In other words: the Government must never subordinate social structures and relationships as such to itself; it must never set itself up as the competent authority in the specific affairs of those structures and relationships. In doing so, it would unlawfully insert itself between its subjects and Christ.

Of course, this doesn't mean that the Government is completely oblivious to the actions of these social structures and relationships. That would mean making this "confession" into what is but a caricature!

For example, one would then ignore the fact that people in their various social spheres can act so irresponsibly among themselves that they make it impossible for *each other* to fulfill their calling and official duties.

But in that case, the Government must rightly intervene. For power has been entrusted to it "for the sake of sin"[43], that is, for the purpose of correction. Such intervention is not an entry into the direct relationship of responsibility of its subjects with Christ, but recalling subjects to that responsibility.

Misunderstandings surrounding sphere sovereignty

Within Anti-Revolutionary circles, this entire issue[44] has long been the subject of numerous misunderstandings. These misunderstandings are due in no small part to an incorrect interpretation of the word "sovereignty", arising from what is, in my opinion, the unfortunate expression "sovereignty in its own sphere". This term has come to be interpreted as "having absolute authority".

As a result the principle of "sovereignty within its own sphere" [271] was adulterated[45] into the "principle" of "*self-determination* within one's own sphere", so that any Government intervention in a social context had to be branded as fundamentally unlawful. It will be clear that all this has nothing to do with a truly Christian principle! After all, the idea of the sovereign human is thoroughly humanist in nature.

The only correct interpretation of the idea of "sphere sovereignty" is that which can be indicated by the words "mandated within one's own sphere." This implies that in all human social structures and relationships, that a person stands, as a man or a woman, as the holder of a divine mandate. A Government that

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42 BCW Note: I have added to this sentence the qualification of "persons active in all" to avoid the somewhat abstract way of referring to life *coram Deo*.

43 BCW Note: Romans 13:1-7

44 BCW Note: i.e. of sphere sovereignty

45 BCW Note: *gedenatureerd*

accepts this profession - for that is what it is - will be scrupulously careful not to infringe on this mandate itself in any way.[46]

But the mandate and the holder of the mandate must not be equated! The fact that the Government must respect the mandate does not mean that it must respect all the actions of the mandate holder.

For the mandate holders can very well act in deviation from their mandate. Where the mandate holder believes they must use their power or authority in such a way that they - in clear deviation from their mandate - openly obstruct another's fulfillment of that mandate, the *Government* is unequivocally *called upon* to intervene.

This is not a *contradiction*, but a *requirement of* the mandate principle (or sovereignty) within one's own sphere![47] This is not a deprivation of freedom, but a realization of freedom! For freedom in the Christian sense is linked to responsibility for one's neighbour.[48]

Once again: criticism

Also with regard to the question of the appropriate measure of Government intervention, we confront socialist, liberal and Roman Catholic political principles with our critical examination.

The *socialist principle* rests on a one-sided emphasis on the place of the (national) community, both in relation to the individual and to the social structures within which any individual has a calling to fulfill. In the socialist principle, social bonds and relations of an economic nature (businesses, market relations, etc.) are clearly subordinated to the national community and its organs (including the state). This risks socialism fundamentally undermining the mandate given to the individual person living within these bonds and relations.

[272] The *liberal principle* rests on a one-sided emphasis on the place of the individual compared to that of the state community. The interests inherent in the proper functioning of this community are therefore in danger of being

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46 BCW Note: see Goudzwaard's caveat in ftn 41 above.

47 BCW Note: In this case the "sphere sovereignty" mandate is applied by the Government in its actions to implement public justice. It's character is defined by the mandate it serves under.

48 **BG Note 4** For this reason, the Anti-Revolutionary election poster for the municipal council elections of May 30th – which depicts a scale with the weights "freedom" and "justice" – is also open to question. Neither freedom nor justice are weights in the Government's balance – as if there were ever a conceivable situation in which there is "too much" justice and "too little" freedom, or in which "too much" freedom prevails compared to "too little" justice. Neither justice nor freedom can ever be "too much"! Rather, the Government's balance is itself the balance of justice; a balance in which (the degree of) Government intervention on the one hand, and (the degree of) the preservation of society's own development on the other, form the weights; meanwhile, true freedom is also realized through a just consideration in this balance.

subordinated, in principle, to individual civil-legal interests. Consequently, liberalism fundamentally deprives the Government of the power to effectively restrict the individual exercise of civil rights to such an extent that it is considered to no longer constitute a violation of the mandate given to others in their social structures.

Both principles, as much for the socialist as for the liberal, contain within themselves, to a significant extent, a *misunderstanding* of the place assigned by God in His creation to the individual and the community. That "individual" and "community" are pitted against each other can only be explained by the fact that both socialism and liberalism, have all along been movements lacking a vision of the root-unity[49] of individual and community, in the *calling* of individual persons *to live in* community, in service to God.

Torn loose[50] from this root, with both political principles the individual and community have *in themselves been separated and opposed* to each other. The conflict between liberalism and socialism over this differing starting point is, at its core, a conflict *within* humanism and should be considered in such terms.

This is a conflict over whether we have right to impose the law upon ourselves: to humankind as individuals or as members of society. That this right is ascribed to humankind is ultimately accepted without question by both principles, both sides in this conflict.

The Principle of Subsidiarity

But the Roman Catholic principle of subsidiarity also provides an incomplete and impure answer to the question of the appropriate measure of Government intervention. According to this principle, what a lower-ranking body (family, business) can achieve through its own initiative and energy may not be taken away from it by a higher-ranking body (such as the state).[51]

The major objection to this principle is its *lack of definition*,[52] in that it says nothing about the standard by which a judgement can be made as to whether an activity can indeed no longer be provided by the lower authority.

For example, if an economic standard is applied here - as is also evident in political practice - there is a real danger that, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, numerous *economic* activities that should remain with citizens, by

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49 BCW Note: Dutch: *wortel-eenheid van individu en gemeenschap*

50 BCW Note: Dutch: *losgescheurd van deze wortel*

51 **BG Note 5** We follow one of the definitions from **Quadragesimo Anno**, § 79. Published by N.V. Gooi en Sticht.

52 BCW Note: Dutch - *onomlijnd*

virtue of the mandate entrusted to them, will be activities concentrated under the state. Only one standard suffices here: that of *justice* towards all subjects, which involves the recognition of their own entrusted mandate.[53]

Balance

We can now take stock!

Both the question of the proper direction of Government policy and the [273]question of the appropriate degree of Government intervention could be answered in light of the Reformed confession of Christ's Kingship over our entire lives.

Christ's Kingship over the *state* compels the Government to pursue an actual regime of *justice* in all its actions, while His Kingship over all *other societal structures* (and relationships) implies that the Government recognise the citizens with *their own callings* in their private lives.

Both elements together form the Christian political principle, which - as is the case with other political movements - enables the pursuit of an independent economic policy! It is a principle that is indeed a true principle, because its content is nothing more and nothing less than Christ's Kingship.

It is gratifying that all of this has found such expression in our new programme of principles. It opens with an introduction that indeed outlines *the* foundation of our political action: that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ.

Then, in Article 4, we read what this confession concretely entails for political life, namely: a state that submits to the standard of justice and that, in its actions, respects the limits set for it by the individual responsibility of its subjects in their social spheres and relationships.

Indeed: these are the two elements of the Christian political principle, which - as is the case with other political principles - can be summarized in two words: the principle of *public justice*!

"Public" points to the Government's recognition of all private powers and responsibilities and is therefore antithetical to the liberal emphasis on the individual, to the socialist emphasis on the community, as well as to the Roman Catholic principle of subsidiarity.

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53 BCW Note: Dutch: *Slechts één maatstaf kan hier voldoen: die van de **gerechtigheid** jegens alle onderdanen, met daarin besloten de erkenning van het eigen mandaat dat hen is toevertrouwd*. Goudzwaard is expounding the Catholic subsidiarity doctrine in its lack of recognition of *economic* standards qualifying the subjected bodies, presumably to a body whose own mandate involves justice (i.e. the State authority). The hierarchic principle of subsidiarity is thus identified with its reductionist vision.

"Justice" points to the only correct orientation of Government policy, and is therefore antithetical to the economic perspective of socialism, the formal civil-law perspective of liberalism, and the teleological perspective of Roman Catholic politics.

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8. ECONOMIC POLICY AS PRINCIPLED POLITICS

II. PROBLEMS REGARDING INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Drs. Bob Goudzwaard

1. Summary and Programme.

There is no impenetrable wall between principle and political practice! That, in short, was the conclusion of the previous article. There is no political decision without the politician's driving principle appearing within it in some way or other. Even if it is unconscious or even unintentional, we always allow what deeply inspires us to resonate in our political words and actions.

The truth of this statement could be illustrated by the way in which socialist, liberal, and Roman Catholic politicians think and speak about fundamental ideas and of such concepts as freedom, equality, justice, responsibility, the common good, and so on. It turned out that they all give these concepts their own meaning. The socialist construes all these concepts in an economic-collective direction, the liberal does so in a civil-rights-individual direction, while the Roman Catholic's concepts are give expression in a theological-subsidiary direction. So, as a consequence, we conclude that it is precisely these typical "contruals" or emphases[1] that characterize their respective principles.

Finally, the question arose as to the true nature of the *Christian* political principle. The answer can be simply put.[2] Because a principle is what animates any person, and to which they will give their heart, the Reformed Christian principle can only refer to Christ and what He means for political life. The meaning of this, it turns out, could be ultimately summarized by the expression "public justice." [3]

The principle in practice

Of course, there must be more than simply giving this designation. What does Christian principle *do* in practice?[4] This question now awaits an answer. We assume the Christian principle is to be expressed in its own, well-defined practical policy - just as it is, for example, for the socialist principle.

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1 BCW Note: Dutch: *"ombuigingen" of accenten*.

2 BCW Note: Dutch: *eenvoudig*

3 BCW Note: The discussion here collapses any extended discussion to answer the question: What is the leading characteristic of Christian politics given it is political conduct subject to the rule of Jesus Christ?

4 BCW Note: Dutch: *Wat doet het christelijk beginsel in de praktijk?* is in a lingual form that ascribes agency to principle. I take it that Goudzwaard "thinks along" with how readers might typically respond: "That's all very well to say but what does public justice mean for political practise?" "Do" could have been replaced by "mean for". Goudzwaard explains what this principle "does".

To avoid being disappointed in this expectation, however, we must, from the outset, take into account that in political practise the principle primarily asserts itself through its influence on the ideas and concepts we hold in that practice.[5] So, a primary question for us will be about how our "world of ideas" is shaped by the Christian principle. [307]Practical Christian politics is, in our view, not possible as long as the Christian principle has not given expression to its own idea of freedom, equality and responsibility, and with its own concept of the "general interest".[6]

Here lies one of the most important tasks, but also one of the most difficult problems for Christian politics. We will never be able to "take possession" of the Christian idea as such. We can only reach for it, constantly correcting ourselves in our conversation[7] with both proponents and opponents; above all, we do this by showing that we have opened our hearts exclusively to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christian politics is therefore never "finished"; it can never be definitively completed in a laid down programme; it is always open to revision.[8]

This article must also be seen against the background of an ongoing process of reaching for and trying to grasp the Christian political idea[9] - and this is a shared communal task. It therefore necessarily bears a provisional character. Even where it polemically addresses the positions of proponents and opponents, it does not intend to offer a conclusive assessment, but merely to provide assistance for a shared decision-making process.[10]

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5 BCW Note: through our spoken words

6 BCW Note: Dutch: *algemeen belang*

7 BCW Note: "In our conversation" has been added by the translator. This 1962 article, in its language ascribing agency to principle, was composed as the the "post-structuralist" philosophy of discourse began to dominate political "discourse", viewing language as an independent variable. It might be observed that Goudzwaard's formulation here is explicitly idealistic, with Christians reaching toward the principle and its key ideas but never with the principle in its controlling grasp.

8 BCW Note: Dutch: *is altijd voor herziening vatbaar.*

9 BCW Note: Dutch: *van dit proces van tasten en reiken naar de christelijk-politieke idee*

10 **BG 1:** This engagement with the positions of our political "opponents" (in this article, specifically the socialists and liberals) is primarily desirable because, in our opinion, the neglect of the driving principles of others is one of the main reasons why many in their own circle have lost sight of a reformational policy.
BCW Note: The phrase "in their own circle", though ambiguous, indicates Goudzwaard's awareness of the way the *ARP* discusses politics, as he seeks to address how the party has moved away from its founding vision into "business is business" neutrality. But with this neutrality the ARP seems to have held back from critically appraising the outlook of political opponents while political opponents have likewise ceased trying to understand the ARP's Christian political outlook. Part of the Christian political party's task, as of any party's true public contribution, is the development of a public account and understanding of the ideologies of political opponents, not only for its own party and voters but for the sake of the entire electorate, reckoning with the various perspectives seeking to shape public governance. This led Goudzwaard to structure his discussion for ARP readers in this way.

This will be discussed here based on the current question of the extent to which the Government may intervene in existing income and wealth relations. An attempt will be made in this piece to demonstrate that concrete politics can indeed be given its own reformational voice, provided we are willing to orient ourselves towards the Christian political idea, as it is partly reflected in a Christian thinking about *equality*.[11]

2. Government and income distribution: a general approach.

"Is it permissible for the Government to intervene in existing income ratios?"[12] This is a question that is regularly asked in our circle. Some believe that such intervention is completely unacceptable, while others insist on a "strong" and "progressive" policy. Which of the two is right?

It's impossible to give a good answer to the question as stated here because, the question as framed simply misrepresents the issue. *Every* Government, in one way or another, will interfere with income ratios whether it intends to do so or not. This is not difficult to demonstrate. The path that has had to be travelled before every person has access to any income at all is so long that every Government, consciously or unconsciously, will have crossed over it at several points with its own actions. It is a path with three stages.

The first stage concerns the development of the resources or capacities that someone may need in order to participate in the production process and thus be able to earn an income. [308] One cannot contribute to the production process without a net worth or capital; these therefore must have first been developed or cultivated. But, this suggests that any Government intervention in the field of education and any legislative measure concerning, for example, the ownership of property, already amounts to an indirect influence on current and future income ratios.

The *second* stage of income formation concerns the way in which one actually contributes to the production process - and the way in which one is "rewarded" for doing so. How is the total production yield to be distributed within the enterprise among, for example, employees and shareholders? This distribution process directly influences income ratios. But it follows that any Government intervention in wage formation, interest rates, and any profit sharing that may

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11 BCW Note: Dutch: *gelijkheidsgedachte*.

12 BCW Note: Dutch: *inkomens-verhoudingen*. This is about the measurable disparity between those with greater and those with lesser income. This is an issue Goudzwaard considered in his work in the 1960s and 1970s and particularly in his work for the CNV and *Patrimonium*.
It is discussed in his "Incomes and their Distribution" translated by Ed VanderKloet from *Patrimonium* 1970. https://tukampendatastore.blob.core.windows.net/neocalvinism/allofliferedeemed/Goudzwaard/BG6.pdf
Also "Income Differentials Adrift" CNV conference 1971 also translated by Ed VanderKloet. https://tukampendatastore.blob.core.windows.net/neocalvinism/allofliferedeemed/Goudzwaard/BG11.pdf

occur within the enterprise, inevitably brings about certain changes in income distribution.

The *third* and final stage concerns the extent to which earned income is actually made available to those receiving it. Significant amounts are withheld from earned income: social security contributions, wage taxes, and (for shareholders) dividend taxes. Subsequently, an additional portion of the already earned income is "skimmed off" in the form of income tax. The final disposable income is therefore considerably lower than the earned income. At this stage, Government influence is simply indispensable. Because the Government levies taxes according to ability to pay (which necessitates a progressive tax rate) and uses these tax revenues to financially support certain population groups, it ensures that the disposable income of the better-off is lower than their original income, and the disposable income of the lesser-off is correspondingly higher.[13] Here, too, in our country there is a direct intervention in the distribution of disposable income.

From the above, it should be sufficiently clear that in developing an Anti-Revolutionary position regarding the relationship between Government and income distribution, the central question can never be whether or not we advocate Government intervention. Rather, the question concerns the *form* of Government action that we are advocating. It is at this point that the true differences between the political movements become apparent.

The socialist approach to intervention

The socialist position on income distribution stems from two motives: a justice motive and a welfare or efficiency motive.[14]

The socialist *justice motive*[15] is aimed at a community within which economic equality prevails. For this reason, an income distribution is required in which equal incomes apply for equal economic performance[16] - or in other words, equal economic needs. [309] This socialist motive of justice or equality forms the basis for some long-standing socialist targets, such as the drastic reduction in unemployment benefits, since these benefits are not matched by economic

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13 BCW Note: i.e. than it would otherwise be with a flat tax rate applied to their income.

14 BCW Note: Dutch: *en een welvaarts- of doelmatigheidsmotief*. The term "efficiency" suggests the functional integration of the community from good planning so that all needs are dealt with and met.

15 BCW Note: Dutch: *rechtvaardigheidsmotief*

16 **BG 2** The question of whether income distribution should be governed by need or performance-based income has long been a point of contention within the socialist movement. We will not elaborate on this further here.

performance, or a tax system designed to achieve a redistribution of income and wealth based on the criteria of need or performance.[17]

But does the socialist also advocate all of this in political practice? No, the *welfare or efficiency motive* ensures that. This motive expresses the socialist pursuit of maximum economic prosperity for the community. Through this motive, the aforementioned desires are limited to such a degree that adverse effects on national economic prosperity and development are avoided.[18]

The curtailment of the justice motive by the efficiency motive goes very far. If one makes a list of the socialist desires that remain after the efficiency motive's "stampede",[19] the impression is certainly not overwhelming. In fact, only two points remain that even remotely recall the socialist justice motive: first, the introduction of a capital gains tax, and second, an increase in inheritance tax.

It is therefore not surprising that many socialists are unhappy with this "solution" and advocate a stronger emphasis on the justice motive. Within socialism, a clear divide exists between those who emphasize efficiency and those who emphasize justice.[20]

Liberal approach to income distribution

We can be briefer about the liberal position. Perhaps it's best to let the quotes speak for themselves here as well.

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17 BCW Note: The emphasis is upon the long-term goal of a drastic reduction in unemployment benefits presumably because of policies that enhance fuller employment.

18 **BG 3** "As long as the tax burden as a whole remains as heavy as it currently is, the economic disadvantages of high income tax rates make it impossible to give that tax an even greater corrective effect through an even more drastic increase for the highest groups" (***De Weg naar Vrijheid*****,** p. 114). "A direct and drastic intervention in existing wealth relations to level out private, individual wealth holdings is... not considered effective" (*Wenkend Perspectief*, p. 149). And so on.
BCW Note: If there is idealism in the socialist outlook, Goudzwaard is viewing their political practice as reformist in terms of the long-term justice-and-efficiency goal, and is thereby seeking to explain the internal dissonance within the socialist camp. Does not Government revenue for service provision depend on tax receipts also from higher tax brackets for highest income levels?

19 BCW Note: Dutch: *de "stormloop" van het doelmatigheidsmotief*. The term "rush" or a "stampede" seems to refer to the immediate legislative responses by socialists after obtaining Government power only to then have to retreat after the (unintended) consequences become evident.

20 **BG 4** Kloos provides the standard for income distribution: "The greatest possible equality of incomes is pursued if this is compatible with an efficient provision of needs and a reasonable expansion"(*Socialisme en Democratie*, September 1959). And Van Ameringen: "Socialism ... is concerned with limiting material inequality to what is necessary to ensure rational production. Socialist criticism is directed against all further inequality." (*Liberalisme en Socialisme* p. 38). However, Den Uyl counters this: "It is certainly not the case that a more equitable distribution of prosperity must always yield to the goal of economic expansion. I innocently thought that the relativization of this standard precisely contained an essential element of a socialist economic system" (*Socialisme en Democratie*, October 1959). To say that this constitutes a contradiction within socialism is not an exaggeration. This contradiction arises from the fact that the socialist principle has shifted both the concepts of equality and prosperity in an equal (economic-collective) direction. Economic equality within the community and the economic prosperity of the community are simply incompatible.
BCW Note: This is also political advice for *ARP* members assisting them "get inside" the socialist contribution by noting the internal dissonance within that outlook between "justice" and "efficiency".

> *I have serious objections to using the income tax rate for the purpose of income redistribution... For various* [310] *reasons, the rate is far too progressive; its function is no longer solely to tax according to an ability to pay, but also to redistribute income*.[21]
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> *When the liberal speaks of wealth distribution... he means encouraging savings across broad segments of the population... When the socialist addresses the issue, his thoughts turn to a 'skimming off' (read: expropriation) of existing wealth holdings....*[22]

In other words: the liberal is generally averse to any form of income and wealth redistribution that amounts to an infringement of already established (property) rights. The liberal advocates a tax based on ability to pay, which for him means: making an equal contribution to utility by every taxpayer, so that income levels before and after taxation remain unchanged in terms of income enjoyment. Behind this lies the liberal, or rather *individualistic, civil-law* concept of equality, which states: the requirement for equal treatment of all subjects is met in principle when every individual is maintained by the Government in the equal enjoyment of their formal civil rights.[23]

and Us?

It has already been mentioned that the decisive factor is not *whether* or not the Government intervenes in income and wealth relations, but *how* it does so. Is it possible, as Anti-Revolutionaries, to commit ourselves to a choice between the socialist and the liberalist approach?

Of course, that is not our approach. Both movements base their own approach on respective concepts of equality, based entirely on the typical principles of these movements. Our approach should be based neither on a collective-economic nor on an individual-civic-righteous concept, but on an intrinsically *Christian* idea of equality.

But what then is the content of such a Christian-political concept of equality?

We would like to return here to something already discussed in the previous article: that Christ's Kingship extends directly to all spheres of society. In all social ties and relationships, however diverse they may be, people stand in a direct relationship of responsibility to the Lord, who calls them to His service. The focal point of the Christian-political idea of equality is that all people, in their respective spheres of life and relationships, are *equally* accountable to Christ as those he has called.

The consequences of this idea of equality for Government policy are twofold.

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21 **BG 5** Mr. J. de Wilde, *Wat is en wil het liberalisme, sociaal en economisch*, p. 187.

22 **BG 6** J. Fahrenfort, *Wat is en wil het liberalisme, sociaal en economisch*, p. 149.

23 **BG 7** In recent times, however, movements have also emerged within liberalism that wish to emphasize motives other than that of (civil law) equality.

First, the Government must have an eye for [311] the unique and independent calling of its subjects in their respective social spheres - a calling that originates not from itself, but from Christ. Therefore, the Government must never present itself as the overarching, all-encompassing authority of society.

Second, in all its policies, it must be mindful that people are called *in all areas of their lives*. It must therefore be especially wary of considering the interests of its subjects exclusively or primarily from an economic or formal civil-law perspective.[24]

The Government's duty is to ensure that its subjects can develop freely in all aspects of life, that is, as those called by Jesus Christ. It must therefore be mindful that human life is not absorbed by economics or civil law, but rather that these are aspects alongside the many other aspects that present themselves in human life. It must honor all these aspects *equally*. The lives of its subjects must be protected and supported by it in every way.

The Christian-political idea of equality is, in other words, an idea of equality guided by the norm of public justice. This guiding principle of *public* justice is expressed in the aforementioned duty of the Government to refrain from subordinating non-state spheres of society to the State.[25]

This guiding principle of public justice is evident in the Government's duty not to discriminate among its subjects in their various spheres of life and relationships, but to support them equally in their callings - in whatever areas of life their calling may lead them. This latter point is particularly emphasized when subjects fail to respect their mutual callings, which can necessitate just intervention by the Government. Through this intervention, the Government gives its subjects the opportunity to once again carry on and develop themselves freely as equals.

All of this undoubtedly sounds rather abstract and general. However, we hope to make it more concrete by delving[26] into some of the practical issues that arise in Government policy regarding income ratios. In doing so, it is best to adhere to the distinction made earlier between the three "stages" that income successively passes through: the stage of the formation of income-generating resources, the stage of the formation and distribution of the income itself, and the stage of the

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24 BCW Note: Goudzwaard here suggests the *ARP*'s Christian perspective should avoid over-emphasis of the economics and formal civil-law that is inherent in both socialist and liberal politics. But at the same time he implies that the Government in implementation of its policies in legislation will be correcting some legislated tendencies that have over-emphasized economic or civil-law factors.

25 BCW Note: i.e. making non-State social spheres subordinate spheres of the State.

26 BCW Note: Dutch: *navülgende te verdiepen* - i.e. digging deeper

availability of income already earned. However, we will first address the second stage - which concerns the process of income formation and distribution.

3. The Government and the process of income distribution.

When speaking of "the process of income distribution", one should think specifically of the distribution of the total business output from the production factors of labour, management, and capital. Workers, entrepreneurs, and providers of capital each [312] demand a share of the total profit resulting from production as recompense for their participation in the production process.[27]

How should the Government approach this distribution process?

First and foremost, it must recognize that all groups involved in this distribution process do so as a significant part of fulfilling their own independent callings. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Government must stand idly by under all circumstances.

First, there is the possibility that this distribution process will harm the *common interest*. Certain public interests (primarily of an economic nature) can be jeopardized by a particular way in which a company's total revenue is distributed. For example, it is possible that wages are set in such a way that they cause price increases and/or unemployment. It is also conceivable that, due to the dominant position of shareholders in the company, dividends are set at such a high level that the companies are economically drained and the national investment level shrinks to unacceptable proportions.

Thus, numerous factors can come into play, which the Government cannot simply ignore. Its calling is to strive justly to ensure that the entire national life, in all its social spheres and relationships, is brought to the greatest possible development.[28] Therefore, it cannot tolerate the process of income distribution occurring to the detriment of this entire national life. In such cases, it is a

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27 **BG 8** The determination of the size of their share is made partly within the company and partly outside of it. The amount of remuneration for company management and shareholders is primarily determined within the company; the amount of employee remuneration, on the other hand, is subject to negotiation between employers' and employees' organizations.

28 BCW Note: This phrase, "the greatest possible development" (Dutch: *tot een zo groot mogelijke ontplooiing wordt gebracht*) invites close attention in relation to Goudzwaard's later emphasis upon the fetish of GDP **growth**. This is another example of how he is suggesting the ARP needs to develop its own Christian view of "greatest possible development" and in normative terms. This is an early indication of the emphasis he later gives to the insight of his Vrije Universiteit predecessor, T P van der Kooy concerning the "simultaneous realisation of norms". **Capitalism and Progress: a diagnosis of Western Society** 1979 p.65. The concept "the greatest possible development" as here set forth aimed at a legislative rationale that is not reduced to mere economic issues. since a nation's welfare is many-sided (ref Dutch term *welvaart*). Goudzwaard's entire scholarly effort in economics is oriented to a non-reductionistic view of welfare as ensured by Government legislation. See "Economische waarde en de doeleinden en instrumenten van economisch beleid" (Economic value and the purposes and instruments of economic policy) in B de Gaay Fortman (ed) **Economie en Waarde** Samsom Uitgeverij, Alphen aan den Rijn/Brussel 1982, 137-162.

requirement of the general interest that the remuneration of the factors of production is never completely unlimited, but, for example, is bound to a certain maximum level.[29]

Besides possible Government intervention to protect a particular public interest, there is another conceivable reason for Government interference in the distribution process: the parties involved in the distribution can harm each other to such an extent that the Government is obligated to force a public review of this distribution.

When does the latter situation arise? In our view, it does not automatically coincide with situations in which certain groups in the distribution process receive less than they are economically entitled to - based on their performance. Assessing what each party receives what they are *economically* entitled to receive, is not primarily a task of Government, but of the business community, which fulfills its independent vocation in this regard. It is the Government's responsibility to ensure that none of the parties is wronged from the perspective of *public justice*. This is particularly the case when one of the parties involved uses its due powers and rights in the distribution process outside its vocation, namely to claim what belongs to the [313] other parties - and hence interferes with their vocation.[30] This results in a disruption of *equality* among the subjects, which must be restored by the Government.

To what extent do such situations still occur in Dutch industrial relations? The two weakest groups in the distribution process are the employees and the shareholders. Is there reason to assume that, *as a group*, they are openly and systematically discriminated against in the distribution process compared to other groups?

The position of the employee[31]

The average income of employees has not risen significantly in recent years relative to the average income of self-employed workers. In 1956, all employees

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29 **BG 9** It will become clear shortly that this measure regarding dividends is absolutely unnecessary. Regarding Government intervention in wage levels, please refer to the third and final article in this series, where "freedom of wage formation" is a separate topic for discussion.

30 BCW Note: Dutch: *namelijk om naar zich te kunnen toehalen wat aan de andere partijen - eveneens in verband met hun roeping - toekomt*.

31 **BG 10** We treat the group of employees as a whole here, refraining from examining the income ratios *among* the various groups of employees. A separate discussion of this issue would take up too much space. But it should be noted that we view the situation of lowest-paid groups still requiring further improvement. From a public justice perspective clear shortcomings can be observed. And the fact that the share of the lowest-paid in the total wage bill has increased considerably in recent years should be considered an important credit in the account of differentiated wage formation.
BCW Note: Goudzwaard as researcher for the *ARP* policy research institute is also explaining why the administration of public justice stands in need of sustained economic and social research.

in businesses - representing 66% of the entire working population - earned approximately 44.5% of the total national income; by 1962, this percentage had risen to 48.5%. Consequently, the employee share of the national income rose from 67.4% to 72.3%.[32]

This development is encouraging, because it means that the benefit from the increase in national income has not been limited to certain individuals, but has accrued to broad segments of the population. As already noted, there is a general interest in ensuring that income ratios develop in such a way that they indicate that the development of national life is being served.

However, this does not alter the fact that today the average income of the domestic worker still amounts to no more than approximately half of the income earned by other Dutch citizens working in a profession.[33] This difference is so great that, at first glance, it seems to fully justify speaking of a systematic disadvantage on the labour factor in the wage-earning process.

Systematic disadvantage?

Without arguing that the current income ratio between [314] the self-employed and dependent employees is entirely fair and justifiable, we would nevertheless like to argue that, despite this income disparity, there is no general and systematic disadvantage for employees as employees. Two arguments can be advanced here.

1. Generally speaking, the income of the self-employed serves a *broader* purpose than that of the employee. The employee needs their income to support their family; the self-employed need it to support their family and to continue their profession or business. Therefore, it is unfair to simply equate the incomes earned by the self-employed and dependent employees.[34]

Employees can generally spend almost their entire income on consumption items. The average self-employed person, on the other hand, cannot. If they

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32 **BG 11** The employee share can be described as the quotient of the percentage share of wages from businesses in the national income and the percentage share of employees in businesses in the total working population. Before 1956, it was equal to 44.5% divided by 66% (= 67.4%). before 1962: 48.5% divided by 67% (= 72.3%).

33 **BG 12** These “other Dutch citizens working in a profession” are primarily self-employed. For convenience, directors of public limited companies are included among the self-employed in this calculation.This (rough) calculation is based on data from the *Statistiek voor de Inkomensverdeling* (Income Distribution Statistics) 1958 (cf. *Statistiek Zakboek* (Statistical Pocket Book) 1962, p. 134), combined with the figures for the development of the employee share between 1958 and 1962.

34 **BG 13** Compare this with what was noted a few pages back: the Government must treat all subjects in their private lives as equals. The Government must support all social structures in its care equally; it has no right to prioritize business interests over others. The interests of self-employed entrepreneurs and professionals who need additional income to maintain and expand their business or profession should be recognized by the Government as genuine interests. If the Government fails to do so, it disregards the independent calling of these subjects in their professions and businesses.

want to be assured of an income in the future, they will have to save a large portion of their earned income and/or invest it in their own business. Therefore a fair comparison of the financial position of employees and self-employed workers should not so much compare their earned incomes, but rather the amount of their consumer spending.

The most recent figures on this subject from 1956, compare the wage income of employees in companies (including NV directors[35]) with the income of other professionals.

The average income *earned* by the "others" was then approximately twice that of employees in businesses; their disposable income (i.e., after deduction of taxes, etc.) was on average 1.7 times as high, while the consumption expenditures of the "others" amounted to an average of no more than 1.37 times the *consumption expenditures* of wage earners.[36] If one also takes into account that these differences have narrowed even further since 1956, there is, in our view, no longer any grounds for maintaining the assertion that, generally speaking, employees are clearly disadvantaged as a group in the distribution process.

We are also ignoring the fact that the income of the self-employed is generally more uncertain and less stable than that of the dependent employee, which could justify the receipt of some additional income (as a risk premium).

2. Even compared to other countries, the income gap between employees and the self-employed in our country certainly cannot be considered abnormal. For example, the so-called employee share in the Netherlands [315] appears to differ only slightly from the employee share in other Western countries – even in countries with a distinctly socialist character (such as Sweden).

The existing balance of power between employers' and employees' organizations in our country also provides little basis for suspecting there is unacceptable pressure on wages throughout the entire distribution process.

Profit Sharing

In many companies, employees do not share in profits; if they are not retained within the company, these profits are distributed entirely to "capital" and "management". The question arises whether, at least in *this* regard, there isn't a

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35 BCW Note: N.V refers to a public company of limited liability in Dutch law. *Naamloze vennootschap*

36 **BG 14** See ***Centraal Economisch Plan*** 1957, p. 45. The figures given here for "other incomes" have been corrected for primary and disposable income, taking into account the reserves included in them for public limited companies and the total amount of corporate tax owed by these companies.

certain systematic discrimination against employees. Is it right that they are being ignored in this regard?

In answering this question, we believe that both employees and employers have often oversimplified the problem. For example, employees have argued that capital, management, and labour together have generated profit. Therefore, it is unfair to withhold a share of the profit from employees. Employers responded as follows: only capital and management generate profit; therefore, it is fair that employees are excluded from profit sharing.

To us, both lines of reasoning seem decidedly too simplistic. The employers' reasoning fails in its *basic premise*. Total enterprise production is generated by labour, capital, and management. Without the cooperation of all factors of production, profit is therefore unthinkable. What is the point, then, of denying that labour contributes to profit? The employees' reasoning, on the other hand, is, in our view, too simplistic in its *conclusion*. Enterprise profit is indeed caused by all factors of production together; but in economic terms, these factors include not only the shareholders, employees, and management, but also bondholders and any landowners; after all, the latter are part of the capital factor of production. If contributing to profit were itself entitled to a share in profits, these categories should also be included in profit sharing. However, I doubt anyone will dare to draw this conclusion.

A Different Approach

Another - and indeed more powerful - approach from the employers' perspective[37] ties in with the *division of tasks*[38] between capital and labour that exists in modern enterprises. According to this task division, it is argued that labour is exempt from bearing the financial risks associated with business operations; this task falls entirely to capital. For this reason, it is incorrect that workers, [316] in addition to their fixed wages, should also receive a share in profits. Since profits are the opposite of losses then, according to this understanding of the division of labour, only capital is liable for financial losses from operations. Therefore, not labour, but only capital is entitled to distributed profits. A government that mandates profit sharing by employees is clearly overstepping the mark. According to the proponents of this approach, choosing a specific division of labour between capital and labour is not the responsibility of the government, but of the business community. The government must respect

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37 **BG 15** Cf. *Een studie over winstdeling*. A study on profit sharing, a report by the Central Social Employers' Association and the Dutch Employers' Association.

38 BCW Note: Dutch: *taak-verdeling*

the business community's choice – even when that choice has certain consequences for the method of remuneration of the production factors.

To begin with this last point: indeed, according to our principle, the Government does not have the right to simply transform existing forms of enterprise - with their associated specific methods of remuneration for production factors - at its own discretion. There must be room for the *independent* development of economic life. However, this does not mean that no specific conditions should be imposed on this independent development. For example, the division of tasks and the methods of remuneration for production factors chosen in a given enterprise must be "developed" in such a way that, from a perspective of public justice, they can be considered justifiable to all members of the enterprise. And it is questionable whether this condition is fully met in the modern enterprise.

Risk Shifting

Consider a particular company choosing a system of remuneration for its factors of production that completely excludes the employee from profit sharing. From a public justice perspective, that cannot be tolerated, since the employee is then still liable for any financial risk associated with the business operations. In that case, the most stringent division between labour and capital will have to be implemented.

Usually however, in a modern company, this does not happen. This is particularly evident when the employee is dismissed by the company for reasons of economy. Part of the financial risks associated with the business operations have then been shifted onto his shoulders.

That this is indeed a genuine *business* risk is evident from the fact that the employee is dismissed *through no fault of his own*; the *company's* poor business performance is the reason for his dismissal.[39] There is therefore a clear similarity between this risk and that created when purchasing a new machine. However, with the acquisition of the machine, there is no possibility of transferring the risk; if business goes badly, the employer is simply left with his means of

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[39] BCW Note: Goudzwaard is redefining "the company's poor performance" as something wider than merely account book balances. That an employee can be employed and dismissed simply because the financial returns are poor is actually evidence of this company's "poor performance". Goudzwaard suggests that the ARP's political outlook and policies needs to maintain respect for the distinct integrity of the work community, of its capital, owners, management and employees. It is not a view that "Government" should presume to fix the company's problems but that Government legislation should enable the company to redesign its definition of risk-sharing within the company's work community and what this means for all contributing to the company. The legal imbalance between the interests of employees and of those providing capital needs correction, justice restored.

production. The employee, on the other hand, can be dismissed without adequate compensation.

We can conclude from this that it is due to the employee's relative powerlessness[40] that he is forced to bear a risk caused by the company without any compensation. This, therefore, from a public justice perspective constitutes a disruption of the *equality* that [317] must apply between the individuals and groups involved in the distribution process. This disruption necessitates Government intervention.

Dilemma

Assuming the approach followed thus far is correct, the Government should restore the disturbed legal balance between the interests of the employee and those of the capital provider. In our view, however, this should prevent the company - as far as possible - from being bound by the Government to a *specific* division of tasks among the production factors; in principle, it should be free to make that choice.

Therefore, we are inclined to see the following dilemma.

If a company wishes to maintain the existing clear division between labour and capital, there can be no objection. *There is a proviso* however and that is that capital will then be obligated to also bear the risk that the employee faces in the event of dismissal,[41] insofar as this dismissal occurs through no fault of the employee. This necessitates a further expansion of *unemployment insurance* for employees, which expansion should not be borne jointly by employees and employers, *but solely by employers* (as representatives of the capital factor).

If, on the other hand, a company chooses the situation in which the employee will continue alone to bear the risk for the period after their dismissal, then the employee must be allocated a place in *profit sharing* corresponding to the extent of their risk. This place can be limited to sharing in excess profits, because only very large operating losses, the *"shortfalls"*, give rise to dismissal on economic grounds. Moreover, the employees must then be granted a say in the company commensurate with the extent of their risk.[42]

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40 BCW Note: Dutch: *de relatieve onmachts-positie van de werknemer. "Onmachts" = powerless*. In order to maximise the share of the profits by appealing to the sharing of risk between the factors of production that completely excludes the employee from profit sharing thereby excludes employees from a share in the company's risk.

41 BCW Note: ... and without such sharing of risk with capital, the employee from this employment has hitherto had to carry alone and so will be required to aborb the costs by any reduction in consumption.

42 **BG 16** We will for the moment now leave aside the question of whether there are other - and more far-reaching - grounds for participation in general.

b. the position of the shareholder

Leaving aside the situation just described regarding potential profit sharing for employees, the current position of capital in the distribution process must generally be considered rather weak. The shareholder's say in the company is limited; in the case of large, "open" and public limited companies, it is so limited that they have more or less abandoned the task of waiting to see which annual dividend the company will pay them.

The share of dividends in the total national income has declined considerably in recent decades.[43] In contrast, [318] the portion of profits retained within the company has increased considerably.

Background

This shift from distributed to retained profits should not be judged in isolation. It should be seen as one element in a development process:[44] that of the so-called privatization of large enterprises. From a dependent executive body of the collective will of the "owners" - the providers of capital - the large public limited company has gradually evolved into an independent organization with, as it were, its own will and its own capital; this then is an organization where the entrepreneur is employed, and where the shareholders are little more than creditors of a special type who have invested their money in the company on a profit-and-loss basis.

Although one might wonder whether this development has not progressed too far in some respects, viewed in isolation, it should however be seen as positive from the perspective of the general interest.

The old approach was fundamentally unsound because it was based on the fiction that the shareholders' ownership rights pertained to the enterprise *as such*, and were not limited solely to the company's *capital assets*.[45] Since the enterprise as a human community is more than the mere embodiment of rights to a piece of property, any corporate structure in which the interests of the shareholders are the unconditional determining factor for every corporate

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43 **BG 17** The share of dividends, interest, and net rents in the national income in the Netherlands fell from 14% in 1938 to 4.5% 1955. However, the decline was greatest for interest and net rents.

44 BCW Note: Dutch: *een ontwikkelingsproces*

45 **BG 18** A typically liberal fiction: after all, it rests on the standard of civil (property) law for all human relationships.
BCW Note: Herein the discussion of ownership of the company's work-community. The Shareholders own the capital, not the business as such. The sociology of the enterprise examines the social co-operation of various interweaving interests. But what is the Government is also a shareholder? Later on Goudzwaard would develop this view in his *Christian Labour Association of Canada* booklet **The Christian and the Modern Business Enterprise** in the sections "The ownership argument" and "Testing the Ownership Argument" pp. 11-12 https://tukampendatastore.blob.core.windows.net/neocalvinism/allofliferedeemed/Goudzwaard/BG4.pdf

decision must be rejected. It is a requirement of the general interest that the enterprise develops according to its *own* nature, i.e., as a *socially* bonded entity, and not merely function as an extension of the will of the capital providers.

The fact that the large enterprise has developed into an independent organization should therefore be applauded. This development has made it possible for the interests of the enterprise as such*, rather than those of a specific group, to be decisive in cor*porate policy. The weakening of the position of shareholders has largely restored the damaged *equality* between the groups involved in the company.

Appreciation

Therefore, the gradual shift from distributed profits to retained profits cannot simply be labeled an injustice to the shareholders. This shift - which is, in fact, nothing more than the financial shadow of the company's process of becoming independent - rightly demonstrates that, even in the allocation and distribution of profits, not only the interests of the shareholders but also those of the company itself should be taken into account. For the continued existence of the company as a social entity, it is [319] indeed necessary that part of the profits that are made will then be reinvested in the company.

As we have indicated, this entire process can also, however, go too far, namely in the sense that the interests of shareholders are insufficiently respected, or even completely ignored. To the extent that this is the case, the solution should be sought in improved shareholder participation in general corporate policy. However, the question remains whether this neglect of shareholder interests will generally come to such a pass. Corporate management is well aware that should shareholders suffer disadvantage in profit-sharing that this will be avenged later on by serious difficulty in attracting new capital on the stock market.

The conclusion may be that there is no general legal basis for the Government to intervene in the profit distribution process for the benefit of the shareholders.[46]

4. The Government and the Means of Income Generation.

With one exception, we have been able to conclude that the process of income generation within the enterprise generally proceeds in such a way that requires no direct and overt Government intervention. Can the same be said regarding the

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46 **BG 19** A special legal basis may arise where, in certain companies, an excessively large percentage of the excess profit is made available to the supervisory directors due to existing power relations. The introduction of a maximum bonus per supervisor (not set too low, and varying with the size of the company) could be considered in this case.

"means" that enables participation in this income generation process (labour power and capacities, as well as capital)?[47]

Education

The process of income generation (i.e the remuneration of the factors of production) is, as we have seen, largely governed by performance standards. This entails the inherent law of economic life. As a result, however, the less productive groups lag behind in remuneration.

Part of this "disadvantage" is due to a difference in employee aptitude and innate ability. This latter difference must, of course, be accepted as a given. Another part, however, is due to the fact that, for financial reasons, many have been unable to pursue the education that suits their aptitude.

From the socialist side, a particular emphasis has been persistently given to this shortcoming. This is because it represents a clear economic inequality, namely a disruption of equality in economic opportunities.

And it seems to us that here we have a clear example of how economic inequality can also imply inequality in the sense of public justice. A lack of opportunities [320] for appropriate education is a serious obstacle to the full development of individuals in diverse social contexts. Government support and subsidies for education are required by the general interest, and as such they are indispensable for the true well-being of the entire nation.

But here too, one must be careful not to tip the scales. Equality in the Christian-political sense does not translate into economic equality. When some people today advocate the establishment of a general student loan for the sake of greater "equality" between student and non-student members of the community, this, to us, constitutes an absolutization of economic principles that deserves to be rejected. The necessary balance between the legal and economic interests of the subjects is then broken.

Asset and Wealth Formation

While the Government influences the *labour* supply in society through its education policy, it influences the supply of *capital* through a policy focused

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47 **BG 20** Here we discuss two possibilities for influencing these "means": education and policies for wealth creation. A third possibility - redistribution of existing wealth through tax policy - will be discussed in Part 5. BCW Note: It may not be immediately obvious what Goudzwaard is referring to here. But this 1962 article from *ARS* now, 64 years later in 2026, alerts us to *ARP* evaluation of it's policy formation and parliamentary contribution. The "with one exception" refers to necessary Government intervention in company life when an employee is left to shoulder risk (of unemployment) without being ascribed any formal share in the company's risk even if contributing to the production, output and profits of the firm. Goudzwaard then goes on to discuss how the Government is necessarily connected in decisive, albeit indirect, ways that should assist a company's productivity. The discussion moves on to how Government supports education and how assets and wealth are to be respected in law. It would be of interest to see how the public policy principles that are given expression here with respect to student loans (*studieloon*) are developed and explained.

upon the formation of assets and wealth. When broad segments of the population are enabled to acquire lasting property or wealth, capital income is distributed more evenly among our people, which in turn has a favorable effect on the ultimate income distribution.

In asset formation policies, a distinction must be made between mandatory and incentive measures. The former might include the possibility of mandating employee ownership of a company. The latter type of measures involves premium savings schemes, promoting profit sharing in shares, encouraging home ownership, and so on.

It is our Roman Catholic compatriots in particular who advocate a policy of property formation (primarily in this second form[48]). This flows directly from their principle.

Rome and Property Formation

The Roman Catholic political principle is determined by two motives: the motive of a pyramidal goal-oriented order of all human communities and the motive of subsidiarity. Both motives are reflected in the pursuit of property formation.

We find the motif of the purposeful order in the idea that without the right to property, lower human communities cannot attain their natural end. The rational nature of man makes private property necessary. Pope Pius XII stated:

> *Every human being, as a rational being, has by nature the fundamental right to make use of the material goods of the earth.*[49]

This applies in particular to durable and lasting possession. Pope Leo XIII put this in so many words:

> *And for this very reason, because ... only man is endowed with reason, goods must be provided to man not only for use, as is true for all living beings, but in fixed and lasting possession - and not merely articles of consumption, but also goods that continue to exist after use.*[50]

[321] Without durable possession, therefore, there is no truly human existence. Human communities, by virtue of the purposeful order of life, are based on the rational nature of man, and so without durable possession cannot flourish.

But are the lower communities capable of providing themselves with this lasting property? Here the second motive, that of subsidiarity, comes into play. It

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48 BCW Note: i.e. the "incentive measures"

49 **BG 21** Pius XII, Radio message of 1 June 1941.

50 **BG 22** Leo XIII, ***Encyclical Rerum Novarum*** of 1891, par. 5. Published by N.V. Gooi en Sticht.

is the task of the higher authority (in this case, the state) to come to the rescue when the lower authority cannot provide for the need on its own. Therefore,

> *... the laws of the Government must promote the right to property and, to the best of their ability, encourage the pursuit of property among the largest possible portion of the people.*[51]

For Rome, a policy of property formation is *the* contribution of Government to the restoration of human dignity and personality.

Appreciation

With Roman Catholic Christians, we affirm that ongoing ownership of property or wealth plays an important role in the entirety of human vocation.[52] This facilitates better family development, partly because, through the possession of its own property, the family becomes more economically independent to deal with sudden risks and unforeseen events. Moreover, by actively developing one's own property, one can contribute to the struggle against a society in which people are treated *en masse*[53] and the general diminishing of the sense of responsibility and of one's calling. Therefore, the pursuit of a diversified property-building process is undoubtedly a laudable endeavor, which can also be positively assessed from the perspective of the common good.

However, this does not mean that we cannot place as high a value on property and possessions within the entirety of human vocation as Rome does. When a Roman Catholic commentator praises permanent ownership as something from which "man's independence can take root" and from which his "personality can radiate"[54], or when, following the Encyclicals, living in a *rented* house or working on *leased* land are already considered serious shortcomings in human development, we believe the proper proportions have been lost. The question of what a people *actually* need to fulfill their callings has, in our view, been pushed too far into the background in these views.

The consequence is that we arrive at a different assessment of interests. When it comes to the promotion of personal property, the Anti-Revolutionary will be inclined to place somewhat less importance on the acquisition of lasting property in the Government's scales of justice[55] than the Roman Catholic. While the current property-building regulations are of a stimulating nature and cannot

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51 **BG 23** ***Rerum Novarum***, par. 35.

52 BCW Note: Dutch: *in het geheel van de menselijke abmstdienst een belangrijke rol vervult*.

53 BCW Note: Dutch: *in de strijd tegen de massificatie*

54 **BG 24** M. Riquet, as quoted in Mr. Th. van Lier, *Die sociale boodschap der pauselijke encyclieken* (Mr. Th. van Lier, **Social Message of the Papal Encyclicals**. Albani, The Hague 1949) p. 155.

55 BCW Note: Dutch: *de weegschaal*

[322] be considered excessive, this fundamental difference, in our view, need not yet give rise to divergent political positions.

Employees and Investments

We now turn to mandatory ownership measures. The question of whether the Government has the right to mandate that employees be granted co-ownership in the company's capital assets is particularly relevant here.

The usual argument of the proponents of this measure is based on the fact that a large portion of corporate investments are currently made through internal financing, i.e. financing from retained profits. The shareholders, it is argued, automatically become owners of these new corporate investments. This is unfair to other groups in the company - particularly the employees - who, after all, have, by their activities, generated the profits that finance this new ownership.

This reasoning is firstly noteworthy because it is based on the assumption of the co-causation of company profit by labour. However, as already discussed in Part 2,[56] this argument is not very convincing. It then became apparent that the legal basis for a general obligation of employee profit-sharing could not be demonstrated. Naturally, there is therefore also no legal basis for making employee co-ownership mandatory in a *general* sense with regard to investments financed from this profit.[57]

Secondly, it is striking that this reasoning assumes that new company investments automatically accrue to the shareholders; that they then become owners. This assumption is generally untenable. The "privatization process" of the modern company has been too much overlooked here. While the shareholder may still formally be regarded as the owner of all the company's capital assets, in reality, in the case of a large public company of limited liability, they have long since ceased to be so. The *company itself* has taken over this role. The shareholder of the modern company is little more than a special kind of creditor.[58] The company is the owner of all[59] - including new - company investments.

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56 BCW Note: **2. Government and income distribution: a general approach.** pp.110-115 above

57 **BG 25** The word "general" is emphasized here because this argument obviously does not apply to cases in which - in accordance with our position - the Government does have the right to prescribe mandatory profit sharing by employees. In principle, one could argue for an employee share in internal reserves proportional to the employee share in distributed profits. However, see what follows in the remainder of the article.

58 BCW Note: He had stated earlier that "the shareholders are little more than creditors of a special type who have invested their money in the company on a profit-and-loss basis." (pp.113-114 in section headed "Background".)

59 **BG 26** This is confirmed by, among others, the legal section of the *Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond* committee **Over de structuur en rechtsvorm der moderne onderneming** *(O*n the structure and legal form of the modern enterprise.) See the ***Rapport*** of the same name, p. 118.

This "shift" has also been reflected [323] in the stock market value of the share. It has become increasingly important for the share's market value to represent a portion of the company's total capital assets Nowadays, the share is not primarily a title to ownership, but a dividend-bearing security. The only time it fully proves itself as a title to ownership is . . . upon the company's liquidation or bankruptcy, i.e., when the company is no longer a well-functioning company.

But - one might object - while the shareholder may now only be a formal owner, they still benefit from the higher dividends that are eventually paid out by new business investments. Ultimately, the benefits of these investments accrue solely to them!

But this objection, however, is unjustified. The positive correlation that is assumed here between the size of dividends on the one hand, and the size of investments financed from past profits on the other, is often barely demonstrable in practice.[60] This is also evident from the fact that dividend payments declined sharply after the war in relation to national income, while a huge number of new investments were realized. An increased level of internal financing is, in the long run, only possible based on an increased level of retained earnings - i.e. based on a *lower* level of dividends paid out to shareholders.

It is arguable that the benefits of investments financed by profit retention ultimately benefit employees no less than shareholders. The significant wage increases of recent years are based on productivity increases, largely made possible by these types of investments. The fact that these investments secure the future of the company is also in the interests of both employees and shareholders.

Based on the foregoing, the conclusion seems justified that the Government is not entitled to mandate employee co-ownership in profit-financed business investments. In a sense, such a development could even be considered counter-progressive or regressive. The recognition that investments financed by profit belong to *the company itself* - a recognition gained during the historical process of corporate independence - is partially undone in this way.

5. The Government and disposable income.

Up to this point, all our attention has been focused on the question of what direct (**3**) or indirect (**4**) influence on incomes earned in society is indeed desirable. No less important, however, is the question of the extent to which the Government

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60 **BG 27** See, among others, Prof. Ch. Glasz, "*Tien jaar ontwikkeling in de vermogensstructuur"* (10 Years of Development in the Capital Structure) in: **Tien jaar economisch leven in Nederland** 1955.

may intervene in disposable incomes, that is to what extent it may ensure that incomes benefit *others* besides those who earned them.

It is good to distinguish between two "systems of influence" from the outset.

[324] The first system is based on the combination of an income-tax based on ability to pay with a system of Government social spending.[61] This combination is actually over a century old. Its age, however, does not negate the fact that this constitutes a deliberate redistribution of income. An income tax based on ability to pay always has a *progressive* rate; and a progressive rate means that higher income earners must give up proportionally more of their earned income than lower income earners.

By contrast, a system of Government financial support or social welfare has the effect of favoring higher income earners less than lower income earners. In effect, this system therefore amounts to the Government forcing the better-off to distribute a portion of their earned income to the less well-off that is then passed on via the treasury. The size of this portion naturally depends on the total tax levy and the support it finances.

And so, after taking taxation and Government financial support for those in need into account, the distribution of income will look more levelled than previously.

The second "influence system" aims for a more far-reaching redistribution of income. Proponents of this system desire a greater degree of income equalization than is possible within a system of taxes based on ability to pay. To achieve this greater degree of income equalization, they will essentially have to tax higher incomes above and lower incomes below their actual ability to pay.

In reality, no combination of the two systems is possible. To the extent that one system is chosen, the other is nullified. However, this does not preclude the possibility that certain hybrids of these two systems will in practice exist - for example, by deviating from the ability to pay principle only with regard to the so-called top incomes. It is also possible to adhere to the second system while retaining a certain capacity to carry *elements* of it.[62]

What should be our attitude toward these two systems? For example, how should we think about the possibility of amending our tax system on certain points in the spirit of this second system?

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61 BCW Note: Interestingly, Goudzwaard's term is "*sociale overheidsuitgaven*" and for the contrasting system one of "*financiële overheidssteun of sociale zorg",* of financial government support or social welfare. Goudzwaard's word usage here implies the government's unavoidable contribution to social welfare, again not whether but how, the form y which this contribution is made.

62 BCW Note: Dutch - *draagkracht-**elementen***

Public Justice

Here we must first recall the observation made earlier that, according to Anti-Revolutionary conviction, the Government is only involved in income and wealth distribution from a specific *perspective*: that of public justice. The Government is not entitled to total and absolute authority over income and wealth distribution. Only when situations and relationships develop or threaten to develop that are intolerable from the perspective of public justice is it entitled to directly intervene in these distributions.

These situations and relationships arise in two ways. First, they occur where certain groups are marginalized by other groups in the process of income generation. Second, they arise where certain groups - [325] due mainly to their limited opportunities and achievements,[63] or due to relatively high needs[64] - are clearly financially disadvantaged compared to others, so that they cannot sufficiently develop themselves in accordance with their calling. In these situations, there is a disruption of *equality* in the sense of public justice, which the Government must rectify. What path then should the Government take?

It is noteworthy that in neither of these two cases is an intervention according to the second system mentioned above required.[65] The first situation can be addressed by direct Government intervention in the income generation process, as indicated in **Part 2**. The second situation can be fully addressed within a system of social legislation, which - insofar as it is not based on the insurance concept - can be financed entirely through taxes based on ability to pay (i.e. according to the first-mentioned system). It is therefore unnecessary to pursue the path of a direct redistribution of existing incomes and assets according to the second system to restore the violated equality.

This conclusion is not without weight. The path of the second system[66] is an *unfair* and *dangerous* one that must be avoided wherever possible.

It is an *unfair* path because it imposes equal punishment on both the "guilty" and the "innocent". When the government combats unjust situations in the process of income distribution by, for example, introducing a higher progression in income tax, it also affects those income earners who have no part in these

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63 **BG 28** For example: the lowest-paid income earners, disabled workers. A general lack of performance is found among the disabled, the sick, widows, the unemployed, and (in another respect) pensioners.

64 **BG 29** For example: families with many children, the sick, the disabled, and the invalids.

65 BCW Note: Ref. the "two systems of influence" distinguished at the outset of this section **Part 5**.

66 BCW Note: i.e. policies to give a more far-reaching redistribution and levelling of income.

unjust situations. With these kinds of measures, it tars all people with the same income with the same brush; it makes the good suffer with the guilty.

This path is also a *dangerous* one, because it very easily crosses the line toward totalitarian taxation. Only one step is needed to establish a tax system where the Government completely subordinates the existing income distribution to itself and its own ethical judgment. The line between what is and is not fair from a justice perspective is too easily - and irreparably - lost in this way.

Based on these factors, in our view, the second system of taxation (which is based on the principle of ability to pay) should, in principle, be valued above the first system, provided the Government does not hesitate to intervene directly in the income generation process when it is necessary to do so.[67]

[326]***Amendment***

However, this acceptance of the second system of taxation cannot occur without first introducing an amendment. This amendment is related to the fact that we are not basing our view on a formal civil law concept of equality, but on a view that is Christian.

The principle of ability to pay, which underlies our best taxation, is still largely based on the liberal formal civil law concept of equality in which every subject has to be subject to an equal reduction in the enjoyment of their *own individual property* rights. We cannot simply accept this concept of ability to pay. An Anti-Revolutionary tax system must be based on an Anti-Revolutionary concept of ability to pay; the total tax burden should be distributed among the subjects as among those of equal standing.[68]

It is not surprising that we have arrived at our own concept of ability to pay here. After all, the concept of "carrying capacity"[69] is, like other ideas and concepts, an empty term in itself, which from the outset gains momentum from the conviction that is directing life.[70]

Taxes on wealth

Everything said here regarding income tax can easily be applied to taxes on wealth. Based on similar reasoning, one can conclude that the Government

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67 **BG 30** This intervention can relate to both the remuneration ratios between the production factors of capital, labour, and entrepreneurial management, as well as the ratios within these factors. For example, with regard to labour, the ratios of employees in labour-intensive and capital-intensive enterprises and employees in private and public sector employment must be regularly reviewed.

68 **BG 31** We hope to elaborate on this further in another context.

69 BCW Note: Dutch - *draagkracht*. Here translated as "carrying capacity" elsewhere as "ability to pay."

70 BCW Note: Dutch: *die eerst vanuit een stuwende levensovertuiging inhoud kan verkrijgen*.

should preferably not pursue the path of fiscally correcting the ultimate wealth distribution, but should limit itself as much as possible to intervening in the relationships *underlying*[71] that wealth distribution.

Therefore, taxes on wealth should be based upon an *ability to pay*.

But a separate comment is appropriate here for those taxes that affect not just wealth itself, but rather *increases* in wealth: inheritance tax and capital gains tax.

Inheritance tax

Professor Tinbergen made the questionable statement that by gradually increasing inheritance taxes,

> *one can reduce the injustice of not being able to choose one's father.*[72]

Without attributing this statement to all socialists, it should be noted that it is not surprising that such a remark would be made by a socialist. It is typical of the socialist, in fact, that he considers an infringement of *individual* property *rights* less unjust than an infringement of *economic* equality within the *community*. Under socialism, the legal interests of non-state communities (families, etc.) are subordinated in advance to the economic interests of "the community."

[327] We therefore cannot share the socialist proposals for a drastic increase in inheritance taxes. We oppose the idea that private inheritance law *as such* is itself unjust - as if every inheritance should, in fact, go to the "community as a whole", and not to specific heirs. Here, the sovereignty within the *family's* own sphere is directly at stake. From the Anti-Revolutionary view, it belongs to the inalienable right of parents to provide for their children even after their death.

Where private inheritance law as such contains nothing unjust, the inheritance tax must also bear the character of a tax based on ability to pay. In this respect, a certain differentiation in the rate can be accepted, depending on the degree of consanguinity between the testators and heirs.

Capital Gains Tax

Socialists have also advocated for the introduction of a tax on capital gains (profits realized through the sale of movable property and securities). This is undoubtedly due to the socialist aversion to so-called unemployed income[73]: after all, these profits are "collected" without any commensurate work performed for the benefit of the community. However, rejecting this argument

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71 BCW Note: Dutch - *grondslag*

72 BCW Note: Reference in text. Jan Tinbergen **Redelijke Inkomensverdeling** *Haarlem N.V De Gulden Pers*. (Reasonable Income Distribution), p. 80.

73 BCW Note: Dutch: *het zogenaamde arbeidsloze inkomen*

should not prevent us from assessing this proposal on its own merits, based on our principles.

Of course, it's impossible to do this in a few lines. We would just like to note that such a tax also seems to be justified from the perspective of ability to pay. After all, realizing capital gains suddenly broadens the range of ability to pay, which broadening may be subject to a tax. This has been happening for years in inheritance tax. As long as capital gains remain completely untaxed, we believe there is a certain legal inequality[74] in our tax system, which needs to be corrected in some way.

[74] BCW Note: Dutch: *een zekere* ***rechtsongelijkheid*** - is it better translated as "a certain legislated inequality."

AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde 1962: 329-347

9. ECONOMIC POLICY AS PRINCIPLED POLITICS

III. ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CHRISTIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY (Conclusion)

Drs. Bob Goudzwaard

In the final article of this series, we will attempt to delineate a path along which, with a renewed perspective, the way might be opened up for the construction of a modern economic policy[1] with a Christian character.

We are not making this attempt without qualifying our effort beforehand. It is possible that the delineation we present here will in certain respects fail - even to the extent of omitting things that are essential for a proper delineation of such a policy. Nevertheless, in our view, it should still be attempted, if only to stimulate the much-needed discussion on this point within our own circles. The discussion about the distinctive character of Christian politics must not, at any cost, be interrupted.[2]

An attempt will be made to mark the route we, as Anti-Revolutionaries, must take with the help of three "signposts". The first is this:

1. We must make a break with our secularized ideas and concepts.

If a Christian-economic policy is to truly exist, then, in our view, one of the first requirements is that we arrive at a "reformation" of our prevailing ideas and concepts regarding freedom, justice, the common good, and so on. In many cases, we still operate from ideas and views that are largely alien to Christian principles. This seriously hinders the development of a truly Christian policy.

Please understand that this is not meant to urge some kind of "language purification" or to advocate for the establishment of a commission to define, for example, the Anti-Revolutionary concept of freedom. Rather, our point is this: as Anti-Revolutionaries, we must learn to constantly reckon with the fact that in political practice we sometimes arrive at entirely erroneous political positions simply because we often too readily adopt a non-Christian pattern of ideas and

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1 BCW Note: *economische politiek - "economic policy"* but also *"political economy"*. We also note that this the third and final in the series is "On a Christian Perspective for Political Economy", a discussion about forming such a perspective rather than claiming, by the title, that this will be ***the*** perspective. This is the discussion about taking this direction along which a Christian perspective has to be developed, rather than setting out in definitive terms what this perspective must be.

2 BCW Note: *afgebroken* - interrupted, broken off. Goudzwaard emphasizes that such discussion is an ongoing, inherent part of a Christian political party's work as it contributes to parliamentary state-crafting. This cannot be broken off without retreating from the field.

concepts.[3] For example, in our view the prevailing view of freedom among us still clearly shows traces of the liberal outlook; our concept of social justice often seems to be [330] more socialist than Christian in orientation. This has consequences in practical politics! If we fail to acknowledge this secularization[4] of our own world of ideas, we run the risk of seriously labeling as "typically Anti-Revolutionary" a political contribution that has absolutely nothing to do with the Anti-Revolutionary principle.[5]

One of the first conditions for shaping a Christian economic policy is therefore an inner willingness to consider the ideas and concepts with which we make our contribution in the light of the Gospel.[6]

So here we would like to separately illustrate the significance of this for practical politics with the Christian *concept of freedom*, specifically in its significance for:

a. the problem of freedom for wage formation;
b. the problem of the proper relationship between a policy of full employment and an anti-inflation policy.[7]

a. The freedom of wage formation

The contrast between "guided" and "free" wage formation is also generally accepted among us. "Guided" wage formation is understood as wage formation with Government intervention. Meanwhile "free" wage formation is viewed as conducted without the Government,

Without disputing the practical utility of this distinction, we must nevertheless emphasize that it is a worthless, indeed a dangerous, distinction for determining

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3 BCW Note: This might mean the ideas and concepts that are accepted within the party or it may be that the disagreements within the party are symptomatic of accommodation to non-Christian ideas.

4 **BG FTN 1:** *"secularisatie" = "verwereldlijking"*. (Secularization equates with becoming like the world). BCW Note: Goudzwaard here explains an outlook that gains a understanding of this world from idolising this world i.e. a this worldly world-view.

5 **BG FTN 2.** Professor T. P. van der Kooy is one of the first in Anti-Revolutionary circles to draw attention to this danger. His book **Om Welvaart en Gerechtigheid** Wageningen, N.V. Gebr. Zomer & Keunings Uitgeversmij, 1954 (On Welfare and Justice) can be characterized as an persistent struggle for a Christian-responsible interpretation of the ideas of prosperity, freedom, and justice. The approach to the problems of Christian economic policy followed in these articles parallels, in certain respects, the reflections of Professor van der Kooy.

6 BCW Note: The words here may reflect conventional discussion in reformed circles about testing one's actions and thoughts by the Gospel. Clearly, as with ftn3 above, Goudzwaard is assuming this is an ongoing part of Christian Anti-Revolutionary politics. It has to be. The emphasis is upon an ***inner*** willingness to be open together about what is being thought and proposed. In other words: an inner willingness to test the ideas and concepts with which we are making our contribution by the teaching of the Gospel.

7 BCW Note: This is indeed to put the ARP policies to a test and we note what he has said at the outset in the 2nd paragraph where he notes it is quite possible in this exercise to fail, to not bring about the requisite clarity.

our own position. For it is a distinction based on a non-Christian, liberalist concept of freedom. It is, after all, typically liberal to label any Government intervention in the economic sphere as a restriction of freedom. The underlying idea here is that "true" freedom is the "freedom" of individual self-determination, the "freedom" to be allowed to do or not to do what one deems to be responsible, according to one's own "moral sense".

In this context, it is interesting to point out that socialists have sometimes argued that "guided" wage formation is in fact much more worthy of the title "free wage formation" than wage formation lacking any Government intervention. From a socialist perspective, this is entirely correct! After all, the socialist primarily thinks of "freedom" as the *economic* freedom of a person as a member of the *community*, and this economic freedom can, in principle, be guaranteed better with Government intervention, rather than without it.

For the true socialist, it is unacceptable that the organs of the community should be deprived of any authority to determine wages: one of the most important instruments for achieving economic freedom is thereby taken out of the hands of the community.[8] [331] And that is why the orthodox socialist can describe and appreciate guided wage formation as a *free* wage formation.

In contrast to this, we must state that we have neither need for free wage formation along liberal lines, nor for free wage formation along socialist lines; with an Anti-Revolutionary perspective, we desire what we understand as free wage formation.

A Bound Freedom

The Christian concept of freedom has nothing in common with the idea of human self-determination. This concept is bound by God's determination over our lives, which is expressed in the calling into His service we have all received - and thus also for our service to our neighbour. Christian freedom means to enjoy the opportunity to fulfill one's God-given calling without hindrance - a

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8 **BG FTN 3** Recently, a movement has emerged within the Labour Party (PvdA) advocating a complete "liberalization" of wage formation. It is characteristic that these voices can be heard precisely from the *left* wing of the PvdA (and from the Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen). Therefore, it is highly unlikely that this "shift" is prompted by a "liberalization" of the socialist concept of freedom. Rather, it is a change of tactics. In a country where socialists constitute the minority, the Government is simply only willing through its wage policy to realize the "economic freedom of the community" envisioned by socialism to a limited extent. In such a situation, this "freedom" is better achieved outside the Government - namely, through strong pressure on employers from the organizations of employees. However, this pressure can only be sufficiently realized with so-called free or freer wage formation. This system of wage formation currently offers the best opportunities for promoting economic freedom for all. Therefore, in our view, the Labour Party's preference for "free wage formation" is based on considerations of expediency.
BCW Note: Note here Goudzwaard's view of how Socialistic idealism leads to "opportunism". What has been translated here as "expediency" is from the Dutch *opportuniteit*. In his previous article it was translated as "opportunism" that was the corollary of "socialistic idealism".

calling that includes the requirement of respect for one's fellow human beings, as those who are called just as we are.

From this it follows that someone who, in their actions, demonstrates a lack of respect for their neighbour and their calling does not have the right to appeal to their own "freedom". They wrongly view their freedom as something in itself; they separate it from their own calling, the very calling for which they have been given freedom.

In its concern for the common good, the Government must create space for the free development of human vocational service in all areas of life. It must support its subjects in the freedom to which they are entitled as those called to such service. Therefore, it will never be able to tolerate its subjects behaving in such ways, within their own social spheres, that effectively makes it impossible for others to freely fulfill their own callings.

When the Government intervenes in such a situation, it does not constitute an infringement on the freedom of its subjects; quite the contrary. Its intervention is precisely demanded by that freedom. When, from a perspective of public justice, activity in one social structure fails to ascribe freedom to another social structure, the freedom of *both* social structures is disrupted in relation to the human vocation. Government intervention to restore this violated freedom must therefore never be considered as in any form a restriction of freedom.

[332] ***Application***

What does this mean for our view on the freedom of wage formation?[9]

In wage determinations, employees and employers undeniably fulfill part of their assigned calling. They should therefore have the freedom (possibly through the organizations that represent them) to determine wages by mutual agreement as they see fit. This "freedom" however, is a freedom bound to respect for the calling of others. Therefore, employers and employees may not set wages in such a way that it hinders third parties[10] in their official duties or harms the development of our people as a whole. If employers and employees do so - consciously or unconsciously - then the Government must intervene in the name of freedom for the benefit of these affected subjects.

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9 BCW Note: In what follows, without explicitly saying so here, Goudzwaard links the lack of concern of wage bargaining participants for the vocation of others, "forgotten groups", to the problems caused by inflation. He has mentioned this theme earlier on, but here links wage negotiation to inflationary tendencies in economic life. There will be further explicit discussion of inflation below.

10 **BG FTN 4** Naturally, employers and employees may also not hinder each other in their callings. The consequences of this, however, has already been discussed in the previous article.

This situation is more prevalent than it appears at first glance. Of particular significance here is the fact that employers and (to a lesser extent) employees are able to partially shift their justified or unjustified "dissatisfaction" with the agreed wage increase onto *others* - others who were not, or not directly, involved in the wage negotiations as such.

This shifting occurs primarily when employers consider the wage increases so high that they see it as grounds to raise the price of their product; or also when employees consider the wage increases so low that they raise new wage demands sooner than usual, or to a greater extent than usual. The inflationary forces thus created are to the disadvantage of individuals and groups who bear no - or practically no - responsibility for the negotiations.

Firstly, these are the so-called "forgotten groups" - all those who have to survive from year to year on a virtually unchanged nominal income. Price increases force them and their families to increasingly curtail their spending; they can, as it were, do less and less with their fixed incomes.

Secondly, these include those who are disadvantaged by any potential decline in economic activity. Dutch products can no longer be sold so easily on foreign markets due to the rising prices and wages; when exports are declining this can not without significance result in *unemployment* in export companies. The "forgotten groups" and the potential unemployed in the export industry are particularly vulnerable who ultimately bear the brunt of the dissatisfaction of employers and/or employees with the results of wage negotiations.

The Government cannot and should not simply let this slide. The freedom of its subjects is at stake! It is its duty to demand that employers and employees, from their respective parts in the negotiation process, *jointly refrain* from inflation-inducing reactions. Employers and employees [333] have the freedom to set wages - granted; but they must use this freedom in *bonded-solidarity,* out of respect for the callings of their fellow human beings.

From an Anti-Revolutionary perspective, free wage formation is therefore not wage formation without Government intervention, but wage formation in which - if necessary through Government coercion - employers or employees refrain from undermining the legitimate interests of third parties.

Practical significance

In practice, this objective is achieved when employers and employees, in their negotiations, generally align wage increases with the increase in national

productivity.[11] If wages generally rise faster than national production, profits earned in businesses shrink, which almost inevitably leads entrepreneurs to raise prices; if, on the other hand, wages rise less rapidly than national production, the employee share of national income is eroded, leading employees to raise new wage demands.[12]

Only when businesses generally adhere to recognizing productivity trends in their wage determinations will inflationary effects from the wage negotiations be avoided. Therefore, there is a legal basis for the Government to bind wage determination in businesses in general to the norm of productivity trends. When employers and employees adhere to this norm in their negotiations, they are making proper use of their freedom. If they ignore this norm, they provoke inflationary reactions from the other party in the negotiations, which then jeopardizes the freedom of others.

But, some will note here, what does "freedom of wage determination" still mean in this sense? The only thing employers and employees still have the freedom to do is to faithfully align their wage determination with productivity trends. In this way, is there any longer a question of their own *freedom* in wage determinations, of a real *sharing of bargaining power* between employers and employees?

Such an objection is not as strong as it seems.

The interests of "third parties" are sufficiently protected when employers and employees *on the whole* adhere to *national* productivity trends. A commitment to productivity within one's own *industry* - as under the system of differentiated wage formation - is therefore unnecessary. A certain degree of leeway can thus be retained in wage negotiations conducted within the industrial sector.

However, these negotiations must be coordinated in such a way that the total wage increases continue to roughly correspond to the increase in productivity. As is known, in the new wage system adopted by the Government - which is broadly similar [334] to the wage system recommended by the Social and Economic Council (SER) - is a coordinating task entrusted to the employers' and

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11 **BG FTN 5** After any adjustment for international influences which, among other things, are reflected in the balance of payments.

12 **BG FTN 6** This last point has an inflationary effect because the increased profits have meanwhile given entrepreneurs reason to increase their investments. The new wage increases and the larger investments together cause overspending, or inflation.
BCW Note: With his footnotes 5 and 6, Goudzwaard has provided a helpful description of how the mechanism of inflation may be triggered.

employees' federations. Therefore, in our view, the complaint of a "general lack of 'freedom' in the business community" in this regard is unfounded.[13]

b. Inflation versus Unemployment

The significance of the Anti-Revolutionary concept of freedom for economic policy can be illustrated by another problem - closely related to the one mentioned above - namely, the question of whether, in our country, priority should be given to combating inflation or unemployment.

This question arises from the fact that, under certain circumstances, it is impossible for the Government to stem both inflation and unemployment.[14] It then faces a choice: either maintain a stable price level, but at the cost of a certain degree of unemployment - or maintain full employment, but at the cost of a slight inflationary increase in the level of prices.[15] Which of these two options should it choose in such situations?

Here, too, socialists and liberals tend to take opposing positions. The socialist side tends to prioritize combating unemployment, while the liberal side favors combating inflation. This differing reaction is not surprising. Unemployment is an *economic* constraint par excellence - and therefore represents a direct infringement on the socialist idea of freedom; inflation amounts to a gradual erosion of individual property *rights* - and therefore represents a direct infringement on the *liberal* idea of freedom.

Behind this concrete, practical difference of opinion between socialism and liberalism, we thus discern a clash of their ideas about freedom: the economic freedom of the community and the civil rights freedom of the individual.

As mentioned, both of these ideas of freedom are unacceptable to us because of their one-sidedness. The Christian idea of freedom is bound [335] to the idea of

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13 **BG FTN 7** Regarding the "viability" of the new wage formation system, it can be noted that these depend almost entirely on:
a) the willingness of the Social and Economic Council (SER) to base its determination of the available room for wage increases primarily on productivity development (with permissible corrections for, among other things, the development of the terms of trade);
b) the willingness of the employers' and employees' federations to actually provide the "internal coordination" assigned to them within the framework of the "room" thus indicated;
c) the willingness of the employers' and employees' organizations in the various sectors to actually lend their ear to the efforts towards "internal coordination".
Keeping all these points in view, the future must be viewed with due care. The ease with which the SER (unanimously) recommended exceeding the available room for wage increases certainly gives food for thought. Nevertheless, we believe it makes sense to put this new system to the test.

14 **BG FTN 8** To avoid any misunderstanding, we note that wage formation geared to increased productivity does not eliminate all potential for inflation. The possibility of so-called demand-driven inflation remains. Therefore, the problem of prioritizing unemployment over inflation is not yet solved with non-inflationary wage formation.

15 **BG FTN 9** A slight inflationary increase, because otherwise there is a risk of a drastic reduction in employment in the export industry; see above.

the human vocation. To properly fulfill that calling, humans need both a certain degree of *"economic"* freedom and a certain degree of *"civil"* freedom. These two "freedoms" must not be pitted against each other. *Both* should be pursued by the government, insofar as they are necessary for the proper functioning of the human civil service in private social contexts.[16]

In the sometimes necessary choice between combating inflation and unemployment, the Government is therefore faced with the necessity of a fair balancing of interests. On one side of the scale are the interests of those affected by potential unemployment; on the other, the interests of those who suffer from potential inflation.

Regarding *both* groups, the Government will have to consider how great the damage will be to these individuals who will suffer it in the context of their official duties and vocations. To what extent does unemployment, on the one hand, and inflation, on the other, harm the proper functioning of families? To what extent do unemployment and inflation hinder the development of businesses in our territory? The answers to these questions will have to determine the Government's concrete position.

It will be clear that it is impossible to say in advance which side of the scale should prevail here. This will always have to be determined in concrete terms. It may be desirable and just that a slight degree of inflation must be accepted as the price for vigorously combating prevailing unemployment. In many cases, unemployment has a disastrous impact on family life and undermines national vigour. Moreover, combating unemployment significantly improves the well-being of businesses - and thus, indirectly, that of many families. On the other hand, however, there are conceivable situations in which a further increase in employment has such inflationary consequences that this path should not be taken; severe and persistent inflation is disastrous for the entire development of society.[17]

Stable Benefits

Socialists don't take the objections of a slightly inflationary trend too seriously. Those who suffer from inflation can, in many cases, be fully compensated by the introduction of so-called stable benefits. A scheme can be devised for virtually every "forgotten group", where the benefit level is aligned with the existing

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16 BCW Note: Dutch: *Beide dienen door de overheid te worden nagestreefd, namelijk voorzover zij voor de goede functionering van de menselijke ambtsdienst in de private samenlevingsverbanden vereist zijn.*

17 BCW Note: What is particularly noticeable here is Goudzwaard's effort to formulate an ARP policy in a way that maintains the closest possible contact with creative and beneficial policies from both socialist and liberal approaches.

purchasing power of money. By creating these facilities, the Government frees up as much as possible in order to actively combat unemployment.

But, in general terms, this "solution" cannot be considered positive. What does the introduction of ever-new inflationary provisions achieve? It is not that the total inflationary pressure is reduced in any way. The only thing achieved is that the total inflationary pressure is distributed differently across the entire Dutch population. [336] Those who have inflationary provisions are completely exempt from bearing that burden; but this means that others must take over that burden. These "others" are all those who - for technical or other reasons - cannot be provided with inflationary benefits.[18] They are the ones who are almost entirely burdened by the total inflationary pressure. The more certain groups are exempted from the burden of inflation, the more the blows will hit the groups not yet exempted.

It is not the intention here to criticize every single inflation-proof provision. There are groups in our society who indeed need protection from the effects of inflation no matter what - widows, most elderly people, the disabled. But in general, it must be said that Dutch society is not served by an ever-increasing expansion of inflation-proof provisions. The more this instrument[19] is applied, the more unfair the distribution of the total inflation burden becomes across the various population groups.

It should also be noted that the interests of the "forgotten groups" should not be limited to purely economic interests. It is typically socialist to believe that the interests of the "forgotten groups" would be sufficiently served if they were given access to economic compensation from the *community*, instead of being given access to the income they freely earned themselves.

Welfare[20] and Responsibility

Hopefully, the foregoing has made it clear that the Anti-Revolutionary idea of freedom opens up important perspectives for shaping a political policy of our own. These perspectives are further broadened when other political ideas and concepts are also considered.

Here, we will confine ourselves to touching on the significance of an Anti-Revolutionary idea of responsibility.

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18 **BG FTN 10** One might think here, among other things, of most private annuitants and, in general, all creditors. Assets set aside for specific purposes (largely invested in bonds and loans) also suffer losses. Finally, in a certain sense, e*mployees* also suffer, as their new wage demands, based on the price increases that have occurred, can only be met with a certain *delay* - if they are met at all.

19 BCW Note: The word in the text is *instituut*.

20 BCW Note: The Dutch term *welvaart* is also the term to denote posperity.

Welfare

The concept of welfare is crucial in our position regarding the so-called "welfare state". Undeniably, the socialist concept of freedom lies behind the *concept*[21] of the welfare state. This is evident, among other things, from descriptions of the welfare state provided by Banning[22] and Den Uyl.[23] The welfare state is the state that accepts responsibility for realizing the economic freedom of the community.

As a rough indication of our own position, the following may serve. We Anti-Revolutionaries, no less than the socialists, favor of a state in which prosperity prevails. But the prosperity we envision [337] in this regard is broader and less one-sided than that of socialism! Thus, in the Anti-Revolutionary concept of prosperity, the protection of civil rights, which one needs for the development of one's calling, is accorded independent validity.

A state in which the *economic* prosperity of its subjects is assigned decisive importance can therefore never be a true welfare state. But, in a "genuine" welfare state, a harmony prevails between economic prosperity and justice - as is so beautifully expressed in the Old Testament word "shalom". It is a state in which one can practice one's calling in peace, unhindered by serious obstacles, economic or otherwise. Only such a "welfare state" can be the target[24] of an Anti-Revolutionary policy.

Responsibility

The word "responsibility" is used with an enormous amount of nonsense these days. Some use it to mean: knowing, based on one's own moral convictions, what one should and should not do (the liberal version); others interpret it as a duty to render a complete account to the national community in general and to its individual members in particular (the socialist version). From an Anti-Revolutionary perspective, human responsibility should be understood primarily as a responsibility based on calling. Human beings are called by God and accountable to Him; this responsibility to God expresses itself in a responsibility toward one's neighbor. Responsibility to one's neighbor - that is, an obligation to

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21 BCW Note: Dutch - *idee*

22 BCW Note: Willem Banning, (1888-1971) a leading promoter of Christian Socialism, and of the Doorbraak movement after World War II. He also wrote "The day of tomorrow. The design of a personalistic socialism ..." He helped to form the PvdA. See: ALMolendijk "Willem Banning and the Reform of Socialism in the Netherlands" *Contemporary European History* (2020), 29, 139–154

23 BCW Note: Joop den Uyl who would become Prime Minister 1973-1977.

24 BCW Note: Dutch: *doelwit*

render an account for all one's actions - only exists insofar as one is placed under the authority of others in one's calling.[25]

The concept of responsibility *to* the neighbour plays a role, among other things, in the question of the position of large corporations within our entire national economy. As is well known, the socialist demand is that large corporations be accountable to the public for all their actions – hence the instituting so-called "public interest commissioners", who, according to the Wiardi Beckman Foundation report, should sit on supervisory boards of large corporations. By contrast, liberals believe that large corporations should be left almost entirely alone.

We cannot agree with either view. On the one hand, we maintain that the corporation, as a business, is not subject to the authority of the state and is therefore not obligated to account to the Government for all of its actions. On the other hand, it must also kept in mind that the corporation is responsible *towards* others: its employees, its consumers, the Dutch people as a whole; and the Government is obligated to *hold* the corporation to that responsibility.

To borrow a phrase from Dr. Kuyper,[26] the company has [338] "a public-legal aspect". The Government is responsible for ensuring that the company conducts itself in relation to its employees, consumers, etc., in a way that can be considered "responsible" *from a public justice perspective*.[27]

This is not without consequences for the practical politics of today. For example, the consumer's position vis-à-vis companies - despite antitrust legislation - is still often weak. Measures against misleading advertising, and possibly mandatory product testing, could improve this. Furthermore, greater transparency in reporting should be mandated in the public interest. The Government must be able to take measures against corporate decisions that undermine the public interest.[28] Why? Because it is the duty of all companies to contribute to the well-being of the people.

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25 BCW Note: The paragraph is complex, an attempt to explain how the calling-responsibilities are interwoven such that for instance an employer or employee is still accountable to the government for how their conduct subject to law is giving expression to their neighbours. This requires further details and systematic sociological discussion.

26 **BG FTN 11** Dr. A. Kuyper in *De Standaard* of April 28, 1910, reprinted in: Prof. W. F. de Gaay Fortman, **Architectonische Kritiek**, p. 155. Dr. Kuyper was not actually referring to the company itself, but rather to industry as a whole; but the reasoning he employed is equally valid for the company itself.

27 BCW Note: emphasis added.

28 **BG FTN 12** We are here thinking, for example, of Philips' decision to introduce the so-called "shortened work-week", suddenly confronting the Government with a wave of reduced working hours across the country.

2. The second guidepost: we must achieve a dynamic development of the principle of *sphere sovereignty*.[29]

In the first article, the principle of "sovereignty within its own sphere" was already briefly touched upon. Against the view that *sphere sovereignty* should be interpreted as a right to self-determination within one's own sphere, it was then argued that this principle should be understood in terms of a "vocation" or "mandate" within one's own sphere. In its policy, the Government must respect its subjects as those *so called* within their own life spheres - which is different from the respect for *all that his done* within the activities of private life.

In addition, it was pointed out that, in weighing all interests assigned to it, the Government must pay attention to which social groups advance those interests. In every balancing of interests, it must ask itself what the social groups involved actually need to fulfill their vocations.

Both remarks point to the necessity of revitalizing the principle of sphere sovereignty. In our circle, one still far too often encounters only a purely static conception of this principle, i.e., a use (or misuse) of this principle in the exclusive form of a commandment to "touch not, taste not, handle not".

This principle is "utilized" solely to keep the Government out of as much as possible. What is needed is that people learn to understand that the Government's general task is precisely *to intervene for the benefit and promotion* of sphere sovereignty![30] It must place itself entirely at the *service* of sphere sovereignty within the private sphere. It must, in its own way, contribute with all its might to ensuring that people in private spheres can fulfill their mandates, their callings, as they should.

In this case, the Government naturally has a duty to act fairly - it has no right to discriminate between individuals or between social groups. In that case, the principle of sphere sovereignty turns against itself: it is then itself the cause of [339] the development of certain social structures which it harms unlawfully. Therefore, this "dynamic" conception of sphere sovereignty does not give the Government *carte blanche* to intervene wherever it pleases. The more "static"[31],

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29 BCW Note: Here follows a discussion of the key ARP principle: *het beginsel der soevereinriteit in eigen kring*. From here on, the shortened term "sphere sovereignty" will appear, recognizing, as Goudzwaard points out, that this principle is always in need of being articulated in fresh and clear terms. In 1962 this series of articles was dealing with the problem of "souvereniteit in eigen kring" being used as a cliché, in ways that masked an uncritical use of the term, where those appealing to the principle saw no need of exlaining its outworking. It is for the outworking of this "sphere sovereignty" principle that Goudzwaard has given himself to writing these three articles.

30 BCW Note: , i.e. the sovereignty within its own vocational sphere

31 BCW Note: Dutch - *statische*. *"static" over against "dynamic" but also "statist" over again "sphere sovereignty"*

negative view of sphere sovereignty - leading to a "no" to certain Government measures - retains its validity in this "dynamic" application of the principle.

The Government may intervene only after a fair assessment of *all* the interests at stake for all individuals and social structures involved - in other words, a consideration against the background of what sphere sovereignty entails for all these structures.

We can also say the same thing in a slightly different way. The Government has a duty to uphold and respect the calling of its subjects within their private social relationships. This "respect", however, has both a positive and a negative side. The Government *insufficiently* "respects" the calling of its subjects by only focusing upon what it is *not* allowed to do with respect to those relationships. It must also consider what it can *positively* accomplish for the benefit of those relationships.

As long as one clings exclusively to the negative, static conception of *sphere sovereignty*, it can safely be said that the prospects for an active Christian-economic policy are not very promising. However, if, on the other hand, the principle of *sphere sovereignty* is primarily seen as a *task* for the Government, then, in our view, the impasse is to a significant degree overcome.

In the second article, this more dynamic view of *sphere sovereignty* - although not specifically mentioned - has already emerged several times. For example, in the defense of an active policy of property development. Owning one's own property can, among other things, make a valuable contribution to the proper functioning of the family unit; a contribution so significant that the Government, in its concern for the general public interest, may indeed allocate certain funds for this purpose.

In this article, this view emerged, among other things, in the discussion of the relationship between combating unemployment and inflation. Here, too, the principle of *sphere sovereignty* - the preservation of the possibility of developing one's own calling - formed the criterion that, in principle, determined the solution to the problem.

Given these examples, two brief illustrations will suffice to further clarify what the "dynamization" of *sphere sovereignty* may mean in policy terms.

Regional Development Policy:

The first illustration is from regional *development policy*. Why do we support the granting of relatively large grants and subsidies to certain regions, partly to improve the existing "business climate" there? The answer is: we do so primarily because these regions contain social groups and associations that no

longer seem able to develop properly. Due, on the one hand, to a certain degree of structural unemployment and, on the other, to a relatively strong population migration to other regions, [340] the proper functioning of many families, associations, churches, and businesses in these areas has been disrupted. Churches and associations are struggling due to insufficient economic opportunities and declining membership,[32] families are experiencing the debilitating impact of unemployment (which is largely hidden and therefore not reflected in the statistics); agricultural businesses are facing the necessity of rapid mechanization, which often exceeds their financial capacity. Based on the principle of *sphere sovereignty*, the Government has a clear task here. It must also support its subjects in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Through a targeted premium and subsidy policy, it will have to create the public conditions necessary for renewed and lasting flourishing and development of life in these diverse work and life spheres.[33]

The increase in Government expenditure

The *second* illustration concerns the problem of the further increase in total Government expenditure. To what extent is such an increase permissible in the long term? The question of particular interest here is whether it is permissible for Government expenditure to increase in the long run proportionally faster than national income.

This last question can be translated into somewhat simpler terms when we consider that - due to the progression in most of our tax rates - with increasing prosperity, a proportionally larger percentage of incomes and profits must be transferred to the Government. If everyone in our country were to earn twice as much as they do now, the Government's tax revenues would not double, but triple or quadruple under existing tax rates.

Without rate changes, both tax revenues and Government expenditure, would therefore, in the long run, increase faster than national income. The aforementioned question can therefore also be framed as follows: is the Government obligated to regularly adjust its tax rates (e.g., income tax and corporate tax) downwards as prosperity increases - or is it permissible to leave those rates unchanged for a relatively long period?

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32 **BG FTN 13** This last point applies particularly to the shrinking of small rural communities.

33 **BG FTN 14** For a more detailed elaboration of this approach, please refer to the forthcoming report of College van Advies **De ongelijkmatige bevolkingsspreiding in Nederland als politiek probleem.** (Advisory Board on *Uneven Population Distribution in the Netherlands as a Political Problem*.

Here, again, a balancing of interests is necessary. Specifically, this involves a balance between the interests of taxpayers on the one hand and, on the other, the interests of those who would benefit from an additional increase in Government spending. The Government must place both interests against the backdrop of the sovereignty of the relevant social groups within their own spheres - that is, against the *backdrop* of what both taxpayers and the individuals and groups benefiting from Government spending need for the life development to which they are called.

Naturally, the height that the tax burden has already [341] reached in our country cannot be ignored. There is reason to believe that a further reduction of this burden is desirable and just. Some current Government expenditures have expanded so much that they support the development of society less than they proportionally cost taxpayers in the development of their social lives. But let us assume that the desired tax reductions for this reason have been implemented. Does the need then still exist to periodically reduce tax rates?

It seems to us that this need exists only to a limited extent. For as the prosperity and population of our country continue to increase, the interest of taxpayers in a reduction of the tax burden diminishes relatively; while the significance of the interests associated with Government expenditures financed by taxes remain at least the same.

It goes without saying that taxpayers' interests diminish with increasing prosperity. For a less prosperous nation, a tax reduction of a given size - for example, 100 million guilders - means considerably more than for a prosperous nation. A reduction of 100 million guilders gives back significantly more "development opportunities" to a less prosperous nation than would be the case for a prosperous nation. Therefore, with increasing national prosperity, taxpayers' interests gradually become less important for a given amount of money.

However, this cannot be said of the interests associated with an increase in Government expenditure.

After all, we live in a country with a rapidly growing population – which, moreover, is increasingly concentrated in certain regions. To ensure that Dutch society functions properly under these circumstances, enormous investments are required. It is a generally recognized fact that with increasing population concentration, Government expenditure increases considerably faster than the population itself. It is no coincidence that there is such a huge difference between municipal expenditure per capita in a large city and that of a small village!

As population density increases, Government expenditure multiplies. Therefore, the interests involved in the last 100 million guilders of Government spending will certainly be no less important in the future than they are today.

All this compels us to conclude that, in the long term, periodic tax cuts should not be overly insisted upon. In the long run, it can be dangerous to try to limit the increase in Government expenditure under all circumstances to the rate of increase that reflects national income. The distinctive integrity of life within countless social circles in our country could be damaged by such an endeavor.[34]

3. The third guidepost: we must break with all pseudo-criteria in the balancing of interests.

The first article discussed in some detail the content of the [342] Christian political principle, which can be summarized by the phrase "public justice". We saw that the Government has the duty to weigh all interests that present themselves to it for their *just* protection of all against any threats - taking into account the calling of its subjects in their social contexts.

In this regard, a position was taken that was also against liberalism and socialism. This was not because these movements completely lacked the pursuit of a fair balancing and reconciliation of interests; but mainly because, in our view, their *concept of justice* had been tilted to one side. As a result, the scales in which they weigh the various interests against each other can no longer be considered entirely fair.

Incidentally, this does not mean that Anti-Revolutionary politicians necessarily possess a fair balance. Being truly just is incredibly difficult - not least in politics. All we may say here is that it is not our principle which is at fault when an unjust policy emerges from the Anti-Revolutionary side![35] If we want to have a truly Christian policy, we must therefore be willing to be guided entirely by the standard of justice in our politics. We must not be open to voices that detract from a truly just policy.

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34 BCW Note: One wonders here whether Goudzwaard has, at the back of his mind, how a Government supports efforts from within the people it governs for "foreign aid and development." There is a responsibility that comes to the rich to serve the needs of those with fewer resources and hence also beyond the borders of any one polity.

35 BCW Note: *Het enige wat wij hier mogen zeggen is dat het niet aan ons beginsel schort, wanneer er van antirevolutionaire zijde een onrechtvaardig beleid uit de bus komt!* Interestingly, the Google translating robot misses the self-critical dimension of this statement. Goudzwaard has drawn attention to "*ons beginsel" - "our principle"* - in the context of an unjust policy put forward by the ARP! The Google translation reads: *The only thing we can say here is that we are not at fault in principle when an unjust policy emerges from the anti-revolutionary side!* That is precisely what Goudzwaard is not saying. It is not the principle that is wrong but those (us) who apply it.

This sounds more conventional than it is. Besides the standard of justice - however one may otherwise interpret it - we are increasingly confronted with a number of *pseudo*-norms in our time; norms that also claim to serve as the sole guideline for weighing interests. Apparently, there is no major political party in the Netherlands that has not been influenced in one way or another by such pseudo-criteria. Instead of one's own vision of justice, these other "principles" are decisive in weighing interests.

We will now examine some of these "principles".

a. the principle of efficiency.

What a balancing of interests entails according to this "principle" can best be illustrated by two examples.

The first example concerns certain applications of the doctrine of "Welfare Economics" - that is, the branch of economics specifically concerned with the ends and means of economic policy. This "Welfare Economics" is a continuation of the old "Political Economy" of the Classical and Neo-Classical schools, and originated around 1920 (with Pigou's book, **The Economics of Welfare**[36]). One of the main variants of "Welfare Economics" - to which Pigou himself belongs - sees the goal of economic policy as maximal satisfaction of the needs of all groups in society. To achieve this goal, numerous political means are indicated - means that are evaluated solely for their effectiveness[37] in relation to this stated goal. Thus, on the basis of [343] maximal satisfaction of needs, the following have been advocated (a rough selection):

Subsidizing all industries with decreasing costs, taxing all industries with increasing costs;[38]
Abolition of all monopolies and monopolistic market structures;
A redistribution of income such that everyone enjoys equal satisfaction of needs from their last guilder;
Replacement of private enterprises with public companies, wherever the latter can operate more efficiently;
A tax system based not on the principle of ability to pay, but on the principle that the people as a whole should be deprived of as little satisfaction of needs as possible.

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36 BCW Note: A C Pigou **The Economics of Welfare** MacMillan 1932 https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/pigou-the-economics-of-welfare

37 BCW Note: Dutch - *doelmatigheid*. Goal attainment ability.

38 BCW Note: *"subsidiëring van alle bedrijfstakken met afnemende kosten, belasting van alle bedrijfstakken met toenemende kosten"*.

What characterizes all these proposals is the absence of any consideration of justice with regard to the interests at stake. The more a particular "means" serves the goal of maximizing the satisfaction of the people's needs, the *better* it is. An economist should not concern himself - so it is said - with considerations of justice and fairness.

This prevailing trend in "Welfare Economics" is also noticeable here and there in the practice of political-economy. The view is often stated as: when a particular measure has been demonstrated to be efficient and economically profitable, it should therefore be adopted. *Therefore,* considerations other than those of efficiency are no longer ascribed a place in the balancing of interests.[39]

Another example of an improper application of the principle of efficiency occurs when, in economic policy, the well-known rule of thumb "global intervention at strategic points" is elevated to a kind of dogma. This example is closely related to the previous one. The tactic of intervening at strategic points is, in many cases, *a much more effective means*[40] of achieving certain Government objectives such as a rising national income, a stable price level, etc. than detailed intervention. However, in some circumstances, *justice* may well warrant more detailed intervention.[41]

For example, it is possible that a certain group of companies decides to suddenly raise prices for unjustified reasons, or that employers and employees vent their disagreement over necessary wage increases by reactions that lead in an inflationary direction. In these cases, justice may require Government intervention, there and then - that is, exactly where the boundaries of what is permissible under public law have been crossed. In our view, it is therefore unacceptable to manipulate the exchange rate, the interest rate or Government expenditure in such a way to achieve a certain economic equilibrium.[42]

[344] Canonizing the rule "global intervention at strategic points" would amount to the proposition that expediency should always have the final say in

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39 **BG FTN 15** Naturally, we are not seeking to deny any significance to "considerations of efficiency" in the balancing of interests. However, the efficiency of Government decisions is merely one aspect of these decisions, an aspect that must be assigned its place by the standard of justice. This is clearly not the case here. We are dealing with an absolutization of efficiency, an elevation of efficiency to the sole valid guideline for balancing interests. This cannot be tolerated in a Christian economic policy.

40 BCW Note: Dutch: *een veel doelmatiger middel*

41 BCW Note: We need at this point to clarify the descriptor "detailed intervention".

42 **BG FTN 16** We encountered another illustration of the desirability of detailed, on-site Government intervention in the previous article. It appeared to be a requirement of justice that the Government, if necessary, intervene directly in the detailed relationships *underlying* the ultimate distribution of income - that is, in the relationships that exist between and among the various factors of production in the process of income and wealth formation.

the choice of political instruments. This is a proposition that cannot be defended from the perspective of Anti-Revolutionary principles.

b. The principle of minimal friction.

This pseudo-criterion is no less dangerous than that of maximum efficiency. It implies that the Government, in its balancing of interests, chooses only those "solutions" that will provoke the least protest from all the groups involved. It always presents its solutions in such a way that it itself offends the least.

This principle is often presented as very plausible. Then, isn't it valuable, it is argued, to prevent tensions in society? When the Government lacks a give-and-take mentality, it causes unnecessary friction and unrest. It is also sometimes drawn into the ethical and pedagogical sphere by pointing out that Government must, above all, treat its subjects with understanding and love and must avoid antagonizing certain groups in any way. Difficult children must occasionally be given their way, otherwise they will "throw a tantrum."

All these fine words, however, do not negate the fact that elevating the principle of minimal friction to a guiding standard for Government policy undermines the Government's mission which is centered on doing *justice* for *all*. When, in Government, it is not those who are right who win, but those who showing the least compliance are those who are to be proved right, then the continued existence of our constitutional state is dangerously jeopardized.

c. The principle of consensus.

We must dwell a little longer on this "principle" - which is closely related to the previous one - because it has found a high degree of *recognition* in both socialism and Roman Catholicism. This "principle" involves governing based on a *consensus* between the Government and the main interest groups.

In socialism, we see authors like Crosland and Professor F. Hartog advocating that planning should be based on this principle. The view runs like this: for Government planning to succeed, the relevant interest groups must express their consent in advance. If they refuse, the Government must exercise self-restraint. This is simply what modern democracy demands.[43] "Governing against the main interest groups is unthinkable in a modern democracy," according to Professor Hartog.[44]

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43 **BG FTN 17** Cf. C. A. R. Crosland, **The Future of Socialism**, Jonathan Cape 1956 p. 502 ff.

44 **BG FTN 18** Prof. Dr. F. Hartog, 'Economic planning as a tool in a democratic system', in: *Socialism and Democracy*, Jan. 1961, p. 93.

Socialism's concept of democracy indeed plays [345] a major role in the acceptance of this pseudo-criterion. Socialism has always seen democracy as the means by which the national community, in sovereign self-determination, decides on its own political and social future: the state is nothing more than an organ of the community; it is the agent of the community's will.

If, however, the Government, through the most important interest groups, is, as it were, granted the national community's veto over its proposals, then it is entirely understandable that it yields to this. It must, after all, see the content and the limits of its task in the will of the community.

Due to the rise of major interest groups, the socialist democratic concept has entered a crisis. This is very clearly illustrated in the aforementioned article by Professor Hartog. Besides the remark already quoted, that governing against the "principal interest groups" is unthinkable in a modern democracy, we also read,

> The existence of powerfully organized interest groups threatens democracy . . . in the present situation . . . . through conspiracies . . . [45]

It is therefore a requirement of democracy that Government be governed with the consent of the very groups that *threaten* democracy! Democracy is therefore working itself into the abyss.[46]

In *Roman Catholicism*, the partial willingness to accept the "consensus norm" rests on a very specific conception of "the common good." As is well known, Rome sees the state as the head of natural society; it is the total body, in which all the lower communities are, as it were, included. In line with this, Rome sees the common good as a kind of sum of all kinds of partial interests: those of employers, employees, and so on. Therefore, according to Roman Catholicism, it is nothing more than a requirement of fairness that these groups have a certain say in how the government provides for "the common good."

In the encyclical **Mater et Magistra**, we find this expressed very clearly:

> *But what can promote this general economic situation the most is not decided by individual enterprises, but by the leadership of the state and the national and international bodies concerned with the various sectors of economic life. This demonstrates the desirability or necessity that, in addition to employers or their representatives, the leadership of the state and the aforementioned bodies should also include workers or those who defend their rights, interests, and aspirations. (para. 99).*

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45 BCW Note: The reference is given in the text. Hartog *ibid* p.89.

46 **BG FTN 19** It is noteworthy to compare this with the words of Article 12 of the Socialist Principles Program: "The Labour Party ... understands democracy as a political system in which ... democracy is defended against those who seek its destruction."

The interest groups of employers and employees should therefore be included as such in the leadership of the state. It is clear that this compels the government to accept the consensus criterion in its economic policy.

Now, it is *not* our intention to claim that the Government, in its policy, need not be concerned with the interests represented by interest groups. Nor is it to be condemned if, before taking a particular measure, [346] the Government consults the relevant organizations and gives them the opportunity to explain their position in detail. This is, in fact, entirely desirable; a fair balancing of interests requires a well-founded understanding of all the interests at stake. Our objections are therefore not directed against this.

But they are directed against the fact that the representatives of special interests, *as such*, have the right to help decide which side the scales of the *general interest* should tip; and that the Government is obligated to acquiesce in a rejection of its policy simply because this rejection originates from some or most of the major interest groups - even if its policy was arrived at through a fair balancing of all interests. In our firm belief, the boundaries of what is permissible have then been crossed. It is in irreconcilable contradiction with the calling of the Government that for it, the will of certain interest groups, rather than justice, should be decisive.

The principle of a prior consensus between the Government and the largest interest groups must therefore be radically rejected. The rejection is radical because the very *root* of Government authority is at stake. This threatens a regressive shift from the rule of law to the *power* state - a state in which not justice, but the will of the strongest and most powerful, sets the tone; a state in which Government has been transformed from a shield for the weak into an device of the strong.

4. Conclusion.

We would not be surprised if many find the path outlined in this article, along which a new perspective for a Christian economic policy can emerge, a very difficult and circuitous one. The three conditions stipulated here for the realization of a Christian economic policy

> breaking with our secularized concepts,
> arriving at a more dynamic concept of “sphere sovereignty”,
> breaking with all pseudo-criteria in the balancing of interests,

are not easy to fulfill. Each one boils down to the requirement of a conscious inner reorientation, a shift in our political thought patterns.

Isn't there an easier route to be found? Isn't it sufficient to formulate a few concrete political aspirations that are clearly worth pursuing to gain a new perspective? In our opinion, a clear *"no"* must be given to such questions. For too long, we as Anti-Revolutionaries have believed that in practical politics, a few slogans and a statement of our desires would suffice.

Let us understand this: we are not saying anything bad about these *statements of our desires*. A political party simply needs a concrete political programme to be able to engage in political activities. But we are completely mistaken when we think that these few concrete desires alone are sufficient to fit us to speak of Christian politics. Christian politics is no more a matter of a few concrete political desires [347] than the Christian faith is a matter of - for example - reading the Bible and faithful church attendance.

In other words: Christian politics will exist as a matter of the heart, or else it will *not* exist at all. The perspective of a Christian economic policy only arises when the Christian faith is applied to all political issues.

Those who seek a perspective at a lower price ultimately achieve no perspective at all. Perhaps people will be briefly enthused by the ideals presented to them, but the backlash will inevitably follow. And this is partly due to the fact that, from the outset, most economic politics has been left lying under the veil of a supposed "neutrality", against which people have allowed themselves to be disarmed[47] in advance.

That is why this article has deliberately pointed out this difficult and arduous path - a path where everything hinges on the choice of the *heart*. A path that can, precisely by doing so, protect us from an unchristian arrival, from the fixed idea that we possess Christian politics.

The path of the perspective of a Christian-economic policy can only be that of bearing the cross behind Christ - a path that flies in the face of the ever-compromising, pragmatic spirit of our time.

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47 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's use of the term "disarmed" is directed not only at the spiritual presuppositions of the "Doorbraak" movement that had arisen in the post World War II context and which as mentioned earlier was led by Willem Banning (see ftn. 22) but he is also alert to the analysis of Herman Dooyeweerd and an article "De gevaren van de geestelijke ontwapening der Christenheid op het gebeid de Wetenschap" Chapter IV in J H DeGoede ed. **Geestelijke Weerloos of Weerbaar?** Amsterdam 1937 pp. 153-212 and translated and published at "The dangers of the intellectual disarmament of Christianity in Science" in Herman Dooyeweerd **Christian Philosophy and the Meaning of History** 2023, 67-104.

AR Staatkunde jrg-33 1963 pp. 304 - 321

10. HOW DO WE RESPOND TO "ANSWER TO THESE TIMES"?[1]

Drs B. GOUDZWAARD

Some time ago, the board of the Christian Workers' Association, *Patrimonium,* published what was intended as a preliminary study for a new Christian social programme. In this **Study**, which runs to no fewer than 340 pages, the committee composing it attempted to provide some guidelines for an intrinsically Christian response to the current era, in order to help shape a *"rethinking of the direction of Christian action in society."* (p. 8).

Even at first glance, one is struck by the sheer breadth of topics discussed in this **Study**. Virtually the entire field of contemporary socio-economic policy is here examined. Besides discussions of guided economies and socialization, we find reflections on wage policy, combating inflation, tax policy, industrial organization, housing, subsidies policy, the problem of employee participation, the legitimacy[2] of public enterprise, and property formation - and meanwhile the authors also offer their opinions on topics such as the contemporary theory of evolution, the method of criminal prosecution in the Netherlands, and the legitimacy of subsidizing humanitarian organizations.

It is, of course, impossible to address all these topics individually in this article. Nor does it seem necessary to do so for an assessment and discussion of the **Study**. If we have understood the authors correctly, the focus of their argument is not so much on the content of the practical positions they have adopted, but rather on the method by which they have arrived at these positions - namely, from out of their evidently principled background. Apparently, their primary intention was to seek that **Answer to the Time** to which our Christian faith obliges us of every current issue. It is then the character of this "Answer" that the genuine conversation between us should consider, and not primarily the content of the many practical conclusions in this book.[3]

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1 **Editor's footnote.** Review of **Antwoord aan deze tijd. Studie voor een nieuw christelijk sociaal program van Patrimonium** published in collaboration with T. Wever Publishers, Franeker (1963), 340 pp.
BCW Note: In the text this will be referred to as the **Study**. The material translated from 147-210 - Goudzwaard's articles on the *Patrimonium's* **Study** and responses from JJ Rippen and F W Schakel provide us with material that illustrates Goudzwaard's efforts to interact creatively with fellow Reformed Christians and members of the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij.

2 BCW Note: Dutch: *geoorloofdheid*. In the sense of what is lawful, what is permitted. The term appears else in the article.

3 BCW Note: This opening comment, explaining the author's purpose, is involved with the usage of the term "Answer" (*antwoord*). Goudzwaard limits himself to an examination of the method of the book, to examine the book as Patrimonium's "Answer" to these times.

Therefore, this discussion will focus on how the **Study** delineates the relationship between the Christian faith and our modern socio-economic problems. Our examination of the bridge built between these two will consider whether it rests on solid foundations.

[305] **Preliminary Note**

What deserves our special appreciation is the **Study**'s attempt to give priority to Christian principles in every respect. Everything demonstrates the sincere desire of the authors to illuminate every practical problem from the perspective of their Christian faith. For this reason alone, the **Study** deserves our attention. In a time when politics is already threatened by "commercialisation", it is good to get our hands on a book that takes seriously our own principled starting point.

1. The Bridge Between Practice[4] and Principle

In the first of the five parts of the **Study**, the authors explain their starting point. They rightly argue that it is not sufficiently clear merely to designate this starting point as faith in God's infallible Word, as professed in the Three Forms of Unity.[5] After all, such an affirmation does not eliminate misunderstandings. To be able to draw practical consequences of this starting point a further concretization is necessary that brings specific issues into focus. In other words, a bridge must be built that clearly connects Christian faith with the practice of socio-economic life.

The authors leave us in no doubt as to how they envision this bridge between principle and practice.

They begin by noting that our faith in God should be expressed in asking for His *laws*, His *guidelines*. For it is in these laws, which God in His love has given to us, that He reveals His will for us. We must now, in gratitude to our Redeemer, live by the spirit of these laws.[6]

In referring to these laws, the **Study** further notes that a continuous line can be observed from the creational ordinances, via the law of the Ten Commandments, to Christ's law of love. The content of the Ten Commandments accords with the ordinances of creation, building upon them (p. 13)[7].

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4 BCW Note: Dutch - *practijk*. Refers to political conduct as a way of acting and hence given the noun form "practice".

5 BCW Note: The Three Forms of Unity - the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dort - are historical documents that are taken to be the doctrinal standards of Reformed churches in the Netherlands.

6 BCW Note: *Wij hebben die wetten naar de geest, ... na te leven*.

7 BCW Note: This is a review of a book that was within reach of ARS readers. It might be possible to obtain a copy for further intensive study of its contents.

The question is therefore raised by the **Study** as to the concrete content of these creational ordinances. On page 13, this content is summarized as follows:

> 1. (The creation of man in) the image of God, which then entails: the bond with God through sonship, service to God, worship, labour, and ownership;
>
> 2. (The institution of) marriage, which then implies: authority in marriage, in the family, in the state.

The Study continues:

> One could shorten it even further: Religion, property, marriage, and authority. It's not much, no... If only we realize that these are the four cornerstones of world construction! And if only we keep in mind that the spirit of revolution always tries to shake these cornerstones!
>
> Just as the entire logical structure of mathematics, with all its laws, is based on a few simple axioms, so all of human society is built on a few pillars.

[306] **The Meaning of the Four Cornerstones.**

The quotations just given are particularly important for a proper understanding of Patrimonium's **Study**. For the practical positions presented in the **Study** are - as we will see below - almost all derived directly from the four cornerstones mentioned here (authority, property, religion, and marriage). In other words, *these cornerstones are what together primarily form the bridge that the **Study** has built between principle and practice*. So, according to the authors of the **Study**, the path from the Christian faith to practical conclusions regarding socio-economic life runs almost exclusively through these cornerstones. We will now briefly examine each particular "cornerstone" in relation to this.[8]

The Cornerstone of Authority

The cornerstone of authority is discussed in part 13 of the **Study.** All authority, we read there, must serve God's glory. This also applies to the authority of Government. Governmental authority may therefore serve only to enforce God's laws and the freedom of its subjects inherent in those laws (p. 24). The conclusion drawn from this by the authors of the **Study** is that Government has received no other mandate from God than a) to act as an arbitrator between its subjects, b) to protect their freedom, and c) to restore society in times of general disruption. For

> *... we must uphold the principle that the spheres of government and business remain separate and that government intervention must always have the character of rectifying... and letting go* (p. 54).

This makes the cornerstone of authority sufficiently concrete for its application in the realm of practical socio-economic policy. Because "business is simply not a domain of the Government", Government-owned enterprises should, in principle,

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[8] BCW Note: Here again, Goudzwaard is focusing upon *the method* by which the **Study** makes its connection between (Biblical) principle and (political) practice.

be converted into private enterprises. (p. 96) For the same reason, Government intervention to combat cyclical unemployment can only be justified as a last resort, a temporary measure (p. 58). Combating the economic cycle is primarily the responsibility of the business community itself, which must learn to adjust downwards to prices and costs and build up its own reserves (p. 57). Finally, in Part E of the **Study**, the personal employment contract is rejected, partly on the basis of the cornerstone of authority (*"one must not place business and law in one hand,"* p. 274), while the idea of employee participation in Part F suffers a similar fate as an infringement of the authority of the entrepreneur.

The Cornerstone of Property

Part C of the **Study** informs us about how the cornerstone of ownership is to be applied. Noting that "the Bible presupposes and protects private property", it goes on to say:

> *The sphere of the Bible is the sphere of freedom and responsibility; of freedom to personally and independently dispose of property and to enjoy its fruits; of responsibility to fulfill one's duty to God*. (p. 129).

According to the **Study**, the communalization and erosion of ownership therefore actually [307] constitute a rebellion against God (by)

> *whoever wants to deny the right to control the allocation of all kinds of gifts, whether spiritual or material" (p.130).*
>
> *The government has nothing to divide; God divides (p.151).*

Having reached this point, the **Study** can easily draw a number of practical conclusions. The wealth tax can be abolished and the progressive income tax largely eliminated, because taxation must not affect property (p. 155 ff.). Community property ("yes, even art property") could be largely converted into private property (p. 136). Taxation should be such that the retained profits of public limited companies largely disappear - because *these* profits belong to the *particular-private* owners[9] (p. 153). Finally, property is being eroded by gradual inflation - that's why we must return to a stable currency: the gold standard! The Government is not permitted to intervene in monetary matters to prevent unemployment; for to do so would be an injustice. (p. 168)

The Cornerstones of Religion and Marriage

In Part D of the **Study**, the cornerstones of "religion" and "marriage" are further elaborated in relation to their practical application. God holds humanity, created by Him in His image, personally responsible:

> *responsibility is therefore not given to the human community, but to each person individually (p. 199).*

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9 BCW Note: Dutch: *omdat deze winsten aan de particuliere eigenaars toekomen*. It would appear that the **Study** uses the term "particuliere" rather than "privaat".

Regarding marriage, it is noted that this - after the communion of God and man - is the second community of a sacred nature (p. 199). In addition, there is also the holy communion[10] of the church. One can also speak of the state community, the community within a state, but

> *if one wishes to speak of community in this context, it is a completely different community than that of the church or the family. It becomes even different when one considers a political party or an association. Everyone senses that the word community is no longer appropriate here.(p. 202)*

In this way, the **Study** naturally arrives at its practical political positions. An *authentic* community sentiment, based on personal responsibility, must not be undermined by Government subsidy policies (p. 206). Therefore, Government subsidies should only be provided in cases of temporary abuses; education subsidies could be abolished:

> *the poor could be granted an exemption (from tuition* p. 209).

Therefore, it opposes children's benefits, universal old-age pensions, and unemployment insurance, and advocates that employees pay their own health insurance, up to, for example, 10% of their income.

Overview

In summary, one can say that the authors of the **Study**, based on their Christian faith, arrived at the formulation of four "cornerstones of creation" - property, marriage, religion, and authority - which they have fashion to be of direct service as a bridge to (political) practice. The cornerstones appear to have been interpreted in the **Study** [308] in such a way that they offer concrete solutions to numerous problems of socio-economic policy. If we understand the **Study** correctly, Christian socio-economic policy, for the authors, is therefore above all: upholding and respecting the four cornerstones as laws of God! According to the evident conviction of the **Study**'s authors, **a** Government will have already provided an in-principle correct **"Answer to the Times"**, by protecting the property of its subjects, by acting according to the distinction between sacred and other communities, by allowing humanity (as the Image of God) to maintain individual responsibility, leaving the authority of others untouched.

2. The Four Cornerstones: Their Appreciation and Use

One of the first questions that arises here is this: how does the **Study** come to assume a *four*fold set of cornerstones? Why *corner*stones? And why are there *four*?

This question is not satisfactorily answered in the **Study**. It does, however, appear that the authors derived their four cornerstones primarily from the first chapters of Genesis, and that in addition to the aforementioned four cornerstones,

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10 BCW Note: Dutch: *de heilige gemeenschap*

they also recognize other "creation ordinances".[11] For example, on page 13, they discuss the "creation ordinance" of the weekly day of rest, the inequality of gifts and talents, and the establishment of natural laws and norms in the areas of economics, logic, aesthetics, etc. What is remarkable, however, is that the **Study** does not consider these "creation ordinances" worthy of the title "*corner*stone of creation". They are nothing more than building blocks. The honorific "cornerstone" designation is reserved for: property, marriage, religion, and authority.

Why? This question may be asked with some justification. It is indeed difficult to assume that the drafters acted arbitrarily here and haphazardly promoted a number of building blocks to "cornerstones". This "selection" must therefore have been based on a preconceived intention. But with what intention? The **Study** is completely silent on this point.

We say all this emphatically because there is a justified fear that the drafters have not been sufficiently critical of themselves, even on this fundamental point. We will agree that the way in which one selects among "creation ordinances" can never be a neutral matter, but rather reflects the worldview of those making the selection. While we will return to this important point later, it will suffice for now to illustrate the significance that, in our view, a somewhat different selection of cornerstones would have had for the entire structure of the conclusions and measures defended in the **Study**.

The **Study** mentions one of the creation ordinances: the cultural mandate for humanity. Now imagine that this cultural mandate had been elevated to the status of *corner*stone, thus to a *fifth* cornerstone. The authors of the **Study** will have to admit that this is entirely [309] acceptable; on page 13 of the **Study**, they themselves state that the creation of humanity in the image of God entails "labour" in addition to "property". According to the authors, the Government's task is to uphold God's law - the creation ordinances. What would have been the result if "labour" had been elevated as a separate cornerstone? Then the **Study** would have concluded that the Government is not only responsible for maintaining and protecting *property* but also *employment*. Many practical proposals in the **Study** would then have been different.

In this context, one might consider, for example, the book's explanation on page 168 regarding the legitimacy or otherwise of monetary policy in situations of unemployment. Legitimacy is denied because monetary policy will certainly result in a depreciation of money. And, according to the **Study**, a depreciation of money means an infringement of property, an infringement of one of the cornerstones of

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11 **BG Ftn,1** The question of whether authority, property, and "religion" are indeed *creation* ordinances is left unanswered here.

creation - in other words: injustice. But unemployment? According to the authors of the **Study**, that is not injustice, but merely a "disadvantage". And one should not deliberately commit "injustice" to prevent "disadvantage". Hence, the Study joyfully embraces the Gold Standard as the great guarantor of monetary stability, even though the authors are well aware that this will result in "chronic deflation", and they may well be aware that this will also lead to chronic unemployment.[12]

In contrast, we would argue that, while a depreciation of money can be called an "injustice", dire unemployment is just as deserving of that label. It is only the very specific selection of key points at the beginning of the **Study** that prevents the authors from reaching this conclusion.

The Method of Applying the Cornerstones

But - someone may well object - this critical point may indeed encounter a number of difficulties, the position just taken is inherently contradictory. For suppose the **Study** were indeed supplemented in such a way that "labour" was also included among the "cornerstones". Then both the failure to maintain property and the failure to maintain employment would be "injustice".[13]

But in cyclical politics, it often comes down to a choice between these two: one can combat unemployment - but then the value of money decreases; or one can keep the value of money stable - but then unemployment is not combated. The consequence would then be that the Government, whichever of the two options it chooses, always commits one or other form of *injustice*! Such a position contradicts our Christian faith, which holds that the commission of sin and injustice must always be attributed to the human being as the *voluntary* perpetrator.

And such an objection is entirely correct - and although it is not addressed, [310] it needs to be addressed to the authors of the **Study**.[14] This is a difficulty that arises from the erroneous way in which the **Study** uses its cornerstones - namely, as

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12 **BG Ftn,2** The authors believe they can mitigate this if gold reserves in Government and business are built up. This is difficult to take seriously. Consider, for example, the fact already mentioned in this study, that gold production increases less rapidly than gold demand! Moreover, the bitter experience of the 1930s showed that a deflationary process is not mainly achieved through falling prices, but through a decline in employment.

13 BCW Note: Here Goudzwaard is indeed "thinking along" with the authors of the **Study**. He takes his criticism one step further to reckon with how his suggestion, if taken up by the authors of the study, will be met by other actors in the realm of economic policy. The aim is clearly educative, by getting alongside the authors of the **Study** to help them think through not only the value of his critical point, but the weakness of their own presentation. And that is what he is offering in what follows.

14 BCW Note: Dutch: *maar aan het adres van de opstellers van de Studie moet worden gericht*. Thus addressed to the Authors of the **Study** so that the objection might be addressed ***by*** the authors of the **Study**. I emphasize this because Goudzwaard is not presuming to tell the authors to address the question even though he believes they should. As *educator*, he draws attention to how the **Study** may be received in the political domain. Goudzwaard also knows *AJS* readers will have to come to their own judgement about the **Study**. This shows an "Anti-Revolutionary" approach to political debate, also with Christians with different ways of reading the Bible in relation to political life.

ordinances from which certain political conclusions and practical measures will flow. This compels the **Study** to demand that Government prioritize any interest directly linked to a particular "cornerstone" over other interests in its balancing of interests - on pain of committing "injustice". The interests of those suffering from gradual *inflation* - the property owners - must always take precedence over the interests of those suffering from *unemployment*, because property is, after all, a cornerstone of creation to be maintained by the Government, while employment - at least according to the authors' selection[15] - is not. An internal contradiction immediately arises when both property and labour are considered the cornerstones of creation. For then the interests of those affected by inflation and the interests of the unemployed must take mutual precedence over *each other*, on pain of creating a situation of injustice. Which is, of course, impossible.

Therefore, it is indeed impossible to derive specific political measures from a few "cornerstones" of creation through reasoning. This violates these cornerstones and fails to carefully weigh the interests.

This last proposition is too important not to illustrate with a few examples.

The Cornerstone of Ownership

As a first example, we will choose the argument presented on pages 126-130 regarding *ownership*. A variety of arguments demonstrate that private property is an institution that must not be undermined. We fully agree with this. Indeed, the institution of private property should be maintained by the Government. With respect for this "ordinance" - leaving aside for a moment the question of whether this "ordinance" is a "creation ordinance" - it should be ingrained in every Government official, and will therefore also have to *determine* the *background* from which the Government weighs the interests of its subjects against each other and acts on their behalf. The **Study** rightly challenges socialist tax theories that undermine private property by viewing it as a kind of communal asset

But how does the **Study** proceed? The attack on property, it states,

> ... actually means rebellion against God... (against) Whom men would deny the right to distribute and *allocate* all kinds of gifts, whether spiritual or material. (p. 130)

Therefore, the Government has nothing to distribute: God distributes.

We deliberately italicized the word "allocate": for there is a presumption[16] lying in this word. Government indeed has a duty to maintain the institution of private

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15 BCW Note: Is Goudzwaard leaving open the possibility that the writers may come to the conclusion that they have elevated some "cornerstones" at the expense of "building blocks". That would require a re-examination of the method adopted and is why Goudzwaard has focused upon the **Study**'s method of "bridge building" between "faith" and "political practice".

16 BCW Note: Dutch: *de gedachtsprong*

property as an "*institution* of God"; but that doesn't mean upholding the current, actual distribution of *property ownership* among our people as an "*allocation* from (311) God", One cannot simply conclude the latter from the former.

In fact, there are indeed conceivable situations in which the Government may change the existing distribution of property ownership without thereby undermining private property as an institution. On page 132 of the **Study**, this is explicitly admitted: it speaks of the Government's right to expropriate!

> *The government cannot carry out its duties without having the right to expropriate in cases of road construction, urban redevelopment, and the like.*

While the obligation to compensate is briefly mentioned, in our view it cannot be denied that the Government is indeed effecting a different "allocation" of concrete property ownership than previously.

Therefore, the authors of the **Study** must consider it a matter of debate.[17] They will either have to admit that assuming ownership as the cornerstone does not necessarily mean that the Government must maintain everyone in their current ownership at all times - or they will have to interpret the right of expropriation as a clear, albeit "necessary" *infringement* of that cornerstone. There is no third way. If the drafters choose the second option, their entire argument is at stake. After all, what is the point of assuming ownership as the cornerstone if it is permissible to undermine it? Therefore, only the first position offers a realistic possibility. However, this means that not every government intervention in the existing ownership situation *as such* is unjust - rather it means that that assessment of whether the intervention is justified or not can only be made in connection with the specific situation at the time, in which the specific interests at stake (including those of the owners) must be fairly weighed against each other.

Aside from the one paragraph in the **Study** that mentions the right of expropriation - and in which the interests of property owners are indeed presented as nothing more than one of the many interests the Government must contend with - everything else in the **Study** gives the consistent impression that Government intervention in a situation of concrete ownership and possession is, *as such*, an infringement of property, and therefore, *as such*, unjust, without any balancing of interests having taken place. As a result, a fair assessment and promotion of interests by the Government are completely lost. For with regard to virtually every political issue, the outcome of the assessment is, as it were, predetermined! The scales - with the exception of the right of expropriation - always tip in favor of the "vested" interests, that is, those who benefit from the unspoiled preservation of

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17 BCW Note: *Daarom is het voor de opstellers van de Studie van tweeën een.*

existing ownership and possession relations. This arises from the claim that *they* are a "cornerstone of creation," while others are deprived of that opportunity.

That this can lead to great injustices goes without saying. There is virtually no conceivable Government action that does not, in one way or another, influence existing property and ownership relations. In virtually every issue the Government has to resolve, the interests of those who [312] control money and property are at stake in one way or another. If these interests were always decisive, one could rightly say that the Government's policy is purely *partisan*, because it always sides with one particular population group.

The Authority

As a second illustration of the proposition that the **Study** violates its own cornerstones and fails to arrive at a fair balancing of interests, we choose the argument in Part B of the **Study** concerning the cornerstone of *authority*. Again, we wholeheartedly endorse the view that all authority must exist for the glory of God and that Government must respect and honor the diversity of authority within society. This latter point is, in fact, nothing other than the well-known principle of "sphere sovereignty". Undoubtedly, the Government is called to respect the inherent authority of the entrepreneur in his enterprise as such, just as it must respect the institution of private property as such. When the government must weigh the interests of its subjects, it must do so within the framework of the principle of sovereignty within its own sphere, i.e., against the background of the question of what authority its subjects have received from God in their various life situations. In *this* sense, we also accept a cornerstone of "authority".

But the **Study** goes considerably further. It speaks not only of government and business as completely *separate authorities*, but also - forcefully - of tasks that are *entirely separated*. The **Study** interprets the cornerstone of "authority" to mean that Government authority extends only to one group of tasks, and authority in business extends only to another group of tasks, so that, for example, the Government must, as a matter of principle, leave the task of production alone, since it is a task of business.

> *Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication that the Government's task is to provide for material needs. (p. 27)*
>
> *Once it is established that socialization is revolutionary because, in principle, government and business are assigned distinct tasks, we might simply conclude that Government enterprises are wrong. (pp. 92, 93)*

The application of the cornerstone of authority in the **Study** thus runs entirely parallel to that of ownership. Just as, according to the **Study**, it is reserved solely for God to decide the distribution of concrete property among humanity, it is also

solely for God to determine which concrete tasks government and business should perform.

But here too, the **Study** itself shows that this reasoning runs aground. After arguing in detail on pages 92 to 96 that Government must, in principle, refrain from conducting business, we are surprised to find, on page 97, the statement that

> *in exceptional cases, it may be desirable or necessary for the Government to operate businesses*.

This is then justified with the quip that "the exceptions prove the rule". Frankly, we find this a bad joke. ***There are no exceptions to principles. The exception nullifies the principle.***

Here, too, it's a matter of two things: either the drafters must openly [313] admit that this "exceptional case" does indeed constitute a violation of the cornerstone of authority; or they must interpret their cornerstone differently - in such a way that this cornerstone does not automatically imply a fundamental rejection of Government-owned enterprises. The latter seems to us the only correct approach. But then the drafters must acknowledge that the question of the fundamental legal basis for establishing or disposing of Government-owned enterprises can only be answered after all the interests at stake have been weighed against each other in the balance of justice.[18]

However, because the authors already know in advance that Government-owned enterprises are fundamentally objectionable, they upset the balance of justice. The interests involved in the presence of *private*[19] production (e.g gas or electricity) are thus given undue weight in the **Study**, while other, equally real interests barely carry any weight at all. And this is solely because the first-mentioned group of interests is related to a guiding principle, a "cornerstone", while the second group of interests is not.

Moreover, this last distinction (which flows directly from the **Study**) between interests that are and are not related to a guiding principle, demonstrates that the **Study** has by no means overcome the well-known tension between principle and practicality. There remains here, too, a neutral business terrain in the form of a

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18 **BG Ftn. 3** Then the cornerstone of authority will automatically assume its proper function, namely as a co-determining element for the overall framework within which the government weighs the various interests. By virtue of its cornerstone of authority, the government will then ensure that the considerations it applies in weighing interests are indeed those characteristic of government authority, and not those characteristic of the authority of the *private* sector. In other words: when choosing a business structure - *public or private* - the government must be guided by the general interest in the sense of *public justice*, and not by the guideline of which business structure is most *economically* profitable.

19 BCW Note: Dutch: *een particuliere produktie*. Once again the use of this term to enhance the proprietory right of those who already have property. See ftn. 9 above. Once again in ftn3 above the term is used as in *"openbaar of particulier"*

large number of business or quasi-business interests, i.e., interests that cannot be directly traced back to any cornerstone of creation.

Consequences

It goes without saying that the consequences of the criticism presented here - which can easily be extended to the other two cornerstones: "marriage" and "religion" - reach beyond the revision of the **Study's** position on public enterprise and inflation control. In fact, it must be said of virtually all the practical measures defended in the **Study** that they are based on a not entirely justified balancing of interests - for the reason that certain interests have been given such a fundamental weight in the Government's balance that other, equally legitimate interests have been marginalized from the outset. In the **Study**, the interests related to existing property rights, to the *individual duties* and responsibilities of persons, and to the *authority normally exercised* by business, are shown to triumph over those interests related to the [314] *economic well-being* of people and their *community* with others, which, if pursued by the Government, would imply an *intervention* in the existing authority of the business community.

Anyone who has carefully read the last sentence will find a familiar contradiction. Indeed - and it is hard to say - here we find the full-blown contradiction between liberalism and socialism. For while socialism is characterized by prioritizing the interests of the national *community* and the *economic* interests of its subjects, and by subordinating the authority of the business community to that of the Government, liberalism is precisely characterized by prioritizing the *individual* and their *civil rights interests*, and by subordinating the authority of the Government to that of the *business community*.

We indeed encounter these latter emphases in many places throughout the **Study**. That civil rights interests take precedence over economic interests in the **Study** is found, among in other places, from the **Study's** preference for combating inflation (= maintaining property) over combating unemployment and from the proposal to abolish or drastically reduce numerous social services. The priority of the interests of the individual over those of the "community" is evident in the view that community ownership should be converted into private ownership; that collective labour agreements should never be obligatory for every individual; and that retained profits in business communities should be distributed to individual owners. That the authority of the Government must yield to the authority of the private sector is evident, among other things, from the push to abolish virtually all Government-owned enterprises, as well as from the assertion that

> *the Government is incapable of applying the standard of law when determining prices and wages (p. 118).*

The conclusion is obvious. Both in the development of the four cornerstones into practical politics *and in the selection of these cornerstones from the various "building blocks of creation"*, the authors of the **Study** were insufficiently wary of liberal influences. As a result, the **Study** unintentionally resulted in a clear synthesis between the Christian faith and liberalism.

Unintentionally! This must be emphasized. For it is precisely in this **Study** that the authors at times explicitly distance themselves from liberalism. We cannot, therefore, see it as anything other than that, simply out of *reaction* to the great dangers associated with a socialist society, the authors were less wary of the dangers of a liberal society.

Summary

The critical comments in this paragraph can be summarized as follows:

a) The **Study** failed to select its own "cornerstones" in such a way that influences of a non-Christian - in this case, liberal - nature were excluded.

b) The **Study** had to make intellectual leaps, i.e., to violate its cornerstones, in order to make them suitable for practical application.

[315] c) In applying its cornerstones to practical politics, the **Study** was unable to avoid upsetting the scales of justice in which Government weighs various interests.

d) The **Study** had to make exceptions to its own, principled political pronouncements derived from the cornerstones in order to avoid reaching far too foolish practical conclusions.

e) In order to draw political conclusions from its cornerstones, the **Study** has had to distinguish, as it were, between interests that are connected to a cornerstone (as a guiding principle) and those that are not - thereby creating an autonomous piece of "business" in the political realm.

3. The Four Cornerstones as "Principles"

In the summary just given, the words "must" or "cannot" appear several times. The **Study** had to offer a forced interpretation of its cornerstones; it could not apply them in a justified manner; it had to allow exceptions to its own principles; it had to, as it were, distinguish between principled and non-principled (or less principled) interests. This is not a coincidence. Indeed, there are a number of constraining positions here; these are positions of constraint that can all be traced back to the same cause.

The difficulties the **Study's** authors encounter are almost entirely a consequence of a desire to derive direct solutions for virtually all our concrete socio-economic policy issues from their four Biblically derived cornerstones. Where these are

solutions based on definitive Biblical pronouncements, the **Study** arrives at the formulation of a political pattern of conduct that is in principle fixed for all times and places, characterized by, among other things, the maintenance of existing property relations, a rejection of government involvement in production, and so on.

The "cornerstones" based on Biblical pronouncements thus effectively permit only one political practice. This, in our view, is the source of the difficulties and contradictions listed above under letters b) through e).

But if this is correct, if the compilers indeed made the most significant error on this point, then we face a question of far greater scope than that of the correct structure of the *Patrimonium's* **Study**. We must then ask ourselves whether compiling and then literally "applying" behavioural guidelines drawn from Scripture is indeed the way to conduct Christian politics. For then all the difficulties and internal contradictions mentioned could serve as a warning to us that, with a similar use of Scripture, we are on a fundamentally wrong track.

We are inclined to this latter view. In the section that follows we will therefore attempt to present some arguments for this position. However, we emphatically note that the question now being addressed is too important to be dealt with in a few pages. [316] What follows must therefore be considered no more than a preliminary contribution to the discussion on this topic. In our view, such a discussion, especially in connection with the current contradictions within Anti-Revolutionary circles, could well be particularly illuminating.[20]

God's Word and Our Political Actions

Above all, we must try to define our problem as clearly as possible. Naturally, we are not concerned with the question of whether or not the Bible has everything to say to us for our political actions, because it undoubtedly does. Nor is it a question of whether or not the Bible contains statements of special significance for our political actions, because such statements are undeniably found in the Bible. What is at issue is the question of how the Bible expresses itself regarding our political actions, as well as how statements of particular political significance should be interpreted.

As mentioned, the authors of the **Study** seem to take the position that certain Biblical pronouncements - namely those concerning the "cornerstones" - in principle contain practical solutions to all (or almost all) socio-economic policy issues; solutions that we as Christians simply and faithfully must accept.

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[20] BCW Note: Of note is Goudzwaard's recognition that the view presented in this *Patrinomium* **Study** is also found, its internal contradictions and antinomies, *within* the Anti-Revolutionary movement

We believe the authors of the **Study** arrived at this view partly from a feeling of a lack of a principled stance and a clear definition in prevailing Christian politics of recent years. Seeking certainty for firm unwavering practical positions, they turned to the Bible in order to anchor therein a policy that proves itself to be intrinsically Christian, a fact that anyone willing to delve into the Bible with the authors of the **Study** and take *all* its pronouncements completely seriously will have to acknowledge - that this is how it must be, this is how it is, and no other way.

We believe that this need for certainty in politics - a need we too understand - should not, however, lead us to seek something in the Bible that is not laid down there, or to expect something from the Bible for which it was not given to us. In our opinion, the central question we must ask ourselves is whether God indeed intended to give us His Word also *for this purpose*, so that through faithful research we can find *practical* solutions to our political, social, and economic questions.

We firmly believe that this is not the case. The Bible, even in the most lengthy investigations, provides no answer to many complex questions of science and practical politics, nor does it intend to. Anyone who approaches the Bible with *these* expectations will sooner or later have to conclude that it is merely a flawed book, one that expresses itself explicitly on certain matters but not on others. The authors will, of course, reject this conclusion entirely. But all the more, doubts must be raised as to whether the way in which the **Study** intends the Bible to function in politics is even acceptable.

For the true nature of all pronouncements in Holy Scripture [317] is none other than that of the announcement, than that of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. For the Bible - to quote Professor Mekkes - always speaks from one focal point; and this focal point is "the One sent by the Father".[21] God desires to achieve through His Word that we surrender our hearts to Him - and that in this way, as new people, we will also enter, for example, into science and politics. God's Word is indeed fully equipped and without flaw *for* this central message. It teaches us to know God in Jesus Christ and to accept Him as our Saviour, also in politics.

When we fully grasp this, it becomes clear what the actual meaning is of those statements of Sacred Scripture that are of particular importance to politics. These statements should serve to assist us in our independent and faithful engagement in practical politics. Therefore, they are never intended *to relieve us* of the task of faithfully and independently seeking the right political and scientific "solutions" by presenting us, as it were, with predetermined "solutions" ready-made for all time.

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21 **BG Ftn,4** Prof. dr.]. P. A. Mekkes, "Heeft de Christelijke politiek een zin?" In: *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*, 31e jaargang, blz 163 en 164. (Trans) Prof. Dr. P. A. Mekkes, Does Christian Politics Have a Meaning? *ARS* 31, pp. 163 and 164.

Rather, they serve *to confirm* us in this independent and faithful *engagemen*t in science and politics, supporting us in our first faltering steps in this field.

Therefore, in our opinion, we would be treading a dangerous path when we take certain statements of the Bible so far that they effectively provide us with numerous practical-political solutions. Then we are indeed using the Bible as if it were God's will that we, as immature children, find all the right "solutions" in it.

Moreover, we then risk depriving Christian politicians of an essential part of their Christian task and calling: to engage in political practice as an adult child of God, according to their heart's choice for Jesus Christ, in the light of Holy Scripture. The Biblical text then effectively no longer supports them in that calling, but rather, through our actions, their calling is taken away from them. Adherence to the letter of the law, rather than to the law's spirit, becomes decisive for them.[22]

The **Study** rightly rejects living by the letter of the law at the beginning of its exposition. We read there that,

> *... we must take the spirit of the law instead of the letter, ... that the literal interpretation of the law has given way to its deeper meaning. (pp. 14, 15)*

However, it seems to us that the authors did not sufficiently consider this in the rest of the **Study**. For we cannot help but see that the "cornerstones" based on certain Biblical pronouncements - whose Biblical origin and special significance for Christian politics we do not for a moment doubt - were indeed interpreted by the authors in such a way that the proper task and calling of the Christian politician is necessarily largely limited to the *literal* implementation of the practical political instructions contained in the cornerstones.[23]

[318] The Biblical Idea of Justice

But - one might object - if, for the establishment of Christian political action, it is not sufficient to simply follow a few codes of conduct drawn from the Bible to the letter - what now? Don't we then automatically arrive at the position that every Christian can only consult within himself to know what God requires of him - a position that is entirely in line with the 'Command of the Hour'[24] of dialectical theology?

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22 BCW Note: The entire sentence needs to be read carefully, perhaps in relation to the teaching of the Letter to the Hebrews that calls upon believers to mature living. Hebrews 5:12-14.

23 **BG Ftn,5** The question can be asked, as an aside, whether the authors have not unintentionally partially fallen back into a nature-grace framework - namely, this framework: that we, as minors, may not act in the realm of nature (politics) until this action has been sanctified beforehand by the realm of grace - namely, by a specific Bible text.

24 BCW Note: Ger: *Gebot der Stunde*. Possibly, Goudzwaard also has in mind the German writers Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Edmund Schlink. The idea that each hour demands a completely new understanding of the law of God. See below in Goudzwaard's final reply to J J Rippen., p.215.

In short,[25] the answer to this question is that there is no longer any room for an arbitrary "Gebot der Stunde" (Command of the Hour) once we have sufficiently appreciated the divinely ordained character, which therefore transcends all arbitrariness, of the social structure in which we are called to Christian political action; namely, the distinctive character of the state structure.

Our religious activity in the political sphere has its own unique color - one that differs from that of our religious activity in, for example, marriage or business. While marriage, by its divine destiny, is primarily a community of love, and business is primarily an economic community, the state is, above all, a *public legal* community. Therefore, in politics, our religious activity must first and foremost be concerned with the question of the (public) *justice* of all actions; with the question of how the Government can do justice to all subjects and in all existing relationships.

It is important to note here that this task not only requires the commitment of our total faith, but that only in this way can the fullness of the Biblical message be fully realized in practical politics. For the way in which we pursue justice toward all and the way in which we give substance to the idea of justice immediately reveals whether or not we are guided in our hearts by the message of God's Word. Seen in this light, Christian politics becomes the expression in political practice of the *Biblical idea of justice*, which opposes all humanistic ideas of justice.

Partly to gain insight into the proper place that should be assigned to the "four cornerstones" of *Patrimonium* in Christian policy, it is useful to examine one of the many facets of this Biblical concept of justice more closely. This facet, namely that the Government, in all its policies, must view its subjects as people who, in their own lives, are addressed by *Jesus Christ* and called to *His* service.

That this indeed represents a facet of the Biblical concept of justice needs little explanation. After all, the Bible is the message of the one cornerstone, Jesus Christ; and the point here is simply that the Government must recognize the great significance that Jesus Christ has for its own subjects. But even this single facet of the Biblical concept of justice can take us further. Based on this confession of faith, we must acknowledge that the Government can only [319] be just toward its subjects when it sees and weighs their interests against the background of what these subjects need in their own life circles for their voluntary service of Jesus Christ. And among what the subjects need is, among other things, the unimpeded exercise of their *right to property* and of the authority present in their own circle; the unhindered functioning of *marriage* and *family*; and the unhindered

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25 **BG Ftn. 6** More fully in: "Economic Policy as Principled Politics", *ARS*, October 1962, p.261ff. (see above pp.90-107)

development of humanity as the Image of God. Only in *relation to the Christian calling of the subjects* do the four cornerstones of *Patrimonium* reach their true destination.

For owning goods is not an end in itself, but only has meaning in relation to the human calling to serve Jesus Christ. And the same applies to authority, to community among people, to human labour, and to the economic possibilities of human existence. Therefore, the Government should not maintain all these "cornerstones" and "building blocks" as ends in themselves, but only according to their significance for the best possible fulfillment of the human calling in the various spheres of society, for the development of humanity in the Image of God.[26]

That is why we reject, among other things, the **Study**'s one-sided preference for combating inflation over combating unemployment. For not only the preservation of free disposal of goods, but also the preservation of existing employment is of public importance for fulfilling the human calling. Only after a fair weighing of interests, against the background of the significance of property and employment for the development of family and business life, will the Government be able to determine whether the interests of the unemployed or those of property owners should prevail.

That is why we reject, for example, the proposal in the **Study** to counter the "privatization" of public limited companies - and thus their increasing independence from shareholders - by, among other things, imposing tax measures on retained profits. This is because the Government must consider not only the interests of the individual owners of the company, but also the interests of the company as a *community*.

The enterprise, as a social entity, must be able to develop according to its *own* nature. And for this, it is of the utmost importance that the company is not merely a plaything of the profitability considerations of capital providers, but is also focused on its own economic survival. Therefore, we also reject the **Study**'s proposals to revise our tax law so that ownership ratios remain relatively equal before and after taxation. Fair taxation is not about every citizen being reduced in their property rights to the same degree, but about all citizens equally experience the pressure in relation to the *vocations* they pursue in their own lives. This necessitates a clearly *progressive* income tax rate.

[320] The limited space for this article prevents us from listing many other practical examples and points of difference.

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26 **BG Ftn,7** This could also be expressed in such a way that, in our view, religion, the Image of God of man, is the only true "cornerstone" of government policy - and that the other "cornerstones" may only have their place in relation to this central cornerstone.

4. Another Side of the Study

As noted at the beginning of this article, we have limited our discussion of the **Study** to an assessment of its fundamental design and structure. Since this assessment has been more negative than positive, we would like to explicitly point out this limitation. What we have written could easily give the impression that, in our opinion, little good is found in the many pages of the **Study**. However, this impression would be incorrect. Even though, in our opinion, the design of the Study as a whole is weak, this does not alter the fact that the **Study** contains several components that are of lasting value and deserve our sincere approval.

We would like to specifically mention one of those many positive aspects here. It is the clear illustration given in the **Study** of the gradual way in which a totalitarian state can develop; a development usually initiated by an ever-increasing (and also observable in our society) concentration of economic and political power.

It is rightly noted that, although it is a fortunate circumstance that Government leadership is even less extensive in areas other than the economic sphere, this must nevertheless be interpreted as a sign of *materialism* (p. 70). It explicitly points out the great danger of future myth-making, the gradual decline of responsibility, the deception of Utopia, and the religious overtones of the socialist and communist idea of community (pp. 192 et seq.).

In contrast, the **Study** rightly states, among other things, that Government intervention should never be aimed at making all abuse impossible (p. 30ff), as this would leave people with no freedom whatsoever (the word "dirigisme"[27] is indeed entirely appropriate in *this* context).

Attention is also rightly drawn to the increasing "overlaps" that arise from ever-increasing government influence:

> *On the one hand, premiums and subsidies are provided on a large scale, and on the other hand, taxes are raised so high that climbing the social ladder becomes almost impossible for the average person, and businesses are squeezed. To give businesses breathing room, investment deductions and early depreciation are permitted, provided businesses do what the government wants. Because ordinary asset formation lags behind, a savings premium is given. This is an example of a problem that must be solved with leeway, with simplifications, with denouements, and perhaps even by cutting through knots. (p. 41).*

It is these - and many similar observations and suggestions scattered throughout the work - that, in our opinion, constitute the true value of this dedicated and serious **Study**. This also justifies the title of the **Study: "Answer to the Present Time."**

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27 BCW Note: The prominent view that the State directs the economy.

Patrimonium **74:20, 20 December 1963, pp. 451-452.**

Clarity and Unanimity[1]

M. W. Schakel

In *AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde* of October 1963, Drs. B. Goudzwaard devotes an extensive discussion to **Answer to the Times**.

It is one of the best among the many reviews that I came across. It is a high-level critique that may well lay the foundation for further discussion. However, it would be inappropriate to closely examine in this publication a review that has been published elsewhere. That response should be made in *ARS*. Our readership is largely different.

I would like to limit myself to one aspect of Mr. Goudzwaard's reflections: the relationship between God's Word and our actions in the socio-economic and political spheres.

He wishes to consider his comments on this matter as a preliminary contribution to the discussion of this topic. It is a discussion that, in his opinion, could prove particularly illuminating.

We are happy to participate in this discussion, because it reaches deep into the hearts of our Christian social organizations and reformed popular parties.

One comment in advance.

For a discussion to be truly fruitful, it must be limited to the topic on which the views seem to converge. Matters on which there is agreement should be left out of the discussion, because if they are introduced in any form, they will distract from the fundamental disagreement and thus obscure the core of the actual "dispute".[2]

Drs. Goudzwaard and I should therefore not debate whether we can find in the Bible *"the direct solution to virtually all our concrete socio-economic policy issues"* (these quotes were taken from the discussion in *ARS*).

We agree that it is not found there. Here all discussion becomes bogged down in a consensus of opinion.

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1 BCW Note: This is included here because Goudzwaard's subsequent article, "Bible and Politics", translated below, was written in response to this article in *Patrimonium* as well as J.J.Rippen's "Answer to the Times and Drs Goudzwaard" which was also published in ARS and the translation of it is also included below. Schakel's article is characterised by short, cryptic statements that may not always be strictly grammatical. But it also helps us to see something of the fraught context in the ARP to which all of his articles are directed.

2 BCW Note: The author M W Schakel, a regular contributor to *ARS*, is obviously seeking to ensure the discussion of this central topic does not get sidelined. However, there is a problem when the unanimity between debating partners share appeal to common words (i.e. to the Bible or to words that actually have, as Bob has insisted, differing "charges". see *"The Liberation of the Business Enterprise" in* ***Aid for the Overdeveloped West*** Wedge 1975 pp.32-48 at p. 34: "... each person has his own way of interpreting concepts and values such as freedom and the development of human personality. *The words or terms are generally accepted, but their content is not. And it is exactly that content which in principle is completely determined by one's world-and-life-view."*

If Mr. Goudzwaard sincerely believes - and I do not share that opinion, but that is irrelevant here - that the *Patrimonium* study demonstrates an attitude *"to relieve us of the task of faithfully and independently seeking the right political and scientific 'solutions', by presenting us, as it were, with predetermined 'solutions' ready-made for all time"*, then it is his right, nay: his duty, to point this out in a discussion of that study.

If Dr. Goudzwaard, after studying our pocketbook, decides that we are treading a dangerous path when we want to go so far with certain statements of the Bible that they in fact already provide us with numerous practical-political solutions - and we indeed use the Bible as if it were God's will that we, as immature children, can find all the good "solutions" in it - then again he would be below par if he remained silent on this point in a discussion of that study.

But if Mr. Goudzwaard is prepared to exchange thoughts with me on the subject he raised, the relationship between God's Word and our socio-economic-political actions, then I ask him not to introduce these notes into this discussion.

The view expressed in these quotations is also mine.

An exchange of thoughts on matters upon which there is wholehearted agreement does not serve that element of truth which must yet emerge from the clash of opinions.

Our conversation is narrowed down to a smaller scale. What scale would that be?

Goudzwaard outlines this himself. We will have to ask ourselves

> *whether drawing up and then literally 'applying' behavioural guidelines drawn from Scripture is indeed the way to engage in Christian politics (ARS* Oct. 1963, p. 315*).*

(Also in light of some comments we have just made, I propose that we delete that disturbing word "literally"; that word damages the purity of discussion.)

But otherwise: The discussion will have to revolve around this pivotal point. This is where the cards need to be laid on the table.

Have I understood Dr. Goudzwaard correctly: is he answering his self-raised question with "No"?

Then there would indeed be sufficient grounds for a fundamental discussion. I have read his *"preliminary contribution to the discussion on this topic"* - to use Goudzwaard's own words - and reread it several times. My difficulty is that, despite this, I still don't have a completely clear picture of his starting position.

Whether this is due to my lack of empathy with his world of thought or to the tentative nature of his remarks remains to be seen. One thing is certain: a good discussion on this central theme for our Christian organizational life requires a clear, unambiguous understanding of each other's position.

Mr. Goudzwaard is therefore entitled to hear my answer to his question: is drawing up and then applying guidelines for conduct drawn from Scripture indeed the way to engage in Christian politics? This answer can be short and sweet.

It is a resounding, unqualified, unencumbered by any restrictions: yes.

(To cut short a possible misunderstanding: the unconditional cannot refer to "applying" insofar as we encounter hardness of heart in a broken dispensation.)

If Dr. Goudzwaard is willing to discuss these matters with me, I would like to ask him, for the sake of a fair discussion and for my benefit, to set out his views on this matter as clearly as possible in the publication *Patrimonium*. This also has the advantage that readers of this publication will hear Dr. Goudzwaard's views firsthand, which is preferable to a summary on my part of what he published in *ARS* (quite apart from the question of whether I would be able to accurately represent his intentions).

Mr. Goudzwaard believes that a discussion on this topic could be particularly illuminating. To this justification of the discussion, which I share, I would like to add a second argument with a quotation from Groen van Prinsterer:

> *In general, repeated exchange of ideas about principles is an invaluable means of promoting unanimity by eliminating misunderstandings and misconceptions" (To the voters, May 24, 1856).*

Clarity and unanimity. Enough perspective to open the discussion.

AR Staatkunde jrg-34 1964 pp. 51-62

"ANSWER" TO THE TIMES" AND Drs. GOUDZWAARD

J. J. RIPPEN

In the October 1963 issue of **Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde (ARS),** Drs. B. Goudzwaard devoted an extensive article to the Study of **Patrimonium, Answer to This Time**. In several places, the author expresses his appreciation for "this dedicated and serious study," as stated at the end of the article (320). Moreover, in the "preliminary note" (305), it was already written: *"In a time when politics increasingly threatens to become 'commercialized', it is good to obtain a book like this, in which one is fully prepared to take one's own principled starting point seriously."*[1] We are grateful to Mr. Goudzwaard for his generous review of our book.

Criticism?

Yet, criticism prevails. Mr. Goudzwaard assumes that *Patrimonium* has based its entire study on a few cornerstones and then devotes several pages[2] to challenging this structure.

Secondly, Mr. Goudzwaard believes that a "liberal influence" can be "clearly" observed in the *Patrimonium* **Study**. And finally, he comes to

> *... the central question of whether God indeed wanted to give us His Word in this very purpose, so that we can find practical solutions to our political, social, and economic questions through faithful research.*

Why an answer to Drs. Goudzwaard?

The explanation for this question is that the views expressed in the article should not be regarded as those of the **ARS** journal.

Firstly, because various writers publish their own views in **ARS**, and secondly, because in this case there is a very clear difference with other issues of the journal. We are referring to the issues of July-August, October, and November 1960, in which Dr. Dronkert wrote three articles entitled *"De Israëlitische Wetgeving en wij"* (The Giving of the Israelite Law and Us).[3]

When we speak here of a very clear difference of opinion, we do so in accordance with the way Mr. Goudzwaard measures the differences. We cannot assume that Mr. Goudzwaard intends to so strongly oppose the guidance of God's Word in practical matters as he did in the article in question, and perhaps this can be explained by a reaction against what he believes to be too strong a connection between practical questions and God's Word![4]

Incidentally, Mr. Goudzwaard's other criticisms (52) also seem to be somewhat overemphasized, despite the serious treatment he gives them. However, we agree with Mr. Goudzwaard that the real discussion should be about the foundation, and not primarily of *"the content of the book's many practical conclusions"* (Goudzwaard), because with some clarification, some convergence, if not agreement, might be reached on the first two points of criticism. We would like to state in advance

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1 BCW Note: Dutch: *"In een tijd, waarin de politiek steeds meer dreigt te "verzakelijken", doet het goed een boek als dit in handen te krijgen, waarin men ten volle ernst wil maken met het eigen principiële uitgangspunt... "*

2 BCW Note: Goudzwaard at the outset of his article says his intention is to critically examine the method by which *Patrimonium*'s book has been compiled.

3 BCW Note: Dr K Dronkert, "De Israëlitische wetgeving en wij" ***AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde*** 30, 196-210, 261-272, 288-307. https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karel_Dronkert

4 BCW Note: Goudzwaard has challenged the view of the Bible that is taken-for-granted by Mr Rippen et al, namely that as God's Word it is therefore a repository of *answers* to the political questions we might have about how we are to be governed, what policies we should advocate, in the present time.

that we are eager to help remove any remaining traces of "liberal influences."[5] Mr. Goudzwaard is willing to accept this from us, because he himself believed that these influences remained "unintentionally."

The Cornerstones

While the reader has likely read Mr. Goudzwaard's article and can at least refer to it, it is unnecessary to resort to extensive citations. Ten of Mr. Goudzwaard's seventeen-page article deal with the "cornerstones", which Mr. Goudzwaard believes the *Patrimonium* **Study** to be based (*"these cornerstones together essentially form the bridge that the Study has built between principle and practice"*). In other words, the path from Christian faith to practical conclusions regarding socio-economic life, for the authors of the Study, runs almost exclusively through these "cornerstones" (306).

Now, on page 13 of the **Study**, cornerstones are discussed, and ten of the fifty lines of these pages are devoted to them. The remaining 339 pages don't mention them at all. That doesn't necessarily tell the whole story. It's possible, of course, that these ten lines do constitute the key to the book, and therefore we must consider whether they were intended as such, or perhaps not, but yet have inadvertently emerged as the core of the book.

Regarding the first point (whether these rules are intended as a key), the train of thought in the first chapter can be traced. There, the revelation of God in His Word is taken as the starting point for a social program. In the search for guidelines, the focus is then on the harmony of love and law, a harmony embodied in Christ. Christ is pointed out as the Re-Creator, who renews the ordinances of creation and confirms the law. Furthermore, it is pointed out that a single, straight line runs through the ordinances of creation, the law, and further revelation. And then, in this train of thought, on page 13:

One could shorten it even further: religion, property, marriage, and authority.

It's not much, no....

If only we realize that these are the four cornerstones of world construction!

And if only we keep in mind that the revolutionary spirit always tries to shake these cornerstones!

The French Revolution shook religion, marriage, and authority. Jan van Leiden shook property, marriage, and authority; the Red Revolution shook all four cornerstones simultaneously.

Now, it's worth noting that it says "one could shorten it even further." (53) This means that it was already preceded by a shortening beforehand. Well, there it was:

> *The ordinances of creation are indeed not many in number. Perhaps someone might even wonder what we have now listed "completely": 1. the image of God, which then entails the bond with God through sonship, service to God, worship, labour, and property; 2. marriage, which then entails authority in marriage, in the family, and in the state.*

This already shows that the last abbreviation was not the book's intention. Rather, the first abbreviation should be considered the key to the book. But the book doesn't claim this either.

What is stated is clearly stated in the summary of the first chapter, on page 21:

> Summary:
>
> 1. The starting point for a Christian Social Program is the revelation of God in Christ, according to His Word, as understood by the three Forms of Unity. The Word, through whom all things were made, became flesh and atoned for sin, the transgression of the law.

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[5] BCW Note: Here the word "liberal" is important. How is it that "conservative" theology, in its advocacy of a liberal social order can yet be so fiercely opposed to "liberal" theology. Mr Rippen seems to proceed without due attention to this ambiguity.

Through the love that God has shown us in Christ, through which we became His children again, reciprocal love has been awakened in our hearts, so that we want to follow Christ, who fulfilled the Law.

2. Christ's law of love demands not only love of neighbor, but first love of God. This law of love is a reference to the Revelation of God's will in the Old Testament.
3. Christ, as Re-Creator, restores all things as He created them and, to this end, confirms the ordinances of creation and the laws given to us for life. In this process, ceremonies have given way to reality, and the letter to the deeper meaning and broader scope.
4. The denial of these laws is a worse sin than the disregard for them committed by the Pharisees. From the psalms of David to the letters of Paul, love for God has manifested itself in a desire to serve God as He desires to be served.
5. From the harmony of love and justice; from the unity of mercy and justice, principles for our social life emerge; the disregard of these principles leads to social catastrophes, and their denial will lead to the final catastrophe.
6. The Antichrist, the "lawless one", will fundamentally deny what the Revolution has incidentally attacked: God, marriage, authority, and property; along with love for God, charity will also disappear, replaced by selfishness; authority will be replaced by violence. God's gifts of ownership will be replaced by communal gifts, and right will be destroyed by self-interest.
7. In anticipation of Christ's return, we should (according to Matthew 24:46-25:46) be concerned with doing God's will, using our gifts to the fullest, and showing mercy.

(54) Therefore, it is in no way formally tenable to maintain that the book is limited to a foundation on the four cornerstones. If one wishes to limit oneself to these four points - granted - but not without connection to the preceding and the following. Mr. Goudzwaard notes on page 308: "**The Study** mentions the cultural mandate for humanity as one of the creation ordinances. Now suppose that this cultural mandate were also promoted to the cornerstone, thus to the fifth cornerstone", and he asks elsewhere (309) why "labour" was not "admitted as a cornerstone", yet this mandate is contained in the first abbreviation (*"the image of God, which then entails the bond with God through sonship, service to God, worship, labour, ownership"*)! Moreover, not only is the cultural mandate discussed elsewhere in the book, but human responsibility is placed so centrally (e.g. in relation to "ownership"), that it would have been more obvious to mention responsibility for God's mandate as the key to the book.[6]

If one wants to cling so tightly to a word like "cornerstones", we are prepared to point out the foundation that lies beneath all the stones, both cornerstones and building blocks. And then we recall a quote in the book (p. 40): "*We must take the text: 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you', seriously, and we should actually place this text above any Christian-social program."* Why didn't Mr. Goudzwaard point to the righteousness of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the book?

But we would also object to that. Even the "summary" of the first chapter is merely a summary of the basic premise.

The bond with God, the service of God, love for God and neighbor, the experience of God's law as a harmony of love and justice - such concepts are merely indications of guidelines, which have such rich significance for all facets of our society that they are extremely difficult to summarize.

Therefore, it is also materially untenable to say that the book limits itself to four cornerstones, unless one understands by them what is only briefly indicated in the preceding paragraph. For example, if one were to believe that "authority" played a major role, one should remember that none of the chapters in the book are headed "Authority", but rather "Authority and Freedom", and that it

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6 BCW Note: Rippen here fails to reckon with Goudzwaard's critique in that the four cornerstones were deemed to be the foundation of the manual's proposals for public policy. Hence Rippen "defends" his work in the manual with what, these days, might be termed an appeal to public theology, being the mediator between God's word and the formulations of public policy. Notice the manner in which Rippen's appeal depends for its coherence upon "the Three Forms of Unity", the confessional documents of the reformed churches in The Netherlands.

would have been even more obvious to think that the emphasis was on the limitation of authority and on freedom. However, a careful reader will soon discover that it concerns responsibility for God's command, a responsibility that cannot be borne if one cannot move freely.

There is no chapter on "Ownership" in the book, but there is a chapter on "Ownership and Responsibility". The summary of this chapter again emphasizes God's service:

> *Ownership is revealed as the provision of gifts for use under personal responsibility... Faithful acceptance of ownership as stewardship signifies both a duty and a right; a duty to God and to one's neighbor.*

(55) There isn't even a chapter where marriage is mentioned in the scripture. Marriage is discussed in the chapter "Personality and Community", specifically as one of the communities, and this chapter definitely doesn't emphasize marriage. It's incomprehensible how this chapter can be interpreted as an elaboration of a cornerstone of "religion and marriage".

The book addresses the most current topics of our time in the light of God's Word, making use of various passages from God's Word. Mr. Goudzwaard, however, expresses his objection elsewhere that too concrete a connection is made between various current issues and the Bible. But then it cannot be said that *"the path from the Christian faith to practical conclusions regarding socio-economic life, for the authors of **The Study**, in other words, runs almost exclusively through these cornerstones"* (Goudzwaard, p. 306). If the well-known ten commandments[7] were omitted, the content of the book would remain completely unchanged. Perhaps someone would then mention the "two points" on page 13, which state:

1. the image of God, which then entails the bond with God through sonship, service to God, worship, work, and property;
2. marriage, which then entails authority in marriage, the family, and the state.

When the four lines were omitted, the content remained based on the actual summary of the first chapter.

Both formally and materially, Mr. Goudzwaard has thus attached exaggerated significance to a single image, which does not appear again in the book. However, if this still doesn't seem sufficient to Mr. Goudzwaard, we would urge **Patrimonium** to delete the ten lines in question.

The second point of criticism

The second point of criticism is closely related to the first. Mr. Goudzwaard himself emphatically states this connection, by saying that the choice of the cornerstones does indeed reflect the preference of the book's authors.

Now, it is clear from the foregoing that this preference only applies to those points if one understands them as a limitation and summary of other matters such as the cultural mandate, labour, righteousness as the message of Christ, and humanity as the image of God. We mention these concepts deliberately because Mr. Goudzwaard emphasizes them (on pages 308, 309, 318, and 319, respectively).

The remarkable thing here is that Mr. Goudzwaard makes it seem as if these matters are given almost no attention in the book. Yet, in the same chapter that contains the (overly) discussed cornerstones, the cultural mandate, labour, and the image of God are also discussed—and even just a few lines above the "cornerstones".

The righteousness of God is discussed in several places, even in the first chapter, with, among other things, these words:

> *This thought is expressed even more beautifully in Psalm 72, where it is said that the Messiah will execute justice for the poor of the people. And (56) the Messiah himself said according to Matt. 6 1: Take heed that ye do not your 'righteousness' before men.*

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7 Dutch: *de bekende tien regels zonden vervallen*

In the Old and New Testaments, God's justice deals with the widow and the orphan, the oppressed, the poor. The righteous person is described as a person who helps such fellow human beings. But then that would be charity, one would say. No, this is also "justice". For charity seeks others, seeks what is due to them, seeks their rights. And what is due to others, what is their right, is what God has intended for them. When misery has entered the world through sin and oppression and injustice demanding redress, it is God's love and grace that nevertheless seeks to raise fallen humanity up again. It is Christ who completely fulfills these things, who restores justice and thereby abolishes misery.

> *Thus, there is harmony between love and justice. No contradiction. This explains why laws and commandments can be sung with love.*
>
> *Thus, seeking God's ordinances is not only an act of obedience, but also of love.*

In this, the work of Christ is also central. We might almost wonder whether the focus of Mr. Goudzwaard has been too much on one point and thereby overlooked other matters.

The book discusses not only the cultural mission, but also labour and employment. In several chapters, unemployment is discussed as a terrible disaster, "against which no remedy is good enough". When the book argues that inflation doesn't even help (see Germany after the First World War and the monetary injections in America after the Second World War) and that unemployment can be combated with better means than inflation, which specifically harms the "little man", this shouldn't be taken to mean that inflation is unfair because it undermines a cornerstone.

Inflation should not be deliberately induced, because that would deliberately cause harm, and thus constitute injustice. One could also argue that deliberately inducing unemployment is injustice, and this author would consider it an even greater injustice. But that is not the issue. When unemployment arises and inflation is created, one is deliberately committing injustice. When one creates permanent inflation with the aim of permanently combating unemployment, one is committing permanent injustice.

Mr. Goudzwaard now believes that we must choose between two things: inflation or unemployment. He forces a choice on us that we haven't made. Before the war, the cry was "Mussert[8] or Moscow", and if anyone wanted to avoid that, they were called communists. We wanted neither. Similarly, we don't want to choose between inflation and unemployment. But if we reject permanent inflation, partly because of the disadvantages to forgotten groups, one cannot argue that this demonstrates a preference for property, which betrays liberal influence. We also object to systematic, permanently controlled inflation as a means of combating unemployment because it leads to permanent wage and price controls. We believe there are better solutions than the permanent control of society, and the book has extensively argued [57] how this leads to statism[9], to a development in a totalitarian direction. Fortunately, it appears that Mr. Goudzwaard appreciates the signaling of this danger, p. 320:

> *We would like to specifically mention one of those many positive aspects here. It is the clear illustration given in the **Study** of the gradual way in which a totalitarian state can develop; a development that is usually initiated by an ever-increasing (and also observable in our society) concentration of economic and political power. It is rightly observed that, although it is a fortunate circumstance that in a domain other than the economic, government leadership is even less extensive, this must nevertheless be interpreted as a sign of materialism (p. 70). The study seriously points out the great danger of future myth-making, the gradual decline of responsibility, the deception of Utopia, and the religious charge of the socialist and communist idea of community (pp. 192 et seq.).*

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8 BCW Note: Anton Mussert (1894-1945) was founded of the Dutch National Socialist Party. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Mussert

9 BCW Note: *verstatelijking* - allow the structure of the state to absorb society.

Mr. Goudzwaard also sees conflicts in his cornerstone theory[10] on other points. However, as in the example above, he is convinced that the solution to practical difficulties need not (and should not) be found by compromising principles.

Mr. Goudzwaard notes that the book not only distinguishes between the nature of government authority and authority in other spheres, but also between the roles of government and business, and Mr. Goudzwaard believes this reasoning is at a standstill. He is surprised to find that the book states that *"in exceptional cases, it may be desirable or necessary for the government to operate businesses"* and "*There are no exceptions to principles. The exception nullifies the principle"* (312).

We believe this is another consequence of the reductionism Mr. Goudzwaard applies to the book. How is the government's task defined in the book? (We can, of course, only cite a few excerpts here.) In the summary of B 1, "The Limits of the Government Task", it states, among other things:

1. There are four main factors that promote the development of society in a totalitarian direction:

a. the increasing complexity of society;

b. the history of recent years;

c. the development of political trends;

d. the weakening of Christians under the influence of these first three factors.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to define the limits of government intervention.

2. Although the location of the boundary cannot be absolutely determined, the fact that there must be a boundary somewhere is absolutely certain.

3. The first principle to be observed in this determination of the boundary for Christians is, of course, that we are not free to determine the limits for government action according to our own insight, but according to God's revealed will.

7. Incidental government intervention to eliminate or prevent (58) misunderstandings or disasters does not affect the freedom or nature of business, provided that this incidental intervention does not become permanent and provided that the intervention is always aimed at restoring business.

8. Permanent government intervention through legislation regarding hazards and generally accepted standards is acceptable, but again only insofar as this is limited to matters and measures that are not and cannot be taken by another circle and that apply to all citizens.

9. When considering government intervention, the direction of thinking should be reversed: the solution to a difficulty should not be sought first in restriction and punishment, but in the restoration, liberation, and development of society.

And in the summary of the section "Government Enterprises" the following:

1. Because distinct tasks have been assigned to government and business, and socialization is therefore revolutionary, private exploitation of so-called enterprises should be pursued...

6. In exceptional cases, it may be desirable and necessary for the government to operate enterprises, for example, when private enterprises fail to meet a need or when a monopolistic private enterprise abuses its position.

Incidentally, it is also said elsewhere that it is even the government's duty in principle to intervene, but in such intervention, the principle of difference in authority must be observed. Does this invalidate the principle? Absolutely not. If parents are deprived of parental authority due to mental incapacity or misconduct, this does not affect the principle of parental authority.

We will limit ourselves here and not address a parallel critique of "the cornerstone of property." We will make only two observations on this. First, that here too, the criticism we have is directed at Mr. Goudzwaard's own exaggeration of the cornerstones. And second, that for the people of Israel, property primarily meant protecting the freedom and independence of ordinary people; the maintenance of property in our time, therefore, does not mean protection of the wealthy, but is the condition for property formation. These things are often seen completely the other way around. For example, people sometimes think that high taxes on cars hurt the wealthy, but in doing so, they

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10 Dutch: *zijn hoekstenentheorie*

actually hurt the working class, because they are thereby prevented from buying a car! Let us not be too quick to assume that a defense of property stems from liberal influences. It can be questionable if one can no longer assume Christian motives when defending property. Homeowners' Associations should not remain stuck in the problems of the last century.[11] The worker will quickly attain the status that higher-ranking personnel have enjoyed until now, and this includes independence.[12]

(59) It is unfortunate that Mr. Goudzwaard, on this basis, believes he sees a preference for interests related to *"property rights, individual tasks and responsibilities of people, and the authority normally exercised by business"* over *"the economic well-being of man and his community with 'others'"* (313-314). He believes he recognizes this as "liberal influence", adding that this occurred unintentionally:

> *For it is striking in this Study that the authors at times emphatically distance themselves from liberalism. We cannot, therefore, see it as anything other than that, simply out of reaction to the great dangers associated with a socialist society, the authors were less wary of the dangers of a liberal society.*

It's doubly unfortunate that he voices this criticism, because an accusation of socialist influence is less dangerous in evoking sentiments among readers than an accusation of liberal influence. **Patrimonium** was certainly aware of the risk of this accusation, if only because any deviation from the prevailing opinion is all too quickly pushed into the corner of liberalism. And now we will be careful not to do the opposite, because that is far from the intention of the book.

If there is one thread running through the book, it is surely the work of Christ, in Creation, Re-creation, His message, His return! The fact that obedience is posited as the consequence and lawlessness is branded is proof to us that the book stands diametrically opposed to liberalism.

It seems hard to accept that the fight against liberalism, socialism, communism, corporatism, and militancy intensifies as this series of events unfolds. In principle, the apostasy from God's law was initiated by liberalism, but subsequent disruptions continue consistently and are therefore even worse. As soon as anyone points out this worsening, the accusation of "liberal influence" is heard.

Now, an unfair accusation can be overcome. More seriously, it betrays an incorrect view of the situation. That fear of liberalism, dating back to the last century, is outdated. We're simply no longer living in 1850 or 1900. Today's liberalism, like other movements, has both supporters and opponents of the PBO (Public legal business organisation)[13], supporters and opponents of a guided economy, and there's hardly a liberal left who opposes government intervention. Liberals don't go as far as socialists, but that's a matter of expediency.

The defining characteristic of our time is precisely that liberals, socialists, communists, and corporatists are growing closer together. Communists and Nazis were no longer significantly different by the end of the war. Socialists and liberals were both moving toward elite planning. *Patrimonium* believes this is a development reminiscent of the end times, and it is the duty of Christians to point out God's mandates to people in various spheres of society. Mr. Goudzwaard is naturally willing to share this view.

To reassure him completely, we would like to add that in our view the Government may intervene (see chapters Authority and Freedom, Limits of Government Task, Ownership and

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11 BCW Note: VVE Vereniging van Eigenaren - one who owns an apartment and rents it out is automatically a member of a Homeowners' Association with various mandated duties with respect to the property.

12 **JRR Ftn. 1** See Father Hoefnagels' article in *Streven* about the serious crisis in wage policy. Father Hoefnagels argues that workers want to have a say in their own wages, without "experts", a view closely aligned with that of **Patrimonium**.

13 BCW Note: PBOs - Publiekrechtelijke Bedrijfsorganisatie - self-regulatory organizations established by law for specific economic sectors. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-regulatory_organization

Responsibility) (60), but that such intervention may not become a permanent takeover of tasks that have been assigned to other spheres.

We need to open our eyes to the fact that, unfortunately, we as Christians have been swept along by the tide of our times in recent years just as much as our ancestors were by the liberals! Back then, our ancestors failed to see that the government is called to protect and raise the weak, to do justice to the poor, to use coercive power to end abuses, and to break with the ungodly notion, "I am my brother's keeper."[14] ***Now***, people seem unable to see that in a time of the greatest prosperity the world has ever known, overthinking is regulating everything down to the last detail, thus robbing the image of God of responsibility and paving the way for a totalitarian society. If we, as Christians, cannot raise a principled objection to this by defining the limits of government action and maintaining freedom for other life spheres with their responsibilities, then the last defense is removed.

The Central Question

Mr. Goudzwaard posed a central question. He first wrote (p. 316):

> *Naturally, we are not concerned with whether or not the Bible has everything to say to us for our political actions, because undoubtedly it does,*

and then:

> *The central question we must ask ourselves, in our opinion, is whether God indeed wanted to give us His Word for this purpose, so that through faithful research we can find practical solutions to our political, social, and economic questions?*

He immediately answers:

> *In our firm conviction, that is not the case.*

(In our opinion, this last point conflicts with the first quotation on p. 316, and especially with the word "everything" therein.)

Our answer to this is that, according to God's Word itself, this *is indeed the case*.[15] We quote from the Study:

> *Now the question can be asked whether the above should lead us to conclude that we should literally obey all the special commandments of Moses' laws.*
>
> *Christ wanted to teach us precisely about this. For when He says, 'But I say to you,' He indicates that much higher demands apply to us, that we must even observe the tenor of the laws, that we must accept the spirit of the law rather than the letter.*
>
> *That is our freedom. We are freed because Christ has freed us from the penalty of the law and because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. But the Holy Spirit never leads us to things contrary to what has been revealed as God's will.*

Through God's Spirit, we recognize God's Word as such and understand what He means. And so God's law once again becomes a light on our path and a lamp for our feet.

Paul gives an example of this in 1 Corinthians 9. There, he cites that the law of Moses states:

> *You shall not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain.*

and then asks:

> *Does God have anything to do with oxen? Or does He not say this for our sakes? Yes, for our sakes it was written, so that the plowman must plow in hope!*

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[14] BCW Note: This is a comment that seems to suggest that the query of Cain in response to the LORD's question about his brother - "Am I my brother's keeper?" can somehow be used to explain the previous effort to break the previous "liberal" grip upon public life - when a measure of responsibility was acknowledged publicly for the care of the brother/neighbour - only to now suggest a new era of great prosperity where an ungodly sense of Government being the keeper of my brother prevails. It is a passage that may well illustrate the way in which Mr Rippen's response to Goudzwaard's review is driven by a theological logic applied to political life that lacks coherence. My sense is that Goudzwaard by his subsequent contributions avoids getting caught up in the details of Rippen's apologia.

[15] BCW Note: Emphasis added.

Paul teaches us here how we should understand God's law, including the laws of Moses, as a guideline for our lives. Of course, Paul does not mean that we should literally follow all the ceremonial laws of the Israelites again. We clearly read in the New Testament how the Church was released from all these regulations. But those regulations had a purpose. And that purpose came to life.

Even a detailed instruction about muzzling an ox, therefore, according to God's Word, has the meaning "that" (not "or" as Mr. Goudzwaard stated)

> *that God has indeed wanted to give us His Word for this purpose, so that through faithful research we can find practical solutions to our political, social, and economic questions.*

I find it incomprehensible when Mr. Goudzwaard writes:

> *For the true character of all statements in Holy Scripture is none other than that of announcement, than that of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.*

The words "none other" sound like a denial of God-ordained laws and norms, unless Mr. Goudzwaard means that this "announcement" also entails the "revelation" of God's law. But what are those laws, then, if they contain nothing or are not given to us to help us find practical solutions through faithful research?

What is the *"lamp for our feet and the light for our path"* if that light doesn't show the path clearly? Should we then stop using the text *"the government does not bear the sword in vain"*? And wasn't it an example for us that Jesus responded to a specific request and proposal from the devil with a literal text? Don't we constantly use texts in our lives? And aren't sermons also applying texts to our lives? And wouldn't we no longer be able to find light for today's social problems through texts?

Mr. Goudzwaard cannot mean that he merely objects to an attempt to literally read solutions to contemporary problems from the laws of Moses, because this is clearly stated in the Study (see quote on page 14), and the various topics are addressed by comparing Scripture passages and the spirit and tenor of the texts. The discussion should therefore be about the issues themselves.

Dr. Dronkert wrote in **ARS** (July-August 1960, p. 198):

> *After all, in Article III of the program of principles of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, we state that in political matters, too, the eternal principles revealed to us in the Word of God must be professed by us. But then we must always be well aware of the content of those principles.*

If we were writing in Mr. Goudzwaard's style, we would now conclude that he was unconsciously influenced by the Breakthrough.[16] But should this be the content of the discussion? We cannot assume that Mr. Goudzwaard means things as he wrote, and we hope that a rebuttal from Mr. Goudzwaard will reveal some convergence. This could be found in his words (p. 319):

> *Only in relation to the Christian calling of its subjects do the four cornerstones of Patrimony reach their true purpose. For possessing property is not an end in itself, but only has meaning in relation to the human calling to serve Jesus Christ. And the same applies to authority, to community among people, to human labour, and to the economic possibilities of human existence. Therefore, the government should not maintain all these "cornerstones" and "building blocks" as ends in themselves, but only according to their significance for the best possible fulfillment of the human calling in the various spheres of society, and for the development of humanity in the Image of God.*

For this is stated almost verbatim in the Study (p. 143):

> *Ownership is revealed as the provision of gifts for use in God's service under personal responsibility.*
>
> *Faithful acceptance of ownership as stewardship signifies both a duty and a right; a duty to God and to one's neighbor.*

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16 BCW Note: The writer is referring to the "Doorbraak" movement which arose after the end of World War II. See Chapter 1, Herman Dooyeweerd **Roots of Western Culture** "Introduction" on the Dutch National Movement and Genuine and Superficial Dialogue pp.1-6.

The Authority of a particular circle, in the service of God, upholds His ordinances for the preservation of life in the sphere of freedom. Freedom consists in acting in accordance with God's laws, which determine the nature and function of things. (p. 34).

In all communities, people are held accountable by God and therefore personally responsible for their work, as well as for all their actions. (p. 204)

Conclusion

All things considered, we believe that the difference of opinion between Mr. Goudzwaard and us cannot be as great as it seems, because Mr. Goudzwaard also accepts Christ as the One sent. We perhaps place more emphasis on Christ as Creator and Re-Creator, who created the structures of the world; as the Word who proclaimed God's laws, statutes, and ordinances to us, both to His people Israel and to His people, spiritual Israel.

The difference can only be about whether the Bible has been used correctly, and then the discussion on that can continue. This is a discussion that we hope for, along with Mr. Goudzwaard.

Finally, we want to reiterate our gratitude to Mr. Goudzwaard for the way he expressed both his appreciation and his criticism. It is comforting to read such criticism, when one is sometimes deeply disappointed to read criticism from Christians who, otherwise, preach a tolerance toward the world that should certainly be practiced among brothers and sisters.

AR Staatkunde jrg-34 1964 pp.93-108

11. BIBLE AND POLITICS

Continuing conversation on "Answer to the Times"

Drs B. GOUDZWAARD

Mr. Rippen, author of **Answer to Our Times**, the **Study** published by *Patrimonium,* found reason to rebut my review.[1] In a clear and calm argument, he addresses the three main points at issue between us: the meaning of the four so-called "cornerstones" - namely, authority, property, marriage, and religion; the accusation that the **Study** contains liberal influences; and finally, my rejection of the way the **Study** connects the Bible and practical politics.

I am grateful to Mr. Rippen for his response, because it paves the way for what I hope will be a fruitful exchange of thoughts on fundamental questions about our Christian political engagement. The term "fundamental questions" is certainly appropriate: if I understand correctly, our third point of discussion - the proper connection between the Bible and politics - is about the root of all our disagreements, not excluding the evaluation of the "cornerstones" and the possible liberal influences upon the **Study**. Undoubtedly, the question of the proper relationship between the Bible and politics should be the focal point of our discussion.

This means, however, that I can no longer confine myself to judging what others have said, in this case, what the compiler(s) of the **Study** imply about the relationship between the Bible and Politics. I will now have to present my own perspective. This was also urged upon me by Mr. Schakel in his article, "Clarity and Unanimity" in *Patrimonium* of December 20th. For this article, I reply to Mr. Schakel who has asked me to present my own view on the relationship between the Bible and politics, and do so in the clearest possible terms which would also prepare for further discussion between us. I hereby comply with his request.[2]

However, with this, I take on a heavy burden. This is not a topic that can be "dealt with" in a few pages. It requires ongoing reflection from all of us. Therefore, I would like to state explicitly that I intend to offer no more than what is strictly my personal contribution to our shared discussion.

[94]Furthermore, I would like to point out that this topic is, by its very nature, difficult to approach in human words and concepts, so that flawed formulations are almost unavoidable. I sincerely hope that not only Messrs. Rippen and Schakel, but

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1 **BG FTN 1** See *Anti-RevolutionIare Staatkunde*, February 1964. The discussion of the Study is included in *ARS*, October 1963.

2 **BG FTN 2** Mr. Schakel in his article requested me to explain this in the columns of *Patrimonium*. I hope he will concur with my choice, also to avoid duplication, to explain myself in *ARS*.

all readers of *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* will constantly keep these two "limitations" in mind as they proceed.[3]

Part One

The Word of God and our political activity

As soon as we begin to engage with the central theme "The Word of God and our political activity", numerous questions arise: What does the Bible have to say to us? How should we read it? What is the Bible, anyway?

These questions, however, have a dangerous side.[4] They can easily lead us astray into theological and quasi-theological reasoning. I deliberately speak of a "leading us astray" here: for if there is one thing that is certain in our view, it is that theological reasoning will not get us anywhere near answering these questions. Questions like those just mentioned are so central, so deeply rooted, that they fundamentally elude any scientific grasp; they *precede*, as it were, all scientific pursuit. Therefore, they require not a *theological* response, but a *believing* response.[5]

Let me therefore immediately raise another question: When it is that we actually know the Bible?[6] The scribes in the time of Jesus's ministry knew by heart, as it were, all the Old Testament books. But did they know the Bible? The unequivocal answer is "No!" For Christ objects to them with these words:

> *Woe to you, teachers of the law! For you have taken away the key of knowledge*. (Luke 11:52).

So, these teachers of the law, knew everything about the Bible, and lived, as it were, by an open Bible every day, in order to fill their entire lives by observation of the rules they gleaned from the Law of Moses - but nevertheless, Christ tells them that the Bible itself has remained closed to them, that the message of the Bible has never penetrated them.

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3 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's statement of these two "limitations" is important for our understanding of what he has been doing in the review of the **Study**, and now in the ongoing exchange. Although the words express "journal writer/debater politeness", they serve to also frame the contribution of his interlocutors, Mr Schakel and Mr Rippen. Goudzwaard may hope that this article "Bijbel en Politiek" will mean ongoing discussion about **Answer to these times** *(Voortgezet gesprek rond '**Antwoord aan deze tijd**)* that is part of renewal in the ARP and its various manifestations, but it is ***not*** written on behalf of the AKS, ARS or the ARP. This leads to the possibility that the initial review was his attempt as public policy research for the AKS to review the manual to enable its author's to understood how it might be read by those who were active in the formulation of public policy and legislation.

4 BCW Note: *een gevaarlijke kant*.

5 BCW Note: The implication being that **Answer to these times** was written with the assumption that a theological reather than a belieiving response was needed.

6 BCW Note: Dutch: *Wanneer kénnen wij de Bijbel eigenlijk?* This is a key question in Goudzwaard's discussion. "When exactly do we (show that we) know the Bible? The question speaks of "knowing the Bible" in a walk of faith, following the immediately preceding statement: Therefore, as he emphasizes, [these questions] require not a *theological* response, but a *believing* response.

How can we escape this deadly danger? The answer is familiar to all of us. Paul puts it this way:

> *For until this day the same veil remains over the reading of the Old Covenant, because it does not disappear until Christ. Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil is over their hearts; but whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 2 Cor 3:16*

Only in *Christ* is the Bible opened up to us; only in surrender to Him do our eyes open to see and understand the Biblical message. In other words, only in Christ does the message of the Bible become revealed to our lives. The Word of God, the Bible, only begins to speak to us when we open our hearts to faithfully receive the Word of God, Jesus [95] Christ. *Therefore, the knowledge of faith is the only possible knowledge of the message of Holy Scripture.*[7]

The Bible and Us

So,[8] only now has the way been paved to address the questions we posed at the beginning: "What does the Bible have to say to us? How should we read it? What is the Bible, actually?"

The great thing about the Bible is that in it *God personally*[9] comes to us *in His Son, Jesus Christ*. And therefore asks of us nothing less than our *heart*, our heart from which arise the issues of our lives - including our political life. Beyond *that* wonderful message, the Bible offers us nothing - for in that message, everything is encompassed. In Jesus Christ, God has offered us everything He has to give us. In Him, He has fully stated what He requires of us. Only in and through the continued reception of Christ Jesus is all wisdom - including all political wisdom - given to us.[10]

Therefore, the Bible, the Word of God, is also one. Its unity is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the One sent by the Father. We rightly speak of the Bible as "the Word" - singular. The Word of God is the one power of God that transforms our hearts to faithful acceptance of our Saviour.

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7 BCW Note: Dutch: *Daarom is de geloofskennis de énig-mogelijke kennis van de boodschap der Heilige Schrift.*

8 BCW Note: In other words: having clarified that we are discussing how we are related to the Bible, as servants of Christ, we can now proceed i.e.

9 BCW: Note: Dutch: *God-zelf*

10 BCW: It might appear that Bob Goudzwaard the economist and researcher is dispensing with his scholar's robes to here preface his comments as an *evangelist*. But as a Christian with the responsibility of economic researcher he is taking up the task of explaining "the relation of the Bible to learning" in this case to discuss what he has learned is the basis and motivating principle of his contribution. In this discussion Goudzwaard appears to be formulating his views by taking in mind what Dooyeweerd wrote as the required characteristic of critical thought. *"A sharp distinction between theoretical judgments and the supra-theoretical pre-judgments, which alone make the former possible, is a primary requisite of critical thought."* **New Critique of Theoretical Thought** Vol.1, p.70. In this case *discussion* of "fundamental questions" is distinguished from what is motivating this discussion.

> *Therefore, our relationship to the Bible is not primarily that we come to the Word with our understanding, but that the Word, as God's power for salvation, comes to our hearts and opens our eyes to the unity of meaning of all Scripture.*[11]

From this confession it follows that I may view and read the Bible in only one way: not as a *multitude* of isolated words and instructions accessible to everyone's understanding, but solely as the *one* (and therefore all-encompassing) instruction of *Christ*, which instruction I can only know and understand *by faith*. Therefore, the beginning and foundation of a Christian policy can never consist *in our grasp of the Word*, and the multitude of individual behavioural instructions we may derive from the Bible in terms of what is recognizable and intellectually followable, *but only in the grasp that this Word has of us*, when our hearts are filled with the one faith-based knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of our personal and political lives.

The Study and its "Bible Use"

From the *Patrimonium* **Study**, I get the impression that it was written from a different perspective. This is not to suggest that the **Study** wasn't written from a serious commitment to placing Christ and His work centrally. About that I have no doubt whatsoever. But the **Study** is based on the conviction that by "positing", and then applying, "principles" that have been derived[12] from Scripture, a Christian political system can be constructed; so that individual texts from Sacred Scripture can be used by us to formulate various independent rules of political conduct, accessible for general application in ways that can be [96] intellectually understood.

For the reasons mentioned above, I simply cannot feel comfortable with such a framework. Perhaps this is the best way to put it: in the way Scripture is handled, I miss something of the radical reverence I owe the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible is not a collection of texts, but nothing less than the book in which God offers Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, God's Word cannot simply be "used": in reality, it is rather a matter of whether God wants to use you and me through His Word. Therefore, we do not arrive at a Christian politics by "positing" political codes of conduct derived from the Bible - this is because the only way a Christian politics comes into being is that the Bible

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11 **BG FTN 3** Prof. Dr. H. E. Runner, **The Relation of the Bible to Learning,** Christian Perspectives 1960, (ARS 1964 p. 97 which is BG's translation into Dutch).
BCW Note: To read this !964 article in 2025, showing Goudzwaard's appreciation of North American efforts, is to note something of the background to Runner's efforts in North America from the 1960s. And those developments had a close connection with what preceded them in The Netherlands.

12 BCW Note: For more on Goudzwaard's critique of "derived principles" see **A Christian Political Option** Wedge, Toronto 1972 pp.26-28; "Wat is normall in sociaal-economisch leven" in H Algra et.al **Wat is Normaal** Bosch en Keuning 1974, 20-33 at pp.22-25 in a section "Economics and Creation."

"posits"[13] us, i.e., as the power of God, it so influences our hearts that we want to follow only Jesus Christ in politics, even in politics.

Let me try to say the same thing in another way. When I believe I am building a Christian policy on an intellectually correct "application" of independently valid, precisely defined rules of conduct, derived by myself or others from Biblical texts,[14] I am, in effect, juxtaposing the personal bond of faith with one message of Scripture with an entirely different bond, namely an impersonal, rationally constructed bond with various statements of Scripture; and it cannot be otherwise than that the latter bond will gradually supplant the former. For the latter bond not only flatters me in my activism but also reduces my observance of God's law to what is more "attainable". But in this way, my condition increasingly threatens to become that of the Jews who asked Christ:

"What shall we do, that the great works of God may be accomplished?"

To which Christ gave them the answer to discover what they were seeking, that is also discoverable for us:

"This is the work of God, that ye ***believe*** *on him whom he hath sent". (John 6:28, 29)*[15]

Do I mean to deny the significance that individual words of Holy Scripture can have for our political lives, such as, for example, the apostle Paul's statement that the Government is a servant of God? Not in the least. But like all other Scriptural passages,[16] this passage also acquires its true meaning only when and because it throws us back on our Saviour, who is the Lord of all rulers.

The political significance of this passage can only lie in the fact that *it deepens our faith in Christ*, so that we also see all our actions in the political sphere as related to the heartfelt service of love to Him. Only as it deepens and strengthens our personal and shared faith bond with Jesus Christ, and thus our personal and shared faith-based vision of the reality around us, will the Bible be able to unlock its treasures for us. For the message of the Bible can only be known and understood by faith. As soon as I

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13 **BG FTN 4** See **The Study** p.17 "... it would be very imprudent if we allowed ourselves to be confused and no longer dared to posit a principle. That would indicate a lack of conviction, of faith, of Spirit."

14 **BG FTN 5** In this connection, see the statement on p. 12 of the **Study**: : "De mens vraagt voor het speelgoed van zijn kinderen een handleiding van de maker, hij vraagt een instructieboek voor zijn auto aan de fabrikant; zouden wij de Schepper niet vragen naar Zijn richtlij nen ?"
BCW Note: (trans) "Man asks the maker of his children's toys, he asks the manufacturer for an instruction manual for his car; should we not ask the Creator for His guidelines?" Goudzwaard seems to have developed a critical appreciation of the "use" of the Bible as a "means" to the goal of formulating a Christian political perspective. His confrontation with utilitarianism is manifest here in his appreciation for ascribing due respect to the Bible as God's Word.

15 BCW Note: In other words Jesus' disciples, having become the workmanship of their LORD, should be looking to discern God's works in their lives,

16 BCW Note: Dutch: *Schriftwoorden*

begin to make a passage of Scripture like this independent by turning it into a separate, "objective" rule of life [97]- that is, one that is intellectually "applicable" - it goes from being one of the facets of the sparkling diamond of the Gospel of Christ to a lifeless piece of glass from which the living message of Sacred Scripture has vanished.

Two quotes

Because these are such extremely important matters, and my own words are inadequate, I will now quote from what Professors Runner and Dooyeweerd have said on all this. First, I give the floor to Professor Runner.[17]

> *Christians often search Sacred Scripture for texts and passages that have a more direct meaning, for example to, political life. By bringing together such specific passages, they suppose, one can arrive at a scriptural vision of our political life. This highlighting of so-called "political texts" from the Word of God is ... the result of a misunderstanding of that Word. Scripture is not a collection of words, some of which have a political meaning; it is one Word. This use of Scripture is called Biblicism, that is, not so much the attempt to live in the light of the one Word of God as the integral guiding Principle of our lives, but rather (the attempt) to ... apply certain texts directly, i.e., taken from the Word of God in its entirety.*

And then:

> *The Bible is not a book of instructions for the various aspects of our lives. It does not provide directions, but rather points the way.[18] It is the central religious revelation concerning God and concerning humanity in its central relationship to God amidst the order of creation. The Word of God guides all our paths precisely because it is this central revelation about humanity's place and calling in the cosmos. As Christians, we desperately need a political articulation of the central knowledge of faith we possess in Jesus Christ.*

Prof. Dooyeweerd puts it this way in **Renewal and Reflection**[19], p. 57:

> Those who believe they can derive true scriptural principles for policy solely from *explicit Bible texts* are assuming a very wrong view of Scripture. They see only the *letter,* but forget that God's Word is *spirit and power,* which must *work through* in your entire attitude to life and thought. God's Word revelation sets you to *work*. It wants *to take hold* of your entire existence, it wants to awaken new life in you where *death and spiritual complacency* reign. *You, lazy reader, want the ripe fruits of God's Word revelation to fall into your lap naturally* [98]. *But Christ Jesus tells you that you yourself must bear fruit, when the seed of God's Word has fallen on good soil.*[20]

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17 **BG FTN 6** Prof. Dr. E. Runner, **Scriptural Religion and Political Task**, in: Christian Perspectives 1962, p. 155 et seq. The Christian Perspectives series is published by the (Canadian) Association for Reformed Scientific Studies and is available from Guardian Publishing Company Ltd., Box 312, Station B Hamilton, Ontario.
BCW Note: In the original Dutch version, Goudzwaard admits that he provided his own translation.

18 **BG FTN 7** The English is pregnant: "It does not give directions but direction."

19 BCW Note: This was the Dutch work **Vernieuwing en Bezinning: om het reformatorisch grondmotief** (ed. J.A Oosterhoff) 1959 This book originally appeared as a series of articles in the weekly Nieuw Nederland from August 1945 to May 1948. They were first published as a book in 1959 and was translated into English as **Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options.** Wedge 1979. "Renewal and Reformation" was the name given to a part translation of 1970.

20 **BG FTN 8** Italics are mine.
BCW Note: See reference in **Roots of Western Culture** 2003 p.60. This is also quoted in **A Christian Political Option** 1972 p.27.

God's Law

I suspect that this will raise questions for many. Aren't we descending into some form of subjectivism, or a version of situational ethics? How then is God's law the reliable basis for our lives?[21]

These questions are justified insofar as they contain a perfectly understandable fear of that view, so often put forward, that a mere appeal to the Name of Christ and to the bond of faith with Him is, in principle, sufficient to justify any self-chosen course of action. This view is so dangerous because it shifts the standard for the rightness of one's own actions to the inspiration of one's own heart, to one's subjective and personal experience of faith; and so all actions and activities that arise from a consciously Christian intention are thereby considered "Christian". However, our intentions can never be the standard for our actions; for they themselves are also subject to the standard. Our intentions must be continually guided by the Word of God, as the firm and enduring standard. For neither our intentions nor our world-and-lifeview[22] are ever finished or perfect. By continually listening to the Bible, we can reach for this perfection, grasp it - and we do so for which we have been grasped by Christ.

Therefore, there is no need to fear a subjectivism that elevates the inspirations of one's own heart or the results of one's own reason to the status of norm.[23] This becomes even clearer when we attempt to give ourselves a faithful account of what invoking the Name of Christ and believing in Him actually entails. Scripture testifies of Christ that through Him, as the Word of God, all things were made. In other words, the entire creation in which we live is His revelation, His Word-revelation; all the structures of the world, including those of the State life, have come about through Him, the Word of God. The same Christ who asks us, also in our political life, to give our hearts to Him, has by His own determining brought this political life forth according to its own nature and character! Should we, then, in fulfilling our State-

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21 BCW Note: It is worthwhile to keep in mind that Goudzwaard, via his articles for *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* is engaged in helping the ARP regain its founding Biblically-directed founding vision. Elsewhere we find him diagnosing the lethargy of the ARP in terms of its economic outlook in terms of an accommodation to a view that "business is business". He is suggesting that a faulty view of the relation of the Bible to political life is at the root of that lethargy.The "heavy burden" that he has taken on is to challenge the party in terms of its understanding of its calling as a political party in the light of Biblical teaching.

22 BCW Note: Dutch *levens- en wereldvisie*. This is one Dutch term for the German *Weltanschauung* and another is l*evensbeschouwing*.

23 BCW Note: Dutch: *Voor een subjectivisme, dat de ingevingen van het eigen hart of de resultaten van het eigen verstand - tot norm verheft, behoeft dus hier niet te worden gevreesd*.
This reads somewhat strangely having pointed out that there is indeed a need to fear a subjectivism that elevates the results of one's own thinking to the norm. But maybe Goudzwaard is assuming his readers need to be reassured. So, at this point, Goudzwaard iadopts an encouraging pastoral tone.

crafting calling, in service to Christ, detach ourselves for even a moment from this specific condition of our political life?

To pose the question in faith like this is to answer it. Anyone who claims to also want to give Christ their heart in politics, and who invokes His name, must demonstrate this in a faithful recognition of Him as the Word who called this same political life into existence according to its own nature and structure, and for whose honor the life of the State must be brought to bear fruit according to this self-same nature and structure. Political life - like all other areas of life - is even designed for this development, this "unfolding" toward Christ. The State can only develop and unfold according to its God-given nature through the activity of *humankind*.[24]

[99] Serving Christ in politics must therefore never be separated from *a faithful understanding* of the way Christ has created the State structure. We say that this is a *faithful* understanding; for this understanding of the specific nature of the State is of God's law for State life and it is not the fruit of scientific or philosophical thought, but of a living faith of the children of the Kingdom.

> *Holding fast to Christ, grasped by Him, . . . the Christian . . . keeps an eye on all the reactions that his (and others') actions within the world evoke, in order to... fathom the meaning of the structures in the perspective of the actions of generations...*[25]

Thus, the Christian, seeing with faith how the State, in the entire span of human history, begins to dissolve and will literally and figuratively lose its meaning when justice is no longer pursued in State-life and when due respect for the calling of Government and for the private lives of its subjects is lacking. From this, the Christian may conclude that the standard of justice, in recognizing the private lives of its subjects, clearly lies at the heart of the nature and meaning of State life.[26] Political science will therefore have to be guided by the pursuit of authentic *public justice*.[27]

Therefore, against all subjectivism, we must maintain that there is indeed an appropriate standard for Christian politics. It consists in the Government, through the path of genuine justice towards all of its subjects, and with due regard for their callings, creating the public conditions through which all social spheres and relationships within its territory can, individually and collectively, conform to the service of Him who, at His coming, will demand an account from everyone. The

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24 BCW Note: It should be noted here that these paragraphs in this section are set forth to counter the supposition that State-crafting just is, another dimension of human self-creation or calling forth fresh expressions of human self-creation in a realm of public life.

25 **BG FTN 9** Prof.dr J. P, A Mekkes **Scheppingsopenbaring en wijsbegeerte,** p.126.

26 **BG FTN 10** The formulation of this norm is, of course, nothing more than human work and therefore not fixed forever. The norm itself, however, is fixed forever, since it is God-given.

27 **BG FTN 11** See Art.4 of the Ani-Revolutionary Party program principles.

Government's mandate, through its pursuit of public justice in this Christian sense, is to be an instrument in Christ's Kingdom coming and already here, an instrument for keeping national society open and for the fulfilling of the Christian calling via public law-based regulation of society.

Bible and Righteousness

But if this is indeed the task of Christian politics, and therefore of every Christian politician, then it is also evident that Christian politics is about something entirely different from a correct and strict adherence to certain "objective" principles. For the pursuit of justice is not something to be *imposed or prescribed* from outside the Christian politician; it is what will have to *come to expression from within* the office-bearer.[28] The pursuit of justice demands a total *faith* commitment. This justice will have to be embodied in the office-bearer's concrete decision-making on a case-by-case basis; and this can only be done with this law of God written on the *heart*.

And *precisely for this reason,* a Christian politician will not be able to do without the Bible for a single moment. Not because the Bible is such an excellent reference book;[29] [100] but because only through constant from-the-heart engagement with the Bible will the resources be unlocked by God's Spirit, through which insight is gained into what is entailed by a Christian view of justice. Thus, it is of utmost importance for the Christian politician to repeatedly allow the words to sink in: *"You shall have no other gods before me"* - for otherwise, the temptation will persist to undermine such a Christian view of justice by placing Government power at the service of others than God, namely, in the service of apostate human desires.

Thus, the Christian politician must continually remain open to *"Thou shalt not steal"* - for without such openness, the politician runs the risk of doing injustice by depriving those subject to the Government to what they are entitled to by virtue of their calling. This politicians cannot do without the constant admonition: *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"* - for otherwise, his policies will not reflect the eternal Sabbath, which, according to the great message of Golgotha, can only be achieved through the satisfaction of God's justice. All this does not abrogate God's

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28 BCW Note: i.e. something that is inherent in the vocation of the Christian politician, coming to expression from the Christian politician's responsibility. Maybe the formulation could be improved by referring to the calling of the Christian *in* the polity, as *Christian State-crafting*. Admittedly, Goudzwaard is addressing the 1960 *Antirevolutionaire Partij,* that inherits a Dutch political status as the inaugural mass political party in the Netherlands that then sought to join Christian citizens with those Christian politicians elected to parliament.

29 **BG FTN 12** The Bible is not a reference work for this very reason: with reference works, the person who consults it can remain so wonderfully out of harm's way. With the Bible, however, no one and nothing remains out of harm's way.

law, but is its *radicalization*, as Christ's Sermon on the Mount radicalized the law and deepened it to be a commitment of heart service of God.[30]

Only through engaging with the Bible does the Christian politician's faithful understanding deepen of what is actually demanded for Christian justice. Only in this way does such a Christian public servant acquire a Christian perspective on all the elements that must be taken into account in the quest for Christian righteousness, and to which all these must be ascribed their rightful place. In this way is developed a Biblical vision of the human community, human labour, human authority, human property, and of humanity itself as the Image-Bearer of God.

This brings me to the point of discussion first mentioned by Mr. Rippen: that of the place and function of the four so-called "cornerstones" - authority, property, marriage, and religion - in Christian politics.

Part 2

The "cornerstones" and their function

After all that has been said so far, my objections to the "cornerstones" of authority, property, marriage, and religion can be stated quite easily. Derived from Holy Scripture - particularly from the first chapters of Genesis - these so-called "cornerstones" appear to function as distinct touchstones or "objective" standards in the **Study,**[31] which are used to determine in advance which practical government decisions are fundamentally correct and which are not. As a result - [101] - they appear in the **Study** in various separate ways, directly applicable as a political code of conduct, which the Government need only strictly follow in order to ensure a good result - and hence such a procedure is deemed to be fundamentally sound.

In line with what has been explained above regarding the relationship between the Bible and politics, I would like to counter this by stating that everything the Bible says about authority, property, etc., acquires political significance for the Christian only *when* and *because* it aligns with the faith-outlook of the Christian politician.[32] What the Bible says about, for example, authority and property, is in no way valid in

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30 **BG FTN 13** Prof. dr. H. Ridderbos, **De komst van het Koninkrijk,** p. 275ff., and Dr. A. Troost, **Casuistiek en Situatie-ethic.** p. 364.

31 **BG FTN 14** Cf. the sharp criticism of this concept by Prof. Dr. J. P. A. Mekkes, The solution of the "support points" and the idea of the "objective norm" in: **Tot Vrijheid Geroepen**, March '63.

32 BCW Note: Goudzwaard in the previous paragraph has given his summarised view of how the "four cornerstones" mentioned in the **Study**, should function in the life and legislative action of the Christian public servant/ politician**.**

itself. These Biblical statements may only be seen as *non-independent facets*[33] of the one, integral Message of the Word of God, which Message can only be received and understood in faith. Therefore, these statements can only acquire political significance because, as facets of the Word of God, they also determine the orientation of the Christian politician as a believer who, in the sense of Christian justice, acts and deliberates from case to case.

Biblical pronouncements that touch on the themes of authority, property, and marriage can therefore never, ever be "transformed" into independently valid, intellectually "applicable" codes of conduct. The moment I attempt to do so, these Biblical words lose their true meaning. For they owe their meaning and significance solely to their inclusion in the one Gospel of God, which, as the *power* of God, always seeks to direct itself to nothing less than our will. Only when and because these Biblical words, in the unity of Holy Scripture, convert our hearts can they become meaningful for our political and intellectual pursuits.[34]

Practical consequences

This diverse approach to the meaning of Biblical statements regarding authority, property, marriage, and humans as the Image of God,[35] naturally has implications for practical politics. These can perhaps best be illustrated with an example. A good example, in my opinion, is the case where the Government must decide whether or not to establish a particular public company.

The **Study**, on such a practical issue as this, is ready with an answer.[36] Just as an intervention in existing ownership relations is contrary to the principle of ownership, so too is the establishment of a Government company (as an intervention in existing

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33 BCW Note: Dutch: *onzelfstandige facetten*. A central concept of the Christian philosophy of Dooyeweerd, Mekkes et al. In the English translation of a cognate term in Dooyeweerd's New Critique *onzelfgenoegzaam* is rendered as *self-insufficiency.*

34 BCW Note: Reading this now in 2026 it might seem as if Goudzwaard is developing a highly convoluted argument that could better be said in a simpler formulation. However, I think this should be read in the context of a party constituency in reformed churches - various denominations - in which supporters of the ARP have also been subjected to efforts by ministers, theologians and academics in complex debates to explain Christian political responsibility. I would suggest this needs to be read as Goudzwaard's attempt to cut through the thickets of such debates and instead of developing a system of discrete *directions* focus upon the Biblical revelation as providing direction. The key term is mentioned in the previous footnote *unself-sufficient facets* of the one cohering Word of God at work in the human heart.

35 **BG FTN 15** As an aside, I note that my objections are not directed against the raising of "authority, property, marriage, and humans as Image of God" as such. In my opinion, too, a correct - faithful - view of authority, property, marriage, and humanity in the Image of God is indispensable for any realization of a Christian politics. My objection pertains solely to the way in which the **Study** allows these so-called cornerstones (and other principles, such as "personal responsibility" or "labour") to *function*, i.e., to see them come into *political force*. Nor do I find it difficult to agree with Mr. Rippen that the "cornerstones" may only be seen as the foundation of the **Study** when placed against the background of what is said elsewhere in the **Study** about the relationship with God and neighbour, justice, and personal responsibility. Mr. Rippen and I largely agree on these points.

36 BCW Note: Dutch: *Zoals bekend, is de Studie met een praktisch vraagstuk als dit spoedig klaar.* Goudzwaard expounds the outlook of the **Study** as a recommendation for the Christian politician.

power relations) contrary to the [102] principle of authority[37], which requires a careful distinction between the Government's own sphere of authority and the private sector's own sphere of authority. Therefore, the establishment of such a company must be fundamentally rejected; only in exceptional cases (or "special cases") should it be established. The principle of authority serves here as a touchstone by which it can be determined in advance that a public company is fundamentally undesirable. The Christian politician has no other option than to strictly follow this "principled" instruction, at least in "normal cases".

Even if I fully consider that the **Study**, in justifying this "indication",[38] places the principle of authority against a broader, principled background, it must nevertheless be said that this line of argument violates the Government's own independent calling. A Government that, in every practical - normal - case, has already made up its mind in advance about the desirability of a particular public undertaking, abdicates its own task and calling. For the calling of Government, as we have said, is the pursuit of Christian public *justice*.[39] And justice requires: that careful *consideration* be given to *all* interests that arise in a specific case; and this from a vision of faith that is *integrally*, that is, in all its facets, guided by the Word of God.

But with this formulation, I find both elements to be missing. The careful weighing of interests has been replaced here - at least in "normal cases" - by a definitive, principled judgment in advance; and the Government's decision is not based on an integral view of faith in all its facets, but on the correct application of a particular rule of conduct; a rule of conduct that others have derived for this case from one of these facets (the facet of "authority").

Therefore, I suggest the Government must take an entirely different approach when considering the practical desirability of establishing a public company. First, it must consider the issue from all of its angles - not just in terms of the *distinction in authority* between Government and Commerce.[40] For example, it must independently consider whether and to what extent the establishment of the company will increase

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37 **BG FTN 16** Where the "principle of authority" must of course be understood against its principled background as outlined elsewhere in the **Study**.

38 BCW Note: Dutch *"aanwijzing"* - Goudzwaard's quote marks.

39 BCW Note: The curious formulation here - Dutch: *christelijke openbare gerechtigheid;* Christian public justice - may raise objection except Goudzwaard is suggesting that the Christian politician, like all elected parliamentarians, must assess the demands for justice according to how justice is to be understood and that is indeed a religious characteristic of all parliamentarians according to how they conceive the legislative task. And here he is not putting it in these terms simply because he presumes a Christian readership - the recommendation that a Christian political party makes in debate on legislation needs to be explained by reference to a full elaboration of the Christian political vision. That is what is at stake here. Goudzwaard finds the method of the **Study**, and of Mr Rippen's defense failing to reckon with this adherence to a Christian political outlook.

40 BCW Note: Dutch: *bedrijfsleven*. The Christian politician is not merely saying "Aye" or "Noe" on any particular issue, but is elaboratingthe stance in terms of an overall political outlook.

employment; whether and to what extent this establishment will improve the provision of essential needs within the *political community*; and whether and to what extent the establishment of the company will have a favorable or unfavorable effect on existing *income and wealth relations*. All these aspects can vary significantly from case to case. Therefore, they must be weighed carefully and fairly against each other on a case-by-case basis. But how is a Christian politician capable of this? Only when the Word of God has addressed all its facets to the politician's heart, unlocking the public servant's intuition to what in this instance is demanded by Christian justice and what it truly entails. For only then will this public servant gain the right insight into the meaning to be assigned to all the noted aspects with a just weighing of interests.

To this end, the Christian politician needs a single, undivided, Christian vision, shaped by the Word of God, of authority as divine instituted, of the proper meaning of work (*employment*) [103] in human life, of what truly constitutes the essential interests of the *political community*, and so on. Only from this single vision of faith, considering its various facets, will the politician be able to fairly and thoughtfully determine whether or not, in this specific case, the establishment of a public enterprise is desirable.

Therefore, I cannot possibly agree with the **Study** if it is essentially giving the impression that the Christian politician can spare himself these worries of mind and heart in all "normal cases". It is as if the **Study** already has the solution ready to implement, as long as no "special cases" arise: the public enterprise will not be allowed to exist. The indispensable, just consideration of all aspects and interests at stake is thus declared by the **Study** to be essentially superfluous in all "normal cases." This to me is an unacceptable position.[41]

Possibility of Rapprochement

Yet, I don't believe Mr. Rippen and I need to remain rigidly opposed to each other regarding the "cornerstones" and their "application". In his response, Mr. Rippen took a stand on a specific point that could bring us closer together. This point concerns the so-called "special cases", which were already mentioned; cases, that is, in which the **Study** allows the Government to deviate from the "normal" course of action in a situation required by the principle.[42] In my discussion, I posed the following critical questions regarding these "special cases": what is the situation? Do

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41 BCW Note: What is noteworthy here is that Drs Goudzwaard, the 30 year-old public-policy research for the Abraham Kuyper Foundation is outlining the normative task for the Christian legislator, the elected member of Parliament. In a few years time he would take his seat in the Dutch Tweede Kamer, the House of Representatives.

42 **BG FTN 17** Thus, the Study permits the Government to expropriate in certain cases, even though it is prohibited in principle from interfering in property relations. It may also establish a public company in "exceptional cases" (p. 97), although this is generally considered "wrong" in principle. Similarly, the Study permits the granting of subsidies "in the case of temporary abuses," although it generally opposes this in principle (p. 206).

principles, according to the **Study**, only apply as long as no special cases arise? Am I really to believe that the **Study** makes "exceptions" to its own principles of authority, property, etc.?

Mr. Rippen has now taken a clear position on this question. His answer is unequivocally negative. Principles, by their very nature, apply *always* and everywhere and admit of no exceptions. Therefore, the principles of authority and ownership may not be infringed upon under any circumstances.

I read Mr. Rippen's answer with satisfaction, because, in my opinion, it reflects a different and more correct view of "principles" than I encountered in the **Study**. For Mr. Rippen concedes to me: if principles never admit of a single exception, then it is simply impossible to maintain that they can demand a specific practical course of action in advance, and that they can serve to establish the fundamental soundness of practical governmental decisions in advance. For in that capacity, they do not always and everywhere apply; they only apply in *non*-special cases. Therefore, Mr. Rippen comes particularly close to the position I have adopted, namely that "authority, property, marriage, and religion" cannot be considered "objective norms", but only as facets of the [104] one Biblical message, which in its entirety must determine the orientation from which the politician weighs the interests at stake.[43]

To clarify this, I can use an example given by Mr Rippen himself, namely the authority of the Government to deprive certain parents of parental authority in exceptional cases. Such a removal of parental authority, according to Mr. Rippen, need not be seen as an infringement of parental authority, and therefore of the principle of authority. I fully agree with Mr. Rippen: it is unacceptable to declare in advance that every removal of parental authority is, in principle, unlawful on the basis of the principle of authority. But, I would like to ask Mr. Rippen, what view of the principle of authority does this reflect? Certainly not the view that the principle of authority is a "touchstone" for labeling certain Government decisions - in this case, the removal of parental authority - as fundamentally wrong in principle. No, here the principle of authority functions as it indeed should: namely, as one of the facets in the Government's balancing of interests. And this in the sense that the Government, when considering whether or not to revoke parental authority, will always faithfully account for parental authority as a Divine institution, an institution that does not tolerate any *unlawful* infringement.

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[43] BCW Note: I judge the difficulty with interpreting the above paragraph arises because Goudzwaard has taken Rippen's view and developed its consequences as if he were a politician who would seek to contribute in Parliament according to the perspective outlined in the **Study** (Answer to the Times) as if it were his political manifesto. It is a kind of "immanent critique" by which he seems to be arguing the case with Mr Rippen in Rippen's terms to show not only its political incoherence, or even its failure to properly respect the relation of the Bible to political life, but that it fails to reckon with the vocational responsibility of the Christian politician.

Consequences for the Study

One of the consequences of the position now adopted by Mr. Rippen seems to me to be that the **Study** will have to change its character in important respects. For example, the **Study** will have to abandon a significant part of its pretense that it will be by "positing" principles that can prevent any "hesitation" regarding practical politics. Stating principles by no means ensures that the main difficulties have already, in principle, been resolved. On the contrary, they may be off to a good start. But from then on, in practical politics, it will be about being aware of *all* aspects in an *intrinsically Christian* way, in every act of weighing interests. The **Study** will also have to change in this regard by eliminating several assertive statements, such as the statement that Government enterprise is "revolutionary" and "wrong" (pp. 93, 97), and the statement that because it is God who distributes, the Government has nothing to distribute (p. 152), and further the statement that causing inflation - or unemployment - is unjust (p. 168). For whether something is unjust or wrong cannot be determined in advance on the basis of any principle, but only after all interests have been weighed against each other in a suitable manner on a case-by-case basis.

If Mr Rippen were willing to take these consequences into account, significant progress would have been made in the discussion between us.

Part Three

The Study Liberal Influenced?

At the beginning of this article, I posited that the difference of opinion between Mr. Rippen and myself regarding the possible [105] influence of liberalism on the **Study** is closely related to our different approaches to the relationship between the Bible and politics. This assertion is not too bold. For the approach to the Bible, as found in the **Study**, in my opinion, stems from - and moreover, again gives rise to - a dangerous underestimation of the possibility of non-Christian influences. For when one believes that a Christian policy can be built on universally applicable principles derived directly from Scripture, one is particularly prone to ascribe to this resulting policy a high degree of infallibility and inviolability. The "principles" on which one bases oneself, one then argues, are not "simply" found, but go back to the teaching of Holy Scripture itself.

In reality, however, even in reading Holy Scripture, let alone in our political activities, we are subject on all sides to the influence of the non-Christian fundamental motives that dominate the life and thought of our Western civilization. We are not simply freed from the influences of Humanism and Scholasticism; to purge these influences from our hearts requires a bitter, arduous struggle of faith, in which we must learn to understand and combat Humanism and Scholasticism at their

deepest roots - that is, as forms of *apostasy*. For we are absorbed with every fiber of our being in a Western civilization, whose apostate thought patterns and fundamental motives penetrate the recesses of our hearts. Only by submitting ourselves daily to the gentle yoke of Christ, with an open eye to the dangers around us, will we be able to maintain the upper hand in the ongoing struggle with the apostate fundamental motives of Western community life. We are never freed from it in this life.

The question of whether *Patrimonium's* **Study** is free from "liberal" influences cannot, therefore, be adequately answered by the observation that the compilers always intended to place Christ and His work centrally. Our good *intentions* are not enough to keep humanistic influences at bay; for these influences often occur without our being aware of them. Perhaps I may apply this to myself for a moment: I certainly do not rule out that non-Christian influences will be evident in various places in this article, no matter how earnestly I have striven to the contrary. Neither our good intentions nor our close adherence to the Bible can protect us from non-Christian influences. We are perhaps most exposed to them precisely when we fear them least.

We will only become fully aware of the dangers of liberal and socialist influences after we have learned to clearly recognize the element of apostasy in liberalism and socialism, and, moreover, we live in the constant awareness that our hearts will be constantly inclined towards every form of apostasy.

Liberalism, Socialism and Apostasy

The element of apostasy in liberalism and socialism becomes apparent when we consider their *humanistic* origins; [106] humanistic in the sense of the religion of man as a law unto himself, who has rejected God as Lawgiver. Thus, liberalism is originally the political creed of man who wishes to be a law unto himself as an *individual*; thus, socialism is that of man who wishes to be a law unto himself in and as a *community*. As typical religious movements, both directions, orthodox liberalism and orthodox socialism, believed that from their respective humanistic creeds, if only strictly observed, full salvation and happiness would dawn for all humanity.

One needed, according to the classical liberal, only to allow the individual to pursue his or her own autonomous course and to fully uphold at all times his or her individual civil rights (of property, contract, establishment, etc.) to then see a society flourish "naturally" in which people could truly be human and in which prosperity, culture, and science would reach their highest development.

By contrast, the orthodox socialist argued that all that is good and all blessings for society could be expected if only the national community were allowed to strive autonomously and unhindered for material-economic prosperity for all and economic equality of opportunity for all; the material-economic care of the community in its

democratic organs could guarantee the humanization of man. Evidence of these two religions - represented here only very briefly - can still be clearly found in modern liberalism and socialism.[44]

Both religious convictions have now given rise to *their own idea of the State*. The liberalist faith led to the idea of the *individualistic constitutional State*, the State that protects only individual civil rights and arbitrates in their enforcement; the socialist faith led to the idea of *the welfare State*, the State that, as an organ of the autonomous national community, guarantees the material well-being of all its subjects. It is clear that both ideas of the State arise fundamentally from an apostate origin: for they both cling to the *religious idée-fixe*, that by prioritizing certain interests (respectively, the civil rights of the individual through liberalism, and the community's economic interests through socialism), true salvation for the entire society will emerge or be brought closer.

The Study and Liberalism

When I now compare the *Patrimonium's* **Study** with the liberal constitutional State concept just mentioned, I cannot help but feel that a distinct, certainly unintentional, similarity exists between the two. Except in situations of complete societal disruption, the **Study** sees the Government's task largely limited to the full enforcement of existing individual rights; according to the **Study**, property [107], contract, and establishment rights do not, in principle, tolerate any Government interference. Taxation should, under all circumstances, leave existing ownership structures intact; price and wage formation should take place entirely outside the control of Government; Government-owned enterprises should be converted into private enterprises; indeed, collective labour agreements should, in principle, be declared non-binding, because, according to the **Study**, *individuals* must have the freedom to deviate from them. (p.120)

However well-intentioned and sincere all this may be, there is an element of emphasis in all of it that I must recognize as not purely Christian. I say this with all the more boldness because the **Study** gives the impression that, along the path it describes, salvation and prosperity for society as a whole can be expected: moreover, prosperity will be given to us (p. 74). *"Only on the basis of principles such as authority, ownership, and responsibility can salvation be expected for all."* (p. 331)

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44 **BG FTN 18** In this connection, consider the characteristic statement by Professor Banning in the pillarization issue of *Socialism and Democracy*: *"What unites us in the Labour Party is not philosophical or theological anthropology, but rather the democratic conviction that the process of becoming human (!) demands the creation of the most favorable economic and social (political) conditions possible."* We hear here a distant echo of Marx's proposition that a sound economic foundation for the community is sufficient to bring about a utopian State, in which humanity loses its self-alienation and begins to live in complete harmony with fellow human beings. BCW Note: Banning is regularly referred to in Goudzwaard's *ARS* articles. see p.75 ftn.7; p.80 ftn 16; p.82 ftn 24; p.143 ftn.22; p.155, ftn 47; p.205, ftn.44.

When one places this last statement alongside the apostate liberal belief that full happiness for the entire society results from severely curtailed Government authority, absolute respect for existing property rights, and such a far-reaching respect for individual responsibility that even individual contract and establishment rights must be maintained without restriction, there seems to me to be every reason for Mr. Rippen not to simply dismiss my accusation of liberal influence, but to carefully review and reconsider it.

Labour

Regarding the points "labour" and "property", I can be brief having said the above.

Regarding *labour*, Mr. Rippen rightly noted that the rule that the Government may not cause inflation (injustice) to prevent unemployment (disaster) does not imply that the **Study** always prefers situations of inflation to situations of unemployment. The rule that one may not commit injustice to prevent disaster must also be applied to situations of *inflation*. The Government may no more cause unemployment to prevent inflation than it may cause inflation to prevent unemployment.

By clarifying the **Study**, Mr. Rippen does indeed address one of my objections. But at the same time, this clarification raises new, perhaps even more serious, objections. This is because fighting inflation is accompanied, by definition, with a decline in purchasing power in society, and therefore almost always leads to a certain reduction in the demand for labour. The rule that the Government must refrain from fighting inflation if it would lead to (any) increase in unemployment therefore practically means that the Government can do nothing to combat inflation.[45] Is this not [108] another typical example of an *excessive* reduction in the authority of the Government?[46]

Regarding the labour principle itself, I continue to find it noteworthy that the **Study** concludes from this principle that the Government must ensure the protection of the *civil rights* of *individual* employees,[47] but not that the Government must ensure the *economic interests* of the people through sufficient employment. This one-sidedness, in my opinion, can only be explained by the presence of a liberal influence.

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45 **BG FTN 19:** Therefore, the Government cannot introduce the Gold Standard, as advocated in the **Study**! Because the **Study** itself acknowledges that this introduction could lead to a certain degree of chronic deflation, and thus to a certain degree of chronic unemployment. Therefore, the introduction of the Gold Standard also falls under the uncompromising judgment that one must not commit injustice (i.e., create unemployment) to prevent disaster (i.e., currency devaluation).

46 **BG FTN 20:** As an aside, I note that the rule "do no injustice to prevent disaster" is based on the view of principles that we identified as incorrect in the previous paragraph. This rule, in fact, embodies the idea that it is immediately clear whether a particular Government measure is "right" or "wrong". Whether a particular Government measure is unjust or not, however, can only be determined after the Government has fairly weighed all the interests at stake.

47 **BG FTN 21**: According to p.106 of the **Study**.

Property

Regarding *property*, I want to emphasize that there is, of course, no objection to the fact that so much attention was paid to property in the **Study**. However, the manner in which it was addressed is important. For example, one can speak of property as an instrument of the national community to promote its economic interests. If one continues to maintain this view, it is *socialist*. However, one can also speak of property as an instrument of the individual to further his own civil rights interests. And if one continues to maintain this view, it is *liberal*. What struck me in the **Study** is that there is a constant tendency to portray property in this latter way. Mr. Rippen appeals here to Mosaic legislation; however, in my opinion, this appeal is not entirely valid. For in Mosaic legislation, both strands are present, the individual and the communal strands - but then united in a magnificent synthesis. In my opinion, Mr. Rippen's interpretation of the Mosaic laws does not do sufficient justice to the second strand.

Finally, I would like to point out to Mr. Rippen Article 4 of the (old?) Principles Program of the Christian Workers' Association "Patrimonium", in which both lines are presented as follows:

> *The Covenant expresses its conviction that ... it considers private property necessary for the development of the human personality ... In accordance, however, with the principles of Holy Scripture, which knows of no unlimited right of property among people, Patrimonium advocates such a regulation of the right of ownership and disposal over material goods, in particular over the means of production, that abuse of power is prevented or curbed, that possessions and prosperity are spread across all circles of society and that no sharp contradictions disturb social peace.*[48]

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48 **BG FTN 22** Quoted in Smeenk, **Christelijk-sociale principes**, p. 124. Cf. also the explanation of this article by G. Baas Kzn. in the Patrimoniumuitgave **Naar hetgemaakt bestek** (1941), p. 31: "Yet... our rejection of general socialization does not in the least mean that we want to maintain what exists at full price, or that no changes may be made in property relations. After all, here too, sin has had a devastating effect and has spoiled life in more than one respect."

Nederlandse Gedachten 20e jrg. No. 21. 23rd May 1964

BIBLE AND PROGRAM

Hendrik Algra (Editor)

We recently argued that a political party cannot exist without a program.

A Christian party distinguishes itself from other political parties by writing its program with the Bible open. Half a century ago, the liberals held a large meeting on Ascension Day, at which Professor Eerdmans of Leiden emphatically stated that the Bible could not be accepted as the Bible and therefore could not and should not have any decisive significance in politics. Recently, at the annual meeting of the VVD, Professor Oud once again made it clear that the program of a liberal party must contain no references to religious scriptures, not even to the Law of the Ten Commandments.

The anti-revolutionaries state at the forefront in their manifesto that the party's aim must be to ensure that the Word of God regains a firm footing in public life.

When we state this in such general terms, we encounter no contradiction within our own circle. It is fully accepted by us.

But that does not mean that we overlook the difficulties we face here.

First of all, there is the danger that we misread the Bible and subsequently equate our own views and practices with what the Bible teaches us. A striking example was the way in which the slavery of Negroes was formerly defended. Cursed be Canaan, the son of Ham, a servant of servants be he to his brothers. That text seemed sufficient. The descendants of Ham, the Negroes, carried a curse through history that was realized in slavery. Another example is the appeal to the text: Rich and poor meet each other; the Lord made them both. It is easy to interpret this as if it said: The Lord wills that there be rich and poor. But it is merely stating that rich and poor meet each other daily, as it were, but that we must bear in mind that the Lord made them both, the poor just as much as the rich. All people have the same Maker.

This danger exists only when we fall into a misuse of the Bible, acting as if we are dealing with a collection of sayings that we can place in a kind of index, to pick and choose as needed. We do believe, however, that we must read the Bible time and again in its entirety, as one mighty revelation. That protects us from a reduced Bible, reduced to our needs. In this way, the Bible becomes a book that is too easy.

There is another point of discussion. To avoid the danger just mentioned, the remark is sometimes made that the Bible gives us no guidelines, but only indicates a direction.

Whoever maintains that in the full sense denies that we can speak of Scriptural principles. The Bible then merely propels us in a certain direction, where we must find our own way. In that case, we actually have no firm footing in the Bible.[1]

I would like to raise two objections to this view.

First of all, I believe - to quote a phrase from the Dutch Confession of Faith - that the will of God is fully revealed to us in the Bible. The Bible is richer and more relevant than we often think. It is not a cistern that you can scoop empty, but an inexhaustible source. It is not the Bible's fault, but ours, when we believe that the Word of God has become meager in content. Our faith requires a willingness to become and remain true disciples.

The second consideration relates to what we have already learned as enduring lessons. If one objects to speaking of guidelines, then let us choose another word. Let us then talk of Biblical truths.

The Bible clearly teaches us, and has clearly taught us, what the character of governmental authority is: it is from God and not from men. Government exists because of sin, to restrain wickedness. Sin is not a natural given; sinful deviations are not quirks or facts of nature.

The government must reckon with the gravity of sin, in nature and consequences. The punishment of the government is truly the punishment of evil and not merely a safety measure of the community. All racial discrimination is fundamentally reprehensible. The government is qualified by its power of the sword. Property is stewardship. The church must not be treated by the government as a human organization for the promotion of spiritual interests. Parents are primarily responsible for the upbringing of children, and by no means the state. It is the business of the government to protect the weak and the defenseless. Pulling field after field is an expression of sinful desires. Marriage was instituted by the Lord, and divorce, except for fornication, is not in accordance with the Bible. The rhythm of working six days and resting on the Lord's Day is a divine commandment.

Thus, we have mentioned a few examples to make clear how meager we can make the Bible by saying that it gives us no guidelines; it only indicates a direction.

We can be mistaken on certain points.

But nothing would be worse than forcing the conclusion from this: let us rather leave the Bible closed forever and completely when discussing our political policy. That is only possible for those who wish to render the Word of God powerless.

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[1] BCW Note: Notice the slight change here in wording regarding "footing". Earlier on it was written: the party's aim must be to ensure that the *Word of God* regains a firm footing in public life.

Nederlandse Gedachten 26e jrg. No. 25, 20th June 1964

BIBLE AND POLITICS[2]

B GOUDZWAARD

I have read with interest your editorial "Bible and Program" in *Nederlandse Gedachten* of May 23 last. Given the importance of this subject, I would like to make a few remarks regarding it; this is partly in connection with the fact that in this article you opposed, among other things, a statement by Prof. Runner, which I quoted with approval in *AntiRevolutionaire Staatkunde*, namely that "the Bible does not give directions, but Direction".[3] I am afraid, in my opinion, that you have not fully understood the position of Prof. Runner, which in this matter is essentially also my own.

As proof of this, I may perhaps remark that, regarding the main points, I agree with your article in almost every respect. I fully endorse with you that God's will for salvation is fully revealed in the Bible; likewise, that the Bible offers us numerous truths concerning the character and function of the government, which we must accept without question and with faith. Undeniably, Scripture demands of the government - taking into account the gravity of sin - not to treat the church as a human organization, and to respect the mandate of parents regarding their children. With regard to these and other "eternal principles," as they are sometimes - erroneously - called (in this respect I prefer to follow Prof. Zuidema, who speaks here of our "political confession of faith"), in my opinion there is no difference whatsoever between us. The government is undoubtedly bound by these Biblical truths.[4]

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2. BCW Note: The following piece, in response to the editor's earlier lead article, was published on the front page of the June 1964 edition of *Nederlandse Gedachten* with the following editorial word of explanation:
   *In two articles in **Nederlandse Gedachten**, we placed full emphasis on the fact that we want to be a party guided by the Bible. That runs very deep.*
   By this, we mean that we believe (all emphasis must fall on that word here!) that the Word of God is a lamp, even on the political path.
   We therefore deal with it daily. Not only because the Word warns and admonishes us, but also, and first and foremost, because this Word teaches us.
   It tells us how things ought to be. How the government and the people must align themselves with God's ordinances.
   In our opinion, we can impoverish this teaching in two ways.
   The first way is to try to maintain that the Word of God gives us only a general exhortation that can be fixed forever in a single formulation.
   Then we forget: 1. that the Bible is very concrete and is concrete anew in every new situation; 2. that the Bible speaks to us across the entire breadth and fullness of life, if we listen faithfully and obediently.
   Another impoverishment is this: that we do not listen to the Bible as a mighty whole, but extract a text from it for special use, one text at a time.
   This is a danger that becomes apparent time and again, and has also been revealed to us in a tragic way in history.
   We have now received the following piece from Drs. Goudzwaard.

3 BCW Note: *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* jrg-34 1964 (April) p. 97. ftn.7 Pregnanter in het Engels: "It does not give directions, but Direction". Goudzwaard's in-text translation of Runner reads: "De Bijbel geeft ons geen richtingaan wij zers, maar wijst de Richting aan."

4 BCW Note: In its initial published form this paragraph was italicized.

What, then, is the correct meaning of the statement originating from Prof. Runner and freely reproduced by you, that "the Bible does not give directions, but Direction"? I am the first to admit that this sentence can indeed lead to misunderstanding, and can indeed create the impression that Prof. Runner wants nothing to do with Biblical truths, such as those mentioned by you. However, if I have understood Prof. Runner correctly, that is not his intention at all. In my view, what he has attempted to express with this pregnant sentence is fundamentally the same as what you stated in n.1 when you remarked in your article that we must read the Bible time and again in its entirety, as one mighty revelation. For if we must always read the Bible in its entirety "in program," as one mighty revelation, then we are naturally never permitted to place certain Biblical statements entirely upon ourselves, i.e., to let them serve as independent, mutually valid signposts to give us a definitive answer in advance regarding what we must and must not do in concrete terms in politics.

These Biblical truths can then only acquire their political validity in their unbreakable coherence within the unity of Holy Scripture, in the oneness of the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the King of political life. I would therefore like to paraphrase the sentence "the Bible does not give directions, but Direction" as follows: **"The Bible does not provide independently valid, 'operating' signposts; no, it guides us in the one Direction of absolute faith in Jesus Christ as the great Exegete of the will of the Father; but so absolutely and so all-encompassingly that the Holy Spirit, through God's Word, constantly reminds us of the directions we must take time and again in political practice."** In this way, the Biblical truths you mentioned also acquire their proper political validity: not as independent signposts, but as *"truths which... have been imprinted by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the simplest Christian"* (Groen van Prinsterer) - and which, as such - that is, as truths written in our hearts by the Spirit - are co-determinant, within the unity of our faith awakened by God's Word, for the political direction we have taken. How exactly this co-determining functions - naturally, no rational system will be able to capture it. For this concerns the working of God's Spirit. He enables me to live these Biblical truths day by day, in conjunction with the one Truth, Jesus Christ. In other words, these Biblical truths are rules of faith; they can therefore never be absorbed into independent rules of conduct to be applied merely intellectually.

Perhaps I can clarify all this with an example. In Rom. 13 I read: *"Whoever ... resists the government resists the institution of God, and those who do so will bring judgment upon themselves."* Undoubtedly a Biblical statement, which is of extremely great practical significance to me as a Christian citizen. But is it a "direction", in the sense of: a self-contained, independently

applicable instruction for conduct? No; if I were to view this statement in that way, I would, for example, never, ever be allowed to know anything about a right of resistance against atheistic governments. You and I, however, do not consider a right of resistance to be in direct conflict with the quoted statement of Rom. 13.

But in doing so, we have simultaneously acknowledged that a statement like this can acquire its true meaning and significance only when we view it faithfully in inseparable connection with the one Gospel of God and with the one Direction shown to us therein. Statements like those in Romans 13, therefore, cannot be "used" independently; they acquire their political significance only by turning our hearts within the unity of Holy Scripture. This heart, thus converted, naturally has to deal with the demand that we must submit to the powers placed above us; but it will then only be able to see this demand as a demand of faith, a demand of which it is impossible to determine intellectually or systematically in which cases it excludes a right of resistance and in which cases it does not.

In summary, I would like to remark that, for my part - and the same probably applies to Prof. Runner - I reject the statement that the Bible gives us guidelines only insofar as and to the extent that one views these guidelines are self-contained directives that one merely needs to "follow" with intellectual precision to be assured of a favorable result- in this case, Christian politics. It is only against *this* view of the "guidelines" given to us in the Bible that I have warned in my article.[5]

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5 At the conclusion of the piece was the following: "For the moment we have nothing to add to this because we fully agree with it. At some future point *Nederlandse Gedachen* hopes to return to this.

12. POSTSCRIPT OF A DISCUSSION

Drs B. GOUDZWAARD

In this postscript, I hope to conclude the discussion with Mr. Rippen about my contribution; and so, I gladly grant Mr. Rippen, if he so desires, the right to write a final word. Two reasons compel this conclusion. First, the readers of *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde* (ARS) cannot be expected to continue a discussion about a specific publication, which began in October 1963, until 1965. Second, there is the fortunate circumstance that, partly as a result of the publication of the *Patrimonium* **Study**, a fairly general exchange of ideas on questions concerning the Bible, antirevolutionary principles, and Christian politics has gradually begun in antirevolutionary circles. This broadening of the discussion makes it desirable to gradually move away from the format of a mere dialogue on these questions.

The Core Issue at Stake Here

A theologian has sometimes been described as someone who first throws a huge amount of dust into the air and then complains that he can no longer see anything. Unfortunately, this danger threatens not only theologians. Many a discussion between non-theologians has already ended in an impenetrable cloud of dust. Therefore, I will make another attempt to explain as clearly as possible the point at which I began our discussion, thus fully maintaining the central content of my two previous contributions.[6]

To this end, I can best relate to the content of my initial response to the Patrimonium **Study**. This response had a very limited objective. Its central focus was not to assess the entire content of the **Study**, but on assessing its *principial structure*. What struck me was the way in which the **Study** sought to ground its practical-political proposals in a *principled approach*. I recognized in it a way of thinking and perspective regarding the interrelationship of the Bible, principles, and politics, which was particularly prevalent in Anti-Revolutionary circles between the two world wars, but which, upon closer inspection, is certainly questionable.

"Eternal" and "Derived" Principles

To briefly and therefore somewhat crudely characterize this view that has been common in A.R. circles, let me note the fact that (at least in theory) the connection between the Bible and politics was envisioned as a path [317] that we had to travel in a

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6 "Hoe geven wij antwoord aan deze tijd?", *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde,* oktober 1963; "Bijbel en politiek", *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde,* April 1964. The English translations of these have been provided here above together with J J Rippen's reply and that in *Patrimonium* of M W Schakel.

series of stages. That was the context in which the terms "eternal principles" and "derived principles" were often used.[7]

The first step, then, was to search with faith, deducing from God's revelation in Scripture, nature, and history a number of *"eternal principles"*: principles that could retain their meaning forever, since they were derived directly from God's revelation. Examples of these "universal principles" were that the government is God's servant, that it is called to benefit the people, and that Christian parents should give their children a Christian upbringing.

This was often followed by the second stage of the so-called *"derived principles"*. These were concrete political guidelines, *derived and deduced* from the Bible or from the aforementioned "eternal principles" with the help of a so-called scripturally faithful theology. They were inherently considered less immutable and reliable than the "eternal principles," because fallible human reason had played a role in their derivation; however, it was believed that, if they were derived as accurately as possible, they should still be accepted as valid principles. Examples of these "derived principles" were: the principle of free trade in international economic life, the principle of a balanced budget (based on the principle that the State should refrain from directly influencing economic life of a different nature), the ban on cremation, and so on.[8]

The final stage on the road from the Bible to practical politics was the place where eventually the aforementioned derived principles were to be applied precisely and faithfully to the political circumstances of the day. That was thought to be the way, at least in theory; but, between the wars, in practical politics the Anti-Revolutionary politicians could only adhere to this order as well as to the content of these "derived principles" to a limited degree - and, in my opinion, fortunately so.[9]

The Path of the Study

What struck me from the outset in the *Patrimonium* **Study** is that, even though the terms "eternal principles" and "derived principles" are not used, a similar articulation is nevertheless maintained concerning the path from the Bible to practical politics.

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7 BCW Note: This is also a point of reference when Goudzwaard outlined his "Grote Taak voor Kleine Mensen" (1969) translated as **A Christian Political Option** (1972) in a chapter V. "The Unique Radicality of the Gospel" pp.25-30 at pp.26-28.

8 BCW Note: This is a further elaboration of the presumed analytical process that is involved with the task for political science to work with so-called "derived principles". See ftn 12 p.192 above.

9 BCW Note: What is noteworthy here is that Goudzwaard is taking to task a view of a "Christian political outlook" that is abstract without due recognition of the context in which this process from the Bible to practical politics is to be followed. Is it the Christian citizen/voter, the members of the local chapter of the party, those in the party who are formulating the party's manifesto, or the caucus of elected members considering how to vote on legislative proposals that are before the Parliament?

First, in Chapter I, certain principles are gleaned from the Bible that bear a strong resemblance to the aforementioned "eternal principles": namely, divine ordinances, the so-called "cornerstones", such as authority, marriage, property, and religion. These are viewed from and posed in the light of the Biblical concept of justice and responsibility. In the subsequent chapters, a whole series of practical-political pronouncements are concluded (either on the basis of these "cornerstones", or on the basis of a direct appeal to the Bible, or on the basis of this concept of justice and responsibility) and these are identical to the well-known "derived principles"; these then, for example, become pronouncements, with the following implications:

> Government-owned enterprises are wrong;
> It is fundamentally wrong to fuel inflation to combat unemployment.
> [318] The Government has nothing to distribute; it is God who distributes.

These are statements, that set forth independent of the specific political situation, enabling an *a priori* conclusion to be made as to which practical Government decisions are fundamentally correct and which are not. And from these a fundamentally safe path is prescribed in advance to be followed by Christian politicians based on God's revelation.

The Necessity of Critical Reflection

Because of this similarity with such a principled approach, the publication of the *Patrimonium* **Study** has, in my opinion, provided a good opportunity for us to explicitly raise the question once again in *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* as to whether we are on the right track with such a view of the relationship between the Bible and practical politics - which gives rise to considerable doubt as to the validity of "positing" such "derived principles" (i.e. precise prescriptions of political conduct which claim to give *a priori* certainty about the fundamental soundness of certain practical-political measures).

For many - and this probably also applies to Mr. Rippen - it is strange, and may even be invalid, to raise such a question about the validity of this process. It is, after all, certain that in political life, too, God's Word must be a lamp to our feet and a light on our path; a lamp that sheds unchanging light and even brightens the darkness in the remotest corners of our political activities. If this be so - and I truly think it to beso - what would be wrong with directly placing all facets of practical political action in the light of concrete political guidelines based on God's Word? After all - so it would then be argued - such formulated rules *are concrete*, i.e., speaking out directly about practical political matters, and so can never be grounds for criticism: for the Word of God is concrete, it has an all-encompassing meaning, it provides light for the solution of the most practical problems.

Nor can criticism be levelled at the fact that we are dealing with the formulation and derivation of *rules* that (as "rules") thus bear a naturally *fixed and unchangeable* character: for the Word of God is firm and unchangeable; the law of God is valid always and everywhere. And finally - so it is concluded - it cannot be objected that we are not *able* to find and formulate such rules: for God's law is *know*able, God has revealed His will; this will is understandable to all who will hear.

This reasoning is perfectly clear and transparent - and, as can be seen, there's no arguing with it. It is therefore not surprising that Mr. Rippen has objected in so many words that, by attacking the "positing" of such practical-political guidelines for conduct derived from God's Word, I am in fact in danger of denying the *concreteness*, as well as the *immutability* and *knowability* of God's law and revelation: precisely, as I have just now tried to discuss such a view.

Hence the serious and warning tone of Mr. Rippen's article. For him, attacking the possibility and permissibility of practical-political guidelines based on Scripture is, [319] if I understand him correctly, inextricably linked to a denial of the concreteness, certainty, and knowability of God's revelation.

A Presupposition

All of this would indeed be true, were it not for the fact that a certain presupposition had been tacitly introduced into the above line of thought. It is this: that the characteristics of God's Word and law mentioned here - in my opinion, quite rightly - concreteness, immutability, everlasting knowability, might and could apply equally to what we ourselves believe we can *deduce* from this Word and this law. But that is precisely what must be denied. For as soon as we attempt to cast what we ourselves have understood from God's Word and law in the form of certain *unchangeably*-valid rules of conduct, which we furthermore make *concrete,* and which we attempt to formulate in such a way that they clearly and always indicate the path to be followed in politics - then this does not appear to lead to the flourishing of a truly Christian politics, but rather to a rigidification and narrowing of what God's law actually has to say to us in the complex problems of practical politics.

The correctness of this observation is evident from our own anti-revolutionary past.[10] To begin with, there is the undeniable historical fact that many of the concrete,

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10 BCW Note: Dutch: *ons eigen anti-revolutionaire verleden*. I have not capitalised "anti-revolutionary", and Goudzwaard may well be referring to a social movement and not simply assuming that the movement is contained within the limits of the ARP organisation. This analysis aims at renewing the anti-revolutionary movement in its Christian direction. This is spelt out in further detail in his contribution "Economisch Politiek" in W.P. Berghuis & H. Algra, (eds) **Anti-revolutionair bestek. Toelichting op het beginsel- en algemeen staatkundig program van de Anti-revolutionaire Partij,** (N.V. Uitgevers-maatschappij de Graafschap, Aalten 1964) pp. 248-315. (Anti-Revolutionary Audit: Explanation of the Principles and General Political Programme of the Anti-Revolutionary Party.) That an extended essay on "Article 17 - Economic Policy", seeks to explain the intrinsic connection between the party's publicly avowed religious commitment and its concrete political contribution.

clear, and unchangeable rules of political conduct, derived from scripture and history in the past, were simply swept away in the storm of time. This is, of course, no coincidence. The only reasonable explanation for this is that these regulations were simply not *designed* for the new social, economic, and political circumstances that were emerging. They were *designed* only for the circumstances that prevailed at the time, i.e., at the time of their "derivation", and as they were known to the persons who had then derived them.

Anyone who calmly considers this will conclude with me that maintaining *consistent*, concrete behavioural norms under *ever-changing* circumstances must necessarily lead to a *rigid* understanding of what God's law has to say for political life. After all, instead of reflecting concretely on what God requires of us *here* and *now* by virtue of his law in each new situation, we then fall back on an *uninterrupted repetition of stereotypical actions*, which may once have had their appropriate place in a much earlier situation. We then, in effect, renounce God's law, namely, by assuming that what was commanded in practical-political action in past situations by God's unchangeable law "will still apply" today - thus misusing the immutability of God's law as a cover for not having to ask God's unchangeable will every day, in the circumstances of that moment.

We can, however, go one step further. Our own history shows that formulating concrete, clear, and unchangeable behavioural prescriptions not only leads to a rigidification of the meaning of God's law, but also to a narrowing of it. For it is again an undeniable historical fact that, over the course of time, these derived concrete behavioural prescriptions have been proven incapable [320] of even approximately allowing an encompassing of the totality of political issues.

Their scope is so exceptionally limited: the more "concrete" they are, the more limited the "range" of political problems to which they can be applied! The result, however, has been that numerous political problems (or aspects of political problems) have, as it were, become suspended in a vacuum of principle; and this for the simple reason that no concrete "principle" was available for these more recent problems.

Thus, a degree of "neutral" objectivity gradually arose in the political arena, due to the fact that a way to follow such "principles" could not be found; thus also arose the dreadful distinction between "principled" and "practical" problems. People began to consider "principled" only those problems that could be covered by self-made and self-derived prescriptions.

As if God's law wasn't directly relevant to all political problems! In this way, the so-called "derived principles" - understood in the sense of concrete political codes of conduct - have contributed to a gross narrowing of the meaning of God's law. A narrowing that is inherent in the very nature of these "principles": for the limitation

of their scope flows directly from the limited scope of the human mind involved in their "derivation."

The conclusion of all this, in my opinion, is obvious. Precisely because we profess God's law as an *unchangeable* law, which remains valid even under *changing* circumstances; and precisely because we see this law as a *concrete* and *all-encompassing* law, applicable even to the furthest reaches of practical-political problems - precisely for that reason we must break with the positing and application of unchangeable and concrete political codes of conduct.

For these codes of conduct, by their very nature, are not valid under changing circumstances, and they are precisely incapable of shedding light on every corner of political problems. They therefore detract from our own confession of the immutability and all-encompassing nature of God's law. The positing and application of these codes may be understandable in a time when strong rationalist influences prevailed; today we must see through the hidden arrogance of human reason, *which has sought to surpass the unchangeable, concrete, all-encompassing and ever-knowable law of God,* and to see through and thus break with this view.

Are Principles to Exit?

It therefore proves impossible for us humans to formulate the content of God's law for political life in such a way that, under all possible circumstances, both present and future, we can concretely, directly, clearly, and radically deduce from this formulation the path we must follow by virtue of God's living and unchangeable law. In this context, however, an important question arises. For if, on this basis, the meaning of the so-called "derived principles"- in the sense of concrete political rules of action - must be questioned, doesn't this also place dynamite under *every* Christian principled political policy?

After all, if all our concrete political pronouncements are subject to the influence of time and can only ever cover a limited area, how can a fundamental stability [321] and continuity be achieved in our political behaviour? Doesn't this sweep away all solid Christian political principles from under our feet in one fell swoop?

The decisive factor in the answer to this question is what we actually mean by "Christian principles." If we cannot view them other than as practical-political guidelines, in which a selection between fundamentally good and fundamentally bad political measures has already been decided; and as guidelines that we ourselves must base our own actions - yes, then these "fixations" are indeed ultimately wrested from our hands. But principles *need not*, indeed *must not*, be understood this way!

Principles, as Groen van Prinsterer once said, are those truths that are instilled in the heart of the simplest Christian by the Holy Spirit.[11] The authorship of true Christian principles therefore rests not with us, but with the Holy Spirit. And it is not we who adopt principles, but the principles adopt us, impelling us, because we are *captivated* by them.

No one will ever be able to wrest these principles[12] from us. Nor will they ever result in a rigidity or distortion of the meaning of God's law: for it is the law itself that is written within us by the Spirit. And finally, the stability and continuity of Christian political action are also given with *these* principles. For the law that the Spirit writes in us is not different every moment and not different for every person: no, it is one law, given to us, a law resting in God's enduring and clear Revelation, and of which clear testimony can thus be carried by our human formulations, however imperfect. Formulations that, of course, cannot precisely indicate what concrete behaviour is required by God's law in all the different circumstances - but that can point to the enduring political norms of faith, which are valid in *all* situations, and which inspire us to be active in His service, moment by moment, in the freedom to which Christ calls us, even in political life.

These faith norms and truths of faith are the backbone of every Christian policy. And they must not - it is well to quickly add - be diminished and reduced to a general "commandment of love". For - and I agree with Mr. Rippen - these faith truths also encompass the faithful recognition of all of God's institutions, including, for example, those of authority and marriage.[13] Just as they encompass the recognition that Christ's Kingship is a universal Kingship, extending not only to the State, but to all spheres of human society: so that the Government is [322] obligated to use its power justly in Christ's service, in observance of the direct calling that emanates from Christ to all His subjects in their own social spheres. These formulations are again flawed, but which nevertheless express something of the intuition of faith that every Christian

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11 **BG Ftn.2 Ongeloof *en Revolutie***, ed. Kemink, p.8
BCW Note: **Unbelief and Revolution** edited and translated by Harry van Dyke. Lexham Press 2018, p.5 reads: *A general statement of "Christian principles" is vague enough to evoke no substantial opposition; and to speak of such principles in connection with history and politics involves little risk of being accused of being accused or suspected of narrow-mindedness so long as one abstains from specifying what he is referring to. For this reason i wish to reiterate right here, in the introduction to my lectures, that i mean by these principles the truths records in Holy Scripture and imprinted by the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the simplest Christian.*

12 **BG Ftn.3** Perhaps to the surprise of some, "principles" appears here instead of "principle", a plural form. Personally, I have nothing against speaking in the plural, as long as one always remembers that these different principles should not be viewed in isolation, but always acquire their political meaning in their mutual context.

13 **BG Ftn 4:** Cf. **Bijbel en Politiek** p.104: "The Government must always faithfully account for parental authority as a divine institution!"
BCW Note: see above "Bible and Politics", from p.202 above: "... the Government, ... will always faithfully account for parental authority as a Divine institution."

politician - yes, even the simplest Christian - has through listening to God's revelation.

To Ask

Mr. Rippen raised several objections in his article, to which I have not yet adequately addressed in the above. I will address these objections as sharply as possible.

1. *Commandments "you shall not steal" and "you shall not commit adultery" are not commandments that can only be understood by faith. The Bible says that even the Gentiles have the work of the law written on their hearts*. Undoubtedly, a certain knowledge of the law is possible even without Christian faith. But is *that* knowledge sufficient to conduct a Christian policy? No; that doesn't get us anywhere. To implement a Christian policy requires nothing less than knowledge of the spirit of the law, a knowledge that is only possible through living faith in Christ. In other words: not only the works of the law, but also the law itself must be written on our hearts!

2. *But isn't the approach followed here essentially the same as that followed by the "breakthrough"*[14]?

Characteristic of the "breakthrough" is that it rests on two foundations: first, the recognition of an ever-increasingly neutral *business* sector in politics, and second, the denial of the immutable nature of God's law by accepting the thesis of the *"Gebot der Stunde"* (the commandment that every hour is different). From the foregoing, I hope it has become sufficiently clear that I radically reject both foundations.

To begin with, there can be no neutrality whatsoever regarding principles written in our hearts: for there is no political problem in which the orientation of our hearts is not expressed in the way we test, weigh, and decide. However, there is neutrality regarding principles we have established ourselves based on the Bible: for these, as we have seen, can only cover a portion of the political problem.

And regarding the second foundation: a concrete political confession of faith regarding the unchangeable task of government, as just stated, is incompatible with a "Gebot der Stunde" (Law of the Time of Day). Speaking of an ever-equal and ever-valid law of God, of enduring divine institutions and creation ordinances, is a thorn in the side of the "Breakthrough" movement. Therefore, our position regarding the "Breakthrough" is by no means relinquished on this point. It is also by no means necessary to deny that the battle against the so-called "derived" principles was initiated first and most vigorously by the "Breakthrough".[15]

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14 BCW Note: "doorbraak" See Herman Dooyeweerd **Roots of Western Culture** 1979 "Introduction" pp.1-6. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breakthrough_(Dutch_political_history)

15 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is aware that it is not himself that has initiated the criticism of so-called principles derived from the Biblical text. In reckoning with the "Doorbraak" movement's contribution, he suggests the **Study** is far more caught up in that post-World-War II movement than they realize.

3. *But doesn't this approach, in fact, constitute a radical break with the entire Anti-Revolutionary past?* Undoubtedly, this break exists in the appreciation of the so-called "derived principles", common between the two world wars (or, [323] if one prefers, after 1900). But if one looks further, the resulting approach can be characterized as a restoration of, rather than a break with, the classical Anti-Revolutionary heritage. In addition to the already quoted statement by Groen van Prinsterer, I would refer specifically to Kuyper's formulation of Article 3 in the old Anti-Revolutionary Principles Program of 1878, where we read:

> *Also in the field of religious policy, they (the ARP) profess the eternal principles of God's Word; however, the State authority is bound to God's ordinances neither directly [as in Israel: BG], nor through the pronouncement of any Church, but only in the conscience of government officials.*

I think it may be said that the foregoing is little more than a contemporary rendition of what is written here.

Liberal Influence

In conclusion to this article, I would like to pay some attention to the question of whether or not the **Study**[16] exhibits a liberal influence, partly in connection with the oral explanation by Mr. Rippen, from which it became clear that my accusation of liberal influence was perceived by him as a very unfair accusation.

To properly understand Mr. Rippen's position, it is necessary to know that the entire *Patrimonium* **Study** is embroidered on the theme of the possibility - or the certainty - of the arrival of a totalitarian State; a State in which lawlessness will reign supreme and in which all divine ordinances, including those of authority, property, and marriage, will be trampled underfoot. To resist this enemy from the outset, the **Study** arrives at such extremely radical practical prescriptions as:

- in principle, no subsidies
- in principle, no government enterprises
- in principle, no interference with existing property rights etc. etc.

These are prescriptions, therefore, expressly intended as bulwarks against the arrival of a totalitarian State. I would therefore like to recognise, with Mr. Rippen, that these prescriptions are in no way intended to glorify "property" and "freedom" as such, as in the manner of liberalism. This accusation was certainly not in mind when I wrote

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16 **BG Ftn. 5** It concerned the place of the "cornerstones" in the Study - another point raised by Mr. Rippen - I would simply like to note that: a. Mr. Rippen stated twice in his previous response that - when these "cornerstones" are viewed in conjunction with their background - they may indeed be considered foundations of the Study, and b. my criticism is not directed against "property, authority, marriage, and religion" as such, but merely against the prevailing a priori rules of political conduct implicitly derived from them. Therefore, nothing would change for me if Mr. Rippen were to delete the famous ten rules from the Study. The pattern-based rules of political conduct, however they may have been "derived," would remain fully intact even after this intervention.

about a liberal influence on the **Study**. If I had foreseen that my words would be interpreted in this way, I would have, for that reason, already refrained from any talk about "liberal influences."

This, of course, does not mean that I now harbor no reservations whatsoever about the strongholds thus erected (although I agree with Mr. Rippen that in our circles the possibility of the arrival of a totalitarian State is definitely underestimated). For the end simply [324] does not justify the means. Aside from the objections listed in the first part of this article against the promulgation of such precise behavioural guidelines, it should also be noted that, in my opinion, Mr. Rippen has pushed his strongholds far too far forward in the field - so that they must be partially abandoned before they are even engaged. In other words, in my opinion, Mr. Rippen has allowed himself in his **Study** to be determined too much by the opponent he fears; he has been seduced into a kind of reactionary attitude. And since totalitarianism and liberalism relate to each other as action and reaction, it is not at all surprising that the practical outcomes and proposals in the **Study**, considered in themselves, give a liberal impression and run almost entirely parallel to those that someone of orthodox liberal persuasion might have arrived at. However, I remain convinced that Mr. Rippen rejects liberalism in its religious roots as much as any other Anti-Revolutionary.[17]

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17 BCW Note: What is notable in this exchange with the fellow anti-revolutionaries of *Patrimonium* is that Goudzwaard is busy forming political argument with fellow Christians in the understanding that Christian politics involves confronting the views and legislative rationale of other Christians, whether in his own party or elsewhere involved in the political arena.

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A LAST WORD

J. J. RIPPEN

It is chivalrous of Mr. Goudzwaard to grant me "a last word". That gives me all the more reason to discuss things with him in a chivalrous, and even brotherly, manner.

After his ***Postscript of a Discussion***,[1] which he kindly sent me before its publication, I certainly no longer find this difficult. This review has surprised and delighted me.

On some points, we still disagree (nor do we have to), but on the main points, Mr. Goudzwaard has corrected his position in such a way that little remains other than a difference in wording. Where he declared in his first critique of the **Study** that

> *the actual character of all pronouncements in Holy Scripture is no other than that of announcement,*[2]

he now declares:

> *These norms of faith and truths of faith are the backbone of every Christian policy. And they must not - it is good to add this immediately - be thinned down and reduced to a general 'commandment of love.' Doesn't - and I agree with Mr. Rippen - these truths of faith also include the faithful recognition of all of God's institutions, including,* ***for example, authority***[3] ***and marriage****?*

Furthermore, he speaks of "authority, property, and marriage" as "divine ordinances". Elsewhere, he noted: *"Speaking of an ever-equal and ever-valid law of God, of enduring institutions of God and creation ordinances, is a thorn in the side of the breakthrough"*, thus acknowledging creation ordinances as well. Such statements (325) have delighted me so much that I consider it irrelevant if he still objects to using the word "cornerstones" for these fixed "institutions".[4]

He no longer states that God's law is only known through faith in Christ (how else could unbelievers be judged), but that that law applies to all. He accepts that the texts from Romans I cited make this sufficiently clear. The reservation he makes (not the law, but the works of the law) is, in my opinion, not essential; clearly, the content of the law is meant, for they will be judged by it. From all this, it is therefore established between us:

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1 BCW Note: The reference is to the immediately preceding article in this collection "Review of a Discussion" - *Nabeschouwing*.

2 BCW Note: The actual statement reads: *Want het eigenlijke karakter van alle uitspraken in de Heilige Schrift* is geen ander dan dat der *verkindiging*, dan dat der ***openbaring*** van God in Jezus Christus. Want de Bijbel spreekt - om een woord van prof. Mekkes te citeren - steeds vanuit één brandpunt; en dit brandpunt is "de Gezondene van de Vader". (316-317 "How geven wij "Antwoord aan deze tijd"? ARS 33: 304 - 321). See the translation page 170 above. One may wonder whether the comma after "verkondiging" meant Rippen read it as a distinct statement rather than one elaborated in what followed. The word can mean announcement, proclamation.

3 BCW Note: Goudzwaard was most likely implying "public authority" having used the terms rather than as it now reads as a general classifcation. The bold emphasis is added by Rippen.

4 BCW Note: But it is not merely a matter of nomenclature.

a. that there are fixed ordinances of creation;

b. that there are fixed institutions of God, which are universally valid and are even known by pagans;

c. that God's will not only proclaims, but also establishes the law, and also teaches us how to act according to His will.

On this main point, there is therefore practical agreement of opinion, and I am very happy about that.

Before moving on to the next point, I quote Professor Herman Ridderbos from the *Gereformeerd Weekblad* of October 16th, where he concluded his article "Towards a More Evangelical Approach?" *as follows:*

> *"We must be no less wary of a Government ethic that turns the Government into the executor of the people's task.* If one does not want this to solve the problems, then my answer is that it is not in the nature of the issues life presents us to have them solved in advance; *but that it is nevertheless very worthwhile to receive some guidance in the confusion and at least not to lose sight of the past in the hazy outlook. And that is how one turns the corner between principle and politics, and it corresponds to the nature of the gospel, which is not only a message but also doctrine.*

But what should we do with these established facts? Mr. Goudzwaard is concerned that we now want to establish all sorts of "derived principles", as if they also apply forever and everywhere. Meanwhile, he wrote in Afterthought:

> *"Just as this includes the recognition that Christ's Kingship is a universal Kingship, extending not only to the state, but to all spheres of human society; so that the Government is obligated to use its power justly in Christ's service, in accordance with the legal calling that emanates from Christ to all its subjects in their own spheres of society. These formulations are again flawed, but which nevertheless express something of the intuition of faith that every Christian politician, yes, even the simplest Christian, possesses through listening to God's revelation."*

In doing so, he thus asserts, in his own chosen words (well-chosen words), sovereignty within one's own circle, and that this *"is even inherent in the simplest Christian through listening to God's revelation."* I am extremely grateful for this. For that is what *Patrimonium* also attempted with his formulations. This also shows that Mr. Goudzwaard is going to overcome his apprehension, an apprehension that may have arisen from the fierce attacks of movements such as the "Breakthrough" (326) on what Mr. Goudzwaard calls "the derivative principles between the two world wars."

We must completely dispel that apprehension. Mr. Goudzwaard never responded to my repeated reference to "The Threshing Ox," about which Paul writes that it was written for our instruction. If such a detail of the Mosaic Laws was even written for our instruction, wouldn't there be more instruction to be found in Scripture?

Mr. Goudzwaard is also afraid of rigidity. I am too. In some respects, we have indeed suffered from rigidity. We must move forward. But on the straight path. And if we have

perhaps strayed from it, we must make a "turn" - as long as that turn leads us back onto the straight path and not into twists and turns. To protect ourselves from this, we must not seek our direction by our own compass, but with God's Word as our guide. Otherwise, instead of rigidity, confusion will follow.

More than ever, we need a firm course and reliable signposts. And that's why I'm grateful that Mr. Goudzwaard doesn't want to leave the commandment of love unaddressed, but wants to help us search for more solid points. Perhaps I might offer a suggestion in this regard, one designed to advance our thinking?

Even though we recognize marriage as an institution of God, it may be necessary to remove a child from parental authority. Then there is such a case, which demonstrates that a principle cannot always and everywhere automatically apply as an iron rule. There are other principles at stake here that must be weighed against the first. But aren't we talking here about the *application* of a principle, which nevertheless leaves the principle untouched?

Finally, something concerning a minor matter. That minor matter is that I felt a little offended because Mr. Goudzwaard still believed he detected a liberal influence. Now, Mr. Goudzwaard has already said that I practically ended up with the "eternal principles" and "derived principles" of the interwar period, and it wouldn't be difficult to prove with quotations (see the Study) that we are indeed continuing in the path of Groen,[5] Sikkel,[6] Kuyper,[7] and Talma[8] and that we want to move forward in that direction. Why should we be embarrassed by that? Isn't even science built on axioms? A long time ago, there was a Mr. Pythagoras, and we still use his law in mathematics.

The aforementioned leaders, for example, saw state insurance as *emergency aid* and wanted to achieve the same restoration of independence for the "working class" that we desire. I will therefore interpret Mr. Goudzwaard's accusation to mean that the aforementioned Anti-Revolutionaries were also still under liberal influence. But I see it differently. Our party has indeed become somewhat rigid. Its attitude is still more or less determined by a reaction to the liberals of the last century, and we think too little about the future.

Mr. Goudzwaard wrote in his final piece: *"I agree with Mr. Rippen that in our circle the possibility of the arrival of a totalitarian state is definitely underestimated".*

I am grateful for that statement as well. As long as the understanding [327] grows that we must stop blaming each other for liberalism or socialism; we need each other more than ever to confront worse "isms": these are the "movements", like fascism and National Socialism, which can arise from the lack of principle (lawlessness) of the post-

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5 Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1976) https://allofliferedeemed.co.uk/groen-van-prinsterer/

6 J C Sikkel (1855-1920) https://reformedreflections.org/biography/sikkel-2.pdf

7 Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) https://allofliferedeemed.co.uk/kuyper/

8 Syb Talma (1864-1916) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syb_Talma; Gerard van Krieken, "Syb Talma: A Dutch Christian Socialist," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 393-418

Christian era. I will not tire of repeating the warning that liberalism, neo-socialism, communism, fascism, and other forms of thought are already converging to form one great unifying-ism.

It's now a matter of reshaping our attitude. Therefore, an example. Professor Rothuizen[9], in the *Gereformeerd Weekblad* (Reformed Weekly), gave a shocking account of what's happening morally in England. It's appalling what's being done and said there, but also how the decline in Christian circles is increasing. To protect ordinary Christians from theologians' condoning of these circles, reminders of the commandment of love won't help, because those people themselves operate with it. Therefore, it's necessary to *arm* these Christians with the *Word*, with *texts* ("one flesh", "what God has joined together, let no man separate", "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife", etc.). Christ defeated the great tempter, as an example to us, with literal texts.

If we hesitate to seek concrete guidance in God's Word, to study texts, and to use them (with prayer, obedience, and serious study), then we despise the weapon God has placed in our hands: the Word!

We can misuse that sword - we can be superficial or fundamentalist - but the worst would be if we *didn't* use it.

Mr. Goudzwaard wants to end the discussion with this, and I am at peace with that. If people in our circles continue to seriously investigate what fixed institutions God has, then the purpose of *Patrimonium* will have been achieved.

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9 BCW Note: https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_jaa003198901_01/_jaa003198901_01_0014.php

AR Staatkunde jrg-34 1964
Exploitatievorm voor aardgas pp.63-64

13. The form of natural gas exploitation

QUESTION AND ANSWER

QUESTION:

During the debate on the natural gas bill in the House of Representatives, the Socialist party expressed a preference for operation by a company in which the government holds the majority of shares. The Anti-Revolutionary party, on the other hand, favored Minister De Pous's proposal, in which natural gas operation would be in the hands of a purely mixed company (i.e., both government and private sector holding 50% control), but in which the government still retained the authority to set the natural gas price. Could you please clarify to what extent this practical difference stems from the difference in principles?

ANSWER:

As is well known, the Labor Party is no longer a doctrinaire advocate of socialization and government monoloy in such exploitation. These two are only advocated when they are the most effective means of serving "the public interest." This does not, however, mean that a socialist approach to these matters is no longer possible. The questions "What is effective?" and "What is the public interest?" will be answered by the Labor Party only in a socialist manner.

In the present case, one might expect the socialist to reason in a nutshell: The proven natural gas reserves are located in Dutch soil and should therefore be used in the interests of the entire Dutch nation. The criterion for the proper method of exploiting natural gas must therefore be which form of exploitation most effectively serves the economic interests of the entire nation. If exploitation were to be left entirely or only partially to the private sector, there would be no guarantee that this would indeed be achieved in the most complete way. After all, private enterprise is not focused on community interests, but on making a profit. This guarantee can certainly be largely obtained indirectly, namely by granting the government a decisive vote in setting the price of natural gas—but why, continues the socialist, choose this cumbersome, indirect method when a direct one is also possible? That only obscures the true circumstances.

The one-sidedness of this argument becomes apparent when I briefly compare the reasoning as one might encounter it from a staunch liberal. His reasoning begins at a completely different point, namely, with the interests of the large companies, which, after a long search, have proven the existence of natural gas reserves in Dutch soil. This demonstration was the fruit of private initiative. It is unjust to deny someone the fruits of their own labor. Therefore, the business community has the right to take the exploitation into its own hands. However, the state must create certain guarantees to prevent, for example, monopolistic price increases in natural gas.

When we compare these two lines of reasoning, we see that the first is based on the economic interests of the national community, and the second on the right of

individual enterprises to exploit natural resources. Here, then, we once again encounter the central contradiction between socialism and liberalism! Liberalism is characterized by an unwavering emphasis on the value of individual civil rights interests, while socialism is characterized by a steady emphasis on the economic interests of the national community.

However, we As Anti-Revolutionaries reject both emphases as one-sided, and strive for a policy in which individual and community interests are reconciled by pursuing public justice towards all, respecting each person's calling (i.e., respecting the principle of sovereignty within one's own circle); a policy in which the economic and civil rights interests of subjects are also promoted to the extent that they are of public significance for the proper functioning of all social circles and associations.

In this case, we must therefore do justice to two interests. First, the interest that the Dutch people (in their families, businesses, etc.) receive natural gas at a reasonable, low price, so that the greatest possible economic contribution to our national development is achieved. Second, however, also the interest that the private companies that have proven the gas's potential will be able to continue their independent business operations, as a "sovereign" sphere of life, through its exploitation.

Now, I believe that in the organizational structure chosen by Minister De Pous, we indeed find a fair reconciliation of these two interests. Because the structure of a mixed enterprise has been chosen, the private companies retain a large part of their development potential. On the other hand, the government, both through its partial control over the operating company and its power to set prices, has sufficient instruments at its disposal to ensure that natural gas exploitation actually benefits the well-being of the entire population. In doing so, the government will naturally have to set the price of natural gas in such a way that significant price advantages are maintained for the public and the private companies receive no more than a reasonable profit.

As an aside: it's certainly not the case that the currently chosen operating model automatically leads to very high profits for the participating companies! This is sometimes suggested by socialists, but it's at odds with the facts. Any high profits are not the result of the chosen "mixed" operating model, but of the minister's pricing policy regarding natural gas.

1967-AR Staatkunde jrg-37 1967 pp.65-74

14. ELECTORAL EPILOGUE[1]

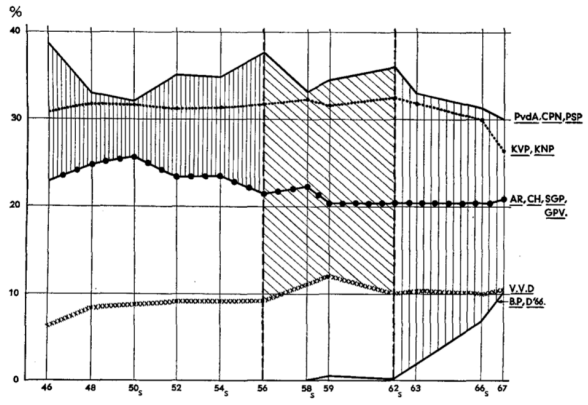
Drs. B. GOUDZWAARD

The 1967 parliamentary elections were elections whose political reverberations will resonate for a long time to come. Shifts occurred or continued, which many interpret as the beginning of the end of our current party system. It is therefore certainly not superfluous that this anti-revolutionary study organ examine in more detail some of the determining factors that have or could have led to the recent results. In doing so, I will limit myself primarily to *idealistic* factors, specifically those of a lasting, structural nature. Therefore, the more temporary influences, such as the famous "Zijlstra effect",[2] and non-ideological factors, such as the influence of television, increasing prosperity, etc., will not be analyzed here.

Long-term results

Structural influences of an ideological nature always manifest themselves in the long term. It is therefore logical to consider the recent results primarily against the background of election results since 1945. The key data are summarized in the graph below, which distinguishes between a "left" bloc (Labour Party plus [66] PSP plus CPN), a "Catholic" bloc (KVP plus KNP (Welter)), a "Protestant" bloc (ARP plus CHU plus SGP plus GPV), a "liberal" bloc (VVD), and a "new parties" bloc (Farmers' Party and D'66).[3]

The graph's lines show the post-war period divided into three periods.



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1 BCW Note: The value of this article is to be found in the attempt to understand the relationships *between* established political parties, and their State-crafting work in relation to voters in parliamentary democracies. The article draws attention to emergent and dominant cultural trends - in this case pragmatism and the impact of US "culture" upon Dutch society.

2 BCW Note: Goudzwaard refers to the impact of ARP leader Jelle Zijlstra (1918-2001), Dutch Finance Minister and Prime Minister, upon an approach to social planning based on fiscal discipline and moderating the impact of business cycles which became a taken-for-granted approach of all parties.

3 **BG Note 1:** A similar method was followed in the article Election Results 1946-1962 in *ARStaatkunde* April/ May 1962, pp. 110ff.

The *first period* is between 1946 and 1956. The dominant motif here is the gradual - partial - breakthrough process[4] of the Protestant parties in the direction of the Labour Party; a process that - partly as a result of the Indies question - was temporarily interrupted between 1946 and 1956. This dominant motif is evident in the graph from the fact that the lines of the "left" bloc and the "Protestant" bloc mirror each other from 1946 to 1956. The KVP and the VVD remain stable during this period; the "breakthrough process", at least measured in vote percentages, largely occurred outside of either party.

In the *second period* between 1956 and 1962, the dominant lines are those of the "left" and "liberal" blocs; the contrast between the Labour Party and the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), between "progressive" and "conservative", appears to be most important for undecided voters. This inverse trend of the lines is indicated by the graph's hatching.

The *third period* is from 1962 to the present. Here, we see that, up to and including the last parliamentary elections, the vote trends in the "liberal" and "Protestant" blocs have been very stable. In 1967, percentages:

	1962 (staten)	1963 (kamer)	1966 (staten)	1967 (kamer)
V.V.D.	10,0	10,3	10,0	10,7
A.R. + C.H. + G.P.V. + S.G.P.	20,1	20,3	20,5	20,9
waarvan A.R.	8,8	8,7	8,3	9,9

While there have been shifts among the Protestant parties themselves, their collective vote has been very calm and stable, as has that of the VVD. The dominant political divide of this last period is therefore neither between the Labour Party (PvdA) and the Protestant bloc, nor between the PvdA and the VVD, but between *the older major parties (KVP and PvdA) and the newer parties (the Farmers' Party and D '66).* Their lines are almost perfect mirror images of each other.

Because of the importance of this observation, a few additional comments are appropriate.

1. The figures provide little reason for the almost universally held opinion that these most recent parliamentary elections represent the major turning point in party-political relations. Rather, one can say that these last parliamentary elections have confirmed a trend that could already be seen in 1962-1963: namely, the trend of a gradual shift from the existing major parties to the emerging new *reactionary*

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4 BCW Note: Dutch: *doorbraakproces*. The terminology is important not least because of what the statistics are read to show concerning the co-operation between the *ARP* and the PvdA.

parties.[5] Despite significant differences between [67] D'66 and the Farmers' Party, they share a highly critical attitude toward *the existing party system*. There is therefore definite reason to argue that the Farmers' Party served as a pioneer for D'66, and thus that in the recent elections D'66 partially took over the political reactionary torch from the Farmers' Party. The combined trend in vote percentages for the Farmers' Party and D66 has been a very regular upward trend since 1962, including the last elections.

2. It is striking that the existing "five major parties" (KVP, PvdA, VVD, AR, and CHU) have shown varying degrees of sensitivity to the rise of these new reactionary parties. The Protestant parties and the VVD have (on balance) been the least sensitive to these new parties; the VVD and ARP even won the last elections. The most sensitive parties have undoubtedly been the KVP and the PvdA. From 1962 to 1967, the KVP's vote share plummeted from 32.5% to 26.5%; the PvdA fell from 29.9% to 23.5% during the same period. It is particularly striking that the decline accelerated in the last parliamentary elections for the KVP; in 1966, the KVP's vote share was still 30.1%. The latter can also be interpreted to mean that the process of collapse that Protestant parties had to endure from 1946 to 1956 has now also essentially reached the Catholic People's Party (KVP). But the striking difference is that this new-style breakthrough has not focused on the Labour Party, but primarily on the two new-fangled reactionary parties: D'66 and, to a lesser extent, the Farmers' Party. The Labour Party, therefore, has not benefited from the collapse in Catholic circles, which it has long anticipated and initiated,[6] and which has now finally materialized. The renewal in party relations it sought is unfolding without its involvement.
3. Finally, it is noteworthy that a modest but very clear loss of the Catholic People's Party (KVP) to the ARP can also be observed; this is particularly evident in the South. This proves that openness within Roman Catholic circles has increased not in one direction, but in general.[7]

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5 BCW Note: A question of definition is here raised: what is to be understood by the term "reactionary". Goudzwaard goes on to say that they "share a highly critical attitude toward the existing party system". This suggests a political development feeding off an electoral sense that major party co-operation is serving to marginalise dissenting voices.

6 BCW Note: Dutch: geëntameerd. This suggests an opportunistic positioning of PvdA candidates with Catholic voters. Goudzwaard however perceives that such encouragement of the Catholic voters to reconsider the way parties are aligned did not have its corresponding impact upon the PvdA itself. He will go on to explain this. He has already published an analysis of the drift in socialism in the PvdA - see "Socialistic Idealism and Opportunism" pp.66-77 above. It is also evident that the term "breakthrough" (Dutch: *doorbraak*) is related to a perceived secularisation of Dutch politics.

7 **BG Note 2:** According to the recently published survey by the Social Science Institute of the Free University, of voters who still cast their vote for the KVP in 1966, 1% voted for the ARP in 1967 (4% for D '66).

What are the underlying *structural, idealistic* factors that - besides typically temporary factors - have led to these significant shifts? I would like to mention three in particular:

a rising pragmatism,
a deconfessionalizing Catholicism in the Catholic People's Party (KVP),
a lackluster socialism in the Labour Party (PvdA).

Emerging pragmatism

Both the Farmers' Party and D'66 are characterised by a strong pragmatic[8] approach; they position themselves - as far as the Farmers' Party is concerned,[68] at least in political practice, they are independent of any intellectual foundation, focusing almost exclusively on their chosen concrete program points. This is most clearly and purely found in D'66, the party that has identified itself with the pursuit of concrete changes in our electoral and Governmental system. In the D'66 election manifesto, this political pragmatism is expressed as follows.

> *The ideologies of today's Dutch political parties no longer answer the questions that concern us. Many would rather cast their votes based on a vision of the present and future than on politically outdated principles.*

Pragmatism - as a preference for the purely programmatic - is a typical child of our times. It finds its spiritual breeding ground in the United States - the father of the pragmatist philosophy was the American William James (1842-1910) - the country where both major parties - the Republican and the Democratic parties - are both built on typically pragmatic foundations. Existing parties in the Netherlands are also increasingly influenced by pragmatism. For example, it is now a rarity for a representative in parliament to openly demonstrate the spiritual foundation from which they build their practical approach. Virtually any reference to socialism, liberalism, and/or the Christian faith "goes down badly", even in the press and on the television; it is considered nonsense - which indeed it sometimes is, but often it is not - touching on matters that are not relevant. Only "facts" are considered relevant.

Because "pragmatism" is gaining ground, especially among young people, but also among the elderly, it's not surprising that a fully pragmatic party like D'66 is now

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8 **BG Note 3:** *Pragma* means: fact; pragmatic is therefore any approach that is guided solely by "concrete facts". BCW Note: Here "pragmatism" is also related to the political mentality that "business is business", namely that the facts that are disclosed by economic analysis are the basic consideration for public policy. See also the useage of *zakelijkheid* - i.e. business-like with an emphasis upon what is efficient, supposedly what is able to get things done. In his essay "Economisch Politiek" in W.P. Berghuis & H. Algra, (eds) **Anti-revolutionair bestek. Toelichting op het beginsel- en algemeen staatkundig program van de Anti-revolutionaire Partij,** (N.V. Uitgevers-maatschappij de Graafschap, Aalten 1964) pp. 248-315. (Anti-Revolutionary Audit: Explanation of the Principles and General Political Programme of the Anti-Revolutionary Party) on the party's "Article 17 - Economic Policy", he linked the party's complacency to its accommodation to "pragmatism", "business is business", *zakelijkheid*.

entering parliament. Many voters - especially young people[9] - apparently prefer to vote solely on “factual” positions. This way, they at least don’t become “engaged” with any spiritual movement, which could lead to being looked at askance by others. Voting for D’66 is called “non-committal” voting; one does choose a side, but not a party in a spiritual sense. It seems to me that it's becoming out of fashion to be known as a liberal, a socialist - let alone a Christian. That’s why many appreciate it when even the political choice gradually drifts into the realm of spiritual colorlessness.

This should not, however, prevent us from seeing through the hollowness of this pragmatic attitude to life, even in its political ramifications. For pragmatism is fundamentally untruthful. It suggests a spiritual non-commitment where none exists. To give an example: how can D’66 ever speak of a “vision of the present and the future”, and live from it and work towards it, without having taken a spiritual side in some way? The same applies to another passage from the D’66 platform, which states that in assessing [69] income and wealth distribution, the party assumes the desirability of a “reasonable balance between social justice and economic efficiency”. This phrase is utterly meaningless; it is only stripped of its meaning when D’66 supporters *begin* to give meaning to terms like “justice” and “efficiency”. But precisely that giving of meaning can only come from the driving spiritual principles and motives that are one’s inspiration. A consistent pragmatism is self-destructive; political pragmatism exists only by the grace of its own inconsistencies.

A Deconfessionalizing Catholicism

It may have struck some that, up until now, I haven't mentioned “the revision of the electoral system," so ardently advocated by D’66. This is because, in my personal opinion, this point - at least during the elections - served more as a flash in the pan rather than actually representing something deeply held by voters. In my opinion, if D’66 had entered the elections with a different “original” point, it would have hardly cost them a single vote. It all depended upon whether that point had been chosen in such a way that it contained “criticism” of the existing “principled” parties.

But if that’s true, it automatically raises another question: why does this criticism of the existing parties resonate so well with voters? How is it that since 1962, the Labour Party (PvdA) and the Catholic People's Party (KVP), in particular, have lost such a relatively large share of their support to these new parties? There must be separate reasons for this, inherent in those parties. And there are.

As far as the KVP is concerned, in my opinion, the reason is not only increased political uncertainty, but also the presence of a Cals[10]-Bogaers[11] wing and a more

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9 **BG Note 4:** 20% of those who voted for the first time in 1967 chose D’66 (V.U. survey).

10 BCW Note: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jo_Cals

11 BCW Note: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Bogaers

liberal-leaning wing, which have entered into open political conflict with each other. Perhaps an equally important factor is the fact that the KVP's spiritual inspiration and breeding ground, which should provide its internal unifying force and the dynamism for its external political action, has recently been eroding. This process is partly related to what is referred to in KVP circles as the party's "deconfessionalization".

There are several aspects to the so-called "deconfessionalization", advocated, in particular, by many KVP youth. A positive aspect, for example, is what has been termed the pursuit of "declericalization", that is, the effort to escape any direct influence of the ecclesiastical-institutional teaching authority. This effort has been largely accomplished, even to such an extent that the KVP itself has been shocked by it (Mgr. Bluyssen[12]). Another aspect of the pursuit of "deconfessionalization", however, is the desire to reduce Christian "input" in politics to more limited proportions. This input should only take place as a shaping of politically relevant "spiritual values" based on Christian conviction. Some KVP members add that these values can be shared equally by Christians and non-Christians, so that both can be "inspired" by them. The "Christianity" of a party like the KVP, with such a complete deconfessionalization, would, if I understand it correctly [70], only be apparent from its appeal to "values" such as "justice", "freedom", "free development of personality", which in their origin stem from the Gospel or are related to it.

I must honestly admit that I do not at all welcome this aspect of the deconfessionalization process. It is well known that within KVP circles, this is partly based on certain pronouncements of the Vatican Council, including those concerning the "autonomy of the inner world".[13] But wasn't the spirit of this Council rather that people wanted to be inspired and addressed anew by the Gospel, and to pass it on in its concrete meaning for our time? Doesn't the lesson of the Council for the KVP rather lie in the fact that, as a political party, globality and relevance of the Gospel must not be neglected in its direct relevance for the political questions of our time?

I pose these questions because these are matters of great importance. In my opinion, if the KVP were to continue on the path of deconfessionalization, as described above, it would undermine any striving for a single, overarching Christian Democratic party. Moreover, I believe that by deconfessionalizing the KVP sells itself short. By deconfessionalizing in the above sense, the KVP paves the way, internally, for a march toward the purely programmatic; in practice, the process of deconfessionalization could serve as a precursor to the triumph of pragmatism within

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12 BCW Note: https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Bluyssen

13 BCW Note: Dutch: *autonomie van het binnenwereldlijke*. Goudzwaard refers to *Gaudium et Spes* (Joys and Hopes) a major Pastoral Constitution from the Vatican Council, published December 1965, defining the Catholic Church's role in the modern world, and challenging the processes of secularisation with a view of the "autonomy of the inner world" that problems should be solved at the lowest possible level (local) rather than by a central authority - the principle of subsidiarity.

this party. And precisely because of this, a party like the KVP could lose the only remaining appeal it possesses to voters. In my opinion, the only thing a fully deconfessionalized KVP can retain in terms of its own distinctive spiritual heritage is its desire for political and social synthesis. a desire that, incidentally, goes back deep into the past, to the origins of the Thomistic view of society.

An Uninspired Socialism

There is a certain tragedy in the Labour Party's development. This party was established to give shape to the renewal of Dutch party relations; a desire for renewal, fueled by an inspiring conviction: democratic socialism. This inspiring socialism was nothing less than the focal point of all the Labour Party's political expressions; and it made that party a compelling one, no matter how much one might disagree with it on principle. This spiritual focus was, for example, sufficiently strong to allow the view within the PvdA that the choice for or against socialization was one of expediency, namely, expediency with regard to the creation of a democratic-socialist society. The creation of that society was the point; and they had the courage to relativize the political paths towards it from the outset. Whether that goal would be achieved through socialization, through a general interest commission in large public limited companies, or through other means, was considered of secondary importance.

The double tragedy of the Labour Party now is that, firstly, the renewal of party relations threatens to unfold without its knowledge, and secondly, that the Labour Party [71] has largely lost its inspiring, unifying conviction, its guiding intellectual focus. As a result, it has become more or less rudderless; on the one hand, it is awaiting the new inspiration that new parties like D'66 could offer the Dutch party system, and on the other hand, it is strongly open to new left-wing influences like those of **Tien over Rood.** These latter influences, however, are once again typically programmatic;[14] influences that once again centralize old socialist *methods and*

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[14] **BG Note 5:** See also the name: "Ten over Red"; this movement chooses ten program points as its hallmark.
BCW Note: **Tien over Rood**, was the title of a New left pamphlet in the Labor Party (PvdA). It alludes to the game of billiards with a strategic shot of one's ball bouncing off other balls on the table.
Tien over Rood: ***uitdaging van Nieuw Links aan de PVDA*** Samenstellers: Hans van den Doel et al. Polak & Van Gennep, Amsterdam 1966.
https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/10913/7/10%20over%20rood%20-%20Nieuw%20Links.pdf
The opening lines of this letter read: *This letter is a challenge to the Labour Party. It is written from the conviction that the largest Dutch socialist party*
a. is unclear regarding its principles;
b. to the extent that clarity exists, often exhibits conservative characteristics;
c. does insufficient justice to democracy in its actions, both internally and externally.
The PvdA's policy was unclear when it came to taking a position on the Vietnam issue. The party board sent the Americans a rather unrelated letter; the parliamentary group in the House of Representatives initially saw no difference in this with the clearly dissenting Ruygers motion; the parliamentary group in the Senate distanced itself with obscure arguments from a motion from the PSP, which, in essence, was almost identical to the letter from the party board. The Labour Party's policy regarding development aid was unclear. While all official party documents present development aid as the most important socialist task of the times, there is no evidence that the party dares to draw the full consequences in its Government policy.
Note: PSP Pacifist Socialist Party that dissented from the moderate stance of the PvdA.

approaches and do not contribute to the restoration and renewal of an inspiring, unifying political vision.

In my opinion, there is an inextricable link between the rise of pragmatism in politics and party choice on the one hand, and the uninspired, uninspiring attitude of both the KVP and the PvdA on the other.

In my opinion, voters who voted for a party like D'66 have done nothing more than draw the consequences from what they already encountered in their own parties: a largely soulless politics and a penchant for the - so deceptive - purely programmatic. Only truly lived, truly guiding spiritual convictions are a match for pragmatism in politics; not those convictions that are held only in name, and of which one is more or less ashamed in public.

The Anti-Revolutionary Course

Meanwhile, all this should not tempt us to harbor the conviction that these important shifts in the spiritual habits of parties and voters are happening outside of ourselves. The flight into the purely programmatic - loudly praised by many as an act of great courage - is no less important to us than to others. And the question of whether the Gospel is indeed the driving force of our political action cannot be asked too often or too persistently in our time. In other parties, people talk about deconfessionalization; but aren't we Anti-Revolutionaries also, *in fact*, surrendering to it? I realize this is a bold question; but bold questions can sometimes be very useful.

However, we cannot stop at these isolated questions and observations. We must also reconsider the task and place of our party in this day and age. This "task" is paramount, and the "place" of our party is subordinate to it; the ARP must never be considered or maintained as an end in itself.

By way of concluding this article, I would like to make two further comments about the "contemporary" task and place of the ARP.[15]

a. Pragmatism as a Challenge

If pragmatism is truly gaining ground within existing political parties, and even leading the significant entry of new political parties, then for a party like [72] the Anti-Revolutionary Party, this represents a life-and-death challenge! We can no longer simply delineate our fronts against the existing currents of socialism and liberalism, that are *spiritually* languishing.

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15 BCW Note: We read this now and note how Goudzwaard's analysis prefigures the developments that would come in the years ahead that saw the merger of the three major Christian parties to form the Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA).

As a Christian political party, we will also and above all have to prove ourselves against *political pragmatism*, which ignores any direct spiritual foundation as a source of political inspiration.

It is crucial to point out that this "realization" is not yet achieved until the hidden spiritual motivations of pragmatic political parties and their leaders have been unmasked. The ARP will only have proven itself in the face of pragmatism in politics *when it is simultaneously a fully principled and fully programmatic party*; in other words: when it pursues a concrete and fully developed program that truly draws its justification from the Gospel to its core.[16]

For it can fail in the face of political pragmatism in two ways. It can fail by merely appealing to the Gospel without giving any clear political elaboration across the entire spectrum of political issues; or it can fail by shaping a program and a concrete policy that cannot be enlivened by and motivated from the Gospel. Either way, the ARP would be slowly but surely digging its own grave.

A hopeless situation? A battle lost in vain? Absolutely not. Whoever says or thinks so has lost the understanding that the Gospel's reach is not limited to "spiritual" matters, but encompasses the *entirety* of life for the *entire* world. Kuyper put it this way in his day:

> *People always tend to get stuck in the spiritual, always moving in the same circle of thoughts, and thereby failing to preach the full Christ, whose Gospel so clearly shows that He also wanted to influence social life, judged it as it was, and sanctified it for its improvement.*[17]

In other words: we can also properly wage the battle against political pragmatism. Provided we don't let our political stance be determined by the *defense* of a Christian party formation, rather than by *the offensive of the Gospel itself*! For let us not misunderstand our task as Christians in politics: that task is not to "derive" some program points from the Gospel through rational reasoning - cultural optimism still bothers us - but that task is to carry forward what the Gospel *itself*, inherently, has to say regarding the political events of our time. And that is incredibly concrete, direct, sparing nothing and no one. Even our existing societal structures do not escape unscathed from the relentless, critical scrutiny of that Gospel.

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16 BCW Note: *anders gezegd: wanneer zij een concreet en uitgewerkt program nastreeft, dat tot in'zijn vezelen zijn gerechtigheid ontvangt vanuit het Evangelie.*

17 **BG Ftn 6 De Christus en de sociale noden**, blz. 53. (Christ and Social Needs)
BCW Note: This refers to De Christus en de sociale nooden en Democratische klippen.
Amsterdam, J.A. Wormser September 1895. Translated as "'Christ and the Needy'; 'The Reefs of Democracy' in **On Charity and Justice. Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology.**
Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press 2022.
Men blijft altoos hangen in het geestelijke, steeds in éénzelf- den kring van gedachten omloopende, en laat daardoor na den vollen Christus te prediken, wiens Evangelie zoo klaarlijk toont, dat hij ook op het sociale leven wilde inwerken, het oordeel- de, gelijk het was, en het tot beter heiligen wilde.

Wherever these structures themselves give rise to sin and to the rooting of social injustices, the Gospel stands, as it were, "programmatically" against them. And our very modest task is to allow the voice of that Gospel to be heard in our own lives, but also in our social coexistence; to bear witness to it in all our human frailty.

[73] **b. The Catholicity of Front Formation**

Finally, we must also draw conclusions from recent developments and shifts regarding the ARP's *place* in our national political life. Against the backdrop of advancing pragmatism, deconfessionalizing Catholicism in the Catholic People's Party (KVP), and disinspired socialism in the Labour Party, the main consequence, in my view, is that the ARP can and must make a significant contribution in the long term to the establishment of a political concentration of all those who - regardless of their church background - advocate a concrete and consciously *Evangelical*, non-pragmatic politics, even in the present day, and are open to the socially critical function of that Gospel.[18]

This is a long-term endeavour, and I'm leaving it entirely open whether this national concentration should consist of a single party formation, or whether the ARP should be absorbed into that single party formation. This isn't because I'd shy away from speaking out clearly here, but simply because committing to such concrete future forms - I'm not talking about a joint *reflection* on them - would be unwise and premature.

For we are now at the beginning of developments, the course of which is by no means foreseeable, and whose progression must be somewhat understood in order to arrive at more concrete proposals. Three developments, of perhaps decisive significance, are particularly uncertain: *first*, the further course of the deconfessionalization process within the KVP (will it continue unchanged, or will opposing forces develop?); *second*, the process of reflection within the World Council of Churches (will the reflection there on the significance of the Gospel for modern social issues bear good and more concrete fruit?); and *third*, the position of our own ARP (will we succeed in actually giving substance to the slogan of a policy "from the inherent radicality of the Gospel"?)

In my opinion, the concrete paths to regrouping will depend directly on how these three processes develop. This can only be determined in conjunction with them.

What can, in my opinion, already be established, however, is that the proponents of such a consciously Evangelical national concentration cannot and should not be sought solely within the "reformed sector".[19] Nor is this criterion indicated in the

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18 **BG Note 7** I deliberately present social criticism here as a function of the Gospel, not as an end in itself; the radicality of the Gospel must not be identified with radicalism.

19 BCW Note: Dutch "gereformeerde gezindte"

ARP's program of principles when characterizing the term "anti-revolutionary direction". The only criterion used there is - quite rightly - focused on political relations, namely, the willingness to agree with the confession that Government and people are subject to the power of Christ and must listen to His Law and Gospel. The ARP should now open its [74] doors wide to all who truly embrace this confession, regardless of whether they are Reformed, Dutch Reformed, or Catholic.[20]

The election results, not only in depth but also in breadth, provide ample reason for renewed reflection and reorientation. However, we must remain very level-headed in this regard and not force developments through organizational measures and maneuvers that will take their entire time to bear fruit.[21]

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20 **BG Note 8:** It is noteworthy that, according to the VU survey, the ARP's gains consisted of 52% Reformed votes and 17% Roman Catholic votes.
BCW Note: Goudzwaard is here referring to the churches associated with Abraham Kuyper (Gereformeerde), the traditional State Church (hervormd) and the katholiek. He is avoiding the implication that the Christian political option is the "mission" of one or other "denomination" (gezindt).

21 BCW Note: The concluding section of this article is a clear statement of how Goudzwaard contributed to, and even gave leadership for, the ARP's parilamentary co-operation with the alliance that would result in the Christian Democratic Appeal party (CDA). But we also can see his aversion to deciding on what the form of co-operation would be in advance of working on it and walking on the political path together.

ARS 38 1968 pp. 51-53

15. BOOK REVIEW

Dr. B. de Gaay Fortman, ***Theory of competition policy.*** Diss. V.U. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1966.

To the shame of this book's reviewer, it has already been over a year since Mr. B. de Gaay Fortman received his doctorate from the Vrije Universiteit, after defending the dissertation noted above - on the non-paternal authority in this case of Prof. W. F. de Gaay Fortman as rector magnificus.[1]

The title of this dissertation - the theory of competition policy - immediately makes it clear that the issues addressed in it are by no means simple or manageable. Not only is competition theory itself a "mer à boire"[2] (especially when, as in this study, one wishes to include the legal and legislative aspects); but the connection of this theory with the theory of economic policy can only be a very challenging field of research. It is therefore no small compliment to note that Dr. de Gaay Fortman has, without dismissing the underlying problems, proven capable of constructing a clear and well-formulated argument, in which his chosen framework remains visible throughout.

This structure is as follows: first, the author provides an overview of the practice of competition, both within the context of developing Western society and the norm of complete free competition based on the capitalist model, advocated by some but rightly rejected by Dr. de Gaay Fortman; second, he attempts to analyze the economic-political principles of competition policy; and finally, he makes a compelling attempt to test these principles against the practice of competition policy, addressing, among other things, the legal structure and application of these policy principles, and subjecting competition policy in the United States, Germany, England, France, and the Netherlands to separate consideration.

It's not easy to do justice to such a dissertation in a short space in what is a non-academic journal. Rather than drowning in piecemeal commentary, I would therefore like to highlight one aspect of this study: its *normative* nature. Not only is this a central theme of this dissertation, but a discussion of it might be of most interest to readers of *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*.

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1 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is pointing out that the Doctoral graduate receives his award from the authority of the Free university's Rector Magnificus who happens to be the graduate's father.

2 BCW Note: Lit: the sea to drink...

"The theory of competition policy - like any political theory - can be fruitfully developed within the framework of a 'normative' analysis". This is the first proposition[3] that Dr. de Gaay Fortman added to this dissertation [52], and his dissertation can be seen as an interesting attempt to substantiate this particular proposition. In presenting his starting points regarding this problem, the author arrives at a number of very well-formulated statements, which I would like to quote here with approval, such as the statement that a 'normative theory' should not be understood as "a kind of mixture of factual analyses with the researcher's own subjective value judgments". Rather, in a normative economic theory, "economic philosophy must be considered a matter of fundamental importance, not of incidental judgment" (p. 9); the observation that the task of a normative theory is "to shed light on reality, more than to design standards to which life must obey" (p. 9); while finally I would like to quote the statement that the economic policy of the Government "is concerned with the promotion of the general interest in the economic sphere of life" (p. 155), whereby Dr. de Gaay Fortman understands this general interest to mean that the Government only has a special task when private activities appear to influence coexistence "in peace and justice". (p. 145) (*translations always mine*)

Based on these general principles, the author attempts to provide a normative analysis of the Government's specific competition policy. This analysis leads him to the proposition that neither the promotion of competition nor the promotion of the idea of cooperation in economic life can be considered the unique and normative goal of competition policy. Such exclusive objectives undermine the true nature of Government policy, which can be characterized as the just and simultaneous pursuit of various objectives. Dr. de Gaay Fortman therefore chooses a different approach; he examines how these diverse objectives of economic policy (which he calls "norms", namely the norms of maintaining international peace, economic growth, economic stability, and economic justice) manifest themselves in the realm of competition policy. Partly on the basis of this research, he comes to the conclusion that at least one thing can be said with certainty about the objectives of competition policy, namely that the Government in this policy tries to maintain "open competition" (p. 179), i.e. a competitive struggle aiming to be a competition in performance.

While this approach is certainly not without its importance, one can still question whether it is tenable in all respects - partly against the background of

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[3] BCW Note: Goudzwaard is referring to the list of propositions that the Doctoral candidate submits to his or her examining committee. This was the "de eerste stelling" of Dr de Gaay Fortman's list.

the principles developed by Dr. de Gaay Fortman himself. For example, the question arises whether the “norm” of economic justice is equivalent to the other “norms” of economic policy mentioned by the author, which - because they are included in the Government’s deliberations - I would prefer to call objectives. Isn’t the criterion of economic justice more the point of reference from which the Government views these objectives, rather than a subsidiary norm or objective?

More important, however, is the question whether Dr. de Gaay Fortman, by relating competition policy to the objective of maintaining “open” competition, hasn’t partially fallen into the danger he himself identified in the critical approach to economic policy theory, which is characterized by the exclusive association of economic policy with a dominant economic objective. After all, there are situations in which the Government, due to other national interests, may be more or less obligated not to honor this objective - at least temporarily. For example, doesn’t the well-known - and recent - “principle of novelty” in the industrial processing of natural gas deliberately preclude performance-based competition in this area? Or do cases like these fall outside the scope of competition policy as indicated by the author?

Finally, in my opinion, Dr. de Gaay Fortman’s analysis could have gained in value if he had considered more explicitly the relationship between competition policy and the cost curves of competing firms, as well as the role of public enterprises - often operating under decreasing costs - in the overall economic competition landscape. An investigation of Italian competition law, against the background of Article 90, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of Rome, could undoubtedly have led to interesting conclusions, including with regard to the aforementioned criterion of “open competition” in national competition policy.

These more or less critical questions, however, hardly detract from my appreciation for this study by Dr. de Gaay Fortman. His dissertation, partly due to its explicit focus on the normative nature of Government action, is a Vrije Universiteit dissertation in the best sense of the word.

AR Staatkunde jrg-41 1971, 99-107

These are articles published in ARS that arose from an ARP symposium on the environment. The consultation members were: Drs. A. Bakker, Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Dr. B. Goudzwaard, Member of Parliament for the ARP, Mr. W. C. D. Hoogendijk, Director of the Dr. Abraham Kuyperstichting, Dr. H. Rebel, biochemist and staff member of the Dr. Abraham Kuyperstichting. Jr. W. F. Schut, Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning.
So now Goudzwaard is no longer a researcher for the Dr. A Kuyperstichting (1959-1967) a position he had held after graduation (1957) and the completion of military service (1957-1959) and also no longer a researcher for the ARP caucus ("fractie") in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament. He has taken his seat in the Parliament (1967-1971) and at the writing of this (pp.127-131) with the Dr Rebel, researcher for the Dr A Kuyperstichting, he has also received a Doctorate from the Rotterdam School of Economics and is to be installed as Professor of Economics in the Faculty of Social-Cultural Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit. At this point he was 37 years. The "Environmental Crisis" not only was an "issue" that needed informed scientific knowledge for party and also for Government as legislation is framed accordingly, but also for how a university will carry out its own mandate in its own sphere, how its several faculties will view their special sciences in terms of the creation and our creation mandate.

THE DEGRADATION OF THE BIOSPHERE

by H. Rebel

Man and the Environment

A characteristic of human history is the very existence of that history - in other words, the passing on of information from one generation to the next, whereby the field of vision slowly but steadily expands. Humans differ fundamentally from animals, which must rebuild their experience and knowledge from the ground up in each generation.

Humanity's understanding of and power over its environment has grown continuously throughout history. With it has also grown its understanding of and power over its own destiny, for humans are intimately connected to their environment. All their bodily functions depend directly on it: they require a constant supply of air and water, as well as food, which is ultimately provided by green plants, and fertile soil therefore plays a decisive role in their survival.

There is therefore an *intensive interaction*, an intertwining within the human environment. Humans have acquired great power over their environment and simultaneously become very afraid of it. This intertwining is highly complex and is therefore extremely vulnerable.

Increasing disruption.

It is good to remember that organizing and exploiting the biosphere is a [100] typically human activity. To a certain extent, a vital activity as well. We are thinking, for example, of agriculture and fishing, the control of water and fire, the regulation of hereditary traits in crops and livestock, and all kinds of medical and technological developments. These kinds of activities clearly manifest the impact humans have on their environment, thanks to their organization and increased knowledge. These actions are the most important exponents of increased human power. They have provided humanity with food and warmth, and largely eradicated diseases and pests, resulting in a significant increase in life expectancy. In the existing mutual dependence, these activities have also had the greatest retroactive effect on human existence.

Especially in the last fifty to one hundred years, the development of these activities has been explosive, partly due to the separation of education and research, and the conscious and targeted application of the latter. We can only imagine the dire circumstances in which we would have to manage without electricity, pesticides, or medicines.

However, the development of societal structures has lagged behind[1] the progress in our capacity to organize and exploit the biosphere. And the gap is widening because societal structures are not evolving at the same speed as our control of the biosphere. This is the reason why the biosphere is experiencing disruption, which is becoming increasingly threatening.

In such cases of biosphere disruption, our technical and scientific resources are almost always misused and ill-considered. This is related to the fact that we often focus our technical and scientific resources too one-sidedly from a predominantly economic perspective, ignoring the consequences of such an approach.[2]

The economic benefit for which science is applied is apparently an insufficient standard for responsible use. We will have to integrate technical-scientific expertise into the entire human mindset and values. After all, in our economically dominated society, the targeted application of science leads to the abuses of overexploitation, disruption, and destruction of the biosphere. In this sense, a disadvantage is built into the social structure, which forms a permanent source of such disruptions. The severity of these is often difficult to estimate, or even guess. The uncertainty about the scope of the threats that are perceived to exist based on certain indications becomes so great that it will lead to new - social - [101] disorders, not the least of which is a tendency to devalue science, technology, and economics *as such*.

The facts on which all of this is based are a number of visible developments that, when extrapolated into the future, irresistibly evoke thoughts of catastrophe. However, we don't know whether this extrapolation is correct. Is it inevitable? Will the trend soon, perhaps "naturally," bend favorably, or perhaps take an even more unfavorable course?

Since the Industrial Revolution, production methods have been constantly changing, made possible by technological developments. In recent decades, this change has even been consciously pursued and accelerated. The many innovations that have been implemented have led to higher production, greater demand for raw materials, and an accelerated flow of goods throughout the economy. Characteristic has always been the increased consumption of metals and other materials, as well as a steadily higher energy consumption.

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1 BCW Note: The author would seem to be suggesting that there has been a "lagging" of human control and maintenance in human cultural sense, in for example in ethical and legal terms.

2 BCW Note: see **Capitalism and Progress** p.65 and Goudzwaard's reference to the normative criterion enunciated by T P van der Kooy. See also the exaugural lecture of Vrije Universiteit Professor of Actuarial Studies, J. P. van Rooyen, "Demografische perspectieven", 1971.

Along with this - and closely related, according to popular belief - a host of unpleasant or dangerous phenomena have occurred in all these areas.

Well-known and important examples: pollution of surface water; atmospheric pollution; changes in the composition of the latter; major impacts on flora and fauna, both aquatic and terrestrial; disruption of landscapes and maritime balances; soil pollution; the increasingly rapid exploitation of fresh water, timber, energy, and ore reserves; accelerated erosion of fertile soil; and nuisance from chemical and physical irritants such as combustion gases, smoke, dust, and noise.

Quantitative pollution

The many forms of environmental pollution are receiving considerable attention. They are therefore the most visible, or at least noticeable. For clarity, we make the somewhat artificial distinction between *quantitative and qualitative* pollution.

By quantitative pollution, we mean those types of pollution that are present only in excess and thus cause disruptions, but for which the biosphere is otherwise subject to various degradation processes. Effective distribution is a key measure against this pollution, preventing localized degradation mechanisms from becoming overloaded. It is precisely because this is happening on an increasing scale that biosphere pollution has recently received so much public attention. In fact, it has always been present. Apparently, it has recently increased significantly.

The overload of water with degradable substances, also known as eutrophication (overnutrition), has received some attention. Examples of pollution include sewage, paper pulp, slaughterhouse waste [102], and the like. As a rule, this material eventually ends up in the sea, where algae break down the nutritious substances and multiply rapidly. These tiny green plants require light and therefore live just below the water's surface. If the process of eutrophication continues at the increasingly rapid pace of recent decades, a stage must be reached where the depletion of oxygen in the sea and the shielding of incoming light will herald the slow suffocation of life present in the deeper layers.

A nasty complication is that wastewater treatment has only limited positive effects. The "purified" water is still highly eutrophic, so it continues to stimulate the growth of microorganisms. Only the organic matter is broken down in the treatment plants. The inorganic substances, such as salts, including many phosphates and nitrates, remain untouched. Phosphates and nitrates are essential for plant growth - they are normal components of fertilizers - and contribute to the algae explosions.

In this context, we can also mention the overfertilization of agricultural and horticultural land. Fertilizers (primarily phosphates and nitrates) serve to replenish soil deficiencies.

Regarding nitrates, there is no structural deficiency in the soil. There is a balance between bacteria that, among other things, fix atmospheric nitrogen as nitrates, and

other kinds of life[3] that carry out the reverse process. In recent years, it has become clear that the latter process, denitrification, is severely overloaded by human nitrate additions, so that excess fertilizer continually leaks into surface water via groundwater. Many phosphates follow the same path, but also enter the water on a large scale, for example, through modern detergents.

The quantitative category of pollutants could also include the change in atmospheric composition. Through the combustion processes we carry out, we reverse a geochemical development that consisted of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in living matter. This process released oxygen, which increasingly promoted the development and maintenance of life forms as its concentration in the air increased. Finally, equilibrium was reached at approximately 21% oxygen and 0.03% carbon dioxide, along with nitrogen and some other gases. In recent decades, however, no decrease in oxygen content has been noticeable, despite its enormous consumption, especially in energy generation.

But the carbon dioxide content shows an unmistakable and constantly accelerating increase. An increase that is small in terms of absolute value, but already large in relative terms, despite accelerated fixation by living nature. If we imagine that this development continues, then drastic changes in living conditions on Earth will eventually occur. Climates will be affected [103] by the fact that carbon dioxide strongly absorbs heat radiation, both the incoming radiation from the sun and radiation emitted by the Earth. Because the clouding of the atmosphere by dust, soot, and the like is also a factor, the total effect of the increase in carbon dioxide cannot be predicted with certainty. In itself, this increase would probably have a greenhouse effect; in combination with the factors mentioned above, it might actually have a cooling effect.

Green plants and the sea regulate the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere. Plants use the gas as a building block for living matter. However, the area of green plants is constantly shrinking due to human demand for space and overexploitation. The sea is becoming eutrophic and, as we will see below, increasingly poisoned. And by this increase, *the existing trend can therefore only be accelerated*.

And of the consequences of general climate change, we mention only one effect: the drop in temperature, which can lead to large areas of land being covered by ice. The effect will be self-reinforcing. Due to the drop in temperature, plants will grow more slowly, thus converting less carbon dioxide, while much more will be produced for heating.

Finally, we could mention here the overexploitation of freshwater, although this is not pollution in the strict sense of the word. It does lead to pollution, because infiltration of sources with polluted and brackish water is necessary as a supplement. The enormous waste of pure freshwater that seems to occur in modern life herein

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[3] BCW Note: Dutch: *en andere soorten*

plays a role in this. But we mustn't forget that it is *industry* that accounts for the lion's share of this water consumption, even in the driest and hottest periods.

In all these cases, dispersing population, industry, and therefore discharge and extraction activities is a possible solution.

However, the limit in this case lies in the total freshwater supply and the total capacity for pollutant absorption by the biosphere. Both are apparently limited. In this sense, the existing dispersal systems (e.g., high chimneys, long discharge pipes) are, if nothing else is done, no more than *temporary* solutions (although it would be going too far to call them solely camouflage).

Qualitative pollution

Distribution as a temporary solution is generally not possible for qualitative pollution, which we understand here as pollution for which no conversion mechanism exists in the biosphere; this, in many cases, can lead to the direct destruction of life forms. This type often disrupts all kinds of life cycles, including the breakdown mechanisms that exist for quantitative forms of pollution.

This here includes, among other things, the indigestible waste in the form of synthetic materials such as [104] plastics and nylon; also all possible toxic to highly toxic contaminants, such as many pesticides against diseases and pests, many chemical wastes (residues from manufacturing processes, oil components, oil derivatives); and, not least importantly, the (compounds of) heavy metals such as copper, zinc, nickel, cobalt, chromium, mercury, etc.; and the emissions from chimneys of gaseous and solid compounds of nitrogen, fluorine, and sulphur, and those from engine exhausts of unreacted fuel and lead compounds. Some of these contaminants are still active as life-damaging substances even in very small concentrations. No one knows to what extent all these substances accumulate in certain life forms, nor whether they enhance each other's effects when combined, or that they perhaps have particular impact upon vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, etc. And they are now present in such large numbers and in such diversity almost everywhere that this alone should cause great concern. It is also feared that quite a few of these substances have carcinogenic qualities to some extent.

This type of pollution, unlike quantitative pollution, is not eternal. It originated in recent decades, but, true to its nature, it has almost immediately demonstrated its specific and infallible effects, albeit initially only to experts. It must be clear that the potentially dangerous effect of all such substances, on the fragile and thin film of life-containing and life-sustaining material, demands profound reflection if we are to have any prospect of life's continued existence.

This qualitative form of pollution is less related to the fact that the population is growing. It is primarily related to the ever-*increasing pattern of demands* these people place on their material lives. As mentioned, dispersal is therefore not a solution here. Only regulation and limitation of production and consumption can be a remedy. The possibility created in recent years *to set tolerance limits*, both for

concentrations and for total quantities present, is a very early start. Increasingly, however, the entire biosphere, and not just the threat or damage to the human body, will have to be accepted here as the starting point. While it is true that the physical well-being of humans is much more directly at stake in this pollution than with the quantitative form (the possibility of poisoning via crops, fish, etc., and the potential risk of cancer), the biosphere as a whole is essentially no less at stake. And because it is very closely connected to the rest of the biosphere, humans also indirectly run the same risks here that we described earlier.

Quantitative-Qualitative Coherence

In practice, quantitative and qualitative pollution usually appear to be interrelated and often occur simultaneously. An example of this is the polluting effect of energy consumption, which is now generated overwhelmingly [105] through the combustion of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal). This generation, which has reached enormous proportions, producing large quantities of carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide (from impure oil; purification of which also requires a great deal of energy) that rains down as sulphuric acid and already acidifies soil and surface water in some places, and soot that clouds the atmosphere. In addition, immense quantities of heat are released to the biosphere in one way or another. The enormous number of miniature power plants, which drive around in the form of cars, is a separate issue, as is domestic heating to a lesser extent. Natural gas is the cleanest energy source here, but it does nothing to address the carbon dioxide problem. Nuclear energy does this, but it creates its own problems: thermal water pollution - nuclear power plants use a great deal of cooling water, which is discharged at a considerably warmer temperature, thus having effects similar to eutrophication - and the dumping of radioactive waste. The disposal of this latter waste - as liquids in underground tanks or in barrels dumped at sea - is currently regulated in a risky manner.

Expansive Society

We discussed above the regulation and limitation of production and consumption as measures to prevent further degradation of the biosphere.

The desires of modern humans, however, tend toward “ever more”. This, however, *necessitates* the need for ever-continuing expansion, for ever-increasing and accelerating industrialization, faster than population growth. Thanks to effective advertising campaigns, we have long since become accustomed to the luxury of being surrounded by countless more or less superfluous products. So accustomed, in fact, that many of these goods are considered *to be established needs*.

It’s as if we were still living in the pre-Keynesian era, where the economy was geared towards satisfying needs. In reality, those “needs” are now consciously generated. Thus, in this era of “dedogmatization”, constant expansion has become a new dogma for us.

Everyone knows that, from the perspective of the production sector, this primarily concerns the *short lifespan* of products. A direct consequence of this is the growing

amount of waste. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on *private* needs, through the refinement and variety of mass products, marketed by intensive advertising and the launch of fashions. Consider, for example, the increase in the number of cars and all kinds of food and luxury goods, where public transport, or a simpler, healthier lifestyle for society, would be preferable.

There is another problem that is somewhat related to population growth, but very strongly to expansion in general: the shrinking of the [106] area of fertile land we have available. We want to preserve the - less fertile - natural areas for recreation and the like. This means that our expansive society builds its houses, factories, and roads on fertile land. This trend is reinforced by the call - from Brussels, for example - to drastically reduce the area of agricultural land, partly due to the existing agricultural surpluses. However, the necessary increase in the productive capacity of the remaining cultivated land requires very intensive land use, particularly the excessive application of fertilizers and pesticides. These are also developments that here must result in the destruction of a part of the biosphere.

The principle of expansion in our economy is also closely linked to *monetary* inflation. This inflation is both the consequence and the driving force of expansion. It necessitates ever larger, cheaper, and faster production, a shorter lifespan of goods, and stimulation of consumption in any way possible; a reduction in agriculture in favor of industrial activity; increasingly risky production methods; carelessness and waste. Inflation could indirectly lead to population growth, either here or in the countries from which we supplement our labour shortage.

Incidentally, industry's "awareness" of the degradation of the biosphere can be recognized as a new drive for economic expansion: a whole new "purification industry" is emerging, already actively promoting its efforts, and we must certainly seriously question whether it can ever remove or prevent more pollution than it produces. After all, every industrial process pollutes by definition, including purification processes (in a different sense than usual). Perhaps eliminating pollution *from* technology *through* technology is more hopeful than inventing perpetual motion, but there is reason here not to be overly optimistic. In any case, we must anticipate a pronounced and perhaps long-lasting "limit" effect. (Compare the problem of Achilles and the tortoise.)

Summary

Let us take stock of the situation. An increasing portion of the total energy available to us is being diverted to our human life system. We are replacing natural communities with cities and roads, as well as with monocultures of agriculture and horticulture, which necessitate the continued use of energy by humans - including by use, for example, of fertilizers. Along with this, the subtle natural balance is being disrupted, and plant and animal species, which are also important reservoirs of hereditary traits, are being destroyed. Furthermore, there is a constant drain of toxic substances from the human community into natural life systems, making their continued existence and self-regulation increasingly impossible.

[107] Moreover, the entire development is occurring at an ever-increasing pace. Ultimately, the balance of these developments *can* tip fatally to the detriment of humanity itself.

The entire phenomenon: degradation of the biosphere, is extremely complex. It affects everyone and everything in our society, down to the smallest actions. We will have no choice but to live *with* a certain degree of pollution. But what is needed is sufficient foresight to realize that the ongoing developments have an end point, related to *the finiteness of the biosphere's resilience*. Furthermore, it is crucial to eliminate the existing uncertainty regarding the extent of that resilience through in-depth study and thus bring the ominous threats that seem present to their proper, perhaps no less extensive, proportions. And this should ultimately lead to us counteracting and eliminating the causes of the threats that can be recognized as such.

It is only possible to say approximately what exactly needs to happen. We can, however, state that the *existence* of technology is not at stake. Therefore, we need not attack it. However, it seems likely that a different economic principle than what we currently know, a change in mentality, and a stabilization of population growth are necessary conditions for achieving a healthy and balanced situation.

The government can intervene actively or passively with regard to population growth. In all cases, there will be a significant influence on social structures. However, the question is whether we, citizens and government, are *able* and *willing* to do so, given the clear need to find a way forward. The case of carbon dioxide, incidentally, illustrates that we can*not* maintain the balance on extremely vital points. Perhaps it would have been better to maintain the position it occupied around the beginning of the major technological developments. If such an insight were to mature, its realization alone would require a new industrial revolution.

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY CONSIDERED

HOOGENDIJK:

Gentlemen, the issue of environmental degradation is an important one that is currently receiving a great deal of attention. As a complex set of problems, it has hardly been explicitly addressed within the Anti-Revolutionary Party thus far. It has also received only limited attention in our Programme of Action.

The environmental issue will likely also play a role in the election campaign, but it is not an issue that can be consigned to history with the election campaign. We therefore want to try to highlight environmental issues as honestly as possible, both now and during the campaign. In my view, we must arrive at a vision of what Government policy in this area should entail for us. In the next four years, and in the somewhat longer term, in the 1970s.[4]

We are not addressing you here, Mr. Bakker and Mr. Schut, as members of the current cabinet. We currently view you solely as people who can make a very important contribution to projecting policy in the 1970s. Our group as a whole offers an interesting picture of the disciplines present. Politics is strongly represented, but based on economics, spatial planning, and biochemistry/biology. This allows us to gain some insight into several essential factors of environmental issues. Mr. Goudzwaard recently received his doctorate in the economic aspects of this matter and can be considered an expert in this area.

APPROACH

SCHUT:

At the time, I was very pleased that our party was one of the first to address Spatial Planning. I remember that not long afterward, we also had discussions in the Reformed Society for Urban Planning about the biotope[5] and the ecological context in which we actually work. Nic. de Jong of the Dutch Forestry Commission (*Staatsbosbeheer*) led the way in this. Unfortunately, that discussion didn't progress beyond the circle in which it was held. It therefore took a very long time before environmental degradation, as a fundamental problem of what we are actually dealing with, received the attention it deserves.

Christians, of all people, should be at the forefront of this matter. For us, it's not so much about pure self-preservation and related matters, but rather about the question of [109] our stewardship of this created world. I have always found the "building and preserving" of Paradise a very important thought.[6] Building is not only a necessary, but also a delightful activity, one that should be continued. That is provided you realize that you are always changing something in the process. The taking of land from farmers and the disruption of landscapes are well known.

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4 BCW Note: This is a "round table" discussion published in 1971.

5 BCW Note: A place of distinctive and uniform environmental conditions that serve to sustain the forms of live that inhabit it.

6 BCW Note: The reference is to the task given to "dress and keep the garden." (Genesis 2:15)

But to us, it has only dawned very late in life that we, as a "civilized" world, are also busy over-exploiting our own natural environment. We've only noticed this in very clear cases of overexploitation. I think, for example, of the Tennessee Valley project[7] as a very good response to such a case, which, in turn, remained too much of an isolated incident. It's a shame. Especially now that the environment has proven vulnerable compared to our highly industrialized society. We are now, in fact, doubly responsible because our actions disrupt the balance between nature and humanity. We should constantly reflect on the questions:

a. What remains of nature?
b. What is the interplay between the gains we make on the one hand and the losses we inflict on the other?

GOUDZWAARD:

That, to me, seems to be a core issue in this problem. Thanks to all sorts of useful and profitable actions, we clearly cause disruptions to the natural environment. There are very clear examples of this. Just think, for example, of the contamination of water with toxins like DDT or mercury.

Humans only truly come into their own in their relationship with nature. You would assume that they would then also manage nature well to keep that relationship pure. But that appears not to be the case. Therefore, a policy, a Government policy, is needed to improve this situation.

Humans themselves, as a "biological" entity, don't seem to pose a problem to me. They connect organically with nature. In my opinion, "social" people simply place excessive demands on their environment, making the kind of disruption I mentioned inevitable. I would therefore also like to emphasize the derailment of stewardship.

SCHUT:

We must not forget that humanity is the crown of creation. Last but not least, we must not become victims of (our own) careless management. The fact that we live within created nature is such that we must exercise the utmost respect and caution toward this unity. The environment is a primary responsibility for us. Only then, I believe, should we fulfill our stewardship as God's great commission.

[110] **SYMPTOMS**[8]

REBEL:

I believe this is a good time to say something about the essence of the damage we cause. In the past, everyone handled materials that originated in nature, or produced such substances. As part of the natural cycle of matter, these were therefore fully absorbable. Energy consumption was low and caused very little and relatively harmless, pollution in the form of smoke, and later also coal slag. A similar observation applies to the use of metals, of which at most very few toxic residues ended up in the environment.

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7 BCW Note: Philip Selznick **TVA and the grass roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization** University of California Press 1949

8 BCW Note: Dutch: *verschijnselen*.

Our modern society has only been able to achieve such significant technological development thanks to a tremendous increase in scale and a change in the character of our production and consumption patterns.

Regarding the production of naturally absorbable substances, the quantities have become so large that the absorption process, as it were, cannot handle them. Furthermore, the production of non-absorbable materials has expanded significantly and now includes masses of harmless but indigestible waste, which we simply continue to deal with, and growing quantities of toxic products that actively influence the cycle I mentioned. In the sense that they disrupt and destabilize it because links become ineffective. An acyclic model can therefore be increasingly ascribed to our production and consumption system.

HOOGENDIJK:

If that's the case, then we're dealing with a fundamental process that can ultimately deprive life of its very foundation. If we want to do something about this, and we are obligated to do so, incidental measures are useless. In that case, only broad-based intervention is the way forward.

But how do we return to the cyclical pattern, to the circular flow, assuming you accept the disruption of that process as a fundamental fact? Should we resort to absolute prohibitions? Or can pricing be the solution, as we've been reading lately?

SCHUT:

In my view, in our activities amid nature, so often at its expense, we are not yet ready for cyclicity. This idea is important for policy, but we must address these issues now.

Therefore, in my view, two points deserve consideration:

1. What processes are underway with regard to the environment? To what extent are they irreversible and therefore potentially serious? We must attempt to answer these questions, as much as possible, in international terms;
2. It will be necessary, based on the answer received, to develop a plan of action to undo harmful consequences, as well as [111] to build a better alternative for the system of human action in this regard.

This immediately confronts us with a whole set of complex issues, which suddenly affect almost everything we do. We will therefore be forced to prioritize[9] our approach; otherwise, I think it's pointless.

LACK OF EVIDENCE?

BAKKER:

As far as I'm concerned, I often find the way the problems are presented very emotional. That doesn't have to be objectionable to wake everyone up, and I do appreciate its positive influence. But it doesn't seem to me a good basis for formulating policy.

I also detect something of that in what Mr. Rebel has presented as a global analysis. Is it all as he presents it? Is there really a threat to life? Then I would like to know exactly how that works, and what factors play the most detrimental role in this.

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9 BCW Note: It is notable that ten years prior to this Goudzwaard had written "Prioriteitenschema en parlement" *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* 1961 jrg-31 pp. 21-36. (48-64 above)

After all, we no longer live in a natural world. Our environment has become almost entirely culture, created by humans. Animals have always become extinct, due to human activity, and we have become extinct due to natural circumstances. Pollution problems have always existed. Production causes pollution, just as consumption creates waste.

If I had to choose between two interpretations of what environmental management should be as I consistently perceive it - namely, the preservation of creation, with all its animal and plant species, etc., or the maintenance of a livable, balanced situation for posterity, in which humanity can fully develop - I choose the latter.

However, the problems have become more significant recently.

I feel that this development is linked to industrialization and is a growth disorder of that process, which must be remedied through appropriate measures without jeopardizing our social order.

REBEL:

I must now clarify my analysis a bit. I've only really talked about pollution, and I'll give a few striking examples.

Water pollution is, of course, not a new problem. But it has only really become a problem in the last few decades. This primarily concerns the ingestible pollution of surface water, [112] of which a clear excess is occurring, so that not only inland waters, but also inland seas (Lake Erie, Baltic Sea, North Sea) are becoming polluted. The entire economy of these waters can no longer cope with the influx. Algal and seaweed growth is abundant in such polluted water, but at the same time has a negative impact on the total population of other life forms, which normally maintain algal growth at a certain level. This must lead to the suffocation of large areas of sea, because a recently initiated and accelerating development is taking place here.

At the same time, more and more toxins are being released into the water, increasingly affecting its conversion and absorption capacity. DDT, which has killed so many animals at the end of the food chain on land by accumulating in their bodies, is known to inhibit algal photosynthesis in water, the fundamental process of all marine life. And it is gradually becoming ubiquitous. Much more potent effects can be observed for mercury, chromium, nickel, and similar metals, some of which have very long residence times in seawater. And these too are increasingly being discharged into surface water.

A similar set of developments can be mentioned in the area of air pollution. On the one hand, there is the enormous production of carbon dioxide, which green plants are clearly no longer able to process. On the other hand, there is the discharge of large quantities of harmful gases, dust, and soot, which, directly or in combination with the growing excess of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, will hinder plant growth, thus amplifying the first-mentioned effect. Scientists are clear that this will eventually lead to drastic, unfavorable changes in the conditions that currently make life on Earth possible.

Very little is known about the various possible combinations of the aforementioned phenomena, but in general, one can expect the effects to mutually reinforce each other. Therefore, there is indeed a threat to life as such, although for outsiders, only the nuisance, the inconvenience of some processes, and perhaps occasionally very direct threats (fish poisoning, for example) are apparent.

The effort to purify wastewater and gases merely means shifting the problems, because under current circumstances, everything related to purification is merely a new industrial development, which will itself pollute air, water, and soil again. This is also due, not least, to the necessary increased energy consumption.

BAKKER:

You haven't yet provided me with any *proof* of your assertion. I still don't see where things are *fundamentally* going wrong. There are a number of negative developments, I readily admit. But in my view, we simply need to address them sensibly and master them.

In my own field, we will succeed in doing so with water within a reasonable time - [113] I am convinced of that. And as for shifting the problems, I believe that's a normal phenomenon when humans adapt to new circumstances. Such things are always accompanied by other problems, which in turn require solutions.

For me, the inherent nature of life-threatening processes in current developments is not yet established. The concern that prevails in academic circles, therefore, requires further proof, which I lack. Incidentally, I cannot prove the opposite to the academics. What I assume about surface water, of course, does not necessarily apply to the atmosphere. But the burden of proof is not on me.

SCHUT:

Especially when considering the policy aspect, I can agree with Bakker. Government action very often involves manipulating living conditions. This is perhaps true here to a special degree and in a special way. Therefore, we shouldn't be too quick to accept all sorts of things that are still shaky.

To properly translate the responsibility we bear into public policy, we shouldn't be using overly grand slogans in our communications. Such bold pronouncements are very difficult to translate into policy; they offer so little support. You can also rarely live up to the consequences of such pronouncements. And then, there's every chance that either you induce complete apathy among people because the issue overwhelms them, or cause complete panic. Both are significant drawbacks for policymaking. For practical reasons, you must therefore stick to the best of your ability.

HOOGENDIJK:

Yes, I understand that, and I agree. In technology, you often hear very knowledgeable people say: "Politicians are blind in these matters". Is the accusation of emotionalism, made by Mr. Bakker, then justified? Science often operates more or less intuitively. That doesn't diminish its value.

And isn't there a parallel between providing evidence and already being engaged in society (anticipatory, based on strong suspicions)? I'm reminded that a Child Labour Committee already existed when no scientific or statistical facts about this social injustice had yet been established. Intuition can be an inspiration for science as well as for political and social movements. Can't we then also bring the well-founded assumptions that exist in this field into the political sphere?

SCHUT:

For the time being, let's assume the continuity of life and look as far ahead as is responsible.

[114] Incidentally, I do see a concrete problem, namely those that are the concerns of academics. I want to take that very seriously. And furthermore, the least we should be strongly advocating is the provision of effective information. Passing on and acquiring such important, fundamental processes as Mr. Rebel just described, should first and foremost be conveyed through education.

But let's beware of the well-known self-deception of accountants: the idea that spending well but booking money incorrectly is wrong, and the reverse is right. If it's true that the environment itself is actually at stake, and if changes are needed, then we will have to take unpopular measures and overcome strong resistance. Then you really have to know that it's necessary.

Therefore, substantiating the arguments is essential. We must and will accept the consequences of our mistakes. It's possible that waiting for proof of our assumptions will bring developments to an irreversible stage, but then, I say, we must prove it.

The point is to determine to what extent we run essential risks and what we must do to keep these risks generally acceptable, that is, within a seemingly safe margin.

Our society is clearly one that needs to be threefold cautious with the environment in its development. It seems to me the time has come to challenge industry to contribute to restoring the disturbed balance in nature, instead of taking offense and causing only disruption and destruction. In a similar way, agriculture, nature conservation, and recreation are mutually complementary. It seems, however, that it is important to fragment the message in this regard as little as possible.

BAKKER:

I still need to get this off my chest: we need to be as concrete as possible in addressing these issues, especially during this election season. Citizens think locally (what will happen to their car) and concretely (where will the recreational areas be located, what will the water be like). The emphasis now must definitely be on the national situation and the North Sea, which borders us.

Regarding the seriousness of the matter, I would like to add this: if research reveals various indicators for the presence of a development, as proposed by Mr. Rebel, then that information will, as far as we are concerned, immediately receive the attention it deserves in policy. That much is clear.

A broadly defined basic science must develop that can serve as a substrate for the policy to be pursued, which I best describe with the word "management". Science fiction is of no use in this regard. It's about what's happening here and now. Even very essential things are happening, and what we can do about it.

I'm still struggling with that evidence, as I said. My minimal conclusion [115] is therefore: much scientific research is still needed in this sector. I would be very cautious about bringing the "assumptions" we've discussed into the political sphere. Their consequences cut deeply into everyone's flesh and soul, that's why I'm saying that.

ALSO FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENTS

SCHUT:

May I point out that we must also include the positive processes in current developments in our discussion. After all, a large portion of air pollution could

disappear as we switch from fossil fuels to nuclear energy. Incidentally, the succession of "conventional" fuels already showed an upward trend in this sense.

Natural gas can certainly be considered a truly "clean" fuel. And you can say a lot of good things about plastic as well.

BAKKER:

Let me follow up on that for a moment. Plastic as a replacement for paper is also saving many forests, which are, or are becoming, a scarce natural resource par excellence. There are already EEC standards for clean car engines. They are also working on absolutely clean engines (Stirling engines, fuel cells). In East Groningen, successful trials are being conducted utilizing wastewater from potato starch factories. I simply have an aversion to the emotions that constantly arise about certain things. For example, don't people also see the importance of the highways that have been increased, widened, or extended in recent years as a means to enable and stimulate recreation and nature visits? Don't various water management projects also have an environmental impact? I'm thinking of the Bosplaat, declared a European nature reserve, and the lagoon coast developing along the new dams.

GOUDZWAARD:

The government will have to make a decision about a large and important nature reserve in due course. Are Mr. Bakker and Mr. Schut willing to give their opinion on the intended use of this area? We then have, to follow up on Mr. Bakker, something very concrete at hand.

BAKKER:

Well, for safety reasons, in this country, which would be half submerged without dikes, we must of course always strive to shorten the coastline. This is also true in light of the relative subsidence that is occurring. But neither from this perspective, nor for any other reason, do I consider reclamation of the Wadden Sea necessary at this time.

[116]SCHUT:

In my opinion, there is also no reason to reclaim the area for spatial planning reasons. I do consider it conceivable to connect Ameland, for example, to the mainland, but then by means of a bridge that allows for free flow. Such a bridge could also be of great scenic beauty.

Incidentally, the broad "Mazure Commission", established by Mr. Bakker and myself, is studying the Wadden Sea area.

BAKKER:

You could also see that bridge as a wider and easier gateway to the completely unique area that the Wadden Sea is. It could significantly expand the small group that currently benefits from that uniqueness.

REBEL:

With the Wadden Sea, we've more or less accidentally stumbled upon something very concrete. I think it's good if we continue to do as much as possible. Based on my story about the indications of environmental degradation, do you have anything more concrete to say?

We also need to discuss the causes of the phenomenon.

COSTS AND PRICES

GOUDZWAARD:

Yes, I'd like to say something about the methodology of the approach, as far as we can see at this point. Isn't it essential to distinguish between what is replaceable and what is irreplaceable? You can then utilize this distinction by channeling the degradation process for the replaceable through pricing and similar means. What is irreplaceable must then be subject to prohibitions, and if the impending loss can already be described as great, this should preferably be done quickly.

This way, we can already create reserves (including reservations) for when we need them. I wouldn't want to lose sight of the medical aspects in this approach.

HOOGENDIJK:

May I rephrase what Mr. Goudzwaard first noted, by saying that we put a price on quality, even at the furthest point of consumption? I mean, of course, "quality of life".

BAKKER:

That seems to me nothing more than a perfectly normal distribution process, in which [117] certain costs, which we now recognize as such, are allocated to industry. In addition, some restriction of consumption is perhaps necessary, as well as the recovery of useful materials from waste. I see no fundamental difference in this cost allocation from what normally occurs in pricing. It is also for this reason that I was somewhat opposed to what I perceived as pessimism in Mr. Rebel, and that I could not quite understand his opinion about shifting the problems. A new cost factor simply arises, one that we previously overlooked. Environmental protection emerges naturally in the drive for real welfare improvement and gets its price. This will slightly reorient economic growth, and perhaps even lead to a decline in absolute production, but it's a matter that simply becomes a facet of economics and, as such, can be managed.

And as for the release of toxic substances, such as the mercury compounds that Mr Rebel mentioned, we must not allow that.

GOUDZWAARD:

So, can we see three policy areas:

1. Restriction, for example, through water and air pollution laws
2. Fines
3. Combating pollution, for example, through green zones.

Which component should we develop most? Fines are limited due to the potential for fueling the inflationary spiral. Restrictions could perhaps be implemented through a kind of quota system, as in the recent Nixon laws in the US.

BAKKER:

May I interrupt for a moment? I think I detect that Mr. Goudzwaard sees the levy system of the Water Pollution Act as a mechanism to impose fines. It certainly isn't. We don't want to impose fines and let the matter go on. These fining measures are temporary replacement charges for the purification process to be imposed. They cover the costs necessary for purification and thus constitute a means of financing the

installations to be built. We will often have to prohibit the inorganic pollution that we cannot address with this.

GOUDZWAARD:

Should government-supported research be prioritized differently? I imagine that there are economic incentives for applied research, but that this will hardly be the case for research focused on environmental conservation. After all, it yields nothing but the preservation of our situation. But perhaps introducing a price is here a sufficient economic incentive.

[118]*BAKKER:*

A great deal of fundamental research is being conducted in our country. This activity will grow as environmental conservation becomes more important to us. My own organization is already geared towards this. For example, we now employ biologists who also examine our actions and behaviour for their environmental impact.

Even in applied research, space will be made available for this research if the environment becomes a cost factor. Pressure is building from the economic side. The possibilities for this will only grow as technological developments continue. Only small companies may not be able to cope. Large corporations may be much more advanced in these matters than we currently think.

POPULATION GROWTH

REBEL:

May I now raise the causes of environmental degradation? I believe I see them in population density, and especially in population growth, and in economic growth, which is linked to a production/consumption craze the likes of which we have never experienced before.

These two phenomena are closely related and reinforce each other. Population growth necessitates economic growth. Economic growth increasingly allows for population growth, even through the influx of foreign workers, which, by the way, does not mean I wish to disparage people.

This growth model now entails ever-increasing production, ever-faster consumption, a greater demand on the space around us, the availability of ever more plastics, constantly increasing energy consumption, and, as a consequence of these and other phenomena, an increasing burden on the environment.

GOUDZWAARD:

I also believe that population density plays a role, but above all, so does the high level of consumption, which "technically" is therefore also a great source taxation. I ask myself whether restrictions should be imposed on this, despite the much-desired development of humanity.

SCHUT:

We must be very careful here again about making too bold assertions. The population situation, in particular, affects people personally, and in my opinion, it should be personal. Population growth, in particular, must remain within the sphere of individual responsibility. I cannot imagine that we, as a Government, want to restrict this growth. Nor can we. If local problems arise here, I would first consider a dispersal policy, both within our own country and abroad. Moreover, it remains to be

proven that [119] we will be stuck with this growth, no matter what. This has been predicted many times before (think of Malthus), but so far nothing has come of it. And the danger of defeatism, if not determinism, lies around the corner with such considerations.

HOOGENDIJK:

Does that mean we should abandon an active population policy? Or would you rather reject the link between population growth and environmental degradation?

SCHUT:

For my part, I clearly want to refrain from an active population policy, which always means curbing population growth.

This is another reason, for example: it's much better to send 10 Dutch people to a developing area with an exploding demographic to help prevent the population from growing by 100, than for us all here to stop all population growth.[10] So you have to be very careful with your conclusions in this area. For the rest of the world, you can still make theoretical claims, not even practical demands, but I don't see the need to stabilize consumption here at 14 million, as the *Environmental Manifesto of the Committee N 70*[11] proposes. There's still so much space in the wide world that I would make a primarily focus upon distribution. And besides, it turns out we can live in densely populated areas, and we should only do so here and there, if necessary. With all the limitations that this places on personal freedom.

BAKKER:

I fully agree with these words. Actively curbing population growth not only has economic disadvantages, but there's also something called population power at stake. Furthermore, I find the *Environmental Manifesto*'s position to be *egotistical*, because I sense in it the desire of people living more or less comfortably to continue living optimally.

REBEL:

But people are also advocating a reduction in growth because of the impending food shortage. Even experts of the Green Revolution claim that their solution to the food problem is temporary. In principle, their options have now been exhausted. McNamara recently calculated in Copenhagen that things are definitely going wrong in that regard.

SCHUT:

Perhaps other forms of food will emerge by then. In any case, this argument doesn't seem to me to force a stabilization of the Dutch population.

BAKKER:

We should certainly listen to people like McNamara and Borlaug. [120] But the problem in developing countries is different from here. We can't here measure with

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10 Dutch: *Ook hierom bv.: je kunt veel beter 10 Nederlanders sturen naar een ontwikkelingsgebied met een exploderende demografie, om daar te helpen voorkomen, dat er 100 mensen bijkomen, dan dat wij allemaal stoppen hier.*

11 BCW Note: The reference is ro an Environmental Manifesto published by the Committee for the European Year of Nature Conservation 1970 (N 70). It was concerned about the quality of lifeconcerned that there was no longer a deep concern for the well-being of humanity. *Milieu Manifest Het Vogeljaar,* Volume 18 - 4 p. 321- 322.

the standard that fits there. It's also a matter of adapting your responsibility to the circumstances. I also feel in favor of leaving personal responsibility in this matter fully intact. However, we can activate and deepen awareness about this through good education. I agree with the *Environmental Manifesto* on that point. But otherwise, the problem is oversimplified.

NEED PATTERN

SCHUT:

It seems as if, when we try to translate the great into the small, and start with ourselves, we always fail. Perhaps we're missing too many links to arrive at responsible *ad hoc* decisions. Who weighs the propaganda for the small family against the comfort of a large family? Against the blessing of a large family here and there in a neighborhood? Let's be cautious about making bold pronouncements, especially regarding government policy. Of course, there's a connection between population growth and environmental degradation. But let's not see that connection too simplistically. I believe that Mr. Goudzwaard rightly highlighted the level of consumption and mentioned technology in it. In our case, you could view environmental degradation as a kind of product of the number of people and their needs. In my opinion, we must dare to control that pattern of needs and desires. That is much harder to sell than curbing population growth, and also much harder to achieve. At least, insofar as that growth does not also have to do with desires.

You can certainly expect that in our current society, a smaller number of people will further increase their needs, such as a second home, a second or third car, and so on. This may further increase the amount of space occupied. And in any case, the product of number x needs remains the same.

The point of action for policy, therefore, clearly lies in self-restraint. We may no longer be able to use some things as they are now (detergents, for example), or a speed limit will have to be imposed on cars.

BAKKER:

Perhaps the spatial footprint isn't even a determining factor. Our available space is still growing due to the shrinking agricultural land. We simply have a lot to do here. I believe we need to choose the variables in our approach to environmental problems. Population growth, as such, isn't a compelling factor. And above all, let's here avoid any semblance of selfishness.

SCHUT:

The root of the problem, after all, lies in everyone's sense of responsibility. An active population policy actually eliminates a large part of that sense of responsibility.

GOUDZWAARD:

I can appreciate that point of view. A few years ago, I read in, I believe, *Socialisme en Democratie*[12], that regulating population growth isn't something for "amateurish cottage industries." We're opposed to the mentality of such an approach.

Okay, so we see population growth as a policy complement. The point of action lies elsewhere.

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12 BCW Note: *Socialisme en Democratie* a prominent socialist journal.

Let me add this: the current population explosion in the world is also a consequence of the doubling of the average age in developing countries within about 20 years. The effect of this will, of course, diminish in the foreseeable future.

SPECIFICATION

HOOGENDIJK:

If, regarding the causes, we want to focus on the pattern of needs, and if, regarding the procedure, we want to follow the line of pricing, prohibitive legislation, and so on, what can we do for the time being, and what should we definitely do? If we succeed in substantiating the "philosophy" here, it would become much more important.

I believe that this will bring the problem out of its isolation. It must become a reality for the population. However, this requires a broad approach. It is about activating democracy in the area of the environment.

BAKKER:

Perhaps we could create our own kind of environmental manifesto, based solely on *policy* points. We could address things like the reuse of materials, or pre-use or pre-production research. These are the kinds of things we shouldn't be asking individual factories to do, but should be regulated by law (nationally, and often even internationally).

GOUDZWAARD:

Are you considering a law on covenants?[13] And now that we're on that topic, won't the adjustment of covenants have to be much stricter?

[122]SCHUT:

As far as I'm concerned, I would prefer to apply legislation regarding prohibitions or restrictions only where truly necessary. I'd like to maintain the good mood between the Government and businesses, and the dynamic atmosphere within the latter.[14]

I would therefore like to continue the practice of covenants experimentally, possibly with improvements to be made. Covenants will certainly become more stringent in the area of Public Health. Not so much from the perspective of Spatial Planning. However, the latter will truly have to take fully into account the data that are significant for the environment. So not only the prevailing wind direction, but also, for example, the location of hydro-electric power stations.[15] The Bergumermeer Center[16] is a clear transitional case in this regard.

BAKKER:

Let's try to limit ourselves as much as possible to what we can do in the next four years, to what we are certain will be useful to promote well-being. After all, we need

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13 ARS Journal note: * Covenants are unofficial agreements between Government and industry concerning the extent to which industry may burden the environment.

14 BCW Note: *Ik zou graag de goede stemming tussen overbeid en bedrijfsieven en de dynamiscbe sfeer binnen bet Iaatste willen bewaren*. The term "atmosphere" (*sfeer)* here is in contrast with "mood" (*stemming*).

15 BCW Note: Dutch: *van kracbtcentraies aan bet water.*

16 BCW Note: De Bergumermeercentraie - a holiday park in Friesland. https://www.bergumermeer.com/

to be as concrete as possible. We'll leave the rest to scientists, so they can gather more information. Much of it is still difficult to translate into policy. I'm thinking along my own lines now. Shall we first say something about water and traffic?

TRANSPORT AND WATER MANAGEMENT

GOUDZWAARD:

Excellent. It would be best if we could express our opinion on the plans for water in the 1970s. Is there sufficient guarantee we will master the problems in this area?

BAKKER:

Now, in my opinion, *water is manageable*, even in terms of pollution. However, this requires a joint approach. In particular, in the coming decade, we will have to address the *eutrophication* issue. It is an international issue that affects both industry and agriculture, as well as everyday human life (e.g. phosphates from detergents). It still poses a significant scientific problem, primarily, because prohibitive legislation would be virtually impossible for organic pollution. And even with purification, this also contributes to eutrophication.

The control measures in the 1970s will depend significantly on the requirements [123] imposed on water, depending on the location and time. Should it be suitable for fishing, bathing, or drinking water? Can it be only used as a waterway, etc. Provided we reach international agreement, all these requirements can be met.

"Biologically pure" water is, of course, a step further. I can't make a clear statement about that yet.

GOUDZWAARD:

Regarding *air quality*, things are more complicated, if I'm not mistaken. This is only because there's no universal air purification method. To be specific: will we have to make clean engines mandatory in the long term?

SCHUT:

Detergents are a striking example of how water can be improved through both regulation and prohibition. We'll also need to pursue these same paths to improve air quality. I'm certainly not overlooking home heating in this regard. And along these lines, the use of clean engines should certainly be enforced as soon as possible.

BAKKER:

Prohibitory legislation is clearly the priority here. Without a permit, a ban on various things (toxic substances, inorganic substances) will soon be in effect. I realize that the measures geared towards this perspective don't yet include the clean car engine. They're actually working on its development solely out of consideration of the danger to (human) health.

SPATIAL PLANNING

SCHUT:

I'm very pleased with this concrete approach. I think it's also very suitable for a kind of manifesto. I believe it's now the turn of Spatial Planning. The first point I'd like to mention is about respecting and maintaining existing features, both within and outside built-up areas. These days, people just widen, clear, and demolish, while other solutions are conceivable.

BAKKER:

That ties in beautifully with what we say in TP 2000: "Expanding *existing* roads capacity."[17]

[124] SCHUT:

Spatial Planning takes on a new dimension in this way. It is also becoming Spatial Management. Some of this can be found in the 2nd Memorandum on Spatial Planning: it discusses development policy as a complement to urbanization. We no longer simply need to create the framework, but also indicate how it will be implemented.

Another point is that of solid waste disposal. A striking example of the problems associated with this is the so-called car graveyards. This area has always been somewhat neglected. However, disposal methods must be available for household waste, rubble, etc. For cars, the matter seems economically solvable (crushing machines, reusing materials), although transport to the processing site and payment for the process currently hinder its implementation. We are still stuck with the need to "dress up" the scrap yard in an appropriate manner.

Solid waste that isn't compostable is usually also unsuitable for incineration. It then, in turn, causes significant air pollution. A good, practical way to process it is to create landscape elements. For example, decontaminating sand pits and creating artificial mounds, which are essentially rubbish dumps.

As I see it, this approach also fits perfectly into a multifaceted spatial planning policy.

Furthermore, I think we shouldn't forget about noise here. Regarding nuisance, I'm not just concerned with road noise, but also with broader nuisance: noise between apartment blocks, inside houses, and especially moped noise.

And I'd also like to raise the issue of air pollution from traffic and the waste of drinking water from the spatial planning perspective.

GOUDZWAARD:

How did you intend to address noise pollution?

SCHUT:

For example, through regulations regarding neighbour noise, moped use, etc. This isn't a simple matter. First of all, monitoring compliance is difficult. And the standard is also difficult to develop. It's just as much about sound volume as about sound characteristics. Absolutely quiet homes have been built in Badhoevedorp or Zwanenburg, but there's little interest. Some sound, or noise, is apparently desirable. A counterbalance to the nuisance would be increased planting along the roads.

HOOGENDIJK:

It's strange that for many, a certain amount of noise still provides a sense of well-being, even if silence bothers them.

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17 BCW Note: The reference to TP 2000, is to a road planning document of interest for road safety research. https://swov.nl/en/publicatie/tp-2000-trees-grow-straight-heaven **Planning en ontwikkeling in Nederland: verkeer richting het jaar 2000** Assen, Van Gorcum, 1972

[125] *GOUDZWAARD:*

You mentioned water waste. Perhaps waste can be approached in a broader sense. But we certainly need to investigate whether water, in its various degrees of purity, is being used economically. It's too great a commodity to waste.

BAKKER:

But don't forget that the quantities of industrial process water far exceed private consumption. Moreover, requirements in industry are often higher than elsewhere.

SCHUT:

With air pollution, I adopt the more "classic" Renewable Energy (RO) policy. I mean the counterbalance to environmental impact and degradation in the form of greenery.

Being extra careful with the rest of nature also means creating (lost) nature. I'm thinking of planting new forests and increasing planting in cities. The latter isn't as easy as you might think, because Dutch housewives, in particular, are, so to speak, "anti-tree". They usually want a garden with flowers, but no trees in front of the house. As a rule, greenery will therefore be planted in compartments.

GOUDZWAARD:

I also think about location policy in your sector. What do you think of integration with environmental management?

SCHUT:

Environmental factors will have to be *incorporated* into the establishment policy. This will affect the type of establishment we permit, and equally importantly, the conditions we impose on establishments. The Spatial Planning Act (ROA) policy will be linked to regulations from other legislation (Nuisance Act, Air Pollution Act, etc.). This will require extensive research and information.

COORDINATION

HOOGENDIJK:

And what do you think of liquidating farms in this context? Do you support the idea of a "landscape manager"?

SCHUT:

I think it's a very good idea, which belongs primarily in the creative sphere. In the technical sphere, as things stand now, this is still very difficult.

[126] To avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to clarify that Spatial Planning *cannot be an executive body* in environmental management. That management consists primarily of coordination, and that could be a Spatial Planning task. For example: (re)afforestation is carried out by the State Forestry Service.

BAKKER:

That point of coordination will now play a role in policy. It's highly desirable, and Mr. Schut will agree with me, that there won't be more departments than we currently have. I also believe environmental management should be coordinated with Spatial Planning. You won't find anything about that in the Second Memorandum.

SCHUT:

Indeed. It remains *cabinet policy*, in which the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, alongside Spatial Planning, can also play a special role. But as far as I'm concerned, no additional minister for this matter.

BAKKER:

I agree. In my opinion, a Ministry of the Environment would be an unpleasant and fruitless undertaking. Establishing one would greatly hamper government work. Only coordination is desirable and necessary. By that, I mean developing an overall vision.

HOOGENDIJK:

Gentlemen, I believe we can conclude this conversation here. I found it a very interesting discussion. While there was undoubtedly a lot left over, a multitude of issues were nevertheless addressed in what I consider to be a compelling manner. Thank you very much.

AR Staatkunde jrg-41 1971 pp. 127-131

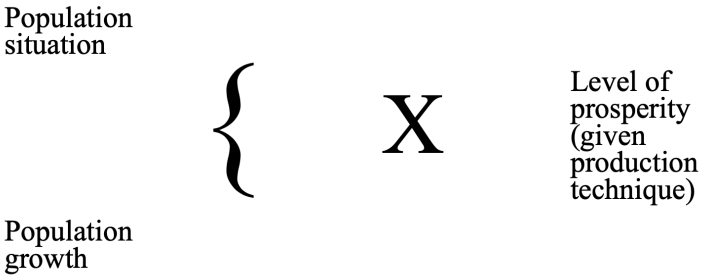
16. Draft "Anti-Revolutionary Environmental Manifesto"

Dr. B. Goudzwaard & Dr. H. Rebel[18]

Reflections

The degradation and deterioration of the environment has been clearly outlined in the preceding contributions.[19]

The socio-economic causes of these disturbing developments are summarized in the following diagram:



The size of this "product" must, of course, be reduced by the efforts already being made to combat environmental degradation.

The political model is somewhat different, because, for example, policy can hardly be effective with regard to population growth. However, the population situation can certainly be used as a starting point.

This provides the key points for policy implementation:

1. population distribution – national and global;
2. the level of prosperity, which is the extent to which we have access to market goods;
3. the influence of existing production techniques.

The previous contributions have shown that better population distribution can and should be achieved. Furthermore, the level of prosperity must be reduced in a specific, selective manner. Possibilities include the direct reduction of consumption that is environmentally harmful and, of course, reducing the production of what is environmentally harmful. Regarding production, these possibilities can be further refined as follows:

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18 BCW Note: This is part of the published results of published symposium within the ARP. The consultation members were: Drs. A. Bakker, Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Dr. B. Goudzwaard, Member of Parliament for the ARP, Mr. W. C. D. Hoogendijk, Director of the Dr. Abraham Kuyperstichting, Dr. H. Rebel, biochemist and staff member of the Dr. Abraham Kuyperstichting. Jr. W. F. Schut, Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning.

19 BCW Note: H. Rebel "De Degradatie van de Biosfeer" and "Milieu Beleid Beschouwd" *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* jrg-41 1971 pp.99-107, 108-126. (i.e. from pp.243ff above)

a. Addressing the adverse environmental impacts of existing production:
    1. this may involve applying and improving purification techniques at the source (intervening in production techniques);
    2. creating counterbalances (e.g., afforestation) within the infrastructure; [128]
b. reducing production itself, for which various mechanisms are conceivable (pricing, investment inhibition, prohibition, for example).

We thus arrive at a number of conclusions, which constitute just as many policy points. And it is also important to consider the following.

First, we assume that the measures to be taken can also *on balance* have a substantial positive impact on the negative developments. It goes without saying that the creation and operation of the various measures can, in itself, cause environmental damage, which will detract from their positive impact. We will have to factor this "deduction" into our calculations, and thus expect a delay that will cause us to reach the set limit more slowly than seems possible at first glance.

Secondly, we should not believe that the measures to be taken will completely rid us of environmental damage. A definitive cleanup is not possible unless we "return to pure nature": a pipe dream of culture haters and romantics.

Considering the previous observation, a degradation reduced to zero might well result in a proportionately greater additional impact, precisely due to the measures taken. Therefore, we can set a maximum, balanced, acceptable limit on the impact.

Finally, the conclusions rest partly on the likelihood that, in the current rise in prosperity, in addition to the need for luxury, which causes significant additional environmental degradation, the need for clean air, good water, etc. will also grow. This could create a counter-pressure that could bring about a shift in the objectives of economic policy; a shift towards environmental remediation.

Policy Conclusions

There is a basic premise that serves as the theme (conclusion 1). The other conclusions of this draft Anti-Revolutionary environmental manifesto are always related to this first one and are, to varying degrees, elaborations on the central idea.

1. Combating and preventing environmental degradation must be an aspect of *overall* government policy. Virtually all policy sectors are involved, and a high degree of coordination is required. This coordination must take place interdepartmentally, for example, through a State Secretary or a separate "Council for Environmental Hygiene" within the Council of Ministers.

2. In the battle against environmental degradation, policy concerned with the [129] population situation, must not be reduced to simply curbing population growth. The underlying problems would then be insufficiently recognized. Moreover, to the extent that instruments aimed at curbing this might be effective, they are often morally

objectionable, and to the extent that they are morally acceptable, they are often barely effective.

3. There is a fundamental relationship between reducing environmental degradation and national and global population distribution policies. Therefore, stronger incentives for (e)migration to sparsely populated countries and continents should be created. At the national level, measures must also be taken to prevent a strong influx of foreign workers into areas most exposed to (significant) environmental degradation.

4. From the perspective of environmental protection, it will be difficult to allow private land ownership, with its far-reaching powers regarding the zoning of land, to continue (in its current form) in the so-called "tension zones" surrounding large population concentrations; further land acquisition by the government will increasingly prove unavoidable. By developing these areas into resilient spaces, they must provide maximum counterbalance to existing or irreducible environmental damage.

5. In cities, space designated for parking cars should be limited. Parking should be concentrated as much as possible on the outskirts of cities. Within the urban area, public transport (primarily electrified) should largely replace the passenger car.

6. Processes that lead to irreversible and therefore irreparable destruction of the environment should, in principle, be addressed through prohibition legislation, rather than based on a specific limitation of their effect within "tolerance limits" (as might be suggested by the application of levies).

Prohibition legislation for this is essential because though toleration limits can have a mitigating outcome, harmful effects can never be eliminated.

7. The prohibition legislation will also, and above all, have to be focused on new or already foreseeable situations (consumption/establishment patterns).

8. The current covenant practices at industrial establishments will, in principle, have to be provided with a legal framework.

9. Given that the business community in our economic order is geared[130] to price incentives, and that proposition 6 states that price incentives (i.e. levies) should certainly not always be used in the fight against environmental damage; separate Government stimulation of research into environmentally *damaging* processes will always remain necessary.

10. Decisions regarding the establishment of businesses that could potentially cause significant environmental damage must be subject to a prior, legally mandated, quantitative biotic and economic investigation into the nature and extent of the damage.

Incentive measures should be implemented for businesses focused on controlling and preventing environmental damage.

11. Regarding the utilization of the natural environment for human needs, the instruments available for this purpose still conceal a series of inefficiencies related to the indiscriminate use of scarce natural resources.

Consider, for example, the use of clean drinking water for purposes inferior to its intended use (irrigation, flushing water, etc.).

Consideration should be given to whether, on this basis, regional *differentiation* should also be introduced in the levies imposed on environmentally harmful businesses.

In any case, businesses that require clean water for their operations will have to pay the full cost price.

12. The production of luxury consumer goods often causes greater environmental damage than the production of goods for basic subsistence. Within society, advertising serves as a powerful stimulant for the production and consumption of luxury consumer goods.

To prevent and combat increasing environmental damage, a slowdown in the rate of increase in advertising expenditures is therefore desirable.

13. The necessary change in mentality, which must be generally accepted through education and training, is viewed too narrowly when it is reduced to a necessary change in mentality among governing bodies. This is because all citizens must also be willing, or at least cultivated, to accept the price-raising effects resulting from an effective environmental protection policy as such. This should not be (immediately) translated as so many cuts to disposable income, which must result in higher income requirements.

14. As part of European policy, the Economic and Monetary Union [130] must simultaneously develop into an environmental protection union. Harmonization of measures that, from this perspective, impose burdens on producers and consumers, including establishment requirements, is a prerequisite.

15. The objectives of development cooperation and the fight against environmental degradation - both national and European - largely run parallel. Further increasing our financial contribution to development cooperation presupposes the presence of a real national savings surplus in developed countries. This surplus, in turn, can only be created by moderating the increase in our consumption level, with the associated positive environmental effects.[20]

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20 BCW Note: This jointly written article, together with Goudzwaard's comments to the ARS symposium "Milieu Beleid Beschouwd" (Environmental Policy Considered) give expression to insights he has developed from engagement with an expanded science of economics initiated by A C Pigou **The Economics of Welfare** (1920) and then later of E J Mishan **The Costs of Economic Growth** (1967).

AR Staatkunde jrg-41 1971 pp.294-295

17. BOOK REVIEW

Prof. Dr. W. Albeda and Prof. Dr. C. de Galan, **Inkomen: vorming, verdeling, beleid.** (Income: Formation, Distribution, Policy.) Wolters, Groningen.

This book, as you can see, is by two authors: Mr. Albeda and Mr. De Galan. Mr. Albeda is a member of the Senate for the ARP and a professor in Rotterdam, while Mr. De Galan was director of the Dr. Wiardi Beckman Foundation and was recently appointed professor in Groningen. The book they wrote together addresses the issue of income formation and distribution.[1]

Books on this topic are certainly not scarce, although they are often either strictly theoretical - and therefore indigestible for the average reader - or directly focused on political practice. The interesting thing about this book, however, is that it attempts to bridge the gap between these two approaches. It contains both an explanation of the economic theory of income formation and distribution, as well as two "policy chapters" focusing, respectively, on income policy and distribution policy. The foreword also states that De Galan wrote the "theoretical" chapters and Albeda the "policy" chapters. An advantage of this division of labour is that the most knowledgeable author always has the floor; on the other hand, there is the disadvantage that the two "parts" of the book do not perfectly align. It is not the case that Albeda "builds" in every respect on the foundations laid by De Galan. The authors also frankly admit this in their Preface: *Through mutual contact and the exchange of ideas, a unity has emerged, but it is not complete.*

One of the most appealing aspects of this study is that the authors do not pretend that their topic is of central or all-encompassing importance - as is often argued in publications on this subject. The two authors instead put it this way:

> *Income does lay the foundation for well-being and development, but certainly does not guarantee it. In a sense, the great interest in income and its distribution distracts from other essential matters: culture, development, nonconformity, and autonomy. As average prosperity increases - in the sense of the level of need satisfaction - attention could shift to other matters, but this rarely happens.*

It is also striking that in this study the authors also remain down to earth. In their clearly expressed view, they consider

> *the income distribution as it exists in the Netherlands to be shockingly unequal and therefore unacceptable (p. 167);*

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1 BCW Note: Read on the context of Gpudzwaard's analysis "Electoral Epilogue" of 1967 we can hypothesize that this publication arose from parliamentary co-operation between the ARP and PvdA with respect to the legislation concerned with "income formation and distribution."

but this does not prevent them from indicating in various places the limits of what can be changed or improved in practice with existing income relations. They note this about the pursuit of "remuneration according to need":

> *On a large scale and in the long term, this has never been successful. The link with performance cannot be severed on pain of harming production and thus total income. (p. 13)*

[295] For readers of *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*, chapters 5 and 6, which deal with policy, are particularly important. They systematically examine the various possibilities for changing income relations in certain respects within the framework of an income and/or distribution policy.

Personally, I consider the analysis of the possibilities of a Dutch wage policy one of the highlights of this study. This analysis shows that a wage policy only has a chance of success under a number of fairly stringent conditions. Such a wage policy presupposes not only a general incomes policy and a policy to manage effective demand (p. 154), but also a level of consent from the relevant employee organizations, especially when there is tension in the labour market (155). Furthermore, centralization of wage negotiations is virtually an indispensable condition (157), while a labour market policy aimed at avoiding tension in the various segments of the labour market must also be in place (158). It is therefore not surprising that the authors note at the end of this chapter that *"in the years after the war ... the wage control system actually functioned surprisingly effectively"* (p. 166). This was possible because in those years there was a general belief in the necessity of wage control. (166)

I have some criticisms. For example, the comment on p.101 speaks too superficially and flippantly about inflation with:

> *[the] often mentioned unfavorable consequences of moderate inflation - to give a general idea: a rise in the price level to 5% - are either nonexistent or not as serious as assumed. (p. 101)*

In the subsequent argument, it is too readily assumed that current global inflation - the combination of domestic inflation with inflation beyond our borders - does not pose evident dangers. Furthermore, one might wonder whether the criterion chosen by the authors in the chapter on Distribution Policy (the function or otherwise of existing income differentials for the course of the economic process) is not too narrowly chosen for defining a political position.

In general, however, this hardly detracts from this book's value. Especially those wanting a summary overview of the starting points for a policy aimed at improving income ratios, this study will serve as a very reliable guide.[2]

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[2] BCW Note: This review helpfully shows the importance of discussion across political party lines as part of the process of developing public policy, and of developing an approach to legislation, with necessary recognition of the policy orientation of political opponents.

AR Staatkunde jrg-47 1977 pp.63-70

18. CHRISTIAN POLITICS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF "SPHERE SOVEREIGNTY"[1]

prof. dr. B. Goudzwaard

For as long as the Gospel has been proclaimed in this world and people have recevied that Gospel as a message of salvation, this then is the period in which the Gospel has had political significance. Professor Van Niftrik once illustrated the truth of this assertion by pointing out that on the day of Christ's resurrection, his disciples were gathered in a house with closed doors and windows because they were afraid of the Jews. Without any intention of engaging in politics, the gathering of the group of fearful disciples was already considered a political act by their enemies. Accepting the message of the Gospel is a religious and personal act, but also a social and political act. It brings us into a new relationship with God, but also with our fellow human beings in all aspects of life.

The meaning of the Gospel of Christ is not only an internal matter, but a matter of external renewal as well. This renewal, not limited to the salvation of the soul, also pertains to the body; it not only concerns a new heaven but also a new earth. In his 1895 pamphlet "Christ and Social Needs",[2] published in 1895, we read that this same conviction led Abraham Kuyper to bitterly complain about preaching common in the churches of his day:

> *People always remain stuck in the spiritual, constantly moving in the same circle of thoughts, and thereby failing to preach the full Christ, whose gospel so clearly shows that he also wanted to influence social life, judged it as it was and sanctified it for the better. (p. 53)*

Christ's Gospel surely urges renewal of our thinking about social and political affairs.

As we all know, the history of Christian attempts to achieve this renewal in political thought spans several centuries. And in that history, we encounter, among other things, the principle of "sphere sovereignty". This principle was, so [64] to speak, an echo within political thought of a profound Biblical truth, namely that we must obey God rather than any human.[3] Therefore, this principle states, no human

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1 **BG Ftn 1.** Lecture delivered at Calvin College, January 1976

2 BCW Note: Booklet titled "De Christus en de Sociale Noden en Democratische Klippen", van Dr. A. Kuyper, 1895. "Christ and the social needs and democratic shoals." The imagery is surely about Dutch politics as it is conducted by a maritime nation negotiating rough seas along a treacherous coast, avoiding reefs. See also above p. 237 ftn.17.

3 BCW Note: Dutch: *namelijk dat we God meer moeten gehoorzamen dan de mensen*. The reference is to Acts 5:29.

institution has the right to have total control over our human lives. Only within their own sphere are human institutions entitled to address us and have authority over us.

As in the time of the Reformation, namely in Calvin's exposition on the civil state[4], we find the core of this sphere sovereignty concept. However, it only receives its more defined designation and elaboration from the Christian statesman Von Gerlach[5] and the Dutch political leader Groen van Prinsterer. Groen himself approvingly quotes Von Gerlach, namely in the January 5, 1871 edition of *Nederlandse Gedachten*, explaining the concept in a captivating exposition - and here I quote that:

> *God's law stands not beside or even beneath, but above the sphere of diplomacy, politics, and war, and encompasses these areas, just as it does the sphere of private life, with sovereign authority; God's law is therefore their highest guideline.*

And Von Gerlach continues:

> *National needs and desires . . . must be deeply subordinated to the sacred majesty of God's commandments which the child learns in the village school, but the depth and height of which no human mind can fathom.*

And this common heritage - Calvin, Von Gerlach, Althusius and Groen van Prinsterer - was then endorsed by Abraham Kuyper, as is evident from the title of his famous opening speech for the Free University in 1891, "Souvereniteit in eigen kring."

However, we live now, in the year 1977. In our time, the field of political activity has reached a level of complexity that Groen and Kuyper, in their day, could not have even imagined. And not only has the complexity of political life increased, but so has the intertwining of political life with all other spheres of life. Especially in socio-economic life, the sphere of Government and that of business have strongly influenced each other. The State has already assumed considerable direct economic responsibilities, and the Government is deeply involved in numerous social and economic affairs. This naturally raises the question: hasn't the whole idea of "sphere sovereignty" been completely superseded by the developments of our time? To raise this now as a topic for discussion seems to be a case of a clear-cut atavism.[6] Does it still have any meaning to speak of individual powers that must be respected within their own sphere, whatever that may be? Nowadays the principle of sphere sovereignty is either not mentioned at all, or it seems to be mentioned only by those who are convinced advocates of what would lead to the State's total abstention from

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4 BCW Note: Dutch: *de burgelijke staat*

5 BCW Note: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Ludwig_von_Gerlach

6 BCW Note: Dutch: *een klinkklaar atavisme*

economic affairs.[7] The principle of sphere sovereignty seems to have developed into a kind of sacred refuge for those Christians [65] who cannot keep pace on the highways of our civilization. It seems an idea suitable only for those who, for example, would explain any attempt at worker participation as a violation of the God-given authority of the employer. Because of all this, we are inclined in our time to declare the complete bankruptcy of this principle; a principle that was once one of the most prominent expressions of the distinctive style of Christian politics.

But this does raise a question. If it is true that the principle of sphere sovereignty was once a fruit of purely Biblical thinking, is it really possible that such a principle could become completely worn out and out of fashion with the passage of time? In my opinion, a good principle always remains valid, and not just as long as circumstances permit.[8] But if this assertion is correct, only one other possibility remains: that through a series of skewed interpretations, this principle has gradually *become* an outdated and dead rule of conduct. Perhaps our own thoughts and interpretations have corrupted the original meaning and thus deprived us of an insight that could very well be helpful in addressing today's complex reality!

Therefore, I would now like to propose that you follow me for a moment in a deliberate attempt to remove the dead shell from around this almost forgotten idea of Christian politics and to search once again for the living core behind all the scholastic dust and paint that has accumulated over time.

A triple misinterpretation

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to a possible threefold misinterpretation of the principle of sphere sovereignty, seen from its origins. First, there is the misinterpretation that transformed a norm-oriented principle into a principle focused on authority. Second, there is a misinterpretation that transformed the appeal to a dynamic calling into a static barrier. And third, there is the misinterpretation that this principle has only one-sided validity, namely, only from Government authority to society.

In other words, I would like to present the principle of sphere sovereignty to you once more as a principle that is, by its very nature, *norm*-oriented, in which the *dynamic* calling of Government and society in their *mutual* relations is expressed, and

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7 BCW Note: *die overtuigde voorstanders zijn van vrijwel algehele staatsonthouding*.

8 BCW Note: See what Goudzwaard said about this in response to J.J. Rippen pp.190-192 above.

thus distance myself from any view of this principle as a static rule that demands unilateral respect by the Government for all existing power relations in society.

[66] **1. Norm versus authority**[9]

The current interpretation of the principle of sphere sovereignty focuses primarily on respecting the *control*[10] of others. In discussing this principle, for example, it has become commonplace to emphasize the need for full respect for all expressions of the entrepreneur's own authority, and that of business in general within economic life. This authority, these powers, should be respected at all times.

Now, respect for authority[11] is a good thing; in its proper context, it can be interpreted a Biblical requirement. And it is also true that the principle of sphere sovereignty has everything to do with the differences in human authority. But is respect for any given authority indeed the historical core, the root, of this principle? I strongly doubt it, and I have good reason for thinking so.

The Dutch word "kring" is certainly important in this context.[12] It can mean "circle". The characteristic of every circle is that it cannot exist without a centre. But what is, for example, that centre according to Kuyper and Groen? Is that center human - God-given - authority? If so, then that authority would be that to which every circle of human life owes its own character and derives its own internal coherence. That sounds too fantastic to be true—although I admit that it sometimes seems as if Kuyper meant it that way.

The center of every sphere of life, the origin of its own coherence, is of course not the existence of human authority, but the existence of divine norms characteristic of that sphere. Groen van Prinsterer already expressed this when he spoke of the validity of God's *law* in every sphere of life. And with great approval, he quotes Von Gerlach's statement that it is God's will that encompasses all human spheres with a sovereign authority as their highest guideline. That divine, "sovereign" authority is the center of every sphere of life. It is only when *that* sovereignty is no longer recognized that the various spheres of life lose their inner coherence and unity.

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9 BCW Note: *gezag* = authority

10 BCW Note: The Dutch word is *zeggenschap* meaning "control", and sometimes even "authority"..

11 BCW Note: *gezag* = authority

12 BCW Note: "Souvereniteit in eigen kring" is translated as "sphere sovereignty", the word "kring" rendered as "sphere". Goudzwaard here explains "kring" in the 2-dimensional terms of a "circle".

It seems like a minor difference, especially considering the many problems of modern social and economic policy. But it isn't. To give an example: if we are discussing the potential of workers' influence in enterprises, and we follow that authoritative interpretation of the principle of sphere sovereignty, then any claim in that direction must be seen as an infringement of God-given authority, and therefore rejected as an attack on the enterprise's own sovereignty. But if it is true that God's standards for economic [67] life form the basis for its "sovereignty", then a consequence of that principle can precisely be the vigorous pursuit of worker co-responsibility in enterprises. For if stewardship is God's standard for all of economic life - and it is - then it is the calling of every enterprise to become a true institution of stewardship. And that is a calling in which all working people, regardless of their profession, must share.

Professor Gerbrandy[13], Prime Minister during the Second World War and a staunch advocate of worker co-responsibility, once expressed it as follows:

> *The idea of sphere sovereignty, quintessentially Christian, is being corrupted in popular life into a sort of boss-like sovereignty that precludes any influence from others; but the characteristic feature of that idea is precisely that of a sovereignty of divine ordinances in a specific sphere of life, to which both master and servant, government and people, must bow in reverence.*[14]

From a Christian perspective, it is indeed unthinkable that authority should ever be allowed to fall into a normative vacuum and be seen as something to be respected as an end in itself, regardless of how it is exercised. A similar way of thinking stems rather from the autonomy-oriented thinking of Humanism. In interpreting the principle of sphere sovereignty, we must start from norms to understand the limits of human authority, rather than by starting from human authority and thereby turning it into an unlimited norm.

2. Dynamic versus static

But this conclusion simultaneously leads us to a second misunderstanding regarding the principle of sphere sovereignty, namely its interpretation as a static barrier rather than a dynamic calling. A static barrier, a line of defense against all Government interference - that is, of course, the primary political conclusion once the principle of

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13 BCW Note: Pieter Sjoerds Gerbrandy (1885-1961) was a Dutch politician and jurist who served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands from 3 September 1940 until 25 June 1945, that is with the Government in exile in England, He was referred to by Winston Churchill as Mr Cherry Brandy. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Sjoerds_Gerbrandy

14 Reference in text: P. Gerbrandy **De strijd om nieuwe maatschappijvormen,** 1927, p. 107.

sphere sovereignty has been transformed into a principle of unlimited deference to authority. Then, indeed, every Government measure regarding the market mechanism and free enterprise is an attack on sovereignty within the sphere of free enterprise. But can we draw the same conclusion if we adopt the normative interpretation of the principle of sphere sovereignty?

My question is almost rhetorical. For if it is true that the primary norm for every Government is to do justice in all matters of public interest, and if it is also true that no attitude of any house of production may ignore the commandment to act as a true steward, then it is quite clear [68] that, if the entrepreneur does not act as a good steward, it can become a matter of just Government action to return him to his original calling. Significant Government intervention in social and economic life may then become necessary. For example, it is a matter of general justice that businesses do not heavily pollute our environment. Legislation to prevent this is therefore not only not an infringement of the principle of sphere sovereignty, but is even a requirement of it. For in this way, the Government restores justice to the national economy, based on a deep respect for the very norm of economic life, stewardship. This is because stewardship means that every business demonstrates direct care for its natural environment. When the Government directs irresponsible businesses back to their calling, this demonstrates that it is not eroding the sphere sovereignty of free enterprise, but rather fully honouring it.

It will be clear that in this way, the principle of sphere sovereignty does not function as a static barrier, but rather encourages a dynamic interpretation of the calling of Government and business.

In our time, we see that, due to the continuing influence of a shallow, materialistic lifestyle, production houses often completely miss the dimension of human dignity in their working conditions and display a lack of economically normative behaviour towards their consumers, their employees, and towards the well-being of the natural world around them. Instead, they are often nothing more than institutions that merely emit a maximum flow of consumer goods, and workshops where factors of production are combined. Is this a full-fledged existence in accordance with God's standards for economic life, which speak of service to one's neighbor, of work in accordance with the creation of humanity in the image of God, and of the mandate of stewardship? No, of course it is not.

And as long as, or as soon as, free enterprises are unable or unwilling to open themselves up to these norms for their own sphere of life, the Government must

intervene by correcting the public excesses of these private enterprises. The Government will even have to create the public conditions to encourage and stimulate every enterprise to open itself up to genuine obedience to these norms of stewardship. For a contemporary Government, it is a dynamic calling par excellence to promote sphere sovereignty of free enterprise in its own way - the way of justice for all - by directing it towards economically responsible behaviour toward nature, toward fellow human beings, toward scarce resources, and in the service of society as a whole. The closed tunnel of entrepreneurial behaviour must be unlocked; that [69] trampled grass[15] must be given the chance to rise again. For *God's norms* should be sovereign in economic life, not our shallow, cheap desires.

3. Two-sided versus one-sided

I would like to conclude my contribution by pointing out a third misunderstanding regarding the principle of sphere sovereignty: that this principle could and should only operate in one direction: as a means of protecting private powers against actions by public authorities within society.

Perhaps this remark puzzles you. Is it indeed possible to reverse this, that is, to speak specifically of the necessity of upholding the sovereignty of the *state's* own sphere against actions by private individuals? That seems only applicable in times of bitter revolution, and thus far removed from our civilized, wealthy Western world.

I would also like to emphasize here how important it is, if the principle of sphere sovereignty resonates with you, to understand it as a norm-oriented principle. The State is not an end in itself. The Government has a divinely imposed duty to obey the norm of justice in all matters of public interest. But this also means that it must have the real ability to act and react in accordance with that norm. For if a Government is prevented by its citizens from carrying out its duties towards society in a just manner, we are indeed dealing with a direct infringement of the State's own sovereignty. But that is precisely the case in many matters in our modern society.

Just think of the way activist groups try to turn government power into an extension of their own private interests; or of the methods that turn a president into a commercial product, to be sold to the people. And last but not least, I want to remind you of the rise in our time of a type of Government that is no longer based on the pursuit of justice, but on the search for endless compromises, meaning an attempt to divide the spoils among the economically strong and leave the weak and small to

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15 BCW Note: Is this a reference to the Keynesian reference to the trampling of the leaves?

struggle behind. If anywhere, then we see here a gross violation of the sovereignty of Biblical standards for the public actions of government. For the central requirement of any Government is precisely to protect the weak and defend those without power.

A totalitarian State is a devilish thing. It openly ignores the fact that God has given His own standards for family life, economic life, and social life; and that in all these spheres, people live directly [70] *coram Deo*, in the face of the living God. Because He alone has the right to have total control over our lives, a state that tries to do the same is devilish. It is an attempt to take the place that belongs only to God Himself. But this should not lead us to the conclusion that the only real danger of totalitarianism always and only comes from the State. It is also possible that this danger comes from the so-called free enterprises, which systematically try to turn the Government into an extension of private commercial interests, and which persistently attempt to transform family life into a platform upon which endless streams of consumer goods can be dumped, even if the price is nothing less than a constant crushing of existing consumer tastes, modeled on modern advertising campaigns.

For what do you think will be the future of the individual sphere of Government and family life in a society where increasing wealth and power are the only prospects for happiness? I tell you that all these institutions will ultimately be transformed into growth-makers, into institutions that must serve that central purpose of our lives, and will lose almost all their diversity of characteristics. For where norms lose their authority in the individual spheres of life, the individual character of each of these spheres also shatters. We can be crushed by a totalitarian society; but we can also create it ourselves.

Conclusions

Two conclusions can easily be derived from this entire argument thus far. The first is that it is not just the principles we claim to follow but, just as important is the way in which we tend to *interpret* them. In the current interpretation of the principle of sphere sovereignty, including in contemporary American literature,[16] the deepest motives are often more humanistic than Christian; often more focused on human autonomy than on a sense of morality; and often more focused on our economic advantages than on our stewardship duties.

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16 **BG Note 2:** e.g Gary North's hair-raising (*afgrijselijke*) **An Introduction to Christian Economics** ch XXXI. BCW Note: Notable here is Goudzwaard's awareness of the migration of "sphere sovereignty" across the North Atlantic. See also his 1963-1964 appeal to H Evan Runner's view of the relation of the Bible to public policy in his exchange with the *Patrimonium* ***Study.*** *see* ftns. 17-20 p.194.

And my second conclusion is that, from its Biblical foundation, the principle of sphere sovereignty has not only retained a certain validity to this day, but has, at this moment, though almost forgotten, perhaps even reached the point of its greatest relevance: namely, in the midst of our superficial, materialistic, and therefore almost totalitarian Western culture, which erodes all distinction.

AR Staatkunde jrg-49 1979 pp. 249-257

19. STARTING POINTS FOR POLITICAL ACTION[1]

Bob Goudzwaard

This week, the Anti-Revolutionary Party celebrates its centennial; a remarkably long period for a political party. This becomes all the more remarkable when we consider that this party has been Christian in design from the very beginning and was, moreover, the first true political party in the history of a democratic Netherlands.

How is it then possible for a Christian party to exist for such a long time? Is it because of the power of tradition? When we consider the enormous problems this party has faced throughout its existence - the so-called social issues; the problem of the poor in an industrialized society; the question of educational freedom; the colonial problem; the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War - and the comprehensive way in which these issues were addressed and dealt with (in most cases correctly, but sometimes incorrectly), tradition is too shaky a starting point to begin to explain such a long and uninterrupted history.

We must conclude, then, that the Christian convictions of the leaders and members of the Anti-Revolutionary Party undoubtedly played a key role.[2] This observation, however, leads us immediately to the topic we must discuss this morning - the relationship between Christian faith and concrete political action. This topic, in the context of this week and this day, takes on a more specific meaning when we add the following: how have Christians in the Netherlands, within a century-long Christian political tradition, grappled with this very relationship, and have they found a solution to this important problem?

Parties that Witness versus Pragmatic Parties

Let's first try to explain the problem before I try to answer the question. Why is it that this relationship between Christian faith and political action could ever be a problem? There is no politician without some form of faith or belief, and one could argue that,

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1 **BG Ftn 1:** Slightly revised in light of discussion held during the Symposium on Tuesday, April 2, 1979. BCW Note: An English version can be found in a chapter with the same title in **Christian Political Options : o*n education, broadcasting, party formation, economic order, international partnership, responsibilities in the welfare state.*** Libertas Utrecht ARP Stichting 1979 pp. 64-78. This English translation is from ARS 49, 1979, pp. 249-257. The founding date was April 3, 1979. The formal amalgamation of the three Christian parties to form the Christian Democratic Appeal party occurred on 11 October 1980 concluding a process that had begun in 1973 and with a formal parliamentary alliance in 1975.

2 BCW Note: Framing his discussion of the 100 year life of the ARP is an affirmation of the work of his own forerunners in the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij, the Vrije Universiteit and the neo-Calvinist tradition of Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper. The challenge he faces concerns how to respect this heritage without make the heritage itself the normative grounds for any Christian political option. And in the essay below we see his effort to challenge the use of "souvereiniteit in eigen kring" as an in-group shibboleth to attempt to affirm instead a reformational "normativity in its own sphere".

in any case, every politician's political actions stem from such a conviction or belief.[3] So what's the problem?

[250] The answer to this question is undoubtedly that Christian faith is more than a private matter for any individual, who is thereby free to interpret it entirely as he or she wants to. Christian faith is a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Redeemer of the world and, in this context, it is also a commitment to the revealed Truth concerning His Person; it is a commitment to the Bible, to the Gospel itself. And it is precisely this anchoring, the presence of a consciously chosen connection to or bond with the Revelation of the living God, that can pose a problem. This problem is generally expressed as the problem of the two worlds - the perfection of God's Revelation on the one hand and, on the other, the complexity of everyday political action.

"East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet," as Kipling wrote.[4]

So, doesn't the same apply to the relationship between God's Revelation and our ordinary, everyday political action? Is it not a violation of the sublime and pure nature of this Revelation to even attempt to bridge these two worlds?

Speaking about the resurrection of Christ seems to belong to a different world than speaking about our balance of payments deficit. Moreover, the danger looms that, when attempting to bridge the gap, not only is the sanctity of the Biblical message jeopardized, but the Bible can also be used ideologically, namely as a tool to advance preconceived political interests.

So, when we formulate our problem in this way, we must immediately acknowledge that there are many tangible elements in political reality that seem to confirm the existence of a gap between the Bible and practical politics.

One of these elements is the existence of "witness parties". These parties are primarily spiritual in nature and seek to engage in politics on a very limited number of political issues - such as abortion, pornography, the possibility of Christian

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3 BCW Note: Dutch: *dat zijn politiek handelen voortkomt uit die overtuiging of dat geloof.*

4 BCW Note: We note that Goudzwaard quotes Kipling in order to draw attention to the allegation that what is distinguished from each other can never be reconciled and to thereby refute the suppostion that what can be analytically distinguished is thereby utterly separated as two distinct things. In fact Kipling's poem "The Ballad of East and West", where this line frames the story, goes on to challenge that too easy stereotype. The actual verse, that begins and ends the poem reads:
Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

education, and the maintenance of a good family life. Outside of these specific issues, they usually remain silent or follow the prevailing conservative line of thought.[5]

By contrast, quite a few so-called Christian Democratic parties tend to become entirely pragmatic in their political behaviour. Christian Democratic parties want to engage with the entire political arena, but often cannot maintain that they are truly Biblically inspired when addressing important political issues. Experience has shown that such Christian Democratic concepts as freedom and responsibility repeatedly lose their dynamism because the connection with their source of inspiration is severed. It's safe to say that Christian conviction often only exerts its influence on everyday political life in a very remote way.[6]

Therefore, criticism is also justified of the common, supposedly open-pragmatic parties in which Christians and non-Christians work together *without concern for their different sources of inspiration*.

An even more serious error is when Christian convictions are "ideologically" abused for the sake of political interests. Sometimes the sole reason for this is to sell the content of party policy to a group of followers who appreciate a clear, literal reference to Biblical truth. I've been told that in the United States there exists a kind of "Bible zone", a region around Grand Rapids, where residents like to be addressed (for example, by presidential candidates) with at least some kind of reference to what the Bible says. Candidates take this into account and use more quotations from Scripture in the "Bible zone" than elsewhere. Here we have a clear example of the ideological use of the Bible and Christian conviction. A practical goal must be achieved - that candidate has to be elected - the Bible is used as a means to that end.

The term "Christian politics" is often used in a similar way; not as a standard to be met, but as a label affixed to a more or less pragmatic policy that must be sold to the public. This is one of the worst things that has happened in the history of "Christian" parties, and on a certain scale, it still happens today. And in my opinion, this evil is so great and does so much damage, that I personally would far prefer membership in a non-Christian party to membership in a so-called Christian party in which such things

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5 BCW Note: It would seem that he is here referring to parties like the *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Political_Party

6 BCW Note: Implicit here is Goudzwaard's distinctive historical account of what is referred to in the social sciences as "secularisation", leading to the marginalising of Christian principles in pragmatic society, after they have also been 'marginalised' in the life of the Christian's thinking. Secularisation to a large extend begins from and occurs within Christian churches and associations. In many respects the articles included in this collection from the *ARS* attests to Goudzwaard's challenge to the internal processes of secularisation within the Christian political tradition within which the ARP operated.

occur. You cannot and must not try to make the Word of God an extension of political desires, passing it off as your party's political goal.[7]

[251] But this protest, which I hope you will share with me, does not undo the problem. It even seems to exacerbate it. For if it is true that Christian parties are, by nature, either "witness parties" - parties concerned only with a limited number of political issues - or they are pragmatic or even ideological parties - using the Bible solely as an ideological tool to sell their basic political products to a traditionally minded Christian audience - then this is tangible evidence from the clearest illustration of the fact that it is apparently impossible to build a bridge between Biblical Revelation and the complex reality of contemporary political action.[8]

Indeed: *"East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."*

How should we view the relationship between the Light from the East - *Ex Oriente Lux* - and the darkness of our complex political policies in Western democracies?[9]

With these threats to Christian Democratic politics in mind, I'd now like to tell you a little more about how the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and now also the CDA[10], has approached the issue of the gap between the Bible and politics.

Two Lines Within Anti-Revolutionary Thinking

Throughout the history of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, there has been a process of almost uninterrupted reflection on precisely this problem. The reason for this is very clear. From the very beginning, Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper made it perfectly clear to the Dutch public, both friends and foes, that there could be no doubt about the significance of the Gospel for the totality of political action. Both abhorred the kind of politics that concerns itself only with a limited number of so-called spiritual subjects. In their view, the Word of God, by its very nature, could not be bound by boundaries such as those between spiritual and natural, ecclesiastical life and political life, etc. Even with regard to material life, just as amidst complex social and political realities, the Word of God is present as the message of liberation and

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7 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is not advocating Christian membership of non-Christian parties but emphasizing that taking out membership in any political party is a activity *coram Deo* that is never religiously neutral.

8 BCW Note: This attests to Goudzwaard's experience, also within the ambit of the ARP, but not exclusively so, of efforts to develop Christian political "pressure", whether in parties that support candidates or as lobby groups.

9 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is referring to the adage taken from Kipling's poem even as he does not discuss Kipling's subtlety in relation to the geographic standpoint of European Christendom - looking "West" across the Atlantic. See the chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5 "Forgotten Depths", "Earliest Sources of the West's Design on the World" and "Western Christendom" as background to "The Rise of the Modern State" in James W Skillen **With or Against the World? America's Role Among the Nations** Rowman and Littlefield 2005.

10 BCW Note: Christen-Democratisch Appèl, co-operating political alliance of the KVP (Catholic People's Party) ARP (Anti-Revolutionary Party) abd CHU (Christian Historical Union) from 23/6/73 and as a formal party from 11/10/80. Goudzwaard wrote the CDA Manifesto, **Not by Bread Alone.**

redemption and must be made clear as such. Christ became flesh, came to this concrete earth, worked and lived here, as Abraham Kuyper repeatedly stated. The Word of God is not far away from us, in heaven, but has come close to us, right in the midst of our daily lives.[11] Therefore, from the very beginning, it has been impossible for the Anti-Revolutionary Party to retreat into some restricted spiritual realm.

But rejecting this path made it even more necessary to find the other way: the path of a Christian politics, that is non-pragmatic and non-ideological, that takes concrete, practical questions into account. But how was this path to be found?

When I look back at the history of my own party, I must be honest. Especially in the period between 1910 and 1940, and partly also in the 1950s, a policy was pursued and put into practice that offered no real solution - namely, the policy of applying so-called "derived principles".[12] It was the era of rationalism and neo-scholasticism. An attempt was made to rationally derive an impressive set of concrete guidelines from the literal text of the Bible, which could be used as prescriptions to "construct", so to speak, a programme of concrete Christian political behaviour. These derived rules could even be applied to the issues of free trade, maintaining the gold standard, preserving authority over the Dutch East Indies, and the acceptability of state-owned enterprises.

You will appreciate the consequences. Some of these precepts contradicted each other, and almost all of them died a silent death because it became clear that they were derived primarily from human intellect and political insight, rather than from God's own living Word.[13] Gradually, it became clear that these so-called derived principles were even, to a certain extent, an affront to what the Word of God truly means in political life; and that, in any case, they could never form the basis for genuinely Christian conduct in the realm of politics.[14]

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11 BCW Note: Goudzwaard's statements have an echo of Romans 10:8 and Deuteronomy 30:12-14. *"The word of God is near you, on your heart and on your lips."*

12 BCW Note: There has been a persistent effort to develop an alternative to this method of "derived principles." see eg. "Bible and Politics: Continuing Conversation on "Answer to the Times" *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde* 1964, See above pp.182-185. In various writings, also writings available in English, Goudzwaard has developed this vital, critical observation. See: **A Christian Political Option** 1972 pp.26-27; "Wat is Normaal in het Sociaal-Ekonomische Leven?" in Hendrik Algra et al **Wat is Normaal?** Bosch & Keuning 1974 pp.20-33 especially at p.23 in a section on "Economy and Creation" pp.22-25 he recalls involvement *"at the Kuyper Foundation, [when] I was busy in the development of towering structures that were intended to give an explanation, as precisely as it was possible to give, of what could be called normal in State and society. But the strange thing now, as I look back, is that all such concern is but a pedantic worry, and relatively fruitless."*

13 BCW Note: Dutch: *in plaats van aan het levend Woord van God zelf.*

14 BCW Note: Here is evidence of Goudzwaard's close ongoing discussion with fellow Christians, struggling with this same issue and coming to understand how such "bridge building" arises from misunderstanding the place of the Bible in political life, but more generally in the life of the Christian.

But another line can also be seen in ARP history. And this one truly propelled the party forward. It is the line that began in the thinking of Groen and Abraham Kuyper, to be developed by scholars such as Anema,[15] Dooyeweerd, and Mekkes. Constant reflection on the nature of the State and on the specific calling of Government in relation to all of its citizens, is characteristic of this line of thought. [252] With this structural analysis, real progress was made to answer the age-old question of the relationship between our Christian faith and our conduct in political reality.

The essence of this line of thought, especially with regard to its importance for the problem of the relationship between the Biblical message and political action, can perhaps best be illustrated by using a prism as a symbol - a symbol also once used by Herman Dooyeweerd. A prism can transform a ray of white light into a color spectrum, whose colors exhibit great differences, yet are nevertheless the constituent parts of one, "undivided" white ray of light. Similarly, we can say that the Word of God is one dynamic message to humanity, conveying one undivided truth about creation, sin, redemption, and the Second Coming - but that this message concretizes and develops in its own way into the various areas of life in which people are called to serve God and their neighbours.

The norms of God, of which the Bible speaks, acquire their respective "colors" in relation to the various structures of human social reality. In all these structures, the demand that the Word of God places upon us must be met; but the answer to that demand takes on its own colour in accordance with the social structure in which humankind has to fulfil some (leading or serving) responsibility.

For example, we can discuss the family structure, with the norm of mutual love and trust as its most typical trait or color; we can discuss the structure of productive economies, which are primarily governed by the norms of *oikonomia*, of stewardship; and we can discuss the structure of the State by considering the most essential norm it must meet, namely the norm of public justice. This norm is politically essential for all, because without it, the State as a State would become a direct threat to its own citizens.

"Der Staat soli Rechtsstaat sein", the State must be a constitutional State, said Julius Stahl a century ago, and Groen van Prinsterer added that therefore the primary task of a Christian politician in parliament lies not in evangelizing, but in testifying to the liberating power of the Gospel by fulfilling the concrete work of justice. By fulfilling this task above all else, namely, by bringing justice to civil society, the Government responds to its calling and to the one, living Word of God.

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15 BCW Note: Anne Anema https://www.parlement.com/biografie/mr-anne-anema

Law and Vocation[16]

But, you might now ask, what is the truly "Christian" element in this line of thought? For there is no political movement that doesn't, in one way or another, point to the need for justice within the State. Conservatism, socialism, liberalism, pragmatism - they all seek justice in their own ways, though they may not make it as overriding and decisive a criterion as it should be. So what's the difference?

Here we must introduce a second element, the relationship between the idea of justice and the Biblical Revelation itself. What does the Bible mean when it states that Governments, by the will of God, deliver righteousness and practice justice? What actually is justice and righteousness in the true Biblical sense? The Anti-Revolutionary tradition has often given a similar answer to this question. Namely, that for the Government, justice means that in every Government measure, every citizen must be treated as bearing the image of God and that therefore their interests must be given the weight they deserve for the fulfilling of their vocations.

With this word *vocation*, a typically Reformed influence comes to the fore. Justice must involve everyone receiving their due. But to discover what this due is, a Government must begin by recognizing that its call to do justice is not the only call from God in social reality. Families also have their own [253] specific vocation, just as, for example, production oriented establishments.[17] Doing justice to them therefore means providing them all with the public conditions to enable them to respond to their own [253] specific calling; they do this by protecting their rights, by providing the public services they need to fulfill their own duties, and also, when necessary, by intervening in their behaviour toward one another. This intervention is called for when people become so unfaithful to their vocation and task that injustice is done to the vocation and task of others.

Normativity in it's Own Sphere[18]

The declaration that justice must be done with regard to and in view of the specific calling of other social groups and institutions is based on the well known anti-revolutionary principle of "sphere sovereignty". This principle was first identified in

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16 BCW Note: Dutch: *roeping* - calling, vocation.

17 BCW Note: Dutch: Ook gezinnen hebben hun eigen specifieke roeping, net zo als bijvoorbeeld produktie-gerichte huishoudingen,

18 BCW Note: Goudzwaard is addressing a readership that is well apprised of the adage of Abraham Kuyper "souvereniteit in eigen kring". ("sovereignty in it's own sphere") Part of the motivation for this article is to encourage Christian-critical thinking about appeal to "sphere sovereignty", which he says has been mangled by a demand of conservatistic liberalism that Government stay out of markets. It should be kept in mind that here in this translation "souvereniteit in eigen kring" is translated as "sphere sovereignty" even though Goudzwaard continues with a discussion that assumes consideration of the words in the (Dutch) phrase.

this way by Groen van Prinsterer.[19] It must be emphasized that the word "sovereignty" here does not refer to the sovereignty or authority of citizens, a sovereignty they could or should assert against the authority of the State. The word "sovereignty" here refers to sovereignty, or rather, the authority of God's norms regarding the entirety of human social life. And that is something different from the authority (in their concrete behaviour) of citizens. Let me remind you again of the prism. The single light of God's Word demands a differentiated, multifaceted response from humanity, differentiated according to a range of norms for fulfilling one's calling.

The Government fulfills only one of these callings, neither lower nor higher than others; for there are no degrees of holiness with regard to what God requires of humanity. Therefore, the Government, which is the governing body within the State, must give citizens sufficient space to fulfill their callings. But if they ignore their calling through their use of power or authority, the State often cannot and should not remain inactive. For example, an industrial enterprise that pollutes its environment is acting contrary to its own economic mandate (*oikonomia* means stewardship). If, in that case, the Government prohibits or limits this pollution, it is still acting in accordance with respect for its own sovereignty - or normativity - of socio-economic life. Therefore, to avoid misunderstandings, it would be better to speak of *"normativity within one's own sphere"*. For the sovereignty at issue here is not the sovereignty of entrepreneurs, but the sovereignty of the Word of God, which demands obedience to the standard of good stewardship from all economic subjects.

The Gap Between Bible and Politics: Not Reality but Suggestion

Why did I go into such detail by refering to the principle of justice and the principle of normativity within our own circle, as I addressed the major problem of the relationship between our Christian faith and concrete political action? I hope you can now understand the reason. When the Word of God itself exhorts us to do justice in the political sphere, in respect for everyone's calling, then precisely this demand makes our Christian faith and understanding paramount amid the most concrete and complex political questions.

This fundamentally shifts the question. It was: how do we bridge the gap between the Bible and concrete political action? Put this way, Christian politics is and remains a matter of labourious attempts to bridge and close that supposed gap between

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[19] BCW Note: It is important to read this by giving emphasis to "in this way", namely to carefully distinguish among those adhering to a political perspective that was resistent to the ongoing impact of the ideology of the French Revolution. Goudzwaard is not denying that the insight that leads to "sphere sovereignty" was presented in the Calvinist jurist Althusius (1563-1638), nor of the Calvinist principle of the Magistrate's duty to resist the imposition of unjust rule of rulers higher up the chain of command for public governance. He is highlighting the importance of noting an anti-revolutionary view of "sphere sovereignty" that reckons with the possibility, contra some in the anti-revolutionary movement across Europe, that Government can also be revolutionary.

Biblical revelation and everyday politics. But when the Gospel itself calls for justice to be done in politics to everyone, according to each person's calling as image-bearers of God - the right of widows and orphans, of foreigners and refugees, of wage earners and small business owners, of drug addicts and the exploited - then it is nonsense to speak of a gap between the Bible and concrete political action.

The Word of God is already fully present in the *midst* of practical politics. In that sense, painful for us, for too long we have been on the other side of the gap we suggested. For amidst the most mundane political problems, the Word of the living God confronts us in every situation with the unavoidable choice between right and wrong. For amidst the most mundane political problems, the Word of the living God confronts us in every situation with the unavoidable choice between right and wrong. Like a sword, it pierces even our most hidden political deliberations. It presents both Christians and non-Christians (!) with the fiery choice of whether we truly want justice and, in doing so, create space for everyone to live in service to others and to the Other.[20]

The fundamental problem of Christian politics, therefore, is no longer to bridge perceived gaps [254]. It is rather to learn to understand what "the true codes of need are" (duty), and in responding to that need, to learn to distinguish between the call for Biblical justice and that with which we tend to deceive ourselves. This is anything but simple. Our ideas of justice are so abstract and bourgeois; they are so far removed from the power of the Biblical justice motif, which is always sharply addressed, incredibly concrete, and which never makes either economic circumstances or formal civil rights the sole focus of the question of justice.

Conducting Christian politics is anything but simple; it is one of the most difficult things in existence. But it is not about bridging the gap between the Bible and practical politics. Is is because that gap doesn't exist. It's merely a suggestion to make things easier for ourselves. This is especially true when we are concretely faced with the question of political justice, which is inherently the structural question for all the forms of Government policy. Therefore, even casual references to ideas like freedom and responsibility, and general formulae that express that the Government should promote such things, are inadequate for Christian politics. As for a program of principles, it should at least refer to the specific calling of each Government, which is oriented toward the norm of public justice.[21]

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20 BCW Note: Dutch: *Ander* The is great subtlety here in Goudzwaard's "Good Samaritan" recognition that in political service to our neighbour who shares with us in the *mageo Dei*, we are indeed fulfilling our calling before God. Goudzwaard is not concerned to always frame his views in "theologically correct" ways.

21 BCW Note: Dutch: *naar de specifieke eigen roeping van elke overheid, die is gericht op de norm van openbare gerechtigheid*. Is this a suggestion that a Political Manifesto, raised by a Christian democratic party, must keep in mind that there are many governments which need to be given due respect in their programme? A Christian democratic party is a party that also develops an international political vision.

For without that clear reference, as we know from our own long history, a development toward either political spiritualism or political pragmatism can hardly be avoided. Insight into structures and the norms that govern them is what should, above all, characterize Christian Democratic principles and our practical politics. However, we certainly cannot claim that this goal has already been achieved.

The Right to Resist

Up to this point, my story has been rather abstract. Before I reach my final conclusion, it might be helpful to provide some concrete examples of the aforementioned line of thought. This might not only shed more light on what I've tried to say about ARP's past, but might also be significant for our future from a Christian Democratic perspective.

My first example is the right to resist. I choose this example precisely because the term "anti-revolutionary" still easily leads to misunderstandings today. The term suggests that "Anti-Revolutionaries" believe that the authority of the Government must be obeyed unconditionally in every situation. But I can tell you in all honesty that this view is entirely un-anti-revolutionary. For example, it was the members of the Anti-Revolutionary movement who (along with the communists) played the most active role in the resistance movement against the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II.

This riddle can best be solved by introducing you to the distinction, which Groen van Prinsterer made as early as 1860, between two terms: "counter-revolutionary" and "anti-revolutionary". The former means: opposed to any form of revolution; unconditionally upholding the authority of the current Government. But for Groen van Prinsterer "anti-revolutionary" meant something fundamentally different. This term stands for the struggle against the spirit of revolution, the spirit that is directed against the authority of God Himself and therefore in most cases is also directed against the authority of the Government.

The importance of this distinction becomes clear once we see that, according to Groen's definition, that not only can citizens fall under the spell of the spirit of revolution, but that this also applies to Governments!

Governments can become revolutionaries, namely when they abandon their mission to practice justice. When a regime systematically exploits the population and suppresses human rights, it can be considered a rebellion against God Himself, who gave Governments the authority to practice justice, not to abuse their power.

In the Anti-Revolutionary tradition, the right to resist an oppressive Government is therefore honoured.[22] But this right to resist is never absolute and ruthless. For those who resist can also fall under the spell of a revolutionary spirit: a spirit that seeks not to serve, but to rule; a spirit that calls not for justice, but for revenge. There is an abuse of power that must be combated in this world. But there is also an [255] idolatry of revolutionary struggle, which, along with the ideology of revolution, must be rejected from the bottom of our hearts. For it is not human power that must prevail and save us, but the mission of justice that must take precedence in the State.

The Social Contract as a Threat to the Rule of Law

The second example concerns a problem that has for many years generated considerable disagreement within most political parties: the relationship between Government, employers' organizations, and unions. In most Western democracies, contacts between these three important powers in every national economy have intensified in recent decades. They have expanded so much that they have often led to a kind of "social contract" between the three powers, in which mutual agreement is reached on wage levels, price trends, taxes and subsidies, etc. Without that agreement (and thus without such a "social contract"), a kind of jungle easily develops, as each "party" claims the right to pursue its own path. Is this a good and just development, and if not, is there a way to escape it?

This is one of the practical points where Roman Catholic and Reformed political thought can, in themselves, lead to different outcomes. In the Catholic style of politics, the Government is seen as the head of the entire "natural" society, which also includes the socio-economic life of the nation (including employees and employers). The principle that prevents the Government from developing totalitarian traits is "the principle of subsidiarity": what a lower body or institution can do should not be done by a higher body. But in the concrete case mentioned above, the rule of subsidiarity fails to a certain extent.

When national economic interests are at stake, it is ineffective to delegate the problems to the "lower" level of employers and employees. The best solution seems to be to give employers and employees a direct voice at the highest level of natural society - that is, the State - as soon as these matters need to be regulated and discussed within the State (this solution was already advocated in principle in the encyclical ***Quadragesimo Anno***, 1931).

In a reformed mindset, this is not only a wrong, but even a dangerous solution. For the Government's calling is different from that of employers and employees. The

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22 **BG Ftn. 2:** Whereby, in line with Calvin, it is limited to those who are capable of exercising responsible political leadership.

Government's own mission, which is oriented towards the norm of public justice, is at stake here - meaning that decisions regarding socio-economic issues, which must be taken from the perspective of social justice for all (measures against inflation, unemployment, etc.), should not be the outcome of a process of mutual negotiation between the Government and two powerful interest groups. For such a consensus-based policy will undoubtedly lead to measures that primarily benefit those interest groups and their members, and only secondarily benefit those groups in society that cannot act as an interest group. Here, the State's starting point shifts from justice to pressure, from the notion of justice to consensus.

The correct approach to the problem at hand is, of course, not to cut off all contact between the Government and employers' and employees' organizations. Regular consultation is valuable, so that each party knows the other's intentions. This contact may also be necessary for the Government to verify the extent to which it will receive positive or negative responses from these organizations regarding certain policy proposals. But a critical threshold has been crossed when this leads to a form of negotiation.

For what happens if such negotiations fail to produce results? Then the parties are free to do as they please. However, within the legal structure of the State, the Government can never accept a situation in which independent organizations "do what they want", especially not if this would violate the norm of justice for other vulnerable groups in society (the unemployed, people on fixed incomes, etc.). It is therefore of the utmost importance for the Government to avoid any form of direct negotiation with interest groups. Negotiations are a normal occurrence in socio-economic [256] life, but it does not fit into the interaction between Government and pressure groups, which should, above all, be within a lawful relationship.[23]

Faith and Economic Order

A third and final example is the difficult question of how Christian politics should position itself to the task of shaping our socio-economic order. Does Christian belief encourage us to criticize our social and economic order? Or should it be defended? And in either case, on what points and to what extent? Of course, within the scope of this lecture, this can only be addressed to a limited extent. Therefore, I limit myself to one aspect of the entire issue: the relationship in our economic system, between power on the one hand, and the associated responsibility, on the other.

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[23] BCW Note: Dutch: *dat voor alles een rechts verkeer behoort te zijn*. The Google translation robot focusing its translation, it would seem, upon "*recht*", gave an initial ambiguous reading of "that everything should be on the right" and then after posing it again gave the present formulation "everything should be a lawful relationship." DEEPL's rendering was: *that everything should be done according to the law.*

In the *conservative way of thinking*, this relationship is already given optimal shape in our current social order. Businesses have the task of producing efficiently for the market, a market that must be as free as possible to ensure that consumer needs are met. Regarding this "responsibility", business must also have ultimate authority or power over, for example, investment decisions. In this way, power and responsibility in economic life are compatible. In this view, the Government's responsibility remains limited to protecting civil rights and providing economic equilibrium, in order to prevent excessive cyclical disruptions to economic life. Its power should therefore not extend beyond this.

In the *socialist perspective*, the State is the decisive organ of the national community. It is the State's responsibility to guarantee equal opportunities and security of existence for everyone; and the Government should therefore possess corresponding socio-economic power. That is why socialists advocate a radical reorientation of our social and economic order, which will often lead to a further expansion of the power and authority of the Government in social and economic affairs.

In a Christian-political mindset, neither view can be accepted. On the one hand, this is because the mandate for stewardship is the core of one's own task and calling in economic life. There should be room for fulfilling this responsibility, which leads to a clear distinction from the socialist approach. On the other hand, however, it must be stated that this mandate for stewardship entails much more than seeking an efficient combination of production factors for the benefit of production for free markets, which places us directly opposite the conservative approach.

In a Christian-normative way of thinking, the economic responsibility of companies and industries also encompasses a direct responsibility for nature conservation, a direct responsibility for maintaining meaningful employment, and a direct responsibility for the human *quality* of work.

And these are all responsibilities for which workers must also be held accountable! Therefore, the principle of normativity within its own sphere also runs counter to all ideas of labour that considers it merely as a factor of production without any reference to the question of the co-responsibility of employees. After all, the employee has a fundamental co-responsibility for how the task of stewardship is carried out within the productive household[24] in which they, as human beings, find themselves.

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[24] BCW Note: Dutch: *de produktie-huishouding*. This may sound strange concept but as well as referring to the fact that the employee working for an employer is also a worker who is accountable in and to his/her own household, it is also full of a metaphor allusion by usage of the term *house* and *household* (Greek: *οἰκία* from which economy is derived) referring to banks as "finance houses" and commercial enterprises as "business houses."

Therefore, there is indeed reason to criticize our current societal structure. This structure must be changed because the current distribution of power cannot ensure that the truly existing responsibilities regarding the norm of good stewardship are put into practice. This leads to two main consequences.

First, there is the need for Government policy to allow business enterprises[25] to better fulfill their original tasks. This requires not only a task-oriented energy and environmental policy, but also, for example, a policy that promotes the quality of human labour in the work process and sets certain limits.

Second, a Government policy is needed that leads to increased responsibility for [257] employees in business enterprises, combined with regulations that explicitly allow for voluntary wage reductions in individual workplaces if employees (or their associations) deem this desirable to better fulfill the economic mission of the company (including ensuring sufficient meaningful work).

Perhaps such a regulation will be entirely without a successful outcome. But in any case, the legal barriers that prevent this path from being pursued should be be removed.[26] It is needed because even when economic sacrifices have to be made, workers should be able to participate in a commercial enterprise's responsibility to become more receptive to the task of being good stewards.

No Anti-Revolutionary Advantage

The three examples mentioned above are, of course, open to discussion. They are in no way intended to provide the ultimate truth regarding Christian policy today. But I hope I have at least made it clear that this historical line contains a significant impetus for overcoming both the dangers of political spiritualism and ideologized political pragmatism.

Overcoming both dangers, incidentally, is not a matter of long articles - like this one - or of certain people - such as an elite of Anti-Revolutionary thinkers. Regarding the latter, for example, the failure of the party elite at decisive moments in the history of the Anti-Revolutionary Party - I'm thinking of the decolonization issue[27] - offers lasting lessons.

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25 BCW Note: Dutch: *produktie-huishoudens*

26 BCW Note: Goudzwaard suggests that the *political* effort to change the law to allow for such voluntary wage restraint traded off with improved working conditions and facilitating the meaningfulness of the workplace, may not meet with any worker or employer initiatives to ensure, for example, that more workers be employed. But it would seem that a lack of such insight on the part of employers or those in the workforce does not mean a Christian legislative contribution shouldn't be made with such an end in view.

27 BCW Note: Around this time there were various articles written on the decolonization of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) after World War II to be found in *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatkunde*.

As far as the Christian Democratic Appeal is concerned, the key question will be whether all Christian Democrats will be willing to continually absorb the call for Biblical justice, so that it can resonate in a structural way within Government policy, based on respect for the calling of all, and realized in a very concrete way. And when it comes to that question, no Anti-Revolutionary has an advantage. Catholics and Protestants will continue to desperately need each other regarding this concrete question. Having a separate past can certainly be an advantage; but a misunderstood and mishandled past is in all cases an insurmountable stumbling block stumbling block for Christian politics.[28]

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[28] BCW Note: There is much in this essay to assist those seeking to appreciate Goudzwaard's overall contribution. This is written at the time he formulated the CDA 1977-1981 Election programme "Not by Bread Alone." By 1981 he would also publish **Genoodzaakt goed te wezen: christelijke hoop in een bezeten wereld** (Kampen, Kok) [Compelled to be good: Christian hope in a possessed world] which explained why he could no longer align with the CDA when the party gave its endorsement to Pershing ICBM missiles being installed in The Netherlands as part of what was described as strategic defense AKA Mutually Assured Destruction" (MAD). It would be translated and published in 1984 as **Idols of our Time** (Translator Mark Vander Vennen, Foreword Howard A. Snyder) IVP**.** This article may also provide a clue as to how Goudzwaard was seeing his contribution at this time before further work with Christians in churches across the global (in particular the "global south", involvement with programmes drawing attention to how poverty was generated in global economic systems. The World Council of Churches from its 1991 Seventh Assembly in Canberra, committed itself to "mission in foreign structures" and Goudzwaard would participate in WCC/World Alliance of Reformed Churches work that sought to demonstrate a practical ecumenical Christian presence in negotiations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. His contributions during this time into the 21st century can be seen from his many publications listed in an annotated bibliography. https://tukampendatastore.blob.core.windows.net/neocalvinism/allofliferedeemed/Goudzwaard/BGBibliogJune2008.pdf