

Values, Catholic Social Thought and Public Policy



CORI Justice

VALUES, CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Edited by
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CORI Justice

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INTRODUCTION

Do values matter in economic and social policy? Does the Catholic social thought tradition offer any insights to our understanding of economic and social issues, particularly in relation to the goal of promoting a just society? Searching for answers to these and many other related questions prompted this publication.

While maintaining a strict adherence to the Gospel values from which it sprang the social teachings of the Catholic Church have also laid great emphasis on understanding the historical and social context in which economic and social activity takes place. It calls for an accurate reading of the ‘signs of the times’.

The goal of Catholic social thought is not to offer an answer to every economic or social question but instead to offer a lens through which to view specific social and economic problems. This perspective argues that economic and social actions are inherently moral actions. Yet the assertion that values matter is a contested issue in many areas of public policy.

The chapters in this book, which were first presented at a policy conference on the topic of *Values, Catholic Social Thought and Public Policy*, seek to address some of the key questions and issues that emerge in this area. They mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the CORI Justice Office which has sought to address these questions and issues on a day to day basis for a quarter of a century. Our approach over that time and our reflections are outlined in the final chapter.

In presenting this volume we do not attempt to cover all the questions that arise around this topic. This volume is offered as a

contribution to the ongoing public debate around these and related issues.

CORI Justice expresses its deep gratitude to the authors of the various chapters that follow. They contributed long hours and their obvious talent to preparing these chapters.

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Brigid Reynolds
Seán Healy
October 16th, 2007

1.

The Contribution of Catholic Social Thought to Economic Policy

Charles M. A. Clark

*“The time has come for a new and deeper reflection on the
nature of the economy and its purposes”*

John Paul II

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to defend two somewhat controversial assertions:

1. For economic policy to effectively promote the common good it has to be based on a firm ethical foundation and a rigorous ethical analysis; and
2. The Catholic social thought tradition provides an ethical foundation that can help guide economic policy towards the common good.

Both assertions are based on the much less controversial proposition that modern capitalist economies require state intervention (including economic policies) to promote prosperity and stability.¹ We shall not concern ourselves with 19th Century laissez-faire economics, even if it does still have its proponents. Our concern is with the role ethical analysis can play in the formation and implementation of economic policy, particularly the insights Catholic social thought brings to the process.

¹ The reality of the mixed economy is commonly accepted, with most of the debate centering on where the line separating public intervention and private initiative should be. One of the current trends in economic policy is for “public-private partnerships” which recognizes that it is increasingly difficult in a modern economy to separate the two spheres

The assertion that economic policy requires ethical analysis is controversial because it challenges the underlying assumption that neoclassical economic theory is a “positive” science, and thus free of values and value judgments. Using the term “common good” also challenges the view of society that underlies neoclassical economics. The Catholic definition of “the common good” is problematic for neoclassical economists because it asserts that there is a “good” distinct from the sum total of individual “goods.” Neoclassical economic theory implicitly, and often explicitly, rejects the idea that society is anything other than the sum total of its individuals, in fact society is seen as a “mental fiction”; only individuals are real. Since neoclassical economic theory reduces the individual good to maximizing consumption through exchange they equate the common good with economic statistics such as Gross Domestic Product or per capita income.

The second assertion is even more controversial, for it argues that economics as a discipline, and economic policy as an activity, can benefit from insights derived from moral theology. This certainly goes against the whole Enlightenment project of freeing reason from faith (which philosophers are increasingly realizing is impossible). No doubt many will argue that it violates principles of the separation of Church and state.² Yet most will agree that humans are more than just economic actors, and that the various factors that influence their actions (socialization, politics, culture, and their relationship with their creator) all overlap with each other, and that understanding each assists in understanding the economy and economic actions. Many will no doubt recognize the usefulness of an understanding of the disciplines of sociology, political science, social psychology and the humanities in order to better understand economic activity based on the simple fact that economic activity does not exist in a vacuum and is not easily separated from other social factors. The problem of separating economics from other social factors is that it ignores what is behind economic activity, that is what motivates and informs human activity at its deepest level, what shapes the values and the value judgments that

² The irony of this criticism lies in the fact that the assertion of the separation of Church and state originates in the Catholic Church.

guide and determine our countless economic actions. These values ultimately come to us from our relationship and understanding of God and the discipline that studies this is moral theology. This is true even for atheists (their motivations and values are as shaped by their understanding of God as any religious person). Furthermore the Judeo-Christian tradition in general, and Christian ethical analysis in particular which carries forward the classical tradition of Aristotle, is the foundation of Western values, and it is impossible to make sense of the West, even in its current secular state, without understanding Christian moral theology. This is especially true for the role of ethics in economic activity, where values play such a key role in regulating individual activity with only minimal government control and coercion. To fully understand economic activity we need to go beyond economic motives.

The necessity for ethical analysis in economic policy formation stems from the role ethics plays in all economic activity. Every economic activity has two aspects that require ethical analysis. First, economics is about making choices, and choices require criteria for choosing, that is values and value judgments. There is no such thing as a “purely economic” or value-free economic action.³ This is true for individual and collective choices. Second, every economic activity is always also a social, political, cultural and spiritual activity because it necessarily involves other persons. There is no such thing as a solitary economic act, just as there is no such thing as a solitary individual person. By their very nature humans must live in community with others, and must, by necessity, come from a community. All economic activity is working or trading with others. Thus it necessarily has an ethical dimension (that is at a minimum it requires criteria for regulating interpersonal interactions).⁴ Economists have often used the Robinson

³ Economists have noted that the very act of choosing “reveals the preferences” of the individual. Such analysis often, however, becomes circular, for economists often argue that individuals make economic choices because it gives them “utility” and we know that such choices gives them “utility” because people choose them.

⁴ Christian ethics would add that all actions necessarily involve the relationship between the “acting person” and God, thus even if we could conceive of economic actions that involve only one human, the dictates of ethics still apply. Choosing something that only harms oneself is not an ethically neutral act, for it harms a child of God in the same way as our actions that harm others. The impact our actions have on others is more a criteria for state intervention than it is for whether it is right or wrong.

Crusoe story to illustrate the autonomous nature of rational economic decision making, yet this is a very misleading example, for even when Crusoe was alone on the island, his actions and decisions were far from being autonomous, that is free of the influence of political, social, cultural and spiritual factors. Crusoe was a fully socialized person and his actions, even when he was by himself, clearly were influenced by the culture and social milieu in which he was raised. The view that each human is an autonomous individual ignores the necessary social nature of the human person. The methodological individualism of neoclassical economic theory not only forces economists working within this tradition to ignore historical and social context, thus failing it its goal of understanding actual economies, it requires them to view economic actors in isolation from others, which is an impossibility.

Attempts to ignore the ethical aspects of economic activity in general, and economic policy in particular, are usually motivated by the desire to impose one set of values and interests on others, using the guise of “scientific” analysis as a way to hide one’s own values and interests, and eliminate the need to consider others’ values and interests. The “laissez-faire” school on the right and Marxism on the left both attest to this tendency. A look at two rather glaring examples of attempting to exclude ethics from economic policy making might be useful. The first, which I need only mention to this audience, is the policy suggestions of Charles Edward Trevelyan during the Irish Famine, when the “laissez-faire” ideology (especially the Malthusian theory of population) was viewed as “science” and was used to promote policies designed to reduce the population of Ireland.⁵ A more recent example is the famous memo written by then World Bank economist Lawrence Summers in 1991⁶. Using solid neoclassical economic theory, Summers argued that it made perfect economic sense to relocate high polluting industries to the third world. Summers’ three reasons for such a policy were:

1. Since the costs of the negative effects of the pollution are measured in terms of “foregone earnings from increased

⁵ Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley, *Political Economy and Colonial Ireland*, London: Routledge, 1992.

⁶ <http://www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa/ads/286.html>

morbidity and mortality,” the costs are lower in poor countries (since their earnings are lower) than it would be in wealthy countries. Summers states: “I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that.”

2. Poor countries have less pollution, due to their lower level of past economic development. They are thus, according to Summers “under-polluted.” It would be efficient to transport pollution created in rich countries to poor countries (yet he laments that the transportation costs are too high to do this effectively.)
3. Since many of the effects of pollution often happen later in life, and since the life expectancy is lower in poor countries, the negative effects of the pollution will be lower in poor countries.

Summers rejects bringing in other factors, including “moral reasons”, into the policy discussion because they might lead to conclusions contrary to the policies he is promoting. He notes that “The problem with the arguments against all of these proposals for more pollution in LDCs (intrinsic rights to certain goods, moral reasons, social concerns, lack of adequate markets, etc.) could be turned around and used more or less effectively against every Bank proposal for liberalization.” What Summers does not mention is that his entire analysis is based on “moral reasons” and not on a set of rules that exist outside or above the moral order. Moving high polluting industries to poor countries makes sense if one “values” human life based on income earned, and your goal is to maximize the consumption of those with money to spend. This is not an objective scientific observation like today’s temperature and it is not based on some physical law of nature like gravity. It is an ethical judgment wrapped up as pseudo-science.

The significance of ethics to economic policy formation and implementation cannot be underestimated. Economic policy’s are designed, or should be designed, to have a positive affect on people’s lives and well being, to shape and form society and social interactions in some manner so as to improve economic outcomes. Whether it is to reduce unemployment, promote local economic development, reduce

inflation, regulate business practices, protect consumers and workers or help the poor and marginalized, values and value judgments prompt the creation of economic policies and play an important role in policy development. The failure of economic policies to promote the common good is often due to their not being based on solid ethical values, although one would have to note that often failure is due to an erroneous understanding of the economy and the nature of the economic problem being addressed.⁷ Many, if not most, economic policies reflect the values and interests of small groups within a society who have the economic and political influence and power to use the power of the state to promote their own narrow self-interests. This is particularly true when you recognize that economic policy is much more than monetary and fiscal policy and that most actions by the state have the goal of influencing economic actions at the micro level and consists of regulations, tax-breaks and subsidies targeted towards specific industries, groups and individuals. Such policies are often necessary and can often promote the common good, but the potential for abuse cannot be underestimate. The question of what economic problems require social action, as well as what specific social action should be undertaken, is as much an ethical one as it is an economic. In fact both expertises are needed. Economic policy, like all economic actions, are social actions, they involve people acting with others. Furthermore, given the democratic nature of most capitalist societies, economic policies are the result of political decisions and political processes. Whose voices are included in the process of policy creation will determine which values will be reflected in social policy. Thus not only are economic policies an ethical concern, but so also are the processes by which policies are developed and enacted.

It is because social ethics and ethical analysis play such an important role in economic policy formulation that Catholic social thought can assist policy makers in the policy making process. The Church does not offer a universally valid set of economic policies; there is no

⁷ Much like the generals who fight the current war with the tactics of the previous war, often to disastrous effect, for the technology and other factors are often different.

“Christian” monetary or fiscal policy *per se*⁸. Actual economic policies require taking into consideration the context of the economic problem being addressed, as well as the social and political conditions. Instead the Church offers principles based on the nature of the human person and the requirements for authentic human flourishing. It offers a lens through which one can view and understand economic and social problems and a set of criteria for evaluating both the means and the ends for addressing such problems, but the actual solutions to specific economic and social problems will always be contingent on the historical and social context of the problem. The Church’s expertise is in its understanding of the nature of the human person and in what is necessary for authentic human flourishing (promoting human well being). While this is not enough to solve any economic problem, such knowledge is a necessary underpinning to inform and guide the other expertise’s necessary to address economic and social problems (economics, sociology, politics, the environment etc.)

1.2 The Crisis in Economics

The theoretical limitations of neoclassical economic theory have been often noted and lamented, and I shall not review here this extensive literature.⁹ The two most fundamental problems with neoclassical economic theory are: 1. in an attempt to make economics a hard “science” it has forced ethics out of economic analysis; and 2. it excludes historical and social context. Neoclassical economists exclude social and historical context because they view economics as an axiomatic science, one that searches for universal principles independent of observing actual particulars. The underlying assumption is that one can discover the hidden forces that bring order

⁸ This is not to suggest that each and every possible economic policy can be, if given the right circumstances, in conformity with Church teachings. The Church’s position is that the requirements of ethics must be adhered to in both the means and the ends of economic policy.

⁹ *My Economic Theory and Natural Philosophy* (Clark, 1992) catalogues many of these limitations.

to the marketplace based on making a few assumptions which they accept as fact, even though they are often contradicted by experience. They do this by excluding historical, social, cultural, political and spiritual factors from their analysis, attempting to develop theories and policies that are true at all times and all places. To do this they have to reduce the human person to “rational economic man”, and in the process they have stripped the human person of everything that makes them human (that is distinct from other animals). No one would argue, I think, that humans do not seek economic ends, or that they attempt to act on some occasions in a seemingly economically rational manner (such as maximizing profits). Certainly no serious student of human nature would deny that people often follow their self-interest, or at least what they perceive as their self-interest. Yet this is only a small part of the human condition. People often act in their narrow “economic” self-interest, but they also often go beyond their narrow self-interest. Furthermore, how they conceive their “self-interest” is greatly influenced by social, political and spiritual factors, and these factors influence their economic actions along with economic rationality. Moreover, people only “seemingly” act rationally, for to actually act in one’s own self interest assumes first correctly and clearly knowing what is in one’s best interest and secondly, having the power to effectively achieve it. This level of rationality, what economists call “perfect information,” is beyond any human’s capabilities, yet it is required for the neoclassical story to make sense (that is for the theory to explain how an economy of free acting individuals achieves equilibrium). Not having perfect information is one of the reasons we rely on ethical principles to guide our actions, because we know that to individually judge our actions requires knowing all the consequences of our actions, as well as all the intentions behind our actions, and this knowledge is impossible. Ethical principles allow us to act, preventing the paralysis that would be caused by having to reinvent ethical standards for each ethical problem or situation.

Yet the crisis of economics is not limited to the theoretical realm, something that concerns only economic theorists and policy makers. There is a growing realization in the advanced capitalist societies that

economic growth does not necessarily bring human happiness. This sense of “is that all there is” is particularly evident in Ireland where the experience of prosperity has been much more truncated than in other capitalist countries. Ireland has gone from being Europe’s poor neighbour to one of the richest countries in the world in one generation. It is apparent to many, if not most, Irish citizens that the dramatic increase in wealth was not matched with a corresponding increase in well being. Even more startling, many of the economic and social problems which in the past were not adequately dealt with because “we didn’t have the means” are still not being addressed even though Ireland can now afford to eliminate poverty (to give one example). Some economic and social problems have gotten worse (teen suicide), and many new problems have emerged (growing murder rate). Clearly there is a sense that we need to look beyond the economy to promote real well being. Yet even if we realize that human happiness is more than just “an economic phenomenon,” we need to realize that the state of the economy greatly influences all of the non-economic aspects of our lives. Clearly one of the greatest sources of stress in Ireland is the strain on the family. This stress is the result of economic policies and processes which have promoted a two wage earner model of the family without considering its social costs. Lessening this strain on the family will require major changes to the economy; just as ignoring this problem has imposed large costs on Irish society. Robert Heilbroner often noted that the market can be a good servant but was a terrible master. Moving from “the people serving the economy” to “the economy serving the people” will require changes in economic institutions, attitudes and behaviors.

In order to promote authentic human development and well being economic policies must consider more than just the profitability, even though businesses earning competitive profits are very important for the common good. This is true because human flourishing is different from making money. Certainly economic concerns are critical to the well being of any community. This was true for our ancestors living in caves and it is true for us. Yet how each society provides for its material reproduction (the economic problem) is only one aspect of the human experience. Our cavemen ancestors were more than hunters and

gathers. For one thing, we know that they were also artists. Human happiness is more than eating regularly and having shelter (the two most common economic concerns in human history) even if these are necessary conditions to human flourishing. They are necessary but not sufficient. Furthermore, it is hard to separate the “economic” aspects of our lives, or our society, from the social, political, cultural and spiritual. Each influences the others. Thus it makes good economic sense to include social, political, cultural and spiritual factors when designing economic policies for this will increase their effectiveness at addressing real human concerns and promoting the common good. The principles of Catholic social thought are an essential tool in ensuring that economic analysis and discourse remain focused on promoting the common good.

1.3 The Principles of Catholic Social Thought

The Catholic social thought tradition has been described as being “social wisdom based on: biblical insights; the tradition of the early writers of the church; scholastic philosophy; theological reflection; and the contemporary experience of the People of God struggling to live our faith in justice” (Kammer, 1991, p. 73). For 2000 years Christians have attempted not only live according to Gospel values, they have also reflected on what these values say to the questions of what it means to be human, how should people live together in a manner fitting of their humanity, what is necessary for human flourishing and for a peaceful society, and most importantly, how can we construct a just society. Often this analysis has been in the form of a critique of the many ways actual societies have deviated from the values of the Gospel. We see this clearly in the Church Fathers, such as St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom, and in a systematic way in the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. In the modern era these reflections have produced a series of papal encyclicals and official Church documents specifically addressing social and economic issues from the perspective of the Gospels and in light of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The Catholic response to economic and social concerns has never been merely an intellectual one. It has always followed (with differing degrees of success) the three steps of: See, Judge and Act.

- See – First we need to understand the world “as it is”, fully understanding all the factors that produce social outcomes and problems. Here using the social sciences are critically important.
- Judge – It is necessary to evaluate social realities based on the insights of valid social science and the values of the Gospel.
- Act – The final step is to take actions that will effectively implement the values of the Gospel

To aid in this process of understanding and alleviating economic and social problems so that Christians can better live the values of the Gospels, the Church has enumerated certain principles that are necessary to ensure that human dignity is respected and the common good promoted.

Principles of Catholic Social Thought

(1) Dignity of the Human Person

Each and every person is a unique individual with a social nature. The dignity of each and every person comes from their being made in the image and likeness of God, and as this dignity is a gift from God it does not lessen due to age, disability, income status, gender or race. “There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

(2) Principle of Participation

The development of the person is only brought about through social interaction (working with others, and in giving oneself to others), thus participation in social processes is a fundamental human right (as it immediately flows from the nature of the human person). Participation is a good in and of itself.

Furthermore, it is both a human right and a human duty (part of one's social obligations to the community).

(3) Principle of the Common Good

“The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people. According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, the common good indicates ‘the sum of those conditions of social life which allows social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment’ (GS 26)” (CSD 163). The common good is not the sum total of individual goods, for it encompasses the good of all people and the whole person.

(4) The Universal Destination of Goods

“God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created good should abound for them on a reasonable basis” (GS 69). “God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth’s goods.” (CSD 171). All rights of property (including intellectual property) are subordinate to the rights of all to subsistence.

(5) Preferential Option for the Poor

“The Principle of the universal destination of goods requires that the poor, the marginalized and in all cases those whose living conditions interfere with their proper growth should be the focus of particular concern” (CSD 182). The development of the person is blocked by exclusion from participation in the economic spheres of social life (that is poverty). Poverty caused by exclusion extends to the social, cultural and spiritual spheres of life.

(6) The Principle of Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity states that larger entities should not assume the roles and functions of smaller entities unless it is absolutely necessary. It “protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on the same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfill their duties” (CSD 187). The unwarranted assumption of roles and functions by larger authorities often lessens social participation and should only be undertaken to increase participation.

(7) The Principle of Solidarity

The necessary interdependence of social life needs to be grounded in an authentic concern for the well being of all persons. This is true for those we have direct interaction with and for those whose actions will affect, even if we never see them. The principle of solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (SRS 38).

1.4 Christian Anthropology as a starting point

The first principle gets to the heart of all social analysis, including economic theory; that is what is the nature and purpose of the human person. Catholic social thought rests on a very different understanding on the human person, one that is grounded both in the classical philosophical tradition of Aristotle, especially as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas, and in the revelations on the nature of the human person contained in Genesis. The statement that humans are made in the likeness and image of God asserts that humans are 1. created beings who have a natural desire for union with their creator; 2. beings with equal dignity that comes from being created by God and this dignity cannot be taken away; 3. beings with the ability to reason and a free will, thus they are moral agents; and 4. beings with a social nature, that is persons need to live in community to fully develop their humanity. The Catholic

articulation and defense of human rights grows out of this view of the human person.¹⁰ This view of human rights stresses that human rights are those rights that are necessary for the fulfillment of the nature and purpose of the human person, including what is necessary for them to carry out their obligations to themselves, their family, their community and to God. Thus they are truly human rights since they are grounded in what makes us human. As John Paul II has noted:

“The dignity of the human person is a transcendent value, always recognized as such by those who sincerely search for the truth. Indeed, the whole of human history should be interpreted in the light of this certainty. Every person, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gn 1:26-28), is therefore radically oriented towards the Creator, and is constantly in relationship with those possessed of the same dignity. To promote the good of the individual is thus to serve the common good, which is the point where rights and duties converge and reinforce one another” (*World Day of Peace Message*, 1999).

This view of the human person is very different from the “rational economic man”, autonomous individual we find in neoclassical economic theory, just as it is different from the view of human nature contained in Marxism. The rational economic man model excludes the social, political, cultural and spiritual aspect of the person, or worse, it will occasionally reduce each of these to merely economic terms. Thus political participation is reduced to voting in one’s own self-interest (as if one’s person’s vote often, if ever, impacts their personal economy), and family life becomes merely a series of exchanges between autonomous individuals rather than parenting and family bonds. Given such a view we can see why Lawrence Summers would use income as the measure of the value of a person, since their ability to consume utility through market exchange is what they see as the most important characteristic of the individual.

¹⁰ See especially John XXIII’s *Pacem in Terris* (1963).

In Marxism the tendency is to have society and social categories such as class or gender to impart the characteristics normally associated with persons, thus the person's individual identity comes from their participation in a group. The person is thus understood based on their role or function in society. The person is seen as the sum total of their social relations. Under such a social philosophy it is easy to sacrifice the individual, or millions of individuals, for the good of society (or at least the elites running the society). In extreme Marxism the individual person is lost and in extreme neoclassical economics, particularly the Austrian variety, the individual is all that exists and society is lost. Christian anthropology considers the whole person, including their inherent social nature.

“Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on each other. From the beginning, the subject, and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life. This social life is not something added to man. Hence, through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue he develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny” (*GS 25*).

The Principle of Participation flows directly from the assertion that human dignity needs to be realized in community. One important way this happens is the process of authentic human development. Humans do not enter the world fully formed. Human development is a process that starts at conception and ends with death. Fundamental to growth of the person is their own participation in their society. The socialization process is critical to human development, but we need to emphasize that it is the person's own participation in the process that best helps them develop. It is a two way process, and cannot be reduced to being just society to individual (as with Marx) or individual to society (as with neoclassical economics). In the economic life of the individual and community, participation is a goal. Thus if there are two ways of achieving a desired economic end and one has a high level of

participation, while the other has a low level, or none at all, the higher level of participation is to be preferred. Programs that allow the poor to become active agents in the process of improving their own lives are better than those that treat the poor as objects to be manipulated.

As noted before, the Catholic concept of the common good goes beyond merely summing up the individual “goods” and instead looks at the conditions that promote and allow for each person to participate in their own development. It is something other than an economic concept, even if it does have economic significance. The conditions that promote well being are social, political, as well as economic, and each of these needs to be evaluated based on how it promotes the common good. Thus the economic goal of economic growth at all costs often promotes activities which are harmful to the common good, but since they promote economic exchanges they are seen as positive. There are many activities which promote increases in measurements of economic growth which are harmful to the community, such as a rise in crime, increased time commuting to work, natural disasters and pollution. If we only measure their impact on the level of economic exchanges (buying and selling) we will get the wrong impression that the community’s well being is improving. We need to look beyond statistics that merely measure market activity (Clark and Kavanagh, 1996).

The economic insight of the principles of the Universal Destination of Goods is that each person needs to benefit from how social output is divided. It does not claim that each person has the right to an equal share, but that each has a right to sufficiency. It does assert that wealth and poverty are socially created categories, and those who have a surplus above their needs have an obligation to help those who have less than what they need. Distribution is more than just an economic act, and we need to consider more than market profitability. Furthermore, the principle of the Option for the Poor recognizes that all persons are “poor” at some time in their lives, that is dependant on others, and our first goal is to help the worse off in a manner that promotes their authentic development.

“The primary purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society. It is to enable *all* persons to share in and contribute to the common good. ‘Option for the poor,’ therefore, is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the depravation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The extent of their suffering is a measure of how far we are from being a true community of persons” (*EJA*, 88).

Poverty is exclusion, both in its causes and its effects, and exclusion blocks participation and authentic human development. While Catholic social thought does not prescribe a one-size fits all anti-poverty policies, it does call us to get to the roots of the problem, which is exclusion. This is why the problem of poverty requires the double sided coin of charity and justice, one side to lift the boot that is keeping them down, the other to give them a hand up. It is worth noting that exclusion is very costly, not only to those excluded, but to society as a whole. Exclusion prevents the poor from making contributions that benefit the common good. Viewed from the perspective of the whole society, exclusion is economically inefficient.¹¹

The principle of Subsidiarity also flows from the right and need for participation in promoting authentic human development. The principle of subsidiarity teaches us that larger groups or entities should not take over the functions of smaller groups unless the smaller group cannot effectively carry out their necessary functions. In such cases the larger group should first try to assist the smaller group before taking over the function. Its application to government is well noted and it is included in the European Union constitution. Yet we should not limit this principle to government, for the issue here is power and

¹¹ Neoclassical economic theory cannot see this inefficiency because they do not allow for a discussion of initial distribution (why some have a lot and many have little). Instead their attention is on, given a distribution of income, what would be a fair outcome of trading under the requirement that no one is made worse off. Any redistribution must be due to free exchanges, even if the initial distribution was not the result of free and fair exchanges.

participation. Most power in society is in the hands of large corporations, and the size of these corporations is often, but not always, much bigger than needs to be the case for economic efficiency reasons. While it does take a very large corporation to build a rocket ship to go to the moon, in fact many very large corporations, it does not necessarily require a company the size of McDonalds to feed millions of people hamburgers and fries. The purpose of the principle of subsidiarity is to restrict the abuse of power and asserts the right and need for participation, emphasizing that means are as important as ends.

The principle of Solidarity recognizes the interdependence of all. Economists are quick to quote Adam Smith's famous statement in the *Wealth of Nations*: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages" (Smith, 1776, p. 26-7), yet they ignore the importance of sympathy (empathy) noted in his earlier book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. ... The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it" (Smith, 1759, p. 7). The economic freedom Adam Smith noted was so important for an efficient economy presupposes a considerable level of self-restraint and self-control, which means including ethical considerations into ones economic calculations.

1.5. Prudential Judgment: Linking Principles to Praxis

As we stated above, the Catholic social thought tradition does not provide a one size fits all economic model for a "just economy," nor

does it offer a set of economic policies that will create the Kingdom of God here on earth.¹² Catholic social thought provides the principles necessary for a “just economy,” but how one actually brings these principles to life will differ at different times and different places. In an agricultural economy combating the exclusion that causes poverty will typically involve increase the poor’s access to land. However, land reform would not be an effective policy for reducing poverty in most advanced capitalist economies. Poverty then, as now, is based on exclusion, but the barriers are different in each society, thus the ways to over come them will also be different. The Christian Anthropology that underlies Catholic social thought emphasizes the social nature of the human person, particularly the role of socialization in human development. Social and historical context are important factors that cannot be ignored or assumed away. Christian ethics has always noted that one has to follow one’s conscience, but that does not mean that anything that one feels is right is necessarily right, for one has the obligation to have a fully informed conscience, which means first that one adequately understand the moral principles they are to follow, and second that they understand the context in which they are going to apply these principles. The purpose of our conscience is to discover what God’s will is. As St. Thomas Aquinas noted: “The function of prudence is not to set the goals of moral virtue, but simply to determine means to those goals. ... Prudence presupposes the goals of moral virtue as general starting-points and determines what to do in particular.” (Aquinas, 1988, p. 377). The role of Catholic social thought is to assist in the process of forming our understanding of economic problems, in particular on how they relate to the nature of the human person and their flourishing, and to provide criteria with which we can evaluate economic outcomes and processes.

The goal of the Catholic social thought tradition has always been first to help Christians and people of good will to make better moral decisions, its main purpose is to shape values, which then will shape

¹² It is worth noting that in the history of economic thought a very large number of economists have offered economic policies that they argued would create heaven on earth.

behavior and outcomes. It is not the goal or purpose of Catholic social thought to dictate how individuals and society as a whole should carry out all their economic actions. The Church does not want to be the central planning agency for the economy. The Church values and promotes freedom, including economic freedom, and it values and promotes individual economic initiative and private property. It values these so much it wants everyone to benefit from them through direct participation in them. But freedom, especially economic freedom, without ethics leads to chaos and slavery. Free economic choice without morals, that is without solid criteria for making choices, is hard to justify and defend, morally or on grounds of economic efficiency. It is like a sick man choosing their treatment or medicine without knowing what their illness is, or without knowing how the medicine will work or what effect it will have. An economy based on free choosing individuals requires more than just freedom to choose, it requires informed choices, and informed choices are based on ethical analysis. This is true for the individual and it is even more true for group or political choices. Catholic social thought helps to form individuals and society so that they can make better choices, so that their freedom will be meaningful, and so that their individual choices will better promote their own and societies well being.

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2.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Catholic Social Thought

André Habisch

2.1 The role of religious ethics in Max Weber

The German political economist and sociologist Max Weber (1864 – 1920) is considered to be one of the founders of the modern study of sociology and public administration. In his main opus ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’, Weber put forward the thesis that Calvinist work ethic and religious ideas influenced the development of capitalism in the Western World. In this perspective Weber’s theory is often viewed as a reversal of Karl Marx’s materialist thesis that the economic ‘base’ of society determines all other aspects of it. With his extended intercultural studies of Christian as well as Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu Business Ethics Weber clearly demonstrates, that religious attitudes and concepts do make a difference also for the economic development of a society.

To be sure, Weber does not argue for any direct causal link between religion and economic output. His concept is not just idealistic opposed to the materialism of Marx and his followers. Rather according to Weber religious beliefs influence the culture and the personal value system of a group of people. He defines “the spirit of capitalism” as the ideas and habits that favor the rational pursuit of economic gain. Individuals who are inspired by that pursuit – Weber calls them *heroic entrepreneurs* – do exist in all cultures; however, as single people they could not by themselves establish a new economic order (that would be capitalism). “In order that a manner of life well adapted to the peculiarities of capitalism could come to dominate others,” wrote Weber, “it had to originate somewhere, and not in isolated individuals alone, but as a way

of life common to whole groups of man.” Only common cultural beliefs would confound mutual expectations and the ‘legitimacy’ of social behavior; only common cultural beliefs would grant Heroic Entrepreneurs a ‘license to operate’.

In reality the spirit of capitalism had to overcome the desire to profit with only minimum effort, the idea that work was a curse and a burden to be avoided, especially when it exceeded what was enough for modest life. So Weber’s argument was that certain religious beliefs of Christianity – especially concerning the access to the Heavenly kingdom of God – foster what we might call a ‘*culture of investment*’. Once there existed a linkage between earthly achievement and the transcendent ‘quality’ of a person ‘heroic entrepreneurs’ are motivated to invest more than they consume and to create assets for generations to come. As soon as a critical mass of these investments are in place and the ‘plant’ of the capitalist system is strong enough it could develop its inherent strength anyway. According to Weber, religious beliefs played an important role as ‘*path breakers*’ of a nation’s path of economic development.

Weber’s notion is that this path breaking role of capitalism is exclusively embodied in Calvinist Protestantism (and its concept of predetermination). It is precisely the individualism of the Calvinist tradition which highlights the question of individual salvation – and that exerts a ‘transcendental’ pressure on individuals to overcome the dominant (=catholic) economic culture of limited work engagement. His cultural historic argument (and the more popular versions of it that fueled public perceptions) was even more convincing as during the bulk of the 20th century Protestant cultures were the corner stone of economic development – in Europe as well as worldwide. The spirit of capitalism flourished in Great Britain, the United States of America, the Netherlands and Switzerland; it spread to other genuine Protestant countries like Germany, Denmark and Sweden. The confessional perspective did also prove valuable if the analysis is extended to different regions of denominationally heterogeneous countries. In Northern Germany (with a strong Protestant tradition) capitalism and economic development soared meanwhile the Southern Catholic regions like Bavaria remained stuck in

rural conservatism. In the 19th and early 20th century Protestant regions like Thuringia, Saxony, Franconia, Prussia's Rhineland province and of course Berlin were the first to develop an entrepreneurial culture. And still after the Second World War, the mainland of Bavaria was one of the poorest and less developed parts of Germany that constantly received financial support from the affluent North. In the Netherlands and Switzerland, Calvinist regions of the North formed the economic engine meanwhile Catholic regions of the South had to be alimented. Countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal and also Eire, which were strongly influenced by Catholic Culture, did not catch up until late in the 20th century.

2.2 'Heroic Entrepreneurship' – a Catholic Social Thought perspective

Max Weber's work has several inspiring implications for Catholic Social Thought in times of globalisation. A first important point is a positive analytical one: religious ethics and 'weltanschauung' does matter for economic development! Weber's analysis meets with more recent approaches here, which tried to overcome a simplified sociological and economic modernisation theory and explain the differences in national economic systems with reference to cultural traditions. In his book on Trust the American social philosopher Francis Fukuyama stressed the role of civic traditions for the emergence of national business cultures and economic institutions. Even if some of Fukuyama's results have been subject to critical discussion the basic approach seems valuable: in the long run economic development cannot be understood without reference to value systems and normative frameworks that guide the activities of economic actors.

Max Weber's description never ever hit the point of the Catholic concept of business ethics. However, with the rise of Catholic social thought in the late 19th and early 20th century work ethics found entrance into the official documents of the Church. Catholic social thought also reflects on the value of labour (Pope John Paul II in his encyclical 'Laborem

Exercens' spoke of 'reverence' for labor). However, work and the accumulation of profit has never been accentuated in such an isolated and disintegrated way as in the Calvinist tradition. Catholic social thought recognizes work as a trait of the human person that has to be orientated towards human personality and should become an expression of it. That also implies an inner distance of the worker towards his work (including its product) that should save him from being completely absorbed by it. This 'spirituality of work' is rooted in the preceding Christian knowledge of the redemption being grounded in the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ – and not in our own efforts. Laborem Exercens rejects the 'error of economism' and materialism that reduces labour to a mere instrumental perspective and contrasts it with 'capital'. The Catholic Social Thought approach also constantly emphasizes the role of work and profit for the realisation of solidarity in society ('Solidarity principle'). The unleashing of capital accumulation emphasised by Weber is only one – a necessary but not sufficient - aspect of a solid order of society and a general orientation towards the common good.

From such an integral approach Catholic Social Thought could pick up Weber's notion of 'heroic entrepreneurship' - but at the same time also transform it. Weber's heroic entrepreneurs are characterized by a long-term maximization strategy. Because their personal goal system involves the 'transcendental' status of their souls, their rational strategy is different: they plant even where they cannot hope to harvest. From an analytical point of view we have to be very precise here: For Weber religious values do not *remove* rational strategies but do *re-orientate* them. Due to the religious orientation of these entrepreneurs the vicious cycle of a consumptive economy - that merely lives from hand to mouth and only produces what it consumes - could be overcome. In the realm of religious values taken seriously a culture of investment was nurtured and a process was started that breaks the path to the creation of economic assets. According to Weber's theory it is *not a personal achievement of the entrepreneur* that enabled the crucial step towards modernisation; rather it was a *cultural environment* that emerged from the ground of certain religious and transcendent convictions. It is a culture of investment in physical capital.

From the perspective of Catholic Social Thought Weber's concept of 'heroic entrepreneurship' lends itself easily as a point of departure for a genuine business ethics perspective. Obviously the situation of today's globalising economy is very different from the early protagonists of capitalism in the late 18th and early 19th century. For the accumulation of capital we do not need heroes any more: there are powerful organisations and global capital markets in place. Huge investments are being made around the globe – with enormous amounts of seed money searching for business opportunities worldwide. The exploding growth of Southern and Eastern Asian regions (China, India etc.) that we are currently experiencing would be impossible without these strong financial institutions and capital markets. However, in other important dimensions means and funds for investments are still lacking. This holds especially true where non-market goods or 'public goods' in the broadest sense are concerned. The allocation of public goods is a crucial factor of sustainable growth in the 21st century. With the more integrated perspective of Catholic Social Thought, Weber's concept of 'heroic entrepreneurship' could be developed further to cover also aspects of social order and public goods in today's globalised economic context. What are relevant areas, here?

Human capital: Education

Scientific economic literature for long has stated that investments are not only made in terms of the creation of physical capital. Nobel Prize winner Theodore Schultz (1961) has pointed towards 'investment in people' and the creation of 'Human capital' as a crucial challenge of development policies. Education is an important factor for overcoming global poverty and the traps of underdevelopment. Children in developing countries are effectively excluded from education. But this holds true also for many children of poor families in developed countries. In Germany the probability of achieving higher education is still four times higher for children of academically trained parents than for children from working class families. This remains valid also despite free access to public schooling and the existence of public support systems for needy families. The effective exclusion of children of poor and unskilled parents from (higher) education and formation of

personality is probably the most irrational and baneful mistake of Western societies. Especially in times of demographic crisis it is also highly detrimental for economic growth and the sustainable competitiveness of an economy. Enterprises of all sizes traditionally play an important role in education. They participate in the organisation of professional education and contribute to mentoring programmes, partnerships with schools etc. Effective strategies to overcome the vicious cycle of poverty and lacking education are an important challenge for 'heroic entrepreneurs' of the 21st century.

Human Capital: Economic situation of families

The first point has a strong reference to the second one: the economic situation of families (traditional as well as single-parent families) is one of the key issues promoted by Catholic Social Thought. Families are the crucial factor for the formation of personality and integration into society. 'Human capital' is not only created in schools and institutions; the foundations are laid inside families. This holds true for primary education like the formation of personal values and basic pro-social behavior as well as the basis for professional education. Strengthening families shows multiple important impact factors for strengthening society and promoting economic development. Relevant instruments of family policy include financial transfers and programmes to effectively ease the balance of work and life, to enrich the cultural life of families, to strengthen their social integration etc.

An aspect that gains in importance is the living situation of older people in today's society. A rapidly growing mobility loosens the ties between the generations and threatens familiar solidarity. Due to the demographic situation, for more and more adults work and life balance does not only mean work and educating children, but also work and caring for the older people. For many of these issues business enterprises are playing an important role; as employers they determine the working conditions of labourer with young children, as powerful organisations in the region they participate in networks for the provision of day-care etc.

Human and Social Capital:

Integration of migrant population into society

Global economic integration fosters labour migration. With the fast economic growth of the last 15 years (approximately) Ireland – that traditionally has been an emigration country – has become a special immigration target for workers from Poland and other Eastern European Countries. The social situation of migrant workers constitutes an important aspect of solidarity in today's world. If families are involved their social integration is a crucial premise for bettering the living conditions and future perspectives of migrant children. As we experience in many urban regions of developed countries these days, poverty, illiteracy and social disintegration are a time bomb: not investing some money and effort *now* means spending a lot more time and effort *later* on fighting high crime rates, regulating racial conflicts, limiting the risk of riots and civil commotions etc. Badly integrated groups of migrants do also exert a detrimental influence on the majority population and undermine their willingness to admit further migrants. These interdependencies accentuate the need for active and rational integration policies. Financial support is only one part of the story here; what is probably even more important are social structures to overcome cultural and social disintegration of minorities and grant especially young people the chances they deserve. Large corporations as employers of a heterogeneous work force are often willing to actively support initiatives for better living conditions of migrant workers. They are interested in a societal environment that is open and attractive to the immigrants which they so desperately need.

Social Capital: Structures of civic engagement, social partnership, solidarity

Many of these urgent challenges of today's social fabric are underlining the important role of an active civil society and social engagement on a regional level. The potential of self-regulation and self-control is an important aspect of a free and solid society. The subsidiarity principle of Catholic Social Thought emphasizes local autonomy and the danger of an all encompassing, interventionist state bureaucracy. As social and political scientists (R. Putnam, E. Ostrom, J. Coleman etc.) have shown

open networks of civic engagement and co-responsibility are an important ‘ingredient’ of a region’s economic as well as administrative success. Those networks and initiatives must no longer be perceived as mere ‘private’ partialities; rather their development has to be targeted by active policies of strengthening involvement and creating platforms of participation. Empowerment of civil society organisations, programmes of civic engagement and education, the emergence of cross-sector networks in the region are means of investment in ‘social capital’. Business can play an important role here: for example as a partner of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in common projects (like ‘Business in the Community’), with corporate volunteering activities for their employees, with participation in regional or national platforms of policy adjustment and coordination (like the National Economic and Social Council - NESO).

The list above isn’t in any way an exhaustive one. However, what should become obvious is that a ‘culture of investment’ is still an important accomplishment for today’s world of globalised markets. A culture of investment in human and social capital is a goal for today’s world that is at least as important as a culture of investment in physical capital has been in the early times of industrialisation. Sustainable development for business and society heavily relies on the secure existence of such a culture and the investments that result out of it.

2.3 Heroic Entrepreneurs and the European Corporate Social Responsibility discussion

It is here that the current international discussions on Corporate Citizenship as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) come into play¹³. Faced with radical changes caused by globalisation the institutional equilibrium between the state, business and civil society is

¹³ For an overview of the European CSR discussion that includes 23 national country studies see A. Habisch/ J. Jonker/ M. Wegner/ R. Schmidpeter (2005) *CSR across Europe*, Heidelberg-Berlin-New York: Springer Editors

going to be shifted. The nation state will continue to play an important role for the provision of public goods and services in the 21st century; however, it will not be able to serve as a kind of ‘monopolist’ of these goods any longer. What we are witnessing today is the slow but irrevocable decline of a social model that many European countries – especially on the Continent – were so committed to during the decades of the post-war era. The causes of that development are multiple and can only be mentioned briefly, here:

- Fast technological and economic developments are increasing complexity and information problems of central regulatory bodies;
- Globalisation is enhancing fiscal competition among national administrations that erodes the basis of public spending (a process Ireland is also gaining from in some respect);
- Growing gains from trade also bring about new problems such as cross-border criminal activity, abuse of the human rights of migrants, corruption, a ‘race to the bottom’ in social standards etc.

In that situation (international) civil society gains relevance for the accomplishment of social order and – local, national and international – public goods. The scientific discourse on ‘global governance structures’ and global NGOs is rooted in these developments. It is also here that Corporate Social Responsibility and corporate citizenship come into play, as business is an important player in civil society and has vested interests in the achievement of many of its goals.

The European CSR discussion has been started by the European commission with several interesting and innovative initiatives. We cannot go into details here but want to re-emphasise some results of international discussions that have already lasted for some years.

- 1 For the EU Commission Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not primarily a ‘social’ topic but business driven. We are not talking about intellectual concepts that have to be forced upon

- companies; rather we are witnessing an explosion of activities, programmes and structures in the business sector that effectively are of great interest for the accomplishment of social goals in the 21st century.
- 2 Consequently, the EU Commission perceives CSR as an instrument to ‘strive for competitiveness’ in the sense of the Lisbon summit. At Lisbon in 2001, European heads of Governments agreed to pursue policies that would make Europe the most competitive region of the World by 2020.
 - 3 Contrasting the European discussion with similar developments in Europe and the US, the EU Commission framed CSR also as a part of the European social model. Resulting from that characterisation, in Europe there also exist public initiatives and institutions that try to foster discourse about the public role of companies and foster cooperation on a local and regional as well as national level: A minister dedicated to CSR in the British Department for Trade and Industry is an example of this as well as institutional activities in many member states like Denmark, Austria, Italy, France and others. Even the Irish NESC with its active participation of the business sector should be mentioned here.
 - 4 CSR activities are no intellectual achievement but feature a strong focus on practical solutions for societal challenges. Therefore the CSR community is characterised by a continuous benchmarking of best practise and mutual learning. The public initiatives mentioned above are in no way ‘governing’ these discussions; rather they serve as mere platforms for modes of communications, that are dominantly orientated ‘bottom-up’ and include business representatives, NGOs, media and administration as partners. CSR is an inherent part of civil society in that sense.

It is not necessary to carry coals to Newcastle, here. Ireland has witnessed many of those very pragmatic, problem-orientated and low-profile forms of cooperation among business and society in recent years. In fact if we have to criticise something of the perception of the

Irish success story outside of your country, it is the limited view that focuses on the economic performance and the widespread neglect of what has been achieved in terms of innovative social and civil society solutions. Development does not only take place in a systemic way. The enormous steps ahead for the Irish people in recent years would not have been possible without instruments of coordination and public good provision that reflect the cultural traditions of the country and at the same time meet the necessities of the globalised World of the 21st century. Ireland's social partnership process productively consolidate the input of social partners (including the community and voluntary sector) and has to be especially mentioned here. It is a very prominent example of Corporate Social Responsibility involving the business community and the activities of Irish companies in the strengthening of civil society, delivering public goods on a local level etc.

2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility as a challenge for Catholic Social Thought in the era of Globalisation

We started with the notion of 'Heroic Entrepreneurship'. Max Weber made it very clear that such a phenomenon is not just popping up occasionally with the personal traits of some individuals. Rather it is a cultural achievement, a 'culture of investment' that – fuelled by certain religious beliefs – has been emerging in these times. Without such a cultural background individuals would have never received the societal 'license to operate' for their innovative goal to accumulate investment capital in excess to their immediate needs.

Even in today's context of highly sophisticated capitalist institutions 'investment capital' is lacking: that is investment in human and social capital of developed as well as developing countries. How could corresponding investment funds be raised? It seems realistic not to rely exclusively on national administrations any longer. International discussions about the role of 'social entrepreneurship' (stimulated by

NGOs like Ashoka or the Swiss-based Schwab-Foundation) as well as the ‘Bottom of the Pyramid’ of global income distribution (C.K. Prahalad) suggest that even in the 21st century ‘heroic entrepreneurship’ might play a crucial role. However, even today a cultural background and a common value-base that stimulates and strengthens activities of that kind are needed.

International players such as the Catholic Church and its centuries-old tradition of social thought could play an important role here. In recent decades Catholic Social Thought has been a powerful counter-balance to excessive forms of capitalism that disown its societal base and neglect the human and social capital it so heavily relies on. The economic rise of Catholic cultural entities like Ireland and other European countries and regions might also be connected to the more prudent and far-seeing values they are based upon.

However, as far as instruments for implementation of its principles are concerned, a certain fixation of Catholic Social Thought on state policies and national Governments is not undeniable. The potential role of business and international civil society for the realisation of a just and solidly international social order has not yet entered fully into its discourse. A careful and constructive perception of what has been said and done under the headings of ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’, ‘Corporate Citizenship’ etc. would be helpful for Catholic Social Thought in its perennial aspiration to express the richness of a Christian concept of society under the changing conditions of history. It would assist Catholic Social Thought in its conviction – firmly expressed by the Second Vatican Councils’ constitution on the Church in the Modern World – to promote ‘joy and hope’ (‘Gaudium et Spes’) of their contemporary worlds.

3.

Globalisation, the Common Good and Catholic Social Thought

Lorna Gold

“It is necessary to state once more the characteristic principle of Christian social doctrine: the goods of this world are originally meant for all. The right to private property is valid and necessary, but it does not nullify the value of this principle. Private property, in fact, is under a ‘social mortgage,’ which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of material goods.”

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n. 42

3.1. Introduction

Ireland has reaped the benefits of rapid economic development in recent years, earning itself the title of ‘the most globalised economy in the world’. In terms of income, Ireland now ranks ninth in the global economy, with an average income of \$45,580¹⁴ per head of population. In 2005, The Economist magazine ranked Ireland as the ‘best place to live’ in the world.¹⁵ For the first time in recent history, the country has

¹⁴ The measurement of Ireland’s national wealth is subject to debate due to the large number of foreign businesses operating within the country. GNI (Atlas method) is accepted as the best measure of actual wealth at a given time. In terms of GNP per capita, measured in \$US PPP, Ireland ranked 14th globally at \$35,540 in 2006 (World Development Indicators, 2006). In terms of the more holistic Human Development Index, Ireland ranks 4th overall. These and other economic indicators are available at www.finfacts.ie/biz10/globalworldincomepercapita.htm

¹⁵ See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4020523.stm> for report on Economist survey.

¹⁶ Using constant prices [Atlas Method]. It is possible to get higher rates if you use PPP but this is the widely accepted method and is consistent with your use of the Atlas method earlier. [Source World Development Indicators]

become a destination of immigration rather than the point of departure, with economic growth rates averaging 5.2% per annum between 1990 and 2005.¹⁶

But while Ireland has become a largely prosperous country, such prospects remain elusive for most of the world's population. Huge inequalities still exist, whether measured in terms of basic income or access to critical services, such as health care and education. Moreover, as economic development accelerates in some regions of the world, the environmental impacts are becoming increasingly apparent, particularly in terms of climate change. The challenge of climate change threatens to undo even the small gains that the poorest countries have made, particularly in Africa, and could set back any real chances for lasting progress.

The persistence of such inequalities in an interconnected world raises difficult questions that go to the heart of our sense of shared humanity and justice, a problem highlighted by Pope Benedict XI in his first Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*.¹⁷ That Encyclical poses the question of our responsibility towards the needs of others as part of the one human family, be they nearby or on the other side of the world. Governments and individuals alike have to face the question of how best to address these issues with a 'new readiness' and sense of urgency. His words echo those of the first Papal Encyclical on development issues *Popolorum Progressio*, which was published exactly 40 years ago. How can we use our position as a wealthy nation, within the European Union and United Nations to serve the needs of the poor?

Irish culture is steeped in a sense of the importance of justice, equality and solidarity. Throughout history, Irish people have experienced injustice and inequality, both at home and abroad. In particular, our deep missionary tradition has sought and still strives to bring the values of justice, peace and solidarity throughout the whole world. Ireland's cultural memory of this experience provides an important backdrop to

¹⁷ Pope Benedict XI, *Deus Caritas Est* www.vatican.va

the values and commitments we hold today, both in national and international arenas. It is a challenge to be agents of justice and to act in solidarity with those who live in the shadow of poverty and violence. Moreover, Ireland's transition from decades of violence to a negotiated political settlement is an experience that can provide inspiration for those attempting to find ways out of the cycle of political violence. Ireland's history is one of ambivalence. It has been one of poverty and deprivation as well as one of affluence. It has been one of violence as well as one of peace-making. And it is this rich, but ambivalent tradition, this experience of being both the beneficiaries of, as well as the contributors to, the structures of co-operative power that we need to draw on as we play our role in building a just world.

This paper sets out a number of critical challenges associated with the process of globalisation. It proposes a renewed commitment to the 'global common good', founded on the values of Catholic Social Teaching, as a way to address these issues. It outlines a number of concrete ways in which Ireland, as a small nation, can make a difference, and help to build a more just and sustainable world through its policy choices in the coming years.

3.2. Globalisation: The Critical Challenges

In order to set the context, it is important to take stock of the scale and gravity of the development challenges that need to be addressed within the context of a globalised economy. Globalisation is characterised by huge inequalities. The contrast in human development statistics between Ireland and Sub-Saharan Africa illustrates these stark inequalities: in Ireland, for instance, average life expectancy is 77 years and rising; in Zambia, it is 37 years and falling. In Ireland, six in a thousand children die before their fifth birthday; in Zambia it is nearer 2 in every 10 children.

Table 3.1 Economic and Social Inequalities

	Ireland	Zambia	High Income (OECD)	Sub- Saharan Africa
Income				
(GNI per capita \$) ¹⁸	41,140 ^b	500 ^b	36,720 ^b	746 ^b
Education¹⁹				
(Adult Literacy) (%)	99 ^c	68 ^a	99 ^c	61.1 ^a
Access to health				
(Infant Mortality per 1000 children)	6 ^b	182 ^b	5.75 ^b	162.6 ^b
Average life expectancy				
(years)	79.4 ^b	38.4 ^b	79.3 ^b	46.7 ^b

Sources: *World Development Indicators (World Bank) 2006*^a, 2005^b / *UNDP Development Report 2005*^c

While some countries, such as China and India, have enjoyed rapid development, in many others the past decade has marked a reversal in development gains made in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. This worrying trend was illustrated in the Human Development Report 2003, which analysed progress towards the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Those eight goals outlined in the box below, represent a concrete commitment by governments worldwide to end poverty and injustice.

¹⁸ Statistics for GNI based on the most recent available -2006 (calculated using \$ US Atlas Method) <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GNIPC.pdf>

¹⁹ Statistics for education, health and life expectancy based on the UNDP Human Development Report 2005. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=3&y=3&z=2>

Table 3.2 Millennium Development Goals

1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Reduce by half the proportion of people in extreme poverty and hunger; Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
2	Achieve universal primary education: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3	Promote gender equality and empower women: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4	Reduce child mortality: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5	Improve maternal health: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids; Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
7	Ensure environmental sustainability: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; Reverse loss of environmental resources; Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
8	Develop a global partnership for development: Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. This includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction, nationally and internationally; Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction; Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing states; Deal comprehensively with developing countries debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term; In

cooperation with developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth; In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

Another striking statistic was demonstrated in the Human Development Report 2005: in certain African countries average life expectancy has been declining since the mid-1990s, meaning that a child born today in these countries will most likely be outlived by his or her parents, and possibly grandparents. Moreover, while the number of people trying to survive on less than \$1 a day has fallen globally,²⁰ the gap between those in absolute poverty and those who live in relative luxury has widened substantially.²¹ In 2005, the wealth of the richest 20 people in the world was greater than the income of the entire population of Sub-Saharan Africa.²² Table 3 below illustrates the enduring income and spending gap that exists between those living in developing countries and northern countries. Such inequalities call us to question the values underpinning the global economy. It must also lead us to question the morality – and indeed the efficiency – of a system that is so inequitable.

²⁰ See Dollar, D and Kraay, A, 2000, *Growth is Good for the Poor*, World Bank Research paper <http://www.worldbank.org/research/growth/pdffiles/growthgoodforpoor.pdf>

²¹ See Milanovic, B, *Decomposing world income distribution. Does the world have a middle class?* <http://econ.worldbank.org/view.php?type=18&id=3442>

²² According to the World Bank, the GNI of 719 million people living in Sub-Saharan Africa is \$432 billion US. This is roughly equal to the combined worth of Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Lackshmi Mittal, Carlos Slim Helu, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Alsaud, Ingvar Kamprad, Paul Allen, the Albrecht family, Lawrence Ellison, the Walton family, Kenneth Thompson, Liliane Bettencourt Bernard Arnault , Michael Dell and Sheldon Adelson at \$432.2 billion. <http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?PTYPE=CP&CCODE=SSA> and www.forbes.com.

Table 3.3 The Scale of Global Inequality

- In 2005, the wealth of the richest 20 people in the world was \$432.2 billion. This is more than the income of 719 million people living in Sub-Saharan Africa.²³
- The cost of meeting the Millennium Development Goals, an estimated \$50 billion, is roughly equal to 0.11% of the global income²⁴
- Europeans and Americans spend over \$1 billion a month on pet food while 852 million people experience chronic hunger²⁵
- Europeans spend \$1 billion a week on cosmetics and toiletries, while nearly 3 billion people in the world lack access to basic sanitation²⁶

Such poverty has become part and parcel of the processes of globalisation. On the one hand, there are those who, through geographical location, privilege or hard work, can grasp the opportunities of a market-based global economy. On the other hand, there is the majority, who, as a result of unjust social and economic structures, cannot avail of the benefits. In many instances, such exclusion is created by lack of access to basic assets such as land or water. In others, it is the result of instability and conflict, which is often the result of mismanaged development, fuelled by a culture of impunity and corruption. In other countries, the denial of access to basic health and education effectively ‘traps’ people, making their participation in the market economy practically impossible. In situations such as these, the market failure is compounded by the inability of governments to intervene effectively.²⁷

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ World Bank estimated cost of meeting the MDGs is \$50 billion; Global GNI in 2005 was \$45.1 trillion
<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=WLD&CCODE=WLD&CNAME=World&PTYPE=CP>

²⁵ Based on WHO SOFI Statistics

http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/focus/2004/51786/article_51791en.html and

²⁶ Based on Euromonitor statistics <http://www.in-cosmetics.com/files/Euromonitor.pdf> and Human Development Report 2004.

²⁷ *Market failure* occurs when free markets do not lead to an allocation of resources that is best for society, as when decisions lead to a situation in which marginal social cost is not equated to marginal social benefit.

The scale of the poverty trap on the African continent merits particular concern. In 2006, African countries occupied 34 of the bottom 36 places in the 177-country UN Human Development Index, which tracks access to the basics of human survival, such as water, health, education and housing.²⁸ While countries in other continents have seen benefits from globalisation to a greater or lesser extent, on balance Africa has not benefited. One could argue instead that the current form of globalisation may have exacerbated problems on the continent. Large flows of unethical investment and illegal trade in minerals, other natural resources and arms have gone unrecorded and unregulated.²⁹ This trade in arms has deepened the level of insecurity across many regions of the continent. The continent's abundant natural resource base is sometimes more of a 'curse' than a blessing.³⁰ Private investment and trade in extractive industries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola and Sudan have contributed to the creation of war economies rather than inclusive development. Such war economies serve the needs of armed political elites within these countries, but undermine governance, stability and economic growth.³¹

²⁸ UNDP's Human Development Report, published annually, ranks the world's nation states in a Human Development Index
<http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=1&y=1&z=1> .

²⁹ See Oxfam, 2004, *Guns or Growth* "In 2002, arms deliveries to Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa constituted 66.7 % of the value of all arms deliveries worldwide, with a monetary value of nearly US\$17bn; the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council accounted for 90 % of those deliveries.
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/downloads/guns_or_growth.pdf

³⁰ The theory of resource curse is based on economic analysis of economic performance of resource rich poor countries. It concludes that "An *abundant* natural resource endowment provides more scope than resource-paucity does for cumulative policy error. Resource-abundant countries are more likely to engender political states in which vested interests vie to capture resource surpluses (rents) at the expense of policy coherence. The economy is increasingly distorted and manufacturing is protected so that development depends upon commodities with declining competitiveness." Richard Auty, WIDER University
<http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/pr9899d2/pr9899d2s.htm>

³¹ Studdard, K (2004) *War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation* International Peace Academy Publication
http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/WARECONOMIES.pdf

International structural inequalities in the trading and financial systems have also worked against economic development, particularly, though not exclusively within Africa. Poor terms of trade for agricultural products, coupled with protectionism in industrialised countries, have meant that years of promoting export-oriented growth in primary commodities has not delivered the anticipated dividends for many Sub-Saharan African countries. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of world exports dropped from more than 3.5 % in 1970 to about 1.4% by the end of 2002, representing an income loss of \$160 billion annually – a decline equivalent to more than twice the GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa and to more than 12 times the \$13 billion in aid flows to Africa in 2004.³²

In addition, the debt to GDP ratio of Sub-Saharan Africa is twice as high as any other region in the world. Of the countries classified as 'Heavily Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC), 80% are in Africa. While recent debt cancellation initiatives will relieve the burden of unpayable debt somewhat, debt continues to absorb a considerable proportion of the national incomes of the poorest countries. As a result of lack of access to adequate grant finance, poor countries are in danger of building up high levels of debt once again as they attempt to meet spending needs for essential services such as schools, hospitals, and basic infrastructure such as roads and sanitation

Internal governance issues within many countries, moreover, continue to seriously hamper development in many parts of the world. While external factors are important, historical and political analysis points to the role of state corruption, in its many forms, in compounding economic stagnation and poverty. Clientelist politics over many years has had a corrosive effect particularly on African states, leading to a downward spiral of corruption.³³ Such problems have often been compounded by donor country actions, which have tended to undermine the capacity of local governments and institutions.

³² Africa Development Indicators 2005 www.worldbank.org/annualreport/2004/africa.html

³³ Lockwood, M (2005) *The State They're In: Poverty and Politics in Africa and the Agenda for International Action*.

Militarisation and violence

Side by side with this lack of access to basic human needs, levels of militarisation and violence have been rising in many parts of the world. While aid levels to the developing world have been increasing relatively slowly,³⁴ military spending has grown substantially. Annual global military spending has now reached over \$1 trillion (US) or 2.6% of global GDP.³⁵ The defence industries of the USA, EU, China and India, in particular, have benefited hugely from the growing readiness on the part of the international community to respond to humanitarian crises with military solutions. The Institute of Policy Studies has estimated that spending on the Iraq war between 2003 and 2005 amounted to \$204.4 billion (US).³⁶ This is four times the \$50 billion of increases in official aid needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals. There is a large gap between what countries are prepared to allocate for military means to provide security and maintain their global and regional power status, on the one hand, and to alleviate poverty and promote economic development, on the other.³⁷

Since 2001, moreover, there has been growing evidence of a shifting axis between security and development within the international community. This is particularly the case within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. The EU Security Strategy, a core document in outlining the EU's overall approach to foreign policy,

³⁴ Aid rose sharply in 2005 in due to one-of debt cancellation agreements with Nigeria and Iraq. The general trend, however, has been steady growth. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/41/35842562.pdf>

³⁵ SIPRI estimates that annual expenditure in 2005 was \$1035 billion US at current rates. http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html

³⁶ The US sunshine report to congress estimates \$500bn costs until 2010 in an optimistic scenario, \$900bn in the next 5 years in a less optimistic scenario. 10 and 18 times the MDG requirement respectively. Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2006 estimate a cost of more than \$2 trillion when costs associated with lifetime disability and health care for injured soldiers and the overall effect on the economy are taken into account. [40 times MDG requirements] http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IH04Ak04.html Statistics from <http://www.ips-dc.org/iraq/cow10-25-05.pdf>

³⁷ SIPRI Yearbook 2004, Oxford University Press, Section 10 <http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp>

examines global threats emerging in the post-Cold War environment.³⁸ The strategy has paved the way for development to be seen as a tool in the perceived ‘war on terror’. It states: “Diplomatic efforts, development, trade and environmental policies, should follow the same agenda. In a crisis situation there is no substitute for unity of command.”³⁹ In other words, money for poverty eradication should from now on be granted subject to the political strategy.

The volatile global security situation, particularly since September 11 2001, has also placed severe pressure on the humanitarian agencies entrusted with responding to emergencies. Humanitarian activities are founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.⁴⁰ Yet these principles have come under threat, especially as a consequence to the rising anti-Western feeling within the Islamic world. In many instances, such agencies have found themselves deeply embroiled in these tensions, often been seen as complicit with the West and become the target of high-profile attacks. This blurring of roles has challenged the humanitarian community to engage in a more rigorous debate on the future of humanitarianism, and especially aid agencies’ relationship with military intervention. Many of the lessons from the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 have yet to be learned. Regrettably those same conditions that ‘allowed’ the genocide to happen still exist today, making it evident that the humanitarian community is only as ‘good’ as those who control their operating environment allow it to be. In spite of cries of ‘never again’, human catastrophes of this nature continue to occur, for example, the current crisis in Sudan.

³⁸ *A Secure Europe for a Better World*, European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003. Amongst the key threats it lists are terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime. It importantly recognises that “security is the first condition for development”. It also cites the importance of the multilateral system as the central priority of EU external policy, which sees itself as rooted in international law.

³⁹ *Ibid*, page 13/EN

⁴⁰ These principles, moreover, are enshrined within International Humanitarian Law. See the International Council of the Red Cross factsheet [http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/57JNXM/\\$FILE/What_is_IHL.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/57JNXM/$FILE/What_is_IHL.pdf?OpenElement)

Crisis of environmental sustainability

Global inequalities are being compounded by the on-set of climate change, which is creating a new vulnerability within the poorest countries. The evidence that this is being caused largely by human interference with the climate, particularly through the burning of fossil fuels, is now stronger than ever.⁴¹ Warmer temperatures are leading to greater evaporation, and a warmer atmosphere is able to hold more moisture, hence there is more water aloft that can fall as rain. Similarly, dry regions are apt to lose still more moisture if the weather is hotter; this exacerbates droughts and desertification. In Africa's large catchment basins of Niger, Lake Chad, and Senegal, total available water has decreased by 40 to 60 %, and desertification has been worsened by lower average annual rainfall, runoff, and soil moisture.

The minimum predicted shifts in climate for the 21st century are likely to be 'significant and disruptive'. Estimates of upcoming changes are wide-ranging: global temperature may climb from 1.4°C to 5.8°C; the sea level may rise from 9cm to 88 cm. This range of predicted effects reflects the complexity, interrelatedness and sensitivity of the natural systems that make up the climate. But while predictions of future climate impacts may be fuzzy, they are not meaningless: what they show is that the consequences could vary from disruptive to catastrophic. The *minimum* warming forecast for the next century is more than twice the 0.6°C increase that has occurred since 1900 - and that earlier increase is already having marked consequences. Sea levels have already risen by 10-20cm over pre-industrial averages and are certain to climb farther.

Although regional and local effects may differ widely, a general reduction is expected in potential crop yields in most tropical and sub-tropical regions. Mid-continental areas, such as the United States' 'grain belt' and vast areas of Asia, are likely to dry. Where dry land

⁴¹ Unless otherwise stated, statistics in this section are taken from the Report of IPCC available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

agriculture relies solely on rain, as in Sub-Saharan Africa, yields would decrease dramatically, even with minimal increases in temperature. Such changes are already causing disruptions in food supply in regions already afflicted by food shortages and famines, such as Malawi and Niger. In the future, this effect will become more acute.

Salt-water intrusion from rising sea levels will also reduce the quality and quantity of freshwater supplies.⁴² This is a major concern, since billions of people already lack access to freshwater. Higher ocean levels are already contaminating underground water sources in Israel and Thailand, in various small island states in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean Sea, and in some of the world's most productive deltas, such as China's Yangtze Delta and Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Higher temperatures are also expected to expand the range of some 'vector-borne' diseases, such as malaria.

What those living in the rich world do not always see is that climate change is happening within a world that is already under stress from poverty, injustice and environmental mismanagement. The critical challenge in terms of climate change in Africa, in particular, is the "way in which multiple stressors – such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, the effects of economic globalisation, the privatisation of resources and conflict – converge with climate change."⁴³

The consequences of overgrazed land, deforested mountainsides and denuded agricultural soils means that nature will be more vulnerable than before to changes in climate. The people most vulnerable are those who lack the resources and, increasingly, the mobility to adapt through migration. Millions live in dangerous places such as floodplains or in shantytowns on exposed hillsides around the enormous cities of the

⁴² See UK joint NGO group on development and climate change *Up in Smoke? Africa and Climate Change*
<http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/4jgqh545jc4sk055soffcq4519062005184642.pdf>

⁴³ Siri Eriksen, reported in Fields, S (2005) *Continental Divide – Why Africa's Climate Change Burden is Greater* *Environmental Health Perspectives* Vol.113 (8) pp. A533-537

developing world. Often they are literally ‘trapped’ in poverty - there is nowhere else for them to go. Climate change is likely to ‘accelerate social stratification’ in Africa, meaning that ‘those who don’t have sufficient wealth to buffer the effects of climate vulnerability will plunge deeper into poverty.’⁴⁴ In reality, for many vulnerable people, such climatic changes will mean the difference between life and death.

The social and economic injustice of climate change is striking. Industrialized countries and corporations, together with each one of us living in the North, are responsible for the vast bulk of past and current greenhouse gas emissions. Arguably, these emissions are a debt unwittingly incurred for the high standards of living enjoyed by a minority of the world’s population. The wealthy are by and large shielded from the largest impacts through abundant resources and opportunities to adapt. Those who are already suffering most from climate change are in the developing world. They have fewer resources for coping with storms, floods, droughts, outbreaks of disease and disruptions to food and water supplies. They are often eager for economic development themselves, but find that this already difficult process is becoming even more difficult because of climate change. For example, the mounting costs of dealing with the health problems associated with changing disease patterns could eat up any additional aid, thus preventing essential investments in economic development.

Almost 10 years ago, a majority of the world’s governments signed up to the Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gases, the principal cause of climate change. In December 2005, new evidence showed that only two out of 15 EU countries will meet their targets by 2007. Some countries, such as Ireland, due to its continuing rapid economic growth, will miss the target completely. This failure presents a major challenge for the new round of negotiations agreed to in Montreal in December 2005.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

HIV/AIDS

The spread of HIV/AIDS is a further major challenge to human development across the world. The 2004 UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS epidemic estimated that since the disease was first detected in 1981, more than 20 million people have died from AIDS. More than 39.5 million people globally are living with HIV. In 2006 alone, more than 4.3 million people became infected with the virus.⁴⁵ While most new cases of the disease are still in Africa, this report pointed to the sharp increase in prevalence rates in Eastern and Central Europe – a fact that raises profound challenges in the face of an enlarged European Union.⁴⁶

Africa continues to suffer disproportionately from the spread of the disease. Around 25 million Africans now live with HIV. In 2006, AIDS killed an estimated 2.1 million African people. The devastation brought by HIV/AIDS can be grasped if one sees the impact it has on children, in particular. According to UNICEF, in Swaziland, as many as one in 10 households are run by orphans, whilst many more orphans are ending up on the street. By 2010, one in seven children will be orphans in twelve African countries.⁴⁷

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has led to a spiral of poverty in many African countries, undermining years of development efforts.⁴⁸ It is recognised that poverty and malnutrition leads to increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, but the reverse is also true: HIV aggravates poverty. It does so through limiting the capacity of families to make a

⁴⁵ UNAIDS Report on the Global Aids Epidemic, 2004
http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_html/ExecSummary_en/Execsumm_en.pdf

⁴⁶ This issue was highlighted during the Conference *Breaking the Barriers- Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia* held in Dublin in 2004 during Irish Presidency of the EU. The final Declaration of the Conference can be found at:
http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&list_id=25

⁴⁷ UNICEF Ireland, *Growing up Alone*
https://www.unicef.ie/unicef.php?content=ovc_report.php

⁴⁸ Barnett, T, and Whiteside, A, (2002) *Aids in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalisation*, Palgrave Macmillan

livelihood and through channelling earnings into expensive medical treatments. It also leads to a reduction of employment opportunities as industries experience a downturn. There is a decline in economic growth due to the loss of skilled labour and, increasingly, the resources that do exist are used for consumption rather than investment.⁴⁹ Moreover, the widespread social stigmatisation of people suffering from the disease compounds these economic impacts.⁵⁰

As a consequence, many vulnerable people, in order to survive, are often forced into high-risk behaviour, which can further exacerbate their exposure to the disease. In 2005, the G8 governments made a promise that all people should have access to essential HIV/AIDS medicines free of charge. This is a positive move, but it remains to be translated into action.

Fragile progress

On the ground, some advances have been made in terms of eradicating poverty in recent decades. As mentioned above, estimates from the World Bank suggest that the average proportion of people in the world surviving on less than \$1 a day dropped from around a third in 1990 to a quarter in 1999. Taken on face value, this trend would suggest that by 2015 the first Millennium Development Goal of ‘halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty’ will be met. The situation is more complex, however. Almost all of the progress towards this goal has been made in Asia, and especially in China.⁵¹ Other countries have had much more patchy progress, and nearly all of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have seen income levels drop.

⁴⁹ See also Kelly, J M (2000) *Planning for Education in the Context of HIV/AIDS*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning Series, International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris.

⁵⁰ Smith, A, E McDonagh and M Leen (2004) *The Reality of HIV/AIDS* Veritas, Dublin

⁵¹ The scale of the reported decrease in poverty in China in recent years is widely contested. NGOs and academics have questioned the reliability of statistics and the methodology used to calculate the decline in poverty. See, for example, the article by RAGHAVAN, C (2000) *Juggling Data to Claim Poverty Decline* Third World Network, <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/juggling.htm>.

Large parts of Asia have managed to overcome a history of poverty and begun to build democratic nations. The processes of globalisation – involving opening up economies and markets to harness international trade – have brought benefits to certain parts of the world. India, for example, has seen economic growth averaging 5% per year over the past decade. Some benefits of this growth have been passed on to the poor. In the early 1950s, nearly half of India’s population was living in income poverty. The 1990s witnessed high levels of poverty reduction and important achievements in literacy with enrolment of primary school-aged children. India today has 136 million children aged 6 to 10 attending primary school.⁵² Rapid economic growth has also led to a substantial reduction in income-poverty in China.⁵³ Despite these achievements, much more remains to be done if the benefits of economic growth are to be gained by those living in poverty.

In Latin America the picture is very mixed. While poverty rates as a proportion of the population fell between 1990 and 2004, the actual number of people living in poverty rose.⁵⁴ Many countries in the region have made substantial progress towards reducing poverty, but the financial crises in Argentina, Paraguay and Venezuela, in particular, have reversed gains in those countries. Even where there has been substantial progress, such as in Brazil, income inequality remains among the highest in the world. The trend towards a polarisation of wealth in the hands of the richest 10% of the population has been increasing, earning the region the dubious title of the “most backward region on the planet in terms of income distribution.”⁵⁵

⁵² World Bank Country Brief, <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Countries/India/4F3233D642E4BB3985256B4A00706AA7?OpenDocument>

⁵³ The scale of the reported decrease in poverty in China in recent years is widely contested. NGOs and academics have questioned the reliability of statistics and the methodology used to calculate the decline in poverty. See, for example, the article by RAGHAVAN, C (2000) *Juggling Data to Claim Poverty Decline* Third World Network, <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/juggling.htm>.

⁵⁴ The rate of poverty (indigent and non-indigent poor) fell from 48.3% in 1990 to 43.2% in 2004. The actual numbers of poor people rose from 200 millions in 1990 to 224 millions in 2004. UN ECLAC (2004) *Social Panorama of Latin America* p.7 http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/DesarrolloSocial/0/LCL2220PI/PSI2004_Summary_Web.pdf

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 11

The 1990s saw many other success stories in the developing world. Primary education improved in Guinea and Malawi. HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Senegal were controlled, and came down in both Thailand and Uganda. Child mortality dropped in Bangladesh and The Gambia. Nutrition levels improved in Indonesia, Mexico and Tunisia. But for each region of the world, and for each area improved, there have also been setbacks. Under-5 mortality rates increased in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, reversing decades of steady decline. Primary school enrolment fell in Cameroon, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania. Malnutrition increased in Burkina Faso and Yemen. In the 1990s, HIV prevalence in many countries doubled, trebled or even quadrupled, severely affecting the development prospects not only of individuals but also of an entire generation.⁵⁶

A global commitment to end poverty

Despite the overwhelming nature of the problems faced by many developing countries, there are some signs of hope. 2005 saw a renewed global commitment to address the underlying poverty, particularly in Africa. Perhaps the greatest sign of hope is the mobilisation of civil society across the world. Civil society organisations, including trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Church, have become increasingly organised and vocal in holding governments to account.

In 2005, millions of people became part of the largest global movement in history, under the banner of the ‘Global Call to Action Against Poverty’,⁵⁷ mobilising communities and movements across the world. Civil society groups, including many faith-based organisations, have played an important role in national Poverty Strategy Reduction Processes in developing countries. This active participation in policy

⁵⁶ Vandemoortele, J. (2002) ‘Are the MDGs feasible?’ UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, New York <http://www.undp.org/mdg/areMDGsfeasible.pdf>.

⁵⁷ See www.whiteband.org

processes has increased the ability of local communities to assess their own needs, understand their rights and bring them to the attention of the local and national governments.⁵⁸

As a consequence of this participation, some important breakthroughs have been made in recent years. Some debt cancellation for the poorest countries has been achieved. Where this has happened, it has already had a positive impact. Governments in the 28 countries that qualified under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme have been using savings from debt relief to increase spending on basic services, with about 40% of the savings directed to education and 25% to health.⁵⁹ In Mozambique, a free immunisation programme for children has been funded as a result of resources freed up by debt relief. School fees for primary education have been abolished in Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania. Uganda and Mozambique, among the early beneficiaries of debt cancellation, have sustained economic growth of over 5%. In some periods, that has reached 7%.

At the same time, many Northern governments are addressing the levels and quality of aid, or official development assistance (ODA) they give to the developing world. The EU member states made a joint commitment to reach the UN goal of 0.7% of Gross National Income going to ODA by 2015. In 2000, the Irish government was among the first governments to re-commit to meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNI to ODA. In 2005, the government reiterated this solemn promise, committing to a new timeframe of meeting the target by 2012. This is a positive step towards beginning to address the massive inequalities illustrated above.

⁵⁸ See De Barra, C (2004) *PRSP as Theatre – backstage policy-making and the future of the PRSP approach* CIDSE/CI Background paper.
<http://www.cidse.org/docs/200409271723027101.pdf>

⁵⁹ UNDP (2003) *The Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty, Human Development Report 2003*
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/> p. 153

Despite these positive signs, the international response to the problems facing the poorest regions of the developing world is still woefully inadequate. Many of the target dates for raising ODA have been set almost a decade from now – the date by which the Millennium Development Goals were to have been met.

According to the UNDP, despite rhetorical commitments, aid to Africa, in particular, has continued to fall.⁶⁰ Despite the cancellation of multilateral debt to the World Bank and IMF in 2005, debt remains a critical issue that impedes the development of many countries. Negotiations on world trade, which are meant to put development concerns at the centre of negotiations, have yet to deliver concrete results. There is still an urgent need for concerted action to address the underlying inequalities within the global economic system.

3.3. Development Challenges in the light of Catholic Social Thought

At this juncture in human history, a deep debate is emerging within academic and policy circles regarding the global project of “development” and its apparent failure to address the many and complex challenges facing humanity. There are calls for a new development agenda to be adopted, but a lack of clarity over what constitutes this new agenda.⁶¹ To some, this failure is a direct result of the lack of commitment of Western governments to take the issues of development seriously – something that can be addressed by a new consensus on international development based around the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments. For a

⁶⁰ Official Development Assistance declined throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. Aid to the people of sub-Saharan Africa fell by 38% between 1990 and 2001, or from \$34 per capita to \$21. This represents a fall from over 6% of GDP in sub-Saharan African countries to 4.5%. See UNDP Human Development Report 2003, p147.

⁶¹ See, for example, Maxwell, S (2007) *10 Steps towards a new development Agenda, ODI briefing paper*

number of analysts, however, the current situation is actually symptomatic of the dominant models of economic development that have been exported from the West to the developing world. In which case, it is time for a radical rethink of the basic assumptions on which international development rests. The complexity and urgency of the challenges facing the world today certainly calls for profound reflection on the part of us all. In particular, it urges us to reflect on what it means to be a ‘developed country’ in the fullest sense of the word. CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT can offer some crucial pointers that can assist in reviewing the basic assumptions of international development in the light of these challenges.

Development of the Whole Human Person

Perhaps the most urgent challenge today, is that of re-evaluating what is meant by development itself and re-orienting it towards the common good – the good of society and humanity as a whole. Such a task is not so much a technical policy exercise as a cultural one, which means reflecting on our past, our present and our future. It involves looking beyond the common sense social and economic indicators of material development to consider the ethical and spiritual dimensions of progress. Such a philosophical and spiritual reflection is an essential step if we are to distinguish between the means of development, including economic growth, and the ends – human flourishing and happiness.

Making such a distinction means asking ourselves to what extent greater wealth is improving us as individuals and as society? Human progress is multi-faceted, and also has ethical and spiritual dimensions. Growing as people means increasing our capacity to be moved by the suffering of others, to address inequalities, and to protect the natural environment for future generations. Can we call ourselves truly ‘developed’, for example, if the model of development we espouse systematically deepens divisions between people? Can we say we are progressing if our progress systematically wastes or destroys the natural environment? This

dimension of development is a constant theme within the Church's teaching, and is outlined extensively in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* published in 2004.⁶² Pope Paul VI spoke of the 'moral underdevelopment' of a society that can sit back in comfort and watch others suffer. Pope John Paul II cites the co-existence of poverty existing side-by-side with inadmissible 'super-development', as the greatest challenge to authentic human development today.⁶³ His words are all too relevant in today's 24/7 information society where we can all too easily become numb to the grinding images of relentless violence, hunger and injustice on our TV screens and the internet.

Distinguishing between self-interest and selfishness

Development, in the fullest sense of the word, is only possible in a society where human values are lived and encouraged at every level of society. Such values, however, can be undermined by the economic, political and social context in which we find ourselves. The dominant market model of economic growth fostered by Northern countries, however, does not pay overt attention to the ethical dimensions of development.⁶⁴ It is widely accepted that markets have a key role to play in development, and this is not being disputed here. A free market allows individuals to exercise their flexibility, efficiency and dynamism in meeting their objectives. By strengthening human freedom and initiative, the market supports the freedom and dignity of the human person. Individual responsibility, entrepreneurship and risk taking have an important place within development and should be supported.

⁶² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004) *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* Vatican Publications, Rome.

⁶³ Pope John Paul II (1987) *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* Papal Encyclical No.28

⁶⁴ One of the fundamental assumptions of orthodox economic theory is the separation of economic rationale and ethical considerations in economic decision-making. The usefulness or otherwise of an economic decision is assumed to be its utility to the individual and not the common good. There is, however, a growing disquiet around this analytical distinction, and growing evidence on the relationship between ethics, trust and social capital on economic life. See Woolcock, M and D Narayan (2000) *Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research and Policy* for an overview of the relationship between social capital and economic development. [http://www.worldbank.org/research/journals/wbro/obsaug00/pdf/\(5\)Woolcock%20%20Narayan.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/research/journals/wbro/obsaug00/pdf/(5)Woolcock%20%20Narayan.pdf)

But a distinction has to be drawn between legitimate self-interest and unfettered markets, which can become a license for abandoning responsibilities to the common good. The dominant market model has unfortunately given rise to an erroneous understanding of freedom - as a licence to do whatever one wants regardless of the consequences. In this way, the model has tended to reward selfish behaviour, excessive consumption and greed. Such selfishness can be transformed into economic and financial structures which promote the manipulation of markets for one's own benefit, regardless of the costs to the wider community.⁶⁵ As such, it can foster widespread social attitudes that undermine traditional values of family, solidarity and respect for others and for the environment.⁶⁶

The lesson that is slowly being learnt in the first decade of the 21st century is that the liberal market economy has limitations. Liberty, the principal value underpinning the market is subject to the reality of the human condition, and hence to the existence or absence of other values such as honesty, integrity and respect for others. The creation of an environment that enables the expression of freedom for the majority of the world's population and not just the few, requires strong institutions and regulatory frameworks. It also requires recognition of the values of mutual collaboration, solidarity, and equality. Facing up to this reality and moving beyond the simplistic logic of self-interest is no small task, particularly in an era of globalisation. It requires a sea change in the basic understanding of what motivates people, how choices should be governed and regulated, and what the respective roles of individuals and governments are in ensuring that the benefits of progress are shared more evenly.

⁶⁵ This was highlighted in the 1990s when currency speculation led to financial crises across the world. See Hayward, H (2001) *Costing the Casino: the real cost of currency speculation in the 1990s*.
<http://www.globalsolidarity.org/tobintax/casino.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Putnam, R D (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* Simon and Schuster, New York.

It is only if individuals and communities care deeply for their brothers and sisters in need that they will be prepared to make sacrifices that may be required to help them. The former Secretary General of the UN, Perez de Cuellar, in the conclusions of the UN Commission on Culture and Diversity, underscored this need: “Trust, loyalty, solidarity, altruism and even love, though readily dismissed by currently fashionable economists, no doubt do play a part in human relationships. Unlike material goods, they grow on what they feed on. No society is capable of surviving without them.”⁶⁷ The higher values of service, self-sacrifice and compassion cannot be imposed from the ‘top-down’, but need to be fostered throughout society, in order to build a true culture of solidarity. It calls on us all, regardless of our religious beliefs, to make these values a positive lifestyle choice which can be proposed through families, churches, schools, institutions, media and workplaces.

Aspiring not to have more, but to be more

In order to bring about such a cultural change, it is necessary to acknowledge that human development in the fullest sense also has a spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension of development could be easily dismissed within the dominant model of economic development which gives more emphasis to the material dimensions of well-being. One must ask seriously how these can be fostered and developed in society at all levels? Shifting from the dominant model of development centred on self-interest to one that embraces higher values of solidarity and love, entails a deep rooted aspiration towards the good of the other. It involves an ability to make sacrifices, without counting the cost. It involves an ability to forgive ones enemies. It involves caring for others, even though we may never come to know their name. It involves a shift from social values centred on ‘having’ – to a culture centred on ‘being’.

⁶⁷ De Cuéllar, J P (1996) *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development* UNESCO Publishing, New York, p.50.

Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa expressed this eloquently: “When one looks into the eyes of a dying mother with a little child next to her who is also infected [with HIV/AIDS], the statistics become even more frightening in their poignancy and impact. Can we even begin to imagine what is going on inside of these ‘little ones’, this little girl who watches as her mother gets more emaciated each day, struggles with uncontrollable diarrhoea, and fears that she is going to die from a disease that people tell her is called HIV/AIDS? But that is precisely what is required from the international level to the remotest village community – as people we need to enter the heart and spirit of these ‘little ones’ and try to imagine what is happening inside, what they may be feeling as they struggle with poverty, hunger, fear of the future and even basics like ‘will I have place to stay?’ ‘Will they take away our home when my mother dies?’”

Our faith teaches us that behind each statistic lies a real person who, like us, is infinitely loved by God. Their cares and dreams as mothers and fathers, friends, children, grandparents and cousins are not so distant from our own. They too strive for a safe home and clean environment, a secure income to provide for their family, a healthy and long life for them and a better life for their children. However, they often face dire circumstances which make these most basic human needs impossible to reach: they have a meagre income, but no state safety net to keep them going in times of need; they face terminal and chronic illnesses in the family, but have no access to hospitals or medicines; they manage to build a small home, but have to flee due to armed conflict or natural disasters. Their daily experience of poverty is often expressed as a lack of control over ones’ life, a sense of powerlessness, injustice, exclusion and a denial of rights.

Such concern for and solidarity with those in need is reflected beautifully in the words of many scholars and saints from the Christian tradition. In the 4th century, the great scholar and Father of the Church, St. Basil the Great wrote: “The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the one who is naked. The shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of

the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are so many injustices you commit.” He goes on to exhort the Christian community: “by a thousand paths make your riches reach the homes of the poor.”⁶⁸ They also form a common bond with other religious traditions, which recognise the need to build just human relations. Mahattma Ghandi, shortly before dying, spoke of the ‘talisman’ as the benchmark that should guide human development: “I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.”

Such high human aspirations reflect the inner depth of the human heart, which longs to break free from confines of selfishness and to be open to the love of God, and others. The gift of free will means that as human beings we are constantly faced with the choice: to retreat into our selfishness or to serve others. Serving others and building solidarity is not an automatic process even though, as we have seen, an essential one for full human development. It entails self-sacrifice, to the point of losing one’s life for the sake of others, through sharing in the mystery of redemption brought about by Christ’s death and resurrection. It is only through spiritual development that we can learn to make space for others and begin to understand their needs and aspirations and find grace, peace, forgiveness and the courage to start again.

⁶⁸ Saint Basil the Great, *Homilia in Illud Lucae, Destruam Horrea Mea*, 5: PG 31, 271. Quoted in *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, p. 187.

The Church's mission – universal fraternity

In the 21st Century, the Church's mission is, above all, one characterised by witnessing to God's Love through its presence in the world, building up the unity of the one human family.⁶⁹ Jesus called on his disciples to become one in him, through mutual and continual love, in the knowledge that it is through such love that he is present "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there"⁷⁰. It is this love, which brings many into one, which reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church, to make us "one heart and one soul"⁷¹. It is in building this communion of love that the Church appears as the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race"⁷²

The world is crying out for such witnesses of love, but what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could turn immediately to the many activities that consume our lives. Becoming witnesses of love means learning to contemplate the mystery of the Trinity dwelling within us and seeing that light reflected in our brothers and sisters. It means reflecting on the profound unity of the Mystical Body, which links each of us together as one human family under God, making us share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. It implies the ability to see what is positive in others and welcome it as a gift from God. It means knowing how to make space for others and learning how to "share each other's burdens".⁷³

This kind of love, by its very nature opens out to a service that is universal and to a commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being. It opens our eyes to see the face of Christ in the faces of those with whom he identifies himself most: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you

⁶⁹ Pope John Paul II (2000) *Novo Millennio Inuente*

⁷⁰ Matthew 12:24

⁷¹ Acts 4:32

⁷² Pope John Paul II (2000) *Novo Millennio Inuente*

⁷³ Galatians 6:2

visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-37). This Gospel text is not simply an invitation to love and solidarity, but a page which sheds light on where we can encounter Christ: “Whatever you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). This love is universal in nature and cannot exclude anyone. Yet, at the same time, it must recognise the special presence of Christ in the poor, and to make a preferential option for them – both near and far. As Christians, who proclaim faith in a loving God, we therefore have a particular responsibility to witness to that love in our daily lives through practical solidarity especially with those in need. Such practical support is never static, but constantly moving and finding new and creative ways to reach out to those in need. □

Faced with such a troubled world, in which the presence of evil is so evident, moreover, the Christian message stands out as a message of hope. The Gospel teaches us, and experience demonstrates, that good will prevail. Jesus has ‘paid the price’ of redemption and with his help everyone will be saved. It is the responsibility of Christians to nourish this hope which sustains their efforts to promote justice and peace. It is this belief that gives us the certainty that despite the personal and social sins which mark all human activity, it is possible to build a better world in which love and justice will reign.

A shared commitment to human dignity

Regardless of religious belief, in a pluralistic society, the overwhelming majority of human beings share a certain basic set of human characteristics, regardless of geographical location, cultural background or circumstances.⁷⁴ These include an innate empathy with those who suffer, an instinct for self-preservation, a desire for autonomous action, and a desire to live a long, happy, and secure life, free from violence and illness. At the heart of these is a shared human need to express love and be loved. These same basic human characteristics are expressed in different ways in a wide range of faith and cultural traditions across the world, and throughout history.

⁷⁴ De Cuellar, P, (1996) *Report of the World Commission on Culture and Diversity ‘Our Creative Diversity’*, UNESCO Publishing, New York.

Each tradition, moreover, in its own way, provides an insight into the so-called ‘golden rule’ at the heart of global ethics: “Do unto others as you would like them to do to you.” And “Do not do to others as you would not like them to do to you.” In each of the Holy Books of the great world religions, including the Bible, this same assertion is found. Whilst expressed in many different ways, and practiced to varying degrees of perfection, this basic teaching offers an important starting point for understanding the nature of values that are necessary to establish a more just world in a multi-cultural society.⁷⁵ It also challenges us to greater inter-faith dialogue on issues of common concern.

Such shared values are already expressed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the results of various UN conferences culminating in the Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000. This body of documents, negotiated over many years, represents the nearest thing that exists to a ‘world constitution’. If we look at the Declaration on Human Rights,⁷⁶ for example, it sets out a core set of universal standards and values that ought to govern national and international action. The first article of that Declaration states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” The second article backs this up by asserting that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” The subsequent 28 articles constitute a comprehensive list of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to which everyone is entitled.

In the course of the past 50 years, the idea of human rights has become the cornerstone of the international system, based around the United Nations. International law is in large part governed by these principles, and the subsequent UN conventions that have arisen from it. In this respect, they are universally recognised as the touchstone of

⁷⁵ The academic debate on the nature of a ‘global ethics’ has been growing since the 1990s. For a good overview, see Runzo, J, et al (2003) *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* The Library of Global Ethics & Religion, Oneworld press, London

⁷⁶ See *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

international ethics and the common language of international relations. Whilst we may often lament the fact that human rights are not enforced or respected, the mere fact that we recognise their existence as a standard is a remarkable advance in human history. Indeed, it is perhaps worth reflecting on the fact that it was out of the painful experience of the 2nd World War that such a diverse group of world leaders, representing all the major faith traditions, were able to assert with such clarity the aspirations of their generation.⁷⁷

Human rights have a profound meaning within the Christian tradition as they flow from the nature of the human person made in God's image and likeness.⁷⁸ Within such a vision, every human being, regardless of their wealth or poverty, race or religion, is looked on as a brother or sister within the one human family. As such, they share the same fundamental rights and unique gifts. The Church has contributed in a particular way to this debate through highlighting the corresponding responsibilities that sit alongside rights and the way that rights are achieved through human actions.

⁷⁷ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up immediately following the Second World War by a Commission chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. The declaration was endorsed in December 1948, the two covenants (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) that emerged to define the obligations of each state were ratified in 1966. For more on the history of human rights see <http://www.universalrights.net/main/world.htm>

⁷⁸ Hogan, L (2002) *Human Rights* Christian Perspectives on Development Issues, Veritas, Dublin. Further reference documents on Christianity and Human Rights can be found on the Samford University website http://www.samford.edu/lillyhumanrights/papers_by_author.html.

Table 3.5: Human Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

- Rights to life and worthy standard of living, including rights to proper development of life and to basic security
- Right to cultural moral values, including freedom to search for and express options, freedom of information and right to education
- Rights to religious and conscience
- Rights to choose one's state in life, including rights to establish a family and pursue a religious vocation
- Economic rights, including right to work, to a just and sufficient wage, and to hold private property
- Political rights, including right to participate in public affairs and juridical protection of rights

Responsibilities

- To acknowledge and respect the rights of others
- To collaborate mutually – in solidarity
- To act for others responsibly
- To preserve life and live it becomingly

Source: Catholic Social Teaching, Our Best Kept Secret⁷⁹

Underpinning these rights, and sustaining them, however, must be a shared value system that reflects certain basic principles of equality, justice, truth, honesty, fairness, non-violence, tolerance, participation and solidarity. Without these values, which affirm the centrality of the human person, the idea of human rights soon become meaningless. Development, in the fullest sense, from a Catholic Social Thought perspective, embraces an overarching commitment to human dignity and human rights. Our responsibility to fulfil those rights and responsibilities must be borne out on a political level in a strong commitment directed building the global common good. This means ensuring that the benefits of economic and social progress are shared

⁷⁹ Henriot, P et al (1992) *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret* Orbis Books, USA.

out amongst everyone in the community, and in particular, with those who are most in need. It means effectively committing to the values of equality and justice. The experience of the past few decades demonstrates that responsibility for this cannot be left to the market alone. But rather, it must be part of the informed choices made at every level of social action, whether personal, community, business or political. □

The primary responsibility for ensuring equality and social justice lies within the domestic sphere. In the Pastoral Letter *Prosperity with a Purpose*, the Bishops of Ireland highlighted some of the critical issues that need to be addressed at a domestic level. These include housing and homelessness, stewardship of the environment, income poverty, long-term unemployment, and early school leavers, to mention a few. They underscored the need to ensure that the benefits of prosperity are distributed evenly, particularly to those in vulnerable groups.⁸⁰ This primary responsibility, however, has to be matched against the needs of others – regardless of geographical location. Our recognition that we are part of one human family, with universal human rights, brings with it the responsibility to ensure – at a bare minimum - that our actions both as individuals and as a nation, are not harming others. This, however, is not enough if we recognise we are one human family. It calls on use to take positive steps towards upholding and fulfilling those rights internationally.

⁸⁰ The domestic questions which arise from Ireland's experience of rapid economic development are discussed at length in the pastoral letter issued in 1999. *Prosperity with a purpose: Christian faith and values in a time of rapid economic growth* (1999), followed in the tradition of *The Work of Justice* (1977), *Christian Faith in a Time of Economic Depression* (1983) and *Work is the Key* (1992), and examined the numerous and complex problems that arise in times of rapid economic development. In that letter we touched on some of the responsibilities of Ireland in the wider world. In those letters, the Bishops acknowledged that 'the success of the 1990s and the good outlook for the Irish economy to the year 2010 constitute a huge opportunity to make solidarity with the poorer nations an even stronger dimensions of Irish life'.

3.4. Ireland's role in building the global common good

How should this theological reflection translate into development policy? Whilst there is no one formula for making that leap, one can begin by saying that Catholic Social Thought provides a clear and unequivocal rationale for development cooperation. Whilst there may be a many motivations for development cooperation, the critical and deep-rooted sense of responsibility towards the well-being of others as part of the same human family. The analysis above highlighted the fact that many millions of people are still without the basic necessities of life on a daily basis and are living in fear of violence whilst Ireland has enjoyed remarkable economic success in recent years. One may ask what responsibility Ireland has towards addressing this situation. Are their ways in which we, as individuals, communities and as a nation, can work towards the common good, not only of people living in this country but globally?

This section sets out five concrete ways in which we can make a real difference in working for the global common good: through strengthening our commitment to interdependence, sharing our wealth, working to reform the international system, ensuring that our markets are socially responsible, and addressing our own contribution to environmental sustainability.

Challenge 1: Strengthening our commitment to interdependence

As a nation, our well-being and, increasingly our security, are dependent on choices and actions taken beyond our borders. Likewise, the lives of others are dependent on the choices we make. In an interdependent world, the problems of one very soon become the problems of all. Global problems, whether related to poverty, disease, the environment or international terrorism, sooner or later affect everyone - though to a greater or less degree, as seen above. This new reality of

human existence calls for a new approach to international politics, with renewed and reformed structures designed to uphold the global common good.

Reaching solutions to global problems requires a commitment to collaborative action and the peaceful resolution of disputes through multilateral processes. Nations that embrace interdependence soon recognise that responding to it requires a change of mindset that goes beyond a traditional model of international relations in which sovereign nation states seek their advantage often at the expense of others. In an interdependent world, finding common solutions to common problems requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to sacrifice short-term national gains for the common good.

Such a vision is somewhat distant from the current reality of international politics, which places increasing emphasis on military solutions to global problems. The UN has suffered many setbacks in recent years are a result of its failure to reform and to prevent international conflicts, such as the US/UK led invasion of Iraq in 2004. Despite this, the UN remains the principal authority through which international law is upheld and pursued. The principles of human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the covenants that derive from it, must continue to form the international standard against which the actions of individual countries and the international community are measured. The UN and its subsidiary bodies need to be fully supported to ensure that human rights are monitored and enjoyed by all people.

One of the biggest challenges is that of strengthening the multilateral system to ensure that all states honour the commitments they have made in international treaties and conventions. Throughout the 1990s, global conferences set out a comprehensive vision of fair globalisation in which the rights of individuals are respected. Practical mechanisms need to be put in place at national and international level to improve the accountability of governments on the promises they have made.

As well as invigorating the institutions that exist internationally, reforms are essential to allow the international structures to respond adequately to the new problems and changing political context. Systemic structural imbalances in decision-making processes in international economic policy have played a key role in creating the current problems faced by many developing countries. Those countries with the greatest development problems have the least representation at the institutions making key decisions. They lack effective representation on the boards of the World Bank and the IMF, as well as the capacity to engage effectively in negotiations at the WTO, as outlined earlier. Ireland, as a member of the EU, can play an important role in pressing other governments for changes to the international system that would give those living in poverty a greater voice in their future.

Being peace-makers

Ireland, with its history as a neutral country and experience of being colonised, can also play an important role as an honest broker in many complex and sensitive international situations. Ireland has played a key role in UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon and is currently doing so in Liberia. Ordinary citizens too have shown extraordinary leadership when the international community has been slow to act. Timor-Leste (East Timor) is a case in point here: it was an international campaign started by Irish citizens that eventually led to a UN-sponsored referendum on East Timor's independence in 1999.⁸¹

Ireland's neutrality has been an important feature of our international relations. However, the meaning and significance of this neutrality has changed in recent years, especially in light of Ireland's membership of the EU and its evolving Common Foreign and Security Policy. Moreover, the trajectory of EU integration means that the ambiguities of our position of neutrality will become ever more accentuated.

⁸¹ For more information on the East Timor Irish Campaign, see http://indigo.ie/~etisc/normal_index.html

There is no doubt that the values of neutrality, impartiality and genuine non-alignment are increasingly difficult to live by, given the changed political climate. Indeed the distinctive role of the ‘non-aligned’ nations in the UN is itself under pressure, though a non-aligned bloc is absolutely vital for international peace and security. The international political landscape is changing. The changes bring challenges for every country, not least for a small, independent and neutral nation like Ireland.

Our history and experience challenge us to continue to develop a principled approach to our international relations: one that supports the principles of international law; is robust in its defence of multilateral institutions, is committed to the resolution of conflict through non-violent means, and that works for the implementation of just and equitable economic practices.

Challenge 2: Option for the poor - Sharing our wealth

Within this commitment to interdependence, another important strategy in building the global common good is to provide financial support for development. *Sharing* is a value that is deeply rooted in a Christian understanding of economic life, and one that could offer a new perspective on building a more equal and just world. The Church upholds the right of individuals to own private property, but underlines the universal destination of goods: that God created goods for all to share in. According to the teaching of the Church, material wealth gives its owners a greater chance to show their inner wealth and reveal who they really are. It is not so much that a large personal fortune, of itself, either brings happiness or causes misery, but that the person who uses it in one way – metaphorically speaking, to build ‘bridges’ with others – is blessed or happy, while the person who uses it differently – to build ‘walls’ against others – is not. With wealth, therefore, comes a grave responsibility. This responsibility is both towards those in need, and towards ourselves. For the Gospel tells us that it is only through opening our hearts to others and giving freely that we will find true

happiness. Such financial assistance, both through official channels and voluntary donations, continues to play an indispensable role in building the social and economic fabric of poor countries.

Irish Aid

Ireland has a long-standing commitment to the developing world through its official aid programme, Irish Aid.⁸² The continued growth of this aid programme represents a major contribution towards building the global common good, of which Ireland can be proud. In 2000, Ireland was the first country to re-commit to meeting the UN goal of 0.7 % within a specific timeframe. In committing to this goal, the government recognised the deep-rooted commitment of the Irish public to those living in poverty in the developing world.

The repercussions of that commitment were felt internationally. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised the decision and asked other countries to follow Ireland's lead. Within two years, four other EU nations had also committed to raising their aid levels to meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals and set timetables for reaching the 0.7 % ODA target.⁸³ When, in 2005, it became clear that Ireland did not intend to honour this commitment, the public outcry brought 20,000 people to the streets. As a consequence, in September 2005, ahead of the UN World Summit, the government re-instated Ireland's commitment to meeting 0.7 %, revising the target date to 2012, setting in place interim targets.

⁸² Formerly known as Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI).

⁸³ Since the Irish decision to reach 0.7% by 2007, Belgium, Finland, France, Spain and the UK have set deadlines for reaching this target. See Joint NGO Briefing Paper (2005) *Heroes and Villains: Which Countries are Living up to their Promises on Aid, Trade and Debt?*

<http://www.eurodad.org/uploadstore/cms/docs/EUHeroesandVillainsMASTER11205.pdf>

The quality of the Irish aid programme has been widely praised.⁸⁴ The focus of the programme is on the poorest countries and the poorest people. One important dimension of the programme is its continued links with missionary organisations, with a substantial proportion of government funding directly supporting the work of missionaries in development. In July 2004, the government and the Irish Missionary Resource Service signed a memorandum of understanding, opening the way for greater long-term collaboration between the two.⁸⁵ It represents a growing recognition of the important development work carried out by missionary associations, particularly with the poorest and most vulnerable communities across the world.

Another key dimension of Irish Aid has been the growing collaboration between the government and the NGO community. As the aid budget has grown, funding from the official programme has been directed to Irish NGOs with a proven track record in delivering aid. This ongoing partnership between the NGO community and Irish Aid has offered NGOs the possibility of expanding their best programmes through supplementing the money they receive from the public with money from government.

While much has been achieved through the aid programme, there is no room for complacency. First and foremost, it will be a challenge to ensure that the commitment to meeting the growth targets are actually met and sustained. Another challenge is that of ensuring that the quality of the programme is maintained. In particular, it will be important to ensure that decisions as to which countries receive aid continue to be made on the basis of their need. Greater efforts also need to be made to improve transparency and accountability within the aid system.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, they do not constitute an excuse for doing nothing. From a moral viewpoint, the certainties of not providing help are far worse than facing the risks of providing assistance.

⁸⁴ OECD DAC Peer Review, Main Conclusions and Recommendations
http://www.oecd.org/document/27/0,2340,en_2649_34603_20366555_1_1_1_1,00.html

⁸⁵ http://www.dci.gov.ie/latest_news.asp?article=436

⁸⁶ See *Rome Declaration on Harmonization of Aid*.

Voluntary giving

Whilst official aid represents one channel of giving, voluntary or charitable giving also plays an important role in building the global common good. Voluntary giving, in particular, represents an expression of solidarity with those suffering from poverty and injustice. Ireland has one of the highest levels of public support for the developing world in the western world.⁸⁷ A government report on the attitudes towards the developing world carried out in 2002 revealed “a strong degree of goodwill towards developing countries”.⁸⁸ In that study, which represents the most comprehensive survey of public opinion on development issues, 90% of those interviewed said that they were in favour of helping people in the developing world, with 51% recognising this as a priority, and 87% recognised that we have a responsibility towards those in poor countries. The vast majority of people said that they had personally helped developing countries in some way, with over 95% saying that they responded positively to appeals. A great part of this high level of public awareness and engagement in development issues is due to the work of Irish development NGOs and tradition of volunteering. Irish NGOs have gained an international reputation for the quality of their work, enabled by the high levels of public support.

Challenges exist around voluntary giving. There is always the danger of becoming complacent, especially once humanitarian disasters have left the television screens. Development is a process that requires commitment not only for emergency aid, but also over the long-term. Silent emergencies, such as the HIV/AIDs pandemic, require our long-term commitment and support. Development NGOs, on the other hand, have the ongoing responsibility to ensure that they become more efficient and effective in providing help to those most in need. This means constantly updating their skills to ensure professionalism, as well as building stronger accountability structures. Within Ireland, there is a pressing need for better independent regulation of the charities sector.

⁸⁷ Together with Holland, according to Weafer, J, 2002, *Attitudes towards Development Co-operation in Ireland*, p. 34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid* p.9

Challenge 3: Address structural injustice - Making international systems fairer

Sharing wealth through redistribution is only one way for people to express their commitment to the global common good. In an ideal world, all people should have the opportunities to earn their own livelihood without relying on charity. Making those opportunities available to all requires change to the international structures that govern globalisation, as outlined in the first part of this report. Deep structural inequalities exist within the global economic and financial systems, which have a decisively negative impact on the poorest countries, keeping them in poverty.

Trade and development

One area where inequality is evident is in the international trading system. International trade plays a key role in the global economy and particularly in determining the chances of those in poverty to earn a just livelihood. Poor countries generally rely on the foreign revenue from international trade to finance other aspects of their development, as well as to pay off external debts. However, the international trading system is unjust. International structures operate strictly on ‘equality before the law’, but such structures often ignore the stark inequalities existing between different countries.

The evolution of the world trading system over the past 200 years has meant that Northern industrialised countries have a disproportionate advantage over their Southern counterparts in terms of trade. Not only do they trade principally in manufactured high value goods, but their economies are highly diversified and relatively well protected from external shocks, such as price fluctuations. On the other hand, the poorest countries in the world are highly dependent on exporting one or two basic commodities. The prices of such commodities are generally low and subject to international price fluctuations. This makes those economies highly vulnerable to even small changes in price, over which they have no control. Moreover, high dependency on agricultural produce and low levels of technology makes the poorest

countries vulnerable to extreme weather, a problem that is increasing through climate change.

Currently, the international trading system exacerbates existing inequalities. This inequality is evident in the double standards of industrialised countries in trade talks, such as the current EU Economic Partnership Agreements, at which they continue to protect their own markets while at the same time, demanding rapid economic liberalisation in the developing world. This inequality is compounded by the subsidy regimes of industrialised countries, particularly in agriculture. The result of such subsidies is the sale of surplus produce at below the cost of production. Critiques of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), for example, have documented its impact on the livelihoods of poor farmers in developing countries. Within Europe there is virtual unanimity on the damage caused by export subsidies to farmers' livelihoods in the poorest countries. It is within this context that the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting agreed the elimination of all export subsidies by 2013.

What is needed is a model of agriculture that supports rural livelihoods, animal welfare and environmental protection in the North, yet does not discriminate against the interests of southern farmers. The Doha Declaration of the WTO, which seeks to promote trade and development, encourages members "to establish a fair and market-oriented trading system through a programme of fundamental reform, encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets".⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Doha Declaration
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm.

Strong regulations are required to protect the fundamental interests of the poorest countries, particularly to enable them protect their food security.⁹⁰ More technical help needs to be given to poor countries to enable them to participate fully in negotiations. Procedures and decision-making needs to be more transparent, enabling the public to fully appreciate and judge the actions of their governments. In negotiations, the rich countries need to ensure that their own policies take into account the needs of the poor countries in terms of their access to markets. Above all, a spirit of true cooperation needs to be revived within the system in order to ensure that it works for the majority of the world's population and not just the few. As a first step, the WTO should endorse the Millennium Development Goals.

International debt

A similar pattern of injustice exists within the international financial system. The ongoing indebtedness of the poorest countries in the world, despite the concessions granted by the G8 in 2005, remains a major stumbling block towards building the global common good.

The debt crisis goes to the heart of the principles of the free-market economy. Honouring contracts and paying one's debts is a critical governing principle of the market economy, without which the financial system would collapse. The value of orderly payment of debts is ultimately about respecting the property of others, and the terms of a relationship one has entered into with another human being. Failure to pay one's debts can result in suffering both for those who have lent, through lost investments, as well as those who fail to pay. It can also undermine trust in the financial system as a whole, making it more difficult for people to access credit in the future. It is for this reason that those international institutions that govern debt repayments and access to credit, such as the International Monetary Fund, have such power within the international system. Failure to pay one's debts is taken as a

⁹⁰ The key issues around food security are outlined in the paper by Van Dillon, B and Leen, M (2000) *Bio patenting and the Threat to Food Security* CIDSE Policy Paper http://www.cidse.org/pubs/tg1ppcon.htm?&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999&workgroup=&pub_niv=&lang=en

signal of credit unworthiness leading to knock-on effects, such as a freezing of assets and preventing debtors from accessing new loans.

Such norms, in order to be justly applied, need to be located within the wider context of how the debts of poor countries were incurred and the impact repayment is having. In many instances, the debt was ‘odious’ or ‘illegitimate’ - incurred by dictatorial leaders often backed by western governments and institutions as part of Cold War politics.⁹¹ It was compounded, moreover, by a global economic downturn over which the countries in question had no control. The people who are now effectively repaying the debt in developing countries often had no control over the way the debt was incurred or how money was spent, since democratic processes did not exist.

The impact of debt repayment on the countries in question is compounded by the challenges of unfair trade regulations and of widespread poverty and disease. The burden of debt repayments creates severe limitations on the capacity of developing country governments to provide basic services to its people, including access to health, education and sanitation - in other words, those basic services that would ensure the minimum of human dignity and human rights. Lack of these basic provisions is, in many cases, directly responsible for millions of premature deaths from disease and hunger throughout the world.

Ireland played an important role in moving the debate on international debt forward several years ago. As a consequence of strong public support, it adopted a policy that 100% debt cancellation is a legitimate objective, given the human development needs of the poorest countries. Such a policy has encouraged other countries to assess their own debt cancellation policies and played a part in the cancellation of World Bank debt in 2005. Since 2005, however, there is little evidence of the international financial system moving towards a more sustainable debt framework.

⁹¹ <http://www.odiousdebts.org/odiousdebts/index.cfm>

In order to achieve additional cancellation of debts, and to prevent crises in the future, further reform is essential. Greater support needs to be given to the measures poor countries themselves are taking to manage their own debts and to strengthen their capacity to negotiate better loans and increased grant finance. Such support would enhance their capacity to participate in the international system and to meet their long-term development needs.

Finally, given the inherent volatility in the international financial architecture, and the vulnerability of the countries in question to external shocks, it could promote the creation of an independent debt arbitration process through which poor countries can resolve their debt crises in an ordered way.⁹² Just as there are provisions within business law for bankruptcy, with responsibilities on both sides (lender and borrower), analogous provisions need to be put in place for national governments.

Challenge 4: Respecting human dignity - building socially responsible markets

A fourth challenge in building the global common good is that of ensuring that international markets become more socially responsible. The corporate sector has a critical role to play in ensuring that the benefits of globalisation are shared more equally. Often, however, the pursuit of business interests in the developing world has resulted in skewed development which benefits the corporations and political elites, while offering little to those who are in poverty. This is particularly true in the areas of mineral extraction, petroleum, and pharmaceutical development. Corporations have often pressed for lax

⁹² CIDSE/CI (2004) *Sustainability and Justice: A Comprehensive Debt Work out for Poor Countries with an International Fair and Transparent Arbitration Process (FTAP)*
http://www.cidse.org/docs/200410291009437888.pdf?&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999&workgroup=&pub_niv=&lang=&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999

regulation in terms of taxation and labour laws, which leads to a 'race to the bottom' as poor countries are put in the position of competing for mobile international investment.⁹³

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) conservatively estimated that Sub-Saharan African governments would receive over \$200 billion in oil revenues over the next decade.⁹⁴ Such revenues should lead to investments in health, education and other vital necessities. The dramatic development failures that have characterised many oil-rich countries around the world, demonstrate that petrodollars do not necessarily lead to poverty reduction. In many cases, poverty has actually been exacerbated by rapid oil exploitation. In the end, such negative competition tends to lead to questionable standards in public office, weakens institutions and even results in conflict. In some cases, such as in resource rich countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, mineral extraction has become known as the 'resource curse'.

Public concern with the activities of large multinational corporations has led to a shift in corporate awareness of the social consequences of their activities. Corporate Social Responsibility has become a major area of concern, and voluntary codes of conduct, such as the Global Compact – a voluntary, international corporate citizenship network - have been developed to guide corporate action in this area.⁹⁵ While these codes have been extremely useful in opening up the debate over corporate responsibility, they have proved weak in content and extremely hard to implement in any meaningful way. In terms of the content, many company codes fail to reflect international standards and set their responsibilities at a lower level.

⁹³ Tonelson, A (2000) *Race to the Bottom* Westview Press

⁹⁴ Gary, I ed al (2004) *Bottom of the Barrel: Africa's Oil Boom and the Poor* Catholic Relief Services, http://www.catholicrelief.org/get_involved/advocacy/policy_and_strategic_issues/oil_report_full.pdf

⁹⁵ So far around 1800 companies have signed up for the voluntary UN Global Compact which highlights issues of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Portal/Default.asp>

Trócaire research into the conditions in toy factories of Asia, carried out in partnership with Irish Congress of Trade Unions, points to a tension within corporations between the good intentions of corporate social responsibility departments and the harsh reality faced by purchasing departments, looking for speedy delivery of products for a voracious market. In the absence of strong global regulatory frameworks designed to support and provide incentives for codes of corporate responsibility, they are unenforceable.

The corporate sector has a central role in generating economic prosperity, and hence in enabling people to fulfil their economic, social and cultural rights. In doing so, it has a responsibility to ensure that the values of human rights, equality and justice are reflected in the different dimensions of their operations, both directly and indirectly. In direct terms, companies have a responsibility to ensure that these values permeate all levels of corporate action, including respect for people's fundamental rights at work.⁹⁶ This means building up organisations that foster and reward a corporate culture of mutual respect, cooperation, honesty, openness, trust and fairness.

Indirectly, the social or community extension programmes of corporations, such as community schools and health facilities, can often provide a valued source of welfare in situations where it is otherwise absent. The private sector is playing a key role in community development programmes through various initiatives that involve the free transfer of technology, as well as the support of voluntary initiatives. These offer hope that free enterprise can play a crucial role in reshaping the excesses of the market economy.

Ireland's remarkable economic transformation has seen massive inward investment from the private sector, especially in large multinational companies in IT, telecommunications and pharmaceuticals. The growth of these sectors demonstrates in a powerful way how private investment can provide a catalyst for prosperity and have

⁹⁶ ILO Declaration http://training.itcilo.org/ils/foa/library/declaration/decl_en.html

knock-on effects within local economies. Many lessons can be learnt from the experience of social partnership in Ireland, which facilitated this economic transformation. Sharing these lessons is one way in which the social partners can build stronger links with the developing world.

Lessons can also be learnt from the new forms of economic association that have evolved in recent years, which seek to reconcile the profit motive with shared ethical values. The growth of 'ethical investment' and 'fair trade' movements offer positive signs that the global business community is responding to the challenges of fully human development through re-thinking the role of profit in relation to a broader commitment to the global common good.⁹⁷ Business movements inspired by Christian principles of sharing and communion, such as the 'Economy of Communion', have emerged over the past decade and are demonstrating the possibility of harnessing the freedom of the market to work for the common good.⁹⁸

Much is happening in the business world in order to promote greater corporate social responsibility. Many companies operating in Ireland are playing an active role in the UN's Global Compact, which seeks to promote good corporate citizenship.⁹⁹ The government launched the Private Sector Forum in 2004 in order to promote stronger linkages between Irish companies and the African market. The aim is to provide a bridge between companies interested in investing and their counterparts in African countries.¹⁰⁰ Whilst this is a start, much more needs to be done, to ensure that the benefits of free enterprise reach those living in poverty.

⁹⁷ These two sectors have grown substantially in recent years. For more information on fair trade standards see <http://www.fairtrade.ie/>. For reliable information on ethical finance and investment see <http://www.eiris.org/>

⁹⁸ The Economy of Communion is an initiative involving around 800 businesses in building a corporate and economic culture centred on the values of sharing, solidarity and brotherhood. Through the initiative, which is inspired by the spirituality of unity of the Focolare movement, the businesses also commit to sharing a proportion of their profits for those in need and for building a culture of giving. Gold, L (2004) *The Sharing Economy* <http://www.edc-online.org/testi/sharing-economy-e.pdf>

⁹⁹ Global Compact <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

¹⁰⁰ http://www.dci.gov.ie/volunteer_21.asp

Responsible consumer choices

Responsibility for socially responsible markets does not rest with corporations alone. Corporations, by their very nature, respond to demand. As people who regularly make choices about what to consume and how to invest our savings, each of us has a responsibility to become informed. Behind each product or service is a long chain of decisions and actions, all of which involve relationships between people. The qualitative nature of these relationships determines to a great extent the way in which the costs and benefits of production are distributed. Several years ago it would have been impossible for consumers to make informed judgements about the products being produced. Now, through advances in communications, it is considerably easier to make well-informed choices.¹⁰¹

Many people in Ireland have become investors, as economic prosperity has enabled them to save for the future or to become shareholders in companies. Each investment has an ethical dimension. In many cases, however, such investment may be used for purposes such as military expenditure or environmentally destructive practices. This has begun to change through the growth of ethical investment funds, which present a transparent way for potential investors to be given a choice in how the money they invest will be employed. Many companies now opt for ethical investment policies as a matter of course, but much more could be done to reinforce the link between investment and development.

While not everyone is an investor, nobody can avoid being a consumer. Every aspect of our consumption is bound up in relationships that stretch far beyond Ireland's borders. There are substantial differences in the prices producers are paid for their produce and this can make a huge difference to their quality of life. In most instances, these relationships are hidden from us. Until recently, we could only look at

¹⁰¹ There are now a range of websites providing gateways to information on ethical consumption and investments. See, for example, www.ethicalconsumer.org, www.getethical.com. See also, Clark, D (2004) *The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping* Rough Guide Publications.

the branding on the package and had very little way of knowing how the product reached us. It is only when NGOs and trade unions have highlighted such issues as the plight of child workers in toy factories¹⁰² that we have taken on these issues.¹⁰³ This has changed to some extent with the development of the ‘fair trade’ movement. Through the fair trade movement, those products that reach a certain high standard in the relationship with producers, including paying them a fair wage, are now identifiable through a trademark. This trademark makes it easier to judge which products have been manufactured and sourced in ways that respect workers’ rights.

Challenge 5: Care for creation - Becoming environmentally sustainable

Many of the problems of globalisation are intrinsically linked to the way in which we interact with our natural environment. As outlined in the first section, those living in poverty suffer disproportionately from the impacts of environmental degradation. Such degradation, including climate change, could seriously undermine any of the positive development efforts being made through rising aid, fair trade or debt cancellation.¹⁰⁴ The dominant model of economic development, which is heavily reliant on the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, exacerbates climate change. Similarly, other environmental problems such as the disposal of waste, depletion of fish stocks, and pollution, are by-products of an economic model that pays little regard to the environmental consequences of development. As more people are able to access the economic and social benefits of industrialisation, this problem is going to deepen.

¹⁰² See Trócaire’s website for more information
<http://www.trocaire.org/newsandinformation/toys03/toys03.htm>

¹⁰³ www.fairtrade.ie

¹⁰⁴ UK Working Group on Climate Change and Development (2004) *Up in Smoke? Threats from, and responses to, the impact of global warming on human development* Policy Paper,
http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?pid=196

Lasting change in this area will only come about through behaviour and attitude change. The problem of environmental sustainability is deeply entrenched within the dominant model of development and cannot be resolved without concerted political will, both in the North and South. The late Pope John Paul II, speaking on the environment in 2001, called for an ‘ecological conversion’ to avert a major global ecological disaster.¹⁰⁵ He pointed to the gross injustice of expecting poor countries working their way out of poverty to shoulder the cost of environmental problems to which rich countries have contributed disproportionately. Moreover, there is a responsibility on governments and private corporations alike to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated through technological transfers.

The landmark Report, *Our Common Future*, published almost 20 years ago in 1987, reached the chilling conclusion that if all people in the world were to sustain a lifestyle like that in the West, it would require the resources of no less than 10 planet earths.¹⁰⁶ Almost 20 years later, there is growing evidence that the impact of climate change is threatening the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Those countries most affected by the early signs of climate change are least able to absorb those changes without catastrophic consequences. Developing countries may require much more money to adapt to the climate change that is already happening.

Environmental footprint

A further critical challenge in building the global common good, therefore, is to minimise our impact on the global environment through making our own domestic development more environmentally sustainable. Much more needs to be done to cut Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions. As a nation, we are legally bound to fulfil our obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, which came into force on 16 February 2005. This accord, now ratified by 147 countries accounting for 61% of greenhouse gas emissions, legally obliges nations to cut

¹⁰⁵ Pope John Paul II message 17 January 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Bruntland Commission (1987) *Our Common Future* UN

emissions by 5% by 2012.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the EU has set itself the further target of reducing greenhouse gases by 8% (of 1990 levels) by 2012. According to the most recent review of the government's National Climate Change Strategy projections, Ireland will not reach its targets set under the Kyoto Protocol.¹⁰⁸ Ireland's emissions of greenhouse gases in 2005 were 25.7% above 1990 levels and, without full implementation of the measures set out in the strategy, this figure could rise to 37% over 1990 levels by 2010.¹⁰⁹

The measures set out in the National Climate Change Strategy in 2000 need to be implemented with greater speed. The strategy, launched as a departure from "business as usual", called for "early action" to address Ireland's international obligations to reduce greenhouse gases. The strategy recognised that "delay would require more painful action at a later date to address both Kyoto compliance and stronger future commitments."¹¹⁰

The first biennial review of the implementation of the national strategy, published in 2003, underlined the slow pace of change.¹¹¹ Over four years since that review, key measures proposed in the Strategy have yet to be implemented. Of particular importance are the proposed tax changes to address CO₂ emissions, measures to reduce the reliance of the Irish economy on fossil fuels, and measures to address transport emissions. Such failures are storing up economic and environmental problems for the future.

¹⁰⁷ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.html>

¹⁰⁸ Plain Guide to the National Climate Change Strategy
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/\\$FILE/pccguideinside.pdf](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/$FILE/pccguideinside.pdf)

¹⁰⁹ A full list of government measures underway to curb climate change can be found on the Department of the Environment website at
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/\\$FILE/cc2002.doc](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/$FILE/cc2002.doc)

¹¹⁰ National Climate Change Strategy...

¹¹¹ The Review document can be found at
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/doepub.nsf/0/7d411c497cb4fbd80256f88003b0961/\\$FILE/ccrpt2%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/doepub.nsf/0/7d411c497cb4fbd80256f88003b0961/$FILE/ccrpt2%5B1%5D.pdf). The Comhar submission to the document can be found at http://www.comhar-nsdp.ie/comharDocs/Recommend1_2002.doc.

Positive change requires strong political leadership, as well as educational campaigns. The wastefulness of over-consumption in Northern countries places a huge burden on the environment and calls for a change of attitudes within society. New ways need to be found to foster an attitude of *stewardship* towards the environment and use of resources. Such stewardship involves treating what we use and consume with respect. The Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics,¹¹² signed by Christian leaders in 2002 ahead of the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, points to some practical ways in which churches can work together to change attitudes and behaviours.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the principles that should underpin a “Catholic Social Teaching” approach to international development cooperation. There is no single formula for translating the principles of Catholic Social Thought into development policy. These principles, however, can help guide policy both in terms of the underlying rationale and the nature of the policies required to address the needs of the wider world. The question of rationale and motivation is often overlooked, but is one that is key to the continued principled engagement with the developing world.

The cornerstone of this approach to development cooperation is one that is centred on the *global common good*, a recurring theme throughout Catholic Social Thought. It is an approach that not only addresses the symptoms of poverty, but also underlying structural injustices that perpetuate inequality. Given the complex and urgent challenges facing the developing and the developed world alike, this approach is one that provides a timely response. From an Irish perspective, the paper highlighted a number of priorities that need to be addressed to effectively implement such an approach. One striking

¹¹² http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration_en.html

feature is that many of these policy priorities are their inter-departmental nature. It touches on EU, trade, energy, migration, agriculture, enterprise – amongst others. Virtually no area of policy is now isolated from having an impact beyond Ireland’s shores and increasingly in the developing world. Whilst Irish Aid has an important role to play in these relationships – and this should not be underestimated – a whole of government approach is needed to face the multiple challenges of development and ensure that other policies contribute to the global common good.

4.

Work for All in a World of Rapid Change: A Catholic Social Thought Perspective.¹¹³

Seán Healy and Brigid Reynolds

Outline of the paper:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The dominant paradigm**
- 1.2 The unfaced challenge**
- 1.3 An alternative paradigm**

2 WHY there should be work for all in a rapidly changing world

2.1 Understanding of work

2.1.1 Work contributes to development

2.1.1.1. Personal development

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2.1.3 Work has a social dimension

2.1.3.1. Women and work

2.1.3.2. Determining the monetary payment for work

2.1.4 Work as toil and struggle

2.2 Right to work

¹¹³ An earlier draft of this paper was delivered at the Conference on *Work as Key to the Social Question in* Vatican City, in 2001.

2.3. Valuing all work

- 2.3.1. One initiative**
 - 2.3.1.1. Ethos of the programme**
- 2.3.2. The lessons of this pilot project**
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- 2.3.4. Unremunerated work**

3. Discussion on Work must include Income

- 3.1. Recognising the importance of income in developing and protecting human dignity**
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- 3.4. Why a Basic Income**
- 3.5. Developing a Basic Income distribution system - the Irish experience**

4. Conclusions

1 Introduction

1.1 The dominant paradigm

There is one dominant framework or paradigm concerning work that is accepted in most of the western world. This paradigm equates meaningful work with paid employment. It asserts that full time jobs are available for everyone seeking them, that these jobs will provide adequate income for people holding them and their ‘dependants’ and that good social insurance will be available for those who are sick or unemployed and adequate pensions would be available to people when they retired. In this way everyone will have meaningful work, adequate income, participate in the life of the society and poverty would be eliminated. This is the paradigm that underpins most public policy initiatives seeking to address work-related issues.

There have been serious critiques of this paradigm in recent years. These have come from a wide range of perspectives. For example Rifkin, writing in 1995 stated:

*‘From the beginning, civilisation has been structured, in large part, around the concept of work. From the Paleolithic hunter/gatherer and Neolithic farmer to the medieval craftsman and assembly line worker of the current century, work has been an integral part of daily existence. Now, for the first time, human labour is being systematically eliminated from the production process. Within less than a century, “mass” work in the market sector is likely to be phased out in virtually all of the industrialised nations of the world. A new generation of sophisticated information and communication technologies is being hurried into a wide variety of work situations. Intelligent machines are replacing human beings in countless tasks, forcing millions of blue and white collar workers into unemployment lines, or worse still breadlines.’*¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Rifkin, Jeremy (1995) *End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labour Force and the Dawn of the post-Market Era*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons p3.

Rifkin went on to say

*“Caught in the throes of increasing global competition and rising costs of labour, multinational corporations seem determined to hasten the transition from human workers to machine surrogates. Their revolutionary ardour has been fanned, of late by compelling bottom line considerations. In Europe, where rising labour costs are blamed for a stagnating economy and a loss of competitiveness in world markets, companies are hurrying to replace their workforce with the new information and telecommunications technologies.”*¹¹⁵

This is one analysis of what is happening to human work. It challenges the dominant paradigm at a most profound level. But it is not the only analysis that presents such a challenge. Guy Standing, senior economist at the Geneva office of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) writing in 1999 has also presented a telling critique. He argues that:

*We have made a mess of ‘work’ since we made an ideal of labour. So much has this been the case in the twentieth century that work that is not labour is not counted. Distinctions should be made between work, labour and employment.”*¹¹⁶

Standing has distinguished between the three as follows:

...Work is defined as rounded activity combining creative, conceptual and analytical thinking and use of manual aptitudes - the vita activa of human existence... The notion of labour is quite different... We may define labour as activity done under some duress, and some sense of control by others or by institutions or by technology, or more likely by a combination of all three... Employment is used with several meanings. For many analysts, it only covers activity entailing the expectation of a

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* P. p.6

¹¹⁶ Standing, Guy, 1999, *Global Labour Flexibility: Seeking Distributive Justice*, London, Macmillan Press, p.3

*wage for tasks performed...In the end, statistical practices have been based largely on convention and concern over 'unemployment'... A peculiarity of employment is that it covers all forms of labour but not all forms of work. Indeed, it strangely excludes certain types of work that contribute to human welfare and development, whereas it includes activities that are unproductive that do not contribute significantly to either. Most analysts would recognise this and then continue with their analyses as if it did not matter.*¹¹⁷

Guy Standing also provides a range of other questions that he believes needs to be addressed. Many other thinkers and analysts raise similar questions. In a paper of this length it is not possible to treat these in any comprehensive way. Suffice it to say here that they present a very fundamental challenge to the dominant paradigm on work that underpins policy analysis and development at this time. We believe the dominant paradigm is fundamentally flawed and should be challenged. We are concerned in particular with its failure to provide a socially just structure or framework within which people can work and access income in a meaningful way.

1.2 The unfaced challenge

Looking at the global figures for unemployment serious questions arise. While the number of jobs has grown in many areas there are very high unemployment levels in many nation states in the 'developed' world. High levels of unemployment persist despite the best efforts of policy makers to address the issue. The level of unemployment now deemed to be 'acceptable' has risen dramatically. So too has the level of unemployment that constitutes the so-called 'full employment' scenario. Only a few countries are anywhere close to full employment Ireland, is among this small group of countries. It is clear to us that the situation that has produced full employment in Ireland is not repeatable in every country of the world and may not be sustained in Ireland in the

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* pp. 3-10

longer term. It should be noted that 30.1 percent of households at risk of poverty in Ireland are headed by a person who is employed.¹¹⁸ This shows that a job is no guarantee of an adequate income.

In the economically poorer countries of the ‘third’ world unemployment is substantially higher than it is in the wealthier ‘developed’ countries. Much of the employment available to many people in these ‘third world’ countries is extremely low-paid and does not meet the requirement of adequacy to ensure people can access what is required to live life with dignity.

It is obvious that the dominant paradigm outlined above is, for the most part, a spectacular failure. It fails to recognise a wide range of meaningful work. It does not provide sufficient jobs to eliminate unemployment. Neither does it provide sufficient income to ensure all people can live life with dignity. In this context there is a major challenge facing politicians, policy-makers, social philosophers and, in particular, Churches who claim to play a key role in the area of values in the wider society. The current situation could be summarised as follows:

- Everyone has a right and a responsibility to work.
- Work is defined as ‘having a job’ or ‘being in paid employment’. The only work that is valued is work that fits into this category.
- The challenge arises when one has to face the question: how can this right/responsibility be exercised in a world without full employment and without the prospect of full employment in the foreseeable future?
- This provides a special challenge to the Roman Catholic Church and to Catholic Social Thought that continues to insist that everyone have this right and responsibility to work. The Church and Catholic Social Thought has provided much material in answering the question why? It has been far less successful at answering the question how? The answers it has provided to date are weak and lack credibility in forums outside the Church when this issue is being addressed.

¹¹⁸ CORI Justice, 2007, *Addressing Inequality Policies to Ensure Economic Development, Social Equity and Sustainability*, page 34.

1.3 An alternative paradigm

In a range of publications over the past two decades the authors of this paper have argued for an alternative paradigm to the one which dominates thinking and policy making at present. We suggest that an alternative paradigm must focus on two deeply inter-related issues i.e. work and income.

Work would be understood, as any activity that contributes to the development of one's self, family, community or the wider society. This much broader understanding of work cannot be operative, however, unless the issue of income is also addressed in a coherent way. At present, the dominant paradigm sees income being provided as payment for a job done. Additional income is (or should be, according to the dominant paradigm) provided through social security systems that ensure the ill, the elderly and other categories of people such as the unemployed are not left to starve. In the new paradigm we are proposing, income would be seen as a birthright. Every person would have a right to sufficient income to live life with basic dignity. Systems (or a system) to ensure that everyone had such an income would be developed and put in place.

As Christians the authors believe that everyone has a right to work and a right to sufficient income to live life with dignity. We believe that there should and could be work for all. This paper outlines some of our ideas on why and how this can be delivered in a world of rapid change. In a paper as short as this, however, we can only present a few ideas and examples. We welcome all responses, critiques, and suggestions for changes or improvements in what we propose. The issues addressed here are central to the shape of the future. Credible answers need to be sought and found and acted upon, if the dignity of every human person is to be protected and respected throughout the twenty first century. In the next sections we address the question why? In the concluding sections we address the question how?

2 Work for all in a rapidly changing world.

2.1 Understanding of work

The writings of some of the great teachers of philosophy, theology, sociology and economics help us to reflect on the ambivalence and ambiguity of work. In the religious tradition, work has been assessed both positively and negatively. It is seen as creative, as a service to community and as a divine vocation. Yet it is also negatively evaluated as a punishment for sin. In contemporary society a similar ambivalence exists. On the one hand, work is seen as important for the individual's self-concept, sense of fulfilment and integration with society. On the other hand work is tolerated as a means to an end: many people work not so much for the sake of the work itself but for the rewards that work brings. It is interesting to note that the first book of the Bible reflects this ambivalence. Genesis 1:15 says '*God took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it*'. Here the author reflects on the development aspect of work. In the next chapter the author's attention turns to the ascetical nature of work. '*Accursed be the soil because of you. With suffering shall you get your food from it*' (Gen. 2:17)

From the reflections of people through the ages we can identify four aspects of human work:

- Work facilitates the development of the person and the world.
- Work is needed in the provision of goods and services.
- Work is a central ingredient of social interaction.
- Work involves struggle and toil.

We now look at each of these aspects in turn.

2.1.1 Work Contributes to Development

It seems valid to summarise the many reflections on development under two headings, the development of the person and the development of the world.

2.1.1.1 Personal Development

Work is an essential ingredient in the development of the person. Work is central to our existence and cannot be pushed to the periphery. It is one of the ways we show our distinctiveness from the rest of nature and realise our humanity. At birth we are just rough sketches waiting for the activity of our daily living to develop our potential. As Pope John Paul II stated, through work the person *'not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense becomes more a human being'*.¹¹⁹ What we do has a major role in forming who we are. It is in our efforts at work that we discover our gifts and talents. Seen in this light work is more than what it produces. It is more than a means of subsistence since it also contributes to the development of the person. Erich Fromm outlined this aspect of work very well when he wrote:

'In the process of work, that is the moulding and changing of nature outside of himself, man moulds and changes himself. He emerges from nature by mastering her; he develops his powers of co-operation, or reason, his sense of beauty.

He separates himself from nature, from the original unity with her, but at the same time unites himself with her again as her master and builder. The more his work develops, the more his individuality develops. In moulding nature and re-creating her, he learns to make use of his powers, increasing his skill and creativeness. Whether we think of the beautiful paintings in the caves of Southern France, the ornaments on weapons among primitive people, the statues and temples of Greece, the Cathedrals of the Middle Ages, the chairs and tables made by skilled craftsmen, or the cultivation of flowers, trees or corn by peasants – all are expressions of the creative transformation of nature by man's reason and skill' ¹²⁰.

¹¹⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Laborum Exercens* No. 9

¹²⁰ Fromm, Eric, 1956, *The Sane Society*, London: Routledge & Keegan Paul. p.177

While recognising that self-expression and human development are important aspects of work we must also acknowledge that not all work is fully humanising and that almost every form of work threatens to alienate some human capacities. Work, which is routine monotonous and tightly supervised gives little scope for personal growth and initiative. It is desirable to bear this fact in mind when talking about the virtues of work. This fact becomes very vivid when we think of the vast areas of work which although essential to the good ordering of the community are unpleasant and difficult e.g. sewage disposal and refuse collection. Likewise there is activity that may jeopardise intellectual, physical or psychological health. There is activity that may not allow individual creativity. There is activity that may not foster self-respect.

It is clear that work is of vital importance to personal development. Reflecting on its importance it is clear that more effort needs to be invested in ensuring that every person has an opportunity to do some work which is challenging and contributes to personal development.

2.1.1.2 Development of Our World

The Christian tradition gives strong support to the view of work as a response to God's invitation to enter into the development of the material universe of which we are part. Human beings not only fit into God's plan but also co-operate in bringing it to consummation¹²¹. We can co-operate with God in building a better world. Much of the industrialisation process and the development of technology while being the result of this development are also a means toward greater development. The challenge of today is to choose from the tools and processes available so that we build a world that is sustainable, humane and ecological.

¹²¹ Fiorenza, F.S., 1980, *Religious Beliefs and Praxis: Reflections on Catholic Theological Views of Work*, *Concilium*, Vol.131, Work and Religion, p.93

The industrialisation process of the last few hundred years has had a major impact on how modern society views work. This was a time of great change in the history of the human family. It was a time when society set itself the project of production so that a modest level of goods and services would be available to everyone. Serving this production project came to be seen as the most important contribution a person could make to society. The understanding of work was confined to those activities, which served production. People were rewarded financially and socially for participating in this process. Gradually work was equated with the job for which there was financial reward.

The renowned sociologist Max Weber studied the process of industrialisation in its early years. Reflecting on the writings of Max Weber, Julien Freund examined how the Reformation and Calvin, in particular, inspired a new view of work. He identified three aspects in particular.

Firstly, asceticism. The asceticism of medieval monasticism was revived by Calvin and transformed to serve his vision. It was important that people would commit themselves to hard work and that they would not become satisfied with wealth and consumer goods. This view facilitated the re-investment of capital in the project. *‘What can, after all, be done with money that one has earned but cannot spend on one’s pleasure? It can only be reinvested in the enterprise to develop it’*¹²².

Secondly, work is seen as a calling. For the Reformers work became a task imposed by God and success in one’s trade or profession became a sign of election. Calvinists, who believed in predestination, were in a particularly vulnerable position. If pre-destination was the decision of an immutable God and there was nothing one could do to achieve salvation, and if the whole focus of one’s religious life was salvation, naturally there was a great need among believers to know whether or not they were among the saved. Success in one’s secular activities was considered to be the best indicator of being among the saved.

¹²² Freund, Julien, 1980, *Work and Religion according to Max Weber*, Concilium, Vol. 131, Work and Religion, p.24

This led to a drive for material success to ensure a place among the saved. Of course the corollary of this position was the belief that those who were not “successful” were the damned. This understanding absolved people from social responsibility. If people were already damned it really did not matter how employers or society treated them. Thus work took on the status of an ethical value and came to be known as a ‘duty’ or a ‘moral obligation’. By becoming a ‘calling’, work tended to become an end in itself. In the twentieth century the view of work as ‘duty’ has developed into something new. *‘Ever-increasing production, the drive to make bigger and better things, have become aims in themselves, new ideals. Work had become alienated from the working person’*¹²³.

Thirdly, Freund examine how riches and poverty effect the view of work. The medieval Church had condemned wealth and exalted poverty. If the industrialisation process was to make progress, it was important that this attitude towards wealth be changed. Puritanism argued that riches were only evil if they were placed at the service of base, irrational passions. They were not evil if they were used in accordance with the demands of ethics and the calling to be stewards of God’s goods. After all if *‘God shows to one of his elect an opportunity to make a profit, he does it intentionally. The good Christian must respond to this appeal’*¹²⁴.

As we reap the harvest of many generations of thought, experimentation and exploitation, we have arrived at a point of much confusion about the place of work in the development of our world. We tend to confuse the ends with the means. Employment or the generating of profits are often seen as ends in themselves. For many people and whole communities the possibility of responding to the invitation to be involved in the project of creation¹²⁵ has been blocked.

¹²³ Fromm, Erich, Op. cit., p. 180

¹²⁴ Freund, Julie, Op. Cit., p. 25.

¹²⁵ Romans 8:18-27

2.1.2 Work Contributes to the Provision of Goods and Services

Work is an essential element in the provision of goods and services and not only this, but much of the work in our world is directed to this area. As the human family has increased and developed so has the need for goods and services. Healthy human beings want to grow and help others to grow and develop. This contribution to society is made through participation in areas such as the services and production sectors. Fulfilling the needs for goods and services is an escalating area of activity. Even when bodily needs are met the needs of the spirit are inexhaustible. The challenge is to respond to the remarkably diverse needs of persons in the context of a finite world.

Often the work involved in providing goods and services can be repetitive, monotonous, boring and toil laden, where opportunities for creativity, initiative and personal development are rare. When reflecting on this aspect of work the New Dictionary of Theology says '*Without denying the primacy of the worker, it can be said that these goods have a value beyond that of the worker who produces them. An object produced for selfish reasons or through alienating work still has value in itself and for persons*'¹²⁶. It is important to give due acknowledgement to this aspect of work and to encourage every initiative that struggles to reduce the alienation that can be part of this type of work.

2.1.2.1 Sustainability

The principle of sustainability poses many questions for society in its provision of goods and services. The paradox is that as we satisfy our needs with even more goods, we create still more needs (or wants?) to be satisfied. The market thrives on creating more aspirations, expectations and needs. This is done overtly through advertising and also in a more subtle manner through other mass media e.g. 'soaps' on television, travel programmes etc.

¹²⁶ Vacek, E.C. (1987), Work, in J.A. Komonchak et al (eds), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, p. 1103.

Given the sophistication of many of our societies today and the unprecedented level of goods and services, now might be an opportune moment to evaluate *what services are needed* to promote human and ecological development. In particular we should evaluate the needs of the human spirit. In this evaluation it is important to ask who is deciding the needs and what criteria are being used in making these decisions.

A second part of this evaluation should research the best methods of providing those goods and services in a *finite* world. Consideration should be given to the non-renewable earth's resources, to conservation strategies, to reduction of pollution and to waste management, all of which should be built into our planning. While economic values have a place in this discussion they should not be the sole determinants. Cultural, social, political and ecological values are essential to this evaluation.

A third and most important aspect of this evaluation is *people*; people who receive the service, people who provide the service and people who are indirectly effected by the service. For those who receive, we should ask if human dignity is promoted and human development facilitated through the service. For those who provide the service we need to evaluate the social status, conditions of work, incentives and rewards systems we attach to the various levels of service. We should question the order of importance bestowed on services and how these are rewarded. If present day rewards and incentives are to be taken as the measure of how we rate our services then providing financial services is very important while providing meals and taking care of children is not important.

Besides those who receive and those who provide, a third group of people is indirectly effected by our goods and services e.g. their land may have been appropriated to provide flowers to decorate our tables and halls or cheaper hamburgers for our fast food outlets. The majority of these people live in third world countries where they have very little power over how their countries' natural resources are used or how their labour is rewarded.

A commitment to sustainability will challenge current trends in urbanisation policy and the neglect of rural development policy. The quest for a more sustainable lifestyle will produce a demand for new skills and new professions.

2.1.3 Work has a Social Dimension

The importance of the social dimension of work is well recognised.

Laborem Exercens outlines three aspects of this dimension of work, firstly, making family life and its upkeep possible, secondly, contributing to the process of education in the family and thirdly contributing to society. The family is the basic unit of society. The formation and nurturing of family is essential to the continuation of human society. Laborem Exercens states that '*work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life...work is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work....Work and industriousness also influence the whole process of education in the family.*'¹²⁷ Although the Encyclical has not developed these reflections on the role of work in the family, it has pointed to crucial issues we need to debate. Among these issues are the right of children to grow up in a family where their parents feel they are making a contribution to their own upkeep and to the development of the society; the way work is organised and the right of the person to participate in the decisions about the work that affect him/her.

By our work we recognise and respond to the need to make a contribution to the community. Schumacher describes this aspect of work as the need for every one of us to use and perfect our gifts '*in co-operation with others so as to liberate ourselves from our egocentricity*'¹²⁸. Laborem Exercens puts it more altruistically when it says that the person intends his/her '*work also to increase the common good developed together with compatriots, thus realising that in this*

¹²⁷ Pope John Paul II, Op. cit. No. 10.

¹²⁸ Schumacher, E.F., 1980, *Good Work*, London: Abacus, 1980, p.4

*way work serves to add to the heritage of the whole human family, of all people living in the world*¹²⁹ This understanding presupposes that the community recognises our membership and welcomes our work contribution. This mutuality of membership of the community is recognised, among others, by theologians. Fiorenza, for example says ‘*Individuals depend upon one another and upon society. They perform services for others and they expect a reciprocal return. Even if the individual’s intentions are selfish the objective purpose of work is ordered to the community*’¹³⁰.

Through the ages societies have derived different mechanisms for bestowing status on their membership e.g. age, ancestry, gender etc. according as these were seen to contribute to the best ordering of the community. Over the past two hundred years as the human project of increased production and industrialisation developed, the determinants of social status changed from what they had been in previous ages. If this human project was to be successful it was important that those who participated would be rewarded not only materially but also socially. So in the western world of today, social status is conferred by the job one does. Maybe it would be more precise to say status is conferred by the amount of money paid for the job done.

We tend to value the activity by the amount paid for it. We take this a step further by valuing people according to the amount they get paid for the jobs they do. Individuals internalise this system and so value themselves according to the income they receive for the job done. We have reached a stage where people value themselves and others according to the income they receive. Social relationships are determined by the jobs in which people find themselves. The dependants of a person with a job often draw their meaning and value from this job. Since the person is much more than the job that they or the “breadwinner” does, it is urgent that we assess our value systems so that the unique value of each person is affirmed.

¹²⁹ Pope John Paul II, Op. Cit., No.10.

¹³⁰ Fiorenza, F.S., Op. Cit., p.93.

The richness and vibrancy of every society is determined by the level of involvement of all its members. In theory we live in a democracy where all are free to participate. However in practice we have so structured our decision-making that it is only those in jobs that have a voice. We need decision-making structures that involve the total adult population and give them a real voice in shaping the decisions that effect them.

We should challenge two assumptions of today's society in this social area.

- (a) the assumption that equates work with a job. While it is true that most jobs are work we should also acknowledge and value the vast amount of work that is done daily in our society but is not financially rewarded (housework, care of children, community work etc.)
- (b) the assumption which says that the honourable way to contribute to and participate in society today is through a job. People contribute through all their work, not just their paid employment. It would be a worthwhile and sobering exercise to put a monetary value on the work done by the adult population who do not have jobs but make a huge contribution to the life of our societies through their work.

Some societies are better than others in affirming the contribution of their individual members to the communal project. The New Dictionary of Theology asserts that:

'The noblest social goal of work is to provide the basis for a culture in which all can realise their fullest human potential Workers enter an historical process of giving and taking, producing and consuming the community's goods. They realise their social nature not only through weaving the social fabric out of these human activities and products. In the contemporary world, one's neighbour is not just the stranger one meets, but all who live in the global village. Thus charity must become

*political, effective, using the wealth and power that derive from work to aid the unmet stranger. If the first consideration about work is the worker, the second is what it does to and for and with humanity’*¹³¹.

These are some of the possibilities and challenges presented by the social dimension of work.

2.1.3.1 Women and Work

Another challenge is the need to acknowledge and reward the place of ‘women’s work’ in the social order and to bestow on it an equal status with ‘men’s work’. Full expression in a partnership of mutuality should be given to both the masculine and feminine dimensions of human work. In a finite world, the job’s promise of wealth, power, control and economic growth needs to be complemented with the dynamics of belonging, nurturing, caring receptivity and self-giving.

While the industrial revolution has brought great gains for the human family it has also had its price. Work became associated with a ‘product’ that could be measured. Women in particular have borne the costs as they saw their work of caring and nurturing poorly rewarded and given second place to the “work of production”. At the end of a long laborious day of nurturing and caring there may be very little ‘product’ to show. Is this why society rewards this work so poorly? It is time to abandon the application of the crude industrial measurements of the late 18th century to the work of caring and nurturing. Social and monetary rewards for this work should be such as to facilitate both men and women getting involved.

¹³¹ Vacek, E.C., Op. Cit. P.1103

2.1.3.2 Determining the Monetary Payment for Work

The industrial revolution demanded that people, particularly men, leave farms and come into a central location to work in mines and factories. These people could no longer provide their own food and shelter. To compensate for this loss wages were introduced. The early days of industrialisation were associated with heavy manual labour. Payment for this labour was in direct proportion to what was visibly produced; wages were the incentive to increase production. Today, wages for the job are not determined by what is produced but rather by the technology used or the power of the employee's negotiating group. Pope John Paul II in *Laborum Exercens* points out that the technology of today is the product of the work of many generations. It is the heritage of the whole human family. Societies and the international community should put in place structures and mechanisms that ensure that all people benefit from this heritage.¹³²

2.1.4 Work as Toil and Struggle

There are aspects to work, which we find monotonous, dull and painful. These are the times when it is easy to believe that the earth is cursed and that we earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. For many who work in repetitive, boring jobs this aspect of work is a regular experience. Work is an activity not only devoted to perfecting reality, it is also focused on maintaining reality and keeping it from degeneration. This maintenance aspect of work, which is a necessity, can bring with it much toil and boredom.

Since all work has some toil attached to it, it is not surprising that a wide variety of religious literature reflects on this aspect of work. The Christian tradition sees it as participation with Christ in his entrance into and crucifixion by a flawed world. Thomas Aquinas taught that work was important to his fellow monks for four reasons. Two of these reasons said it was a 'bridle on the concupiscence of the flesh' and it

¹³² Pope John Paul II, 1981, *Laborum Exercens; On Human Work*, CTS, London Nos 6, 14

was ‘a remedy against idleness which is the source of evil’ (the other two reasons saw work as a means of livelihood and a source of almsgiving)¹³³. This religious view does not see work as an end in itself. It can be seen as a penance for sin and as a means of forming a self-disciplined, industrious orderly life. In more recent times however, theologians, while seeing this aspect of work as a reminder to us that this world is not and never will be heaven, also call for reforms of working conditions so as to remove some of the toil and boredom. Pope John Paul II sees the global meaning of work in the context of the Paschal Mystery; the toil is a share in the cross, the striving ‘*to make life more human*’ an aspect of the Resurrection¹³⁴.

We have looked at work under the four functions of development, provision of goods and services, its ability to facilitate social interaction, and the toil and struggle associated with work. Now we wish to look at the right to work.

2.2 Right to Work

As illustrated above, various disciplines through the ages have shown that the human species understood work to be a means of sustenance and of developing self and society. In particular religious traditions expected every adult to work. The preservation of life was understood to be a duty placed on all. It follows therefore, that each one has a natural right to procure what is required in order to preserve life. The only way many people can procure these needs is through their work. Theology is just one of the places in which the basic human need for sustenance is linked to work.

The second basic need of the human being, that is the need for development, is also linked to work. Pope John Paul II strongly emphasised the conviction that every adult should work and stated the reasons why this is so. He said ‘*Work is an obligation, that is to say a duty on the part of everyone, everyone must work both because the*

¹³³ Fiorenza, F. S., Op. Cit., p. 93.

¹³⁴ Pope John Paul II, Op. Cit., No. 27.

*creator has commanded it and because of his/her own humanity which requires work in order to be maintained and developed*¹³⁵. He goes on to talk about the moral rights corresponding to this obligation. If every person has a right to work, then society has the obligation to structure itself in a way that makes work accessible to all. He sees this structuring being done through the activities of both the direct and “indirect” employers¹³⁶

The ‘right to work’ is usually interpreted as the ‘right to employment’. In this understanding it is problematic in a world that shows little, if any, interest in really generating a full-employment world. A century and a half ago De Tocqueville saw the implications of recognising this understanding of the ‘right to work’. His observations have had a resonance down the years. He wrote:

To grant every man in particular the general, absolute and incontrovertible right to work necessarily leads to one of the following consequences: Either the State will undertake to give to all workers applying to it the employment they lack, and will then gradually be drawn into industry, to become the industrial entrepreneur that is omnipresent, the only one that cannot refuse work and the one that will normally have to dictate the least task; it will inevitably be led to become the principal, and soon, as it were, the sole industrial entrepreneur...Now that is communism .

If, on the contrary, the State wishes... to provide employment to all the workers who seek it, not from its own hands and by its own resources, but to see to it that they always find work with private employers, it will inevitably be led to try to regulate industry... It will have to ensure that there is no unemployment, which means that it will have to see that workers are so distributed that they do not compete with each other, that it will have to regulate wages, slow down production at one time and

¹³⁵ Pope John Paul II, Op. Cit., No. 16.

¹³⁶ Ibid., Nos. 17, 18.

*speed it up at another, in a word, that it will have to become the great and only organiser of labour... What do we see? Socialism.*¹³⁷

Standing argues that in the twentieth century, the international debate on the right to work has been shaped by, inter alia, *paternalism, the Great Depression, the emergence of Keynesianism and, in paradoxical ways, by the existence of communist states*. Standing places *Laborem Exercens* in the paternalism tradition. He claims that in Centesimus Annus, issued ten years later Pope John Paul II “*was more circumspect... It supported labour market policies, but undercut the right to work by concluding that ‘the state could not directly ensure the right to work of all its citizens unless it controlled every aspect of economic life and restricted the free initiative of individuals*”^{138, 139}.

The comments of De Tocqueville and Standing are focused on the right to work being understood as meaning the right to employment for all. We don’t believe that full employment is likely anytime soon. We do, however, believe that everyone can have access to work.

Reflecting on a large body of literature and the historical developments of our time we believe that every person has the right of access to the means of sustenance, and the right to contribute to the development of both self and society. Whatever contributes to providing this sustenance or to the development of self, family and society is work. Paid employment is not the only means of providing a person with sustenance and access to development. There are other possible mechanisms for distributing income and facilitating development. The need to explore these mechanisms is urgent since society has an obligation to structure itself in a way that guarantees every person access to sustenance and the opportunity to contribute to the development of self and society. In this way we believe everyone has the right to work.

¹³⁷ De Tocqueville, A. 1848, *Discours sur le droit au travail*, Paris, Librairie L. Curmer, pp. 7-9, (Translation supplied in Standing, op. cit. p.12.)

¹³⁸ Pope John Paul II, 1991, *Centesimus Annus*, Rome, The Vatican, p. 19.

¹³⁹ Standing, Op. Cit. P. 13.

2.3 Valuing all Work

The challenges to society in this situation are substantial. In particular society needs to structure itself so that everyone has access to meaningful work and has access to sufficient income to live life with dignity. If paid employment is not available to large numbers of people, how can society meet the requirement that it structure itself so that everyone has access to meaningful work?

2.3.1. One Initiative

If people do not have access to the income that comes from paid employment, how can society structure itself so that everyone has sufficient income to live life with dignity? These are among some of the questions facing society today. In its struggle to engage with these issues CORI Justice piloted a programme (1994-7) called the *Part-Time Job Opportunities Programme*.¹⁴⁰ This was a time when unemployment was at 15.6 per cent in Ireland.¹⁴¹

CORI Justice highlighted the point that, although there was high unemployment there was a vast quantity of socially useful and important work which was required to be done by local communities, voluntary and statutory bodies. Such work was vital to the wellbeing of individuals and groups within society and to society as a whole. It made up what people understood as the social economy, in part or in whole. It included such important work as care of the elderly, care of the young, the development of arts and sport, and the development of local communities, care of the environment, heritage awareness, and tourism development. Much of this work was not being done or was only partially being done. CORI Justice believed that the money being spent on paying social welfare to unemployed people could be used more creatively and with a greater respect for human dignity.

¹⁴⁰ For more information see *Part-Time Job Opportunities; Final Report 1994-1997, Conference of Religious of Ireland*

¹⁴¹ CSO, (1996) *Statistical Bulletin*

CORI's proposal was based on the conviction that it was possible to create real and meaningful part-time jobs for unemployed people doing this much-needed work. CORI believed that these jobs should be paid at the 'going rate for the job', have the working conditions that were seen as good practice within the market economy, and be ongoing. In this way the employment created would enhance the dignity of those employed, while at the same time fulfilling real social needs within the communities where the jobs were created.

2.3.1.1 Ethos of the Programme

In 1993, unemployed people who depended on social welfare were forced to contend with three major problems. Firstly they received an income which was insufficient to enable them to live life with basic dignity. Secondly they were forced to remain idle as a condition of receiving social welfare in order to demonstrate their availability for a job even though there were no jobs available that they could access. And thirdly, as a result of their non-involvement and inadequate income they were cut off from the mainstream of society and alienated. Indeed in some cases, where certain geographical areas had a high incidence of unemployment, whole communities experienced this marginalisation and alienation.

CORI Justice believes that every person has a right to work. It also believes as outlined already that the nature of work is changing. In the light of this change, society must look again at the issue of unemployment. We can no longer rely on market forces alone to provide meaningful work for everyone. Nor can we accept a society where significant numbers of people do not have the opportunity to contribute to society in a meaningful way and are destined therefore to become marginalised and excluded.

The Part-Time Job Opportunities initiative was born out of a vision which

- understands work as any activity which contributes to the

development of the person, the family, the community or the wider society;

- distinguishes between work and a job;
- envisages more flexible job patterns, e.g. job-sharing, flexitime, shorter working days, reduced overtime, v-time, and so forth;
- acknowledges the many thousands of hours of socially useful work which are currently ignored by our economic system, particularly in the caring, nurturing, cultural, artistic and sporting areas;
- recognises that everyone has some skills and is willing to develop those skills and other skills if given the right environment;
- believes that no society can afford to refuse the gifts and skills of its people through structural unemployment;
- affirms that people do not necessarily need a job for thirty-nine hours per week for forty years to enjoy a meaningful life, while recognising that people's meaning comes from their relationships and work, both paid and unpaid.

Underpinning this vision is a belief that every person has a right to an income, which allows him/her to live with dignity.

2.3.2 The lessons of this pilot project

This pilot programme showed that

- There is substantial scope for identifying and developing meaningful work.
- Unemployed people could and would do this work if they were given the opportunity.
- The emphasis on human dignity and human respect is crucially important in any development in this area.
- Involvement in meaningful work had a very positive impact on the individual participants, on their families and on their communities.
- A little creativity can provide solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems.
- The social economy has enormous potential (cf below).
- Sustainability can be supported in a variety of creative ways.

2.3.3 Developing the social economy - the Irish experience

The development of the social economy is one mechanism that societies can use to meet their responsibilities in this regard. There has been much discussion on the social economy in the member states of the EU. It is a concept that is very much in the developmental stage in Ireland. In the late eighties and early nineties CORI Justice had been advocating that much work needed to be done despite the fact that unemployment was high. Some of this was work that could be seen as part of the social economy. It was within this context that the Part-Time Job Opportunities Programme was developed and implemented.

In 1998 a working group in Ireland composed of Government and Social Partners (Business, Trade Unions, Farmers and the Community and Voluntary sector) of which Sean Healy of CORI Justice was a member, produced a report on the social economy. This report described the social economy as follows:

‘The distinguishing features of the social economy might be defined broadly as:

- *That part of the economy between the private and public sectors, which engages in economic activity in order to meet social objectives’.*

The working group went on to focus on a sub-set of the social economy in its report. The working group described this sub-set as having

...all or some of the following characteristics:

- *ownership within a community or community of interest, responding to market demand, regardless of source of income;*
- *focus on the economic and social development of a community or community of interest.*
- *Operation benefiting the community and individual members;*
- *Providing for employment experience and employment opportunities which is sustainable, but which might nonetheless be dependent on state support.*

As a general rule a social economy enterprise has a traded income with the profits or receipts of activity invested in the viability of the operation rather than accruing to shareholders. Maximising employment opportunities within the community would be an important end of the operation. While a social economy enterprise is entrepreneurial in that it functions in the marketplace and has a traded income, some or all of that income can come in the form of public subsidies for providing services or employment opportunities and experience for disadvantaged groups.

The Working Group used the following typology of social economy enterprise, which breaks the social economy down into the following subsets:

- *Community business, ultimately financed from trading income alone*
- *Deficit demand social enterprises, where the demand for particular goods and services within a community is not matched by resources to pay for these due to disadvantage or low density of population*
- *Enterprises based on public sector contracts, which deals with the potential for subcontracting public sector expenditure in disadvantaged areas and communities to local social economy enterprises*¹⁴².

While we are not in a position to develop the issue of the social economy in this paper we believe that it does provide a major area of potential for the future. The social economy enterprise described by the Irish working group is just one of a vast range of possibilities that exist and would benefit from further scrutiny. This whole area is especially important in the context of moving towards a situation where other meaningful work, besides paid employment, is recognised and valued by the wider society. It also has a significant role to play in promoting sustainable development.

¹⁴² *Report of Partnership 2000 Social Economy Working Group*, 1998, Irish Government Publications.

2.3.4. - Unremunerated work

The first and most important priority is to challenge the false assumptions that underpin the dominant culture that informs both public opinion and the policy making process at present in much of the world. One such assumption, we have already highlighted, is that work and a job are identical. When questioned closely people may disagree with this equation, but when asked what work they do, they invariably understand the question to refer to the job they have or do not have. This equation needs to be broken. Working and having a job are not the same thing. This is one of the most important truths that needs to be constantly repeated today.

A great many people work very hard even though they do not have a job. One has only to think of a mother with children who is fully occupied as a homemaker or the person who is the ‘dynamo’ of some local organisation. These people work very hard but the work they do is not ‘employment’. It is critical that society broaden its understanding of work. It is crucial to recognise that everyone has a right to work but that work and a job is not the same thing. Our support for the introduction of a Basic Income system (to which we shall return later in this paper) comes, in part, from a belief that all work should be recognised and supported.

Another assumption that needs to be challenged is the one that says that the honourable way to contribute to and participate in society today is through a job. We believe that a monetary value should be put on the work done by the adult population that is not paid employment. This work makes a huge contribution to the life of society yet goes unrecognised for the most part because it is not ‘counted’ in the calculation of Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is one of the reasons we support the development of ‘shadow’ national accounts that include the value of such work done in the society (as well as including the real costs of environmental damage etc.).

In this context a special focus should be put on the work done by volunteers. The Irish Government’s White Paper on Supporting

Voluntary Activity defines volunteering as “*the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes*”¹⁴³. It goes on to point out that volunteering benefits society as a whole; it benefits individual communities and the volunteers who offer their services.

The White Paper situates this discussion in a wider context that it calls ‘re-thinking our vision’. In this context it goes on state that:

*There is a need to create a more participatory democracy where active citizenship is fostered. In such a society the ability of the Community and Voluntary sector to provide channels for the active involvement and participation of citizens is fundamental. Both formal, structured voluntary activity and informal volunteering are essential in this regard.*¹⁴⁴

Volunteering has played a very significant role in the development of many societies. It is a ‘glue’ that has connected people and developed community identity and vibrancy. Volunteering supports individuals and families in creative and personal ways that are very difficult to replace. As the White Paper says: “A key determinant of the health of society is the degree to which individuals are prepared to come forward to give of their own time on a voluntary basis”¹⁴⁵. Volunteering is a form of work that is not recognised adequately, especially in a modern world which *appears* to have a shortage of work for people.

¹⁴³ *Supporting Voluntary Activity: A White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the state and the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2000*, Dublin, Irish Government Publications, p.29.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.41.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 31.

3. Discussion on Work must include Income

3.1 Recognising the importance of income in developing and protecting human dignity

Few people would disagree that the resources of the planet are for the use of all people, not just the present generation but also generations still to come. In Old Testament times, these resources were closely tied to land and water. A complex system of laws about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years (Lev. 25:1-22, Deut 15: 1-18) was devised to ensure, on the one hand, that no person could be disinherited, and on the other, that land and debts could not be accumulated or the earth exploited.

In more recent times, Pope Paul VI said *‘private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditional right. No one is justified in keeping for his/her exclusive use what is not needed when others lack necessities...The right to property must never be exercised to the detriment of the common good’*¹⁴⁶. In *Laborem Exercens* Pope John Paul II has developed the understanding of ownership, especially in regard to the ownership of the means of production. One of the major contributors to the generation of wealth is technology. The technology we have today is the product of the work of many people through many generations. Through the laws of patenting and exploration a very small group of people have claimed legal rights to a large portion of the world’s wealth. Pope John Paul II questions the morality of these structures. He says *‘if it is true that capital as the whole of the means of production is at the same time the product of the work of generations, it is equally true that capital is being unceasingly created through the work done with the help of all these means of production’*. Therefore no one can claim exclusive rights over the means of production. Rather that right *‘is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone’*¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Pope Paul VI, *Populorem Progressio*, No. 23

¹⁴⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Op. Cit.* No. 14.

Since everyone has a right to a proportion of the goods of the country, society has an obligation to develop structures that ensure a just distribution of these goods. At this point in history it seems that society is faced with two responsibilities regarding economic resources:

- firstly, that each person has sufficient to access the good life, and
- secondly, since the earth's resources are finite and we know that more is not necessarily better, it is time that society faced the question of putting a limit to the wealth that any person or corporate body can accumulate.

Interdependence, mutuality, solidarity, connectedness are words which are used loosely today to express a consciousness which is very Christian. All of creation is seen as a unit which is dynamic; each part is related to every other part, depends on it in some way and can affect it. When we focus on the human family this means that each person depends on others, initially for life itself and subsequently for the resources and relationships needed to grow and develop. To ensure that the connectedness of the web of life is maintained, each person is meant to reach out to support others in ways that are appropriate for their growth and in harmony with the rest of creation. This thinking respects the dignity of the person while recognising that the person can only achieve their potential in right relationships with others and the environment. All of this implies the need for appropriate structures and infrastructures. In particular, we advocate that a structure, which would guarantee an adequate income to everyone, would be accepted as a basic requirement.

3.2. The need for an alternative to the present system

The dominant paradigm tells us that people should have access to income through payment for the job they do or through a social welfare / social security system that protects those who are young/poor/old/sick etc. and ensures they are not left in poverty. The main problem with this paradigm is that it does not deliver on its claims. In the global context unemployment is widespread. There are no jobs for a great many people. Social welfare/security systems, where they exist, have failed, for the

most part, to eliminate poverty. Many people who do have jobs receive wages that are so low that they remain in poverty. In a rapidly changing world, an alternative approach is required, one that will ensure that people receive sufficient income to live life with basic human dignity.

Basic Income is such a system. We have for many years argued for the introduction of such a Basic Income system. In our view it is the alternative approach most likely to deliver on the basic requirement for any alternative system i.e. that it ensures people will receive sufficient income to live life with basic human dignity. We offer our proposals as a contribution to the public debate we believe is urgently required around the key issue of poverty and income distribution.

The following paragraphs outline what such a system might look like and report on developments in the Irish context concerning proposals for the introduction of such a system.

3.3. What is Basic Income?

Basic Income is usually defined as an income paid unconditionally to everyone on an individual basis, without any means test or work requirement. In a Basic Income system every person receives a weekly tax-free payment from the Exchequer and all other personal income is taxed. For a person who is unemployed the basic income payment replaces income from social welfare/social security. For a person who is employed the basic income payment replaces the tax-free allowance or tax credit contained in the income tax system.

Basic income is a form of minimum income guarantee that avoids many of the negative side effects inherent in social welfare/security payments. A basic income differs from other forms of income support in that:

- it is paid to individuals rather than households
- it is paid irrespective of any income from other sources
- it is paid without conditions
- it is always tax-free.

3.4. Why a Basic Income

Many arguments have been made in favour of introducing a Basic Income system.¹⁴⁸ Among these are arguments focusing on liberty and equality, efficiency and community, common ownership of the earth and equal sharing in the benefits of technical progress, the flexibility of the labour market and the dignity of poor people. Arguments have also been made focusing on the need to tackle unemployment and inhumane working conditions, on the desertification of the countryside and inter-regional inequalities, on the viability of co-operatives and the promotion of adult education. There are arguments from the perspective of *liberty* that can be traced back to Thomas Paine. There are arguments from an *egalitarian* perspective that have been enunciated by people such as John Baker.¹⁴⁹ There are *communitarian* arguments for Basic Income that have been summarised by Bill Jordan.¹⁵⁰ People such as Hermione Parker¹⁵¹ and Samuel Brittan¹⁵² have also made strong arguments for Basic Income on the grounds of *efficiency*. For those interested in the philosophical questions of why a Basic Income should be introduced, Philippe Van Parijs has produced a very comprehensive analysis that is well worth reading.¹⁵³ For those interested in the economic arguments for a basic income Charles Clark has produced a well argued and interesting analysis.¹⁵⁴ For those who wish to focus on the practical implementation of a basic income system, Charles Clark and John Healy have produced a detailed study illustrating how this can be done.¹⁵⁵ For those interested

¹⁴⁸ For a good summary of the various arguments in favour of Basic Income cf. Sean Ward, *Basic Income*, in Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds, (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland, Principles, Practice and Problems*, 1988, Dublin, Oaktree Press.

¹⁴⁹ Baker, John (1992) An Egalitarian Case for Basic Income, in P. Van Parijs (ed) *Arguing for Basic Income*, London: Verso.

¹⁵⁰ Jordan, Bill, (1992), *Basic Income and the Common Good*, in Philippe Van Parijs, *Arguing for Basic Income*, London, Verso.

¹⁵¹ Parker, Hermione (1989), *Instead of the Dole: An Enquiry into Integration of the Tax-Benefit Systems*, London: Routledge.

¹⁵² Brittan, Samuel (1996), *Capitalism with a Human Face*, London: Fontana.

¹⁵³ Van Parijs, Philippe, (1992), *Competing Justifications of Basic Income*, in *Arguing for Basic Income*, London, Verso.

¹⁵⁴ Due for publication in late 2001 this work will analyse the criteria for progress designed by a number of different groups and test basic income against these criteria. It will also provide an excellent critique of labour market policies from this perspective.

¹⁵⁵ Clark, Charles M.A. and John Healy, (1997), *Pathways to a Basic Income*, Dublin: CORI.

in these various issues and their application to the broader context of Government's annual budget and the various aspects of Government policy the present authors have produced a number of studies that may be of interest.¹⁵⁶

We believe there is a wide range of arguments why a Basic Income system is the best alternative to the present failed system and should be supported and introduced. Among these are the following:

- It is work and employment friendly
- It eliminates poverty traps and unemployment traps
- It promotes equity and ensures that everyone receives at least the poverty level of income
- It spreads the burden of taxation more equitably
- It treats men and women equally
- It is simple and transparent
- It is efficient in labour-market terms
- It rewards types of work in the social economy that the market economy often ignores, e.g. household work, child-rearing, etc
- It facilitates further education and training in the labour force
- It faces up to the changes in the global economy

¹⁵⁶ These include the following publications which the present authors have either edited and written a chapter of, or written in full:
(2001) Prosperity and Exclusion: Towards a New Social Contract
(1998) (eds.) Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems
(1997) Surfing the Income Net
(1996) (eds.) Progress, Values and Public Policy
(1995) (eds.) An Adequate Income Guarantee for All - Desirability, Viability, Impact
(1994) (eds.) Towards an Adequate Income for All
(1993) (eds.) New Frontiers for Full Citizenship
(1990) (eds.) Work, Jobs and Income: Towards a New Paradigm

3.5. Developing a Basic Income distribution system - the Irish experience

In the late 1970s empirical work was done for Ireland's National Economic and Social Council on the issue of Basic Income. From 1987 onwards two approaches to basic income have been developed in Ireland. The first of these preserved key parts of the current income tax and social welfare systems. The second approach substituted basic income for the existing tax and welfare systems and some other Government spending. The authors are identified with the latter approach. We do not intend going into all the details of these approaches here. For those who are interested Sean Ward has produced a very good and succinct outline of developments in Ireland up to 1998 which is well worth reading.¹⁵⁷

In Ireland, since 1987, Government has negotiated with employers, trade unions and farmers' organisations to develop three-year national plans. In 1996 an additional pillar was added to this partnership process representing the voluntary and community sector. CORI Justice is one of the organisations that is now recognised as a full social partner in this pillar. In the course of the negotiations for Partnership 2000 (*covering 1997 - 9*), CORI Justice was successful in getting agreement from the other social partners to include a section on Basic Income which reads as follows:

“Further independent appraisal of the concept of introducing a Basic Income for all citizens will be undertaken, taking into account the work of the ESRI, CORI and the Expert Group on the Integration of Tax and Social Welfare and international research. A broadly based steering group will oversee the study”.

A working group was established to implement this commitment; CORI was part of this working group. The working group decided to divide its work into two phases. Phase one examines the tax rate

¹⁵⁷ Ward, Sean, (1998) Basic Income, in Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds (eds) *Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems*, Dublin: Oaktree Press.

needed to fund Basic Income and the distributional implications of introducing Basic Income with this tax rate. Phase two looks at the dynamic effects of the proposal, including its effects on employment, effects on economic growth, short and long-term budgetary implications and the gender dimensions of all of these. These studies have been completed and published by Government.

These studies found that a Basic Income system would have a substantial impact on the distribution of income in Ireland. Compared with the then tax and welfare system it would improve the income of 70% of households in the bottom four deciles (i.e. the four tenths of the population with lowest incomes). It would also raise half of the individuals that would be below the 40% poverty line under 'conventional' options above this poverty line.

According to these studies, these impacts would be achieved without any resources additional to those available to 'conventional' options. CORI Justice has welcomed the fact that the P2000 Working Group Report vindicates its claims that a Basic Income system would have a far more positive impact on reducing poverty than the present tax and welfare systems.

In the build up to the 1997 Irish general election CORI Justice canvassed all political parties to include a commitment on Basic Income within their election manifestos. The incoming Government (Fianna Fail / Progressive Democrats coalition) made a commitment to introduce a Green Paper on Basic Income within two years. This was a further breakthrough as it would ensure that the work being done on Basic Income would be considered within the official policy making process of Government and that the results would be published for public consideration.

The Green Paper was published in 2002. CORI Justice welcomed its publication. In particular it welcomed the fact that the Green Paper vindicated our previous claims that a basic income system would have

a far more positive impact on reducing poverty than the present tax and welfare systems.

The critical test of any tax and welfare system is its impact on people with lower incomes. In that context the Green Paper shows that a basic income system is far more effective at tackling poverty than the present tax/welfare system. Therefore it should form part of a comprehensive strategy to totally eliminate income poverty in the years immediately ahead.

The choice between a basic income system and the “conventional” tax/welfare options is a trade-off between greater equity and a possible risk of slightly lower economic growth versus less equity and less risk to higher economic growth. At a time when so much concern is expressed about the country’s failure to use its recent economic growth to build a fairer society, the argument in favour of introducing a basic income system is further strengthened.

The resources of recent years were more than adequate to introduce a full basic income system in Ireland. It is regrettable that the resources were not used to introduce such a system. Its introduction would have produced a much fairer tax and welfare system. It would have moved beyond models that were appropriate to the twentieth century but are not capable of effectively addressing the new economic realities of the twenty-first century. Also, basic income would be far more effective than the present tax/welfare system at addressing the income inequality, increased insecurity and social exclusion that accompany the “new economy”.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ See also Ward, S. (2006), “Basic Income: Recent Analyses for Ireland”, in Healy, S., B. Reynolds and M.L. Collins, *Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems*, Dublin, Liffey Press.

Basic Income provides a substantial challenge to the income distribution system promoted by the dominant paradigm. It is fairer, more efficient and has a far greater impact on reducing poverty. If supporters of the dominant paradigm reject a Basic Income approach, they are left with a serious challenge - to find an income distribution system that ensures every man, woman and child has sufficient income to live life with basic human dignity.

4. Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to address questions that are critically important for the twenty first century i.e. how to ensure meaningful work and adequate income for all in a rapidly changing world. In doing this we have argued for an alternative paradigm to underpin the approach to issues of work and income distribution. We believe such an alternative is urgently required if the human dignity of all people is to be respected and assured. It is also required if we are to ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability within this finite world. We also believe such an alternative would be far closer to the fundamental tenets of Catholic Social Thought.

5.

Work and Catholic Social Thought¹⁵⁹

David Begg

One Monday morning a few weeks ago I was passing through Merchants Arch on my way to a meeting. There was a woman lying on the cobblestones, apparently unconscious. She didn't look too good to me. I guessed she was in her mid-thirties. Was she ill or just "stoned"? What to do in such circumstances poses a real dilemma? If you were to stop for every person in similar circumstances that you would come across while walking across town then you would have a full-time job. But this woman looked ill all the same. I resolved my dilemma by asking the porter in the Central Bank to call an ambulance for her. When I made my return journey she was gone – hopefully to be checked out in St James's Hospital.

I am acutely conscious that a genuine Christian, following the example of the Good Samaritan, should have taken a more interventionist course.

But what should the Good Samaritan do if he travels the same route every day for several years and finds another victim of the muggers each week at the roadside? Treat each victim with the same kindness? Give up his acts of compassion on the grounds that his purse will not bear the demands? Or begin to ask what is wrong with this particular road or the society through which it passes?

Will he begin to suspect that the Innkeeper is in league with the muggers? By his rescue efforts is he creating a market for this type of crime?

¹⁵⁹ An earlier version of this paper was presented to a conference on the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* held at Croke Park, Dublin on March 2nd, 2006.

And why will the authorities not do something about this problem? Why will they not police the road? Perhaps they don't have the resources? Maybe public spending is being curtailed, because of overseas military commitments by the Roman army.

Perhaps the local business community are objecting to paying rates or corporate taxes. Maybe the Innkeeper is an influential member of the Local Chamber of Commerce.

Perhaps it is that the police trade union is in dispute about overtime and is working to rule?

Luke, Chapter 10 does not consider these angles so it is a good thing to have a Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church to interpret Gospel values in the context of the modern world.

Catholic Social Thought is rarely mentioned in Ireland today. It has been said of it that it is the Church's best kept secret.

One morning on BBC Radio 4 I heard the author, Paul Vallely, being interviewed about a book he had written entitled "The New Politics – Catholic Social Teaching for the Twenty First Century". At the time Tony Blair was promoting the concept of "The Third Way". Vallely suggested that if Blair really wanted to find a third way he should talk to his wife. When asked to explain what he meant, Vallely pointed out that, as a Catholic, Cherie Blair would know about Catholic Social Teaching and its focus on 'The Common Good' as a *via media* between capital and labour which eschews Marxist/Leninist concepts of class war. As a matter of fact the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales arguably played some part in the election of the Labour Government in 1997, when they published a Pastoral entitled "The Common Good", which was widely interpreted as an attack on the Tories.

Mr Blair, alas, did not consult his wife and little is heard from him today about a Third Way. It has been said of him, and it seems to be true, that he is a man who holds opinions strongly – while he holds them!

In the Compendium there are 103 separate references to ‘The Common Good’. In fairness this is not a concept over which the Catholic Church has a monopoly. Noam Chomsky, the left wing American author, who attracted such a huge following during a recent visit here, wrote a book with that title in 1998. Let me quote you some extracts from that book:

“The goal is a society in which the basic social unit is you and your television set. If the kid next door is hungry, it’s not your problem. If the retired couple next door invested their assets badly and are now starving, that’s not your problem”.

“Boards of directors are allowed to work together, so are banks and investors and corporations in alliances with one another and with powerful states. That’s just fine. It’s just the poor who aren’t supposed to cooperate”.

“Now that...workers are superfluous, what do you do with them? First of all, you have to make sure they don’t notice that society is unfair and try to change that, and the best way to distract them is to get them to hate and fear one another”.

“...the power of business propaganda in the US...has succeeded, to an unusual extent, in breaking down the relations among people and their sense of support for one another”.

The Compendium takes a more restrained view of the relations between labour and capital but one which is no less powerful when it states in paragraph 279:

“The relationship between labour and capital often shows traits of antagonism that take on new forms with the changing of social and economic contexts. In the past, the origin of the conflict between capital and labour was found above all in the fact that the workers put their powers at the disposal of the entrepreneurs, and these, following the principle of maximum profit, tried to establish the lowest possible wages for the work done by the

employees. In our present day, this conflict shows aspects that are new and perhaps more disquieting: scientific and technological progress and the globalisation of markets, of themselves a source of development and progress, expose workers to the risk of being exploited by the mechanisms of the economy and by the unrestrained quest for productivity”.

You might ask what practical evidence is there of this risk exposure of workers. Well even in our own buoyant economy in which one bank can make a profit of €1.7bn, there are pressures created by the migration of industry to low cost locations of which we see regular examples. In tandem with this there is inward migration of people who are vulnerable to exploitation as evidenced by the Irish Ferries and GAMA cases and the capacity of employers to use people in this situation to undermine established rates of pay and conditions in the different sectors of the economy. We have seen in recent years, and despite minimum wage provisions, the emergence of the phenomenon of ‘The Working Poor’. Statistically 19 per cent of our population are deemed to be at risk of poverty. Of all those at risk of poverty in Ireland today almost one third live in households headed by a person with a job.

Yet it is true that Ireland has also benefited from globalisation through foreign direct investment. Part of the difficulty of current public discourse is that protagonists for or against globalisation often do not acknowledge the existence of these separate truths. The challenge is to find a way to deal with this situation, not to deny the reality of it. I will return to this point later.

In “The New Industrial Society” John Kenneth Galbraith coined the phrase “Private Affluence and Public Squalor” as a commentary on the type of society American was becoming. Forty years later, in 1999, the UNDP asked him to consider how the world had evolved in the intervening period. In essence he said that things had got worse but the main difference was that greed was now held to be a legitimate motivator of behaviour.

But has the world really become a more bitterly divided planet? At one level there has been significant progress. The Cold War, with all its oppression of freedom and proxy wars is over. More countries are functioning democracies today than at any time in the past. India and China have awoken and their economic progress has the potential to lift millions out of poverty and destitution.

Africa, on the other hand, remains what Tony Blair described as a “Blight on the Face of Civilisation”. To his great credit he, with Gordon Brown, tried to lead a campaign to bring that tragic continent into the world economy. But the situation for its 750 million people is profoundly depressing.

Some 36 of the 50 countries in Africa are currently affected by drought or on the brink of it. According to the World Food Programme 43 million people are experiencing severe food shortages. The problem is exacerbated by incredibly high levels of HIV/AIDS which is killing off a generation of agriculturalists as well as teachers and other key professionals. In many cases structural adjustment programmes imposed by the West have weakened African states’ ability to cope.

These same programmes have forced cuts in public spending and entrenched the culture of corruption which is so debilitating the institutional capacity of African countries. War and other forms of conflict cause millions to become refugees or “internally displaced persons”.

Some progress has been made on debt relief and trade liberalisation. Nevertheless, the poorer a country is, the less varied its economy is and the less well equipped it is to counteract the effects of drought and other climate challenges.

Africa presents us with a unique moral dilemma. Even the best countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya suffer corruption and human rights abuses. The Catholic Church has taken a strong role in advocating for increased aid for Africa, particularly the UN target

that 0.7% of GNP be allocated for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Even at its 2007 level of 0.5% of GNP Ireland spends in excess of ?813m in its ODA Budget. It is significant money and it cannot be most effectively used by financing individual projects. Most opinion in the development community supports direct budgetary support for African Governments. There is, however, a risk that such transfers will be corruptly or inappropriately used. Public opinion is not ready to accept this reality. Taking risks in an effort to lift Africa out of destitution is unavoidable and morally defensible. The plight of Africa's people is so terrible that we cannot insulate ourselves from these consequences. The desperate efforts of so many to emigrate to Europe are the most obvious manifestation of those consequences. Fortress Europe is not a viable long term option.

The range of problems with which all developed countries are trying to grapple may be summarised as follows:

- How to deal with large migration flows;
 - The failure of liberal democracy to prevent the growth of inequality
- and
- The unique influence of the United States in the world.

Globalisation is a phenomenon which excites either total opposition or zealous advocacy. Hundred of books have been written about it and its opponents include such establishment figures as George Soros and Joseph Stiglitz. Generally it is associated in the public mind with the rise of China as an industrial power and the migration of industry and services to that country and India respectively.

It is in fact a more complex process than that. The radical relaxation of anti-trust enforcement by the Regan administration in the 1980's allowed big companies to expand horizontally. Many producers, once they gained control over their markets, began to outsource less profitable operations. Many suppliers of these services became dependent on the big companies because they had few other pathways to the marketplace.

The increasing power of a few trade orientated companies over entire production and supply systems results in a variety of economic and political ills.

In a production system marked by extreme outsourcing, oligopoly does not result in the end of competition so much as the redirection of competition as leading companies capture more power to set supplier against supplier and worker against worker and even country against country. The latter arises in the battle for foreign direct investment and tax competition between countries to secure it. In reality it is not really the Chinese who are destroying Western jobs, or even globalisation as such, but rather the radical change in the structure of industry resulting in the power of the world's largest traders and retailers to pit producer against producer and to capture most or all of the gain from the arbitrage.

Anyone who doubts this analysis ought to go and see a recent film about Wal-Mart which controls 30 per cent of the US retail market. The recent controversy over the acquisition of the European steelmaker, Arcelor, by Mittal is another manifestation of the same thing. Likewise the mega merger of Procter and Gamble and Gillette. Another example is the power over renewable energy systems of British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell.

So how can the interests of ordinary people and workers be protected in a world which is dominated by powerful corporate supply chains and is willing to accept destitution affecting 750 million people, growing inequality in the developed countries and the degradation of employment conditions? It seems impossible. And yet to accept that is to accept that people no longer have any influence over their own destiny. Such a conclusion would, it seems to me, run directly contrary to everything Catholic Social Thought stands for.

Human beings are capable of standing up for what is right but often they have to be pushed a long way before they do. Consider the United States today. Union organisation there has been pushed down to about 13 million or 12% of the labour force. Unions are unable, in many

cases, to stop employers from resiling from pension and health care provision. The automobile industry is a case in point. From an employers' perspective huge legacy costs make them uncompetitive against start up operations, like Toyota, which do not have those costs. Logically they try to shed those legacy costs and workers lose pensions and health care.

This is a serious development in a country that has virtually no universal public health or welfare provision. How will the citizens of the United States react to that? For how long will religious fundamentalism and the so called 'War on Terror' divert their attention from the reality that the kitty is bare as regards the state providing for them? For how long will they accept a combination of tax cuts for the super rich and increased military spending causing even further reductions in social programmes? What will happen when the "Baby Boomers" retirement clashes with the accumulated 2.5 trillion dollar deficit - which the economist Paul Krugman reckons the tax cuts will cost.

I would like to think that ordinary Americans would sweep the Republicans from office and, like Sweden, in the Thirties, install a new social democratic progressive era of long duration. I don't think it will happen though. Why? Because America has moved too far to the right over the past 30 years ever to come back to the values of Roosevelt's New Deal or a Johnson's vision of 'The Great Society'.

In 1968 a short time before he was assassinated, Robert Kennedy, made a powerful speech at the University of Kansas. In the course of it he said this:

“Even if we act to erase material poverty, there is another great task. It is to confront the poverty of satisfaction – a lack of purpose and dignity – that afflicts us all. Too much and for too long, we seem to have surrendered community excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material things.... The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy

of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile”.

Who could imagine anyone in the Democratic Party today making a speech like this? The Democrats never have been a Social Democratic party as we would understand it. Nevertheless, they have moved so far from their working class base as to mean nothing to those people. They fail to understand that it is not just neo-conservatives who care about moral and religious values. One unfortunate consequence of this is the split in the AFL-CIO (the US equivalent of Congress). Andy Stern led a breakaway group on the grounds that continued political funding of the Democratic Party would achieve nothing for working people and their organisation in trade unions.

America has a unique value system based on the heritage of the Pilgrim Fathers. It places a superior value on property and individualism. Labour rights are considered inferior to market deregulation and collectivism is frowned upon.

Europe is different. Deregulation of the labour market – one of the central institutions of a market economy – is a litmus test that shows how far any society allows capitalism to go. There has always been, ever since the Middle Ages, the idea of a just wage, which the Catholic Church supported, and which it continues to support as the Compendium makes clear. When Catholic societies embarked on capitalism in the nineteenth century they tried to retain the idea of the just wage for the worker and with it notions of the just price, just profit and even the just enterprise. They still do, and it's the reason Christian democratic parties in mainland Europe are as attached as they are to a less raw, or stakeholder-orientated capitalism.

What the Americans say instead is that capitalism is opportunity for all and risk for all; if you win that game you get lucky. It is the alternative tradition of Catholic capitalism, social market capitalism, or stakeholder capitalism – call it what you like – that is congenial to my outlook. As the Compendium puts it in paragraph 277:

“The Church’s social doctrine has not failed to insist on the relationship between labour and capital, placing in evidence both the priority of the first over the second as well as their complementarities.

Labour has an intrinsic priority over capital. This principle directly concerns the process of production: is an evident truth that emerges from the whole of man’s historical experience. This is part of the abiding heritage of the Church’s teaching”.

The whole European project was guided by people whose values were rooted in Catholic Social Thought. People like Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors particularly had a vision of a Social Europe in which the process of social dialogue between both sides of industry played a major part. Our own Social Partnership process is derived from that model and I agree with Senator Martin Manseragh when he said in his “Irish Times” column on 18 February, 2006:

“Right-wing critics claim partnership is undemocratic, as if democracy consisted only of parliamentary majority rule, rather than multi-layered participation in public affairs. While nominally Seanad Éireann is composed along corporatist lines, social partnership is much closer to the real thing. It is corporatism as an extra dimension to democracy, rather than as a substitute for it as envisaged by some in the 1930’s”

This finds a clear resonance in the Compendium - paragraph 307 states:

“Beyond their function of defending and vindicating, unions have the duty of acting as representatives working for “the

proper arrangement of economic life” and of educating the social consciences of workers so that they will feel that they have an active role, according to their proper capacities and aptitudes in the whole task of economic and social development and in the attainment of the universal common good. Unions and other forms of labour associations are to work in cooperation with other social entities and are to take an interest in the management of public matters. Union organisations have the duty to exercise influence in the political arena, making it duly sensitive to labour problems and helping it to work so that workers’ rights are respected”.

It would, of course, be a mistake to assume that there is unanimity of opinion on this point. Social Partnership has bitter opponents on the left and on the right. It is opposed on the left by Trotskyites and by others who believe in class conflict and see social reformers as simply propping up an unjust free market capitalism. It is opposed on the right by economic liberals who see social dialogue, and indeed trade unions, as an unwarranted interference with free markets. The latter have very strong support from the business press.

Within their lights they are both right. Social Europe and the social dialogue process is reformist rather than revolutionary. Equality springs from a belief that democratic societies are entitled to put constraints on markets. An activist state is required to enforce choices made by the community, to promote the primacy of the public realm and to make manifest the reality that the pre-condition for a just society is a narrowing of inequality. This clearly is anathema to the hard left and equally to the liberal right.

Nevertheless, the battle for the heart and soul of Europe does not involve the Trotskyites left. Their influence is too marginal for that. It is between Social Democrats and Liberals. Since the era of Jacques Delors the Liberals have been in the ascendant, to some extent because social democratic opinion has been in retreat for the last twenty years for reasons which I won’t go into now. But the defeat of

the Constitutional Referendum in France and The Netherlands may have halted the liberal advance. I should say, in passing, that I think the draft Constitution, particularly the Charter of Fundamental Rights, is a good document. It is clear, even if it is somewhat paradoxical, that it was rejected because of a resentment of the bellicose liberal attitudes of the Commission. I for one am glad that it happened although I hope that in time it will be possible to have it considered on its merits.

One encouraging development is the way the European Parliament dealt with the Services Directive. It is a good thing for democracy to see the Parliament coming centre stage and trying to work out a practical accommodation between economic and social matters. Doing so is completely in keeping with the tenets of Catholic Social Thought. As Paul Vallely says in his “The New Politics – Catholic Social Teaching for the Twenty First Century”:

“The political problem of mankind is to combine three things – economic efficiency, social justice and individual liberty – and the modern age has lost the correct balance between the three elements of this political equation”.

There is some hope too in the fact that the conservative parties in Sweden, Canada and Britain are moving towards the centre ground. I suspect too that Angela Merkel would not have achieved the level of popularity she has as leader of a Centrist Government had she become a CDU Chancellor. Personally though, if I were a citizen of those countries I would continue to wear a clove of garlic just in case... Francis Fukuyama in “The End of History and the Last Man” argued that the end of the Cold War represented a victory for capitalism red in tooth and claw. A lot of people are putting a lot of effort into proving this hypothesis but they are wrong and the signs are to be found by those that seek them.

With the new imperialism being resisted in both the Muslim world and Latin America, growing international demands for social justice and ever greater doubts about whether the environmental crisis can be solved

within the existing economic system, the pressure for political and social alternatives will increase. The particular form of society created by 20th Century communist parties failed because it ignored the human person's right to individual freedom and will never be replicated. But the quest for a just society will not be abandoned. The best definition of the just society that I have seen is by the Polish and Jewish Sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman who said when asked to speak about it:

“What would the just society be like? The only answer I can offer in good conscience is that a “Just Society” is a society which thinks it is not just enough, which questions the sufficiency of any achieved level of justice and considers justice always to be a step or more ahead. Above all it is a society that reacts angrily to any case of injustice and promptly sets about correcting it”.

Europe, built on the heritage of Catholic Social Thought, offers the best possibilities for a just society. The mission of the European Union is no longer to prevent warfare within its territory – such would be unthinkable today – but rather to tame globalisation in the service of mankind. Europe, given the dysfunctional state of America, is quite simply, the hope of the world.

Earlier I mentioned the difficulties of all countries in managing migration flows. It is an acute challenge for Europe and Ireland is in the cockpit of that challenge.

With the opening of our labour market to the 10 new countries of Eastern Europe the non-national component of our workforce rose to 9 per cent in less than 18 months. Germany took 30 years to get to that point. This poses a unique challenge, in justice, to our society. I want to try to relate it to our discussion today because I think most people will admit that the role of the trade union movement is central in this matter.

During the course of the second Nice Referendum the accession of the 10 new members was not expected to produce the numbers of immigrants it did. Congress campaigned strongly in favour of the Nice

Referendum. We took the main burden of argument against those who said that the country would be swamped by people coming to take Irish jobs. We do not regret taking that stand but we have to admit that we underestimated the push-pull factors that subsequently attracted people here. The evidence available at the time, based on the empirical experience of the entry of Spain, Portugal and Greece, suggested that migration overall would be small and negligible for Ireland given its peripheral location. What essentially undermined that analysis was a combination of Ireland's decision not to avail of the derogation contained in the Nice Treaty to open up its labour market and the opposite decision by the other 12 countries to do so. We were not alone in forming the judgement we did because the ESRI forecast relatively modest numbers of net immigrants of 5000 in 2004, 14,000 in 2005 and 19,000 in 2006. As we now know, there was net immigration of 53,400 people in the year to April 2005 and this has continued to increase.

What Congress offers employers and Government is a bargain. We retain the principle of labour mobility but it must be on our terms. Our terms will require the protection of indigenous and non-Irish nationals alike from exploitation and displacement. The measures we propose will not offend against genuine economic efficiency but they will invoke an equal commitment to social justice.

This requires a legal framework, the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure enforcement and strong enough sanctions to promote a culture of compliance.

I mentioned at the outset that Catholic Social Thought is sometimes regarded as the Church's best kept secret. That is true of the times we are in but it wasn't always so.

Catholic Social Thought attracted advocates in the Thirties where motives were probably genuine but they put it at the service of a political ideology which would be abhorrent to most people today. Prominent academics like James Hogan of UCC and Michael Tierney of UCD made common cause with reactionary intellectual priests like

Fr Edward Cahill and Fr Edward Coyne to promote a sort of corporatism as an alternative to democracy rather than enhancement of it. The Blueshirts were the political manifestation of that stream of thought. It must be acknowledged, however, that some Catholic figures, like Fr Flanagan, stood out against this thinking and, indeed, a Christian Brother from Derry actually died fighting for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. As you know, mainstream Catholic opinion supported Franco and the Blueshirts who fought – or at least went to Spain ostensibly to fight – on his side.

In the Fifties and Sixties, the Jesuits, to their credit, gave Catholic Social Teaching a new impetus. Many generations of trade union activists participated in adult education programmes through the Catholic Workers' College, later the College of Industrial Relations.

Nevertheless, from the Thirties through to the Sixties the Church was a cold place for people with left leaning sympathies. In part this was shaped by an anti-Communist paranoia characteristic of the Cold War period. It has been said of that period that if five members of a left wing group held a meeting, one would be a representative of the CIA, one would be Special Branch and two would be looking out for the interests of John Charles McQuaid.

The emergence of Catholic policy in Ireland post independence was unusual in a European context. Many European countries developed along separate confessional lines most notably, for example in the trade union movement. Many European countries have separate Catholic, Protestant and secular socialist trade union centres. The same pattern emerged in politics. That didn't happen in Ireland because it was assumed that everybody more or less subscribed to a Catholic orthodoxy.

On the whole this was not, I think, healthy, although as a child of the Fifties I have no sense of the oppressive society that one would judge it to have been in retrospect. Yet it cannot be denied that any significant social legislation from the equal pay directives of the Seventies on

came from Europe and was, in many cases, resisted by legislators here. The irony of this is that, as I have argued earlier, the European Social Market construct is based on Catholic social values.

So my thesis is that the Irish Church has made many mistakes in the last eighty years. Its authoritarianism has damaged it and concealed from full public evaluation the richness of its social teaching.

But things are different now. Many Church organisations are strong advocates of social justice. People like Fr Seán Healy and Sr Brigid Reynolds have been to the forefront of public debate about social and economic policy. Trocaire is a strong advocate for justice in relation to our policy towards the Developing World.

I am surprised that Noam Chomsky attracted such an enormous following when he came here. He is one of the most powerful intellects in the world today but I doubt that all these people who attended his lectures occupy the same political space that he does.

What this confirms in my own mind is that people, while displaying all the attributes of individualism and consumerism, still feel uneasy about the enormous growth of corporate power in a globalised world on the one hand, and the diminution of social solidarity on the other. They have no reference point against which to critically evaluate these trends. In short they no longer have a value system.

This is the challenge for the Church in the modern world. It has to transcend its own recent humiliation and the pre-occupation with defining morality only in terms of sexual morals – which lets face it; it can no longer credibly do anyway. Catholic Social Thought, as presented in the Compendium, is not about that. It is about a code of Christian ethics and values designed to promote the common good. People of faith and people of no religious conviction but who care about the common good will see it as timely and engage with it. It should cease to be the Church's best kept secret!

Lord Patten, in his book “Not Quite a Diplomat” seems to take a sceptical view of Catholic Social Teaching:

“The identification of the EU with the Catholic Church and Catholic political and social teaching has always made it a harder sell in Britain than it might otherwise have been”.

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and again:

*“Catholic social policy has always caused anxiety, mixing (as it often does) wafflingly well meaning and incompatible aims with a **dirigiste** instinct increasingly out of sympathy with the times”.*

From what I have said so far you will not be surprised when I say that I take a more benign view. I am a Social Democrat and Mr Patten is a Conservative, and British Conservatives have not much empathy with even mainland European Christian Democrats, even if Mr Cameron is moving his party towards the centre ground. Then again the centre ground in Britain has defined by Mr Blair who has not much regard for European Social Democrats. So we are at odds.

But let me qualify my point by saying that I consider the best manifestation of Catholic Social Thought – as represented by the political equation embracing economic efficiency, individual freedom and social justice – to be found in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries are always in the top ten for competitiveness, productivity and social cohesion. The Nordic countries have high levels of public services supported by high levels of taxation. They are the direct antithesis of the Anglo Saxon model that European liberals want us to adopt.

The only complication in this is that the Nordic countries are in the Lutheran tradition!

Pope Benedict's first encyclical makes it clear that there is no room in the community of believers for a poverty that denies anything essential for a dignified life...the concept of neighbour is universalised.

There is a recently produced film about the life and times of Johnny Cash. One of Johnny's best albums was recorded in Folsom Prison. He was a man who had a sense of what it meant to love your neighbour. When he asked his record company to make the recording they didn't want to do it. There is a scene in the film where the man in charge of the record company said to him:

"Look John, your fans are all Christians. They won't want to see you giving comfort to a gang of rapists and murderers".

Johnny replied:

"Well they ain't Christians then".

I started off by explaining why I thought the parable of the Good Samaritan needed to be interpreted for the modern world. However, Matthew 25 (31-46) is direct and more explicit:

*"I was hungry and you never gave me food;
I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink;
I was a stranger and you never made me welcome;
Naked and you never clothed me;
Sick and in prison and you never visited me".*

It does not, it seems to me, require much intellectual effort to see how this powerful injunction applies to our times. The Good Samaritan acts immediately and without qualification to relieve the urgent physical suffering of another person. Remember too that the Good Samaritan is a foreigner!

6.

The Catholic Church and Social Policy¹⁶⁰

Tony Fahey

Introduction

The influence of the Catholic Church on social policy in Ireland can be identified under two broad headings — a *teaching* influence derived from Catholic social thought and a *practical* influence which arose from the church's role as a major provider of social services. Historically, the second of these was the more important. The church developed a large practical role in the social services before it evolved anything approaching a formal body of social teaching, and its formal teaching in the social field never matched the inventiveness or impact of its social provision. Today, this order is being reversed. The church's role as service provider is dwindling, mainly because falling vocations have left it without the personnel to sustain that role. Its reputation as a service provider has also been tarnished by the revelations of shocking abuses perpetrated by Catholic clergy and religious on vulnerable people (particularly children) placed in their care in the past (see, e.g., the *Ferns Report* – Murphy, Buckley and Joyce, 2005; also O'Raftery and O'Sullivan 2001). Nevertheless, its teaching role in the social field is finding new content and new forms of expression. Despite the corrosive effect of the scandals of the past decade on the church's teaching authority, these new means of influencing social policy debate have considerable potency and may well offer a means by which the church can play an important part in the development of social policy in the future.

¹⁶⁰ This is a slightly revised version of a chapter previously published in Seán Healy and Brigid Reynolds (eds.) *Social Policy in Ireland. Principles, Practice and Problems*, Oak Tree Press, Dublin (1998)

Drawing on this distinction between the church's teaching and provider roles, the present chapter gives a brief overview of the evolution of the church's influence in social policy in Ireland, assesses the present situation and offers some brief comments on possible directions for future development. The chapter adopts the conventional though rather arbitrary definition of 'social policy' which links it to questions of distribution of material resources and services in society. It thereby excludes a whole range of social issues (such as family and sexual matters) on which the Catholic church has for long exerted an influence. In Catholic circles, these latter issues are often classified as 'moral' rather than 'social', and while this is a forced distinction, I will follow it here in order to reduce the field of reference to manageable dimensions.

Church as social provider

Throughout the western world in the nineteenth century, the Catholic church's survival and expansion in the face of social revolution, industrialisation and the spread of secularism rested in part at least on its success in developing a powerful, far-reaching role as a social service provider. Catholic schools, hospitals, orphanages and other similar institutions multiplied and flourished in the course of the nineteenth century and in many instances anticipated the development of similar services by emergent welfare states. In some countries (such as Ireland), the church eventually entered into various forms of partnership with the state in jointly providing social services, in others (such as the United States), it created independent systems which paralleled and in some ways competed with state provision. In any event, no other organisation in the modern western world came as close as did the Catholic church to matching the capacity of the present-day welfare state to fund and deliver mass social services.

A number of institutional devices which the church either invented in the nineteenth century or took out of its traditional repertoire and brought to new levels of development enabled it to develop this role to such effect. One such device was the system of clerical recruitment, training and

deployment in parish ministry. This was based on a model outlined in the Council of Trent in the seventeenth century but which was fully and properly implemented only in the nineteenth century. Parish clergy were usually not of themselves significant providers of social services, as their dominant role was pastoral ministry (though in Ireland, they acquired a peculiar though important role as managers of schools in the national primary school system). But the ubiquitous, disciplined and tightly organised parish system which most national churches cultivated and successfully staffed with clergy in the nineteenth century provided the basic presence of the church in people's lives which was the foundation of its capacity to develop its social provision.

The role of the religious congregations

While parishes provided the remote framework within which Catholic social provision developed, the real drive and energy came from a different institutional source — the religious congregations. Communal ascetic withdrawal traces its origins in the Catholic tradition back to the sixth century Benedictines. The male mendicant orders in the Middle Ages developed that tradition by harnessing the ascetic impulse to the evangelising mission of the church. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Jesuits added a new dimension through the medium of elite education and scholarship, while new charity orders (exemplified by St Vincent de Paul's Congregation of the Mission in seventeenth century France) began to develop methods of working among the poor which combined missionary teaching with charitable service. The nineteenth century was an important period of innovation within this tradition. Taking their cue from the active, charitable strand of the tradition typified by St Vincent de Paul, a wave of religious founders emerged at that time and set up scores of new orders and congregations. These were devoted to a mixture of social provision and evangelisation both for the poor and the bourgeoisie.

The novelty of this movement rested in part on its scale and on the comprehensiveness and extent of the social services which this scale allowed. It also represented a breakthrough in another important respect — in its new openness to *female* religious and in the consequent

mushrooming of female congregations which occurred throughout the Catholic world during the nineteenth century. The Irish experience was typical in this respect. A number of new female congregations were founded between 1780 and the mid-nineteenth century (most notably the Presentation sisters, the Irish sisters of Charity, the Loreto sisters and the sisters of Mercy), geared to practical teaching and social service work rather than cloistered devotion (see Clear 1987 for an overview). These and a number of other foundations provided the basis for a long-lasting expansion of numbers. In 1800, there were some 200 nuns in Ireland, by 1850, there were 1,500 and by 1900 there were some 9,000. The numbers of male religious and clergy also grew but less spectacularly — the number of priests almost doubled between 1800 and 1900, reaching 3,500 in the latter year (Fahey 1987). The Irish church was somewhat exceptional in that growth in personnel continued throughout the first half of the present century (though even this was not unique — Catholic church personnel in the US also continued to grow rapidly up to the 1960s). In Ireland by the mid-1960s, there about 16,000 nuns in Ireland and some 14,000 male religious and clergy, numbers which made the Irish Catholic church the most heavily staffed of any national church in the Catholic world (Inglis 1987). Parish ministry carried out by clergy occupied less than one in five of these. The balance provided the human resources which formed the foundation of the church's massive role in social provision.

Effects on social services

What effects did that role have on the social services system in Ireland? One considerable effect was to increase the overall level of provision in education, health and related social services. In Ireland, it is often said that the work of the church in these areas simply displaced the role of the state and meant that the church colonised activities which properly should have been provided by the state. While there may be some truth in this view, it should not be overstated. State investment in social provision in Ireland prior to the rapid expansion which took place in the 1960s was not generous. No reserve existed within the public system which could easily have been drawn upon to fill gaps caused by withdrawal or non-activity on the part of the church. State

provision might have been somewhat greater than it actually was had the church not been as active, but on its own it is unlikely to have risen to the levels achieved by the combined church-state provision which actually evolved.¹⁶¹

While the church's social services had an effect in raising the overall level of provision and thus the overall standard of services available to the public, there is little indication that the social services system was more *equitable* as a result. The primary purpose of social service provision for the Catholic church was to disseminate and safeguard the faith, not to combat social inequality or reform society. Arising out of the primary focus on Catholic propagation, Catholic schools and hospitals were structured in such a way as to reflect and to some extent reinforce existing social hierarchies — there were elite schools as well as poor schools and exclusive services for the wealthy as well as broadly provided services for the less well off. The religious congregations themselves incorporated status distinctions into their structures — for example, in the distinction between lay sisters and choir sisters in the female congregations or the status rankings of the elite orders versus the more run-of-the-mill congregations.¹⁶² Many of the religious congregations founded in the nineteenth century to provide services for the poor soon found themselves subject to upward social drift — once their reputations became established they found it difficult to resist the demand from the Catholic middle classes that they expand their services upwards on the social scale. Any potential they might have had for substantial social distribution down the social scale was thus compromised. Those congregations most associated with

¹⁶¹ Tussing (1978) pointed out that from the 1950s to the 1970s, Ireland had a reasonably high rate of participation in post-compulsory education — one that was higher, for example, than that in Britain and Northern Ireland, despite the higher level of public funding for education in the latter systems. He points to the role of the Catholic church in providing post-primary schools as one of the factors contributing to Republic's somewhat surprising educational performance.

¹⁶² Echoing these gradations, a former pupil from a Loreto secondary school in the 1960s recalled to me recently how one of the sisters would reprimand unruly pupils by saying, 'Remember girls, you're not factory girls, you're not Mercy girls, you're Loreto girls'.

populist provision, such as the Sisters of Mercy and the Irish Christian Brothers, eventually found themselves oriented more to the lower middle classes than to those at the very bottom of the social scale.

As Catholic social services matured in the first half of the twentieth century, they became more rather than less associated with social privilege and eventually came to form as much an obstacle to the equitable distribution as a means of promoting it. The lack of a genuine redistributive concern in Catholic social provision tended to create a vacuum in services for those at the bottom of the social scale – or at least did little to narrow gaps between the poor and the better off. This evolution also tended to develop a vested interest in the existing system of provision among Catholic service providers. The consequence was that as the state in Ireland began to make sporadic efforts to move towards welfare state supports and services for the poor, the Catholic church often found itself resisting rather than promoting this kind of reform (the role of the Catholic church as an obstacle to redistributive policies on the part of the state in Ireland is extensively argued in Breen *et al.* 1989). An early instance came in the field of health, as the Catholic church came to the support of vested medical interests in fighting off the extension of public health insurance from Britain to Ireland in the period 1912-18 (Barrington 1987). It acted similarly in the course of the long-drawn out struggle over the improvement of the health services which eventually resulted in the Health Act of 1953. In the latter instance, the church's conservatism and apparent lack of a social conscience did considerable damage to its credibility as an agent of Christian concern for the poor.

A similar vitiation of the church's claim to serve the cause of social justice occurred in the field of education. For example, the system of vocational education created by the Vocation Education Act 1930 was designed in part to protect the social standing and exclusiveness of Catholic academic secondary schools and thus helped inflict a status inferiority on vocational schools which blighted their development over succeeding decades. In the 1960s, as the state attempted to rescue the position of vocational education and bridge the gap with secondary education by moving towards a comprehensive, universal system of post-primary education, the Catholic

church again played an obstructive role, particularly in the face of the seminal proposals put forward by the then education minister, Dr Patrick Hillery, in 1963 (Ó Buachalla 1988, pp. 163-66).

A further feature of Catholic social provision which affected its impact on social policy was its overwhelmingly pragmatic character and its consequent lack of an intellectual or theoretical base. Catholic religious congregations which emerged in the nineteenth century were highly successful in developing efficient and effective social services but they neither drew on nor contributed to contemporary developments in social analysis. They added little or nothing to intellectual reflection on social issues and left no mark on emerging academic study in fields like pedagogy or social administration. Out of the thousands of capable men and women who flooded into these congregations over the last century and a half, there were remarkably few who expressed a thought of any lasting intellectual significance about the work they did or the social conditions they confronted. At the level of thought and understanding, therefore, their heritage is strangely empty and this drains their achievement of a progressive, creative dimension which its sheer scale and practical effectiveness would seem to have warranted.

In sum, the Catholic church's role as social service provider, in Ireland as in other countries, was an extraordinary organisational achievement and exceeded anything provided by any other non-state organisation in the western world in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. In advance of the expansion of state provision in the last fifty years, it substantially raised the overall level of services enjoyed by Catholic populations and brought real practical benefit to many people. It also played a role in the development of certain social service professions (particularly nursing) which it is beyond our scope to examine here.

However, its larger impact in the development of social policy and social administration was limited and was less than the practical scale of its social service activity would lead one to expect. This was so largely because social service provision was a means rather than an end for the Catholic church — it was an instrument for the dissemination of the faith,

not a field of endeavour which was worth pursuing in its own right. This evangelising purpose meant that the concern for social redistribution was relegated to second place, if it was there at all. It also meant that intellectual and creative energies were diverted away from a focus on the purpose, methods and philosophy of the social services and social policy as worthy things in their own right rather than as aids to Catholic propagation.

Catholic social thought

It is a reflection of the disjuncture which ran through the Catholic church's role in social policy that, while it threw itself energetically into social service provision from the early nineteenth century onwards, it was only with the publication of the Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1892 that it acquired anything approaching a formal body of social thought. In the social field, thought thus came long after action, and it referred to social issues at such a general level that it had little bearing on the tradition of social intervention represented by the Catholic social services.

The social analysis presented in *Rerum Novarum* and its main successor, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1932) drew attention to the plight of the poor and showed a new awareness of the importance of social deprivation as a concern in its own right and as a factor in sustaining or undermining faith. However, the impact of this social analysis on social policy in Ireland was limited by a number of factors. The first was that it was a construct of the Vatican rather than of the national church at any level. In contrast to social service provision, which emanated from a bottom-up growth of popular new congregations, Catholic social thought was handed down from the olympian heights of Rome, quite often reflecting the personal preoccupations of the pope of the day. While the Vatican's concerns about the ravages of unrestrained capitalism and the plight of the poor undoubtedly chimed with popular concerns throughout the Catholic world, it was nevertheless inevitably remote from local issues within national churches.

This remoteness was particularly notable in Ireland. The central thrust of papal social teaching, which directed at finding a middle way between what the Vatican saw as the extremes of *laissez faire* capitalism and state socialism, had only limited relevance to social conditions in Ireland. Outside of the industrialised north-east of the island, capitalism had failed to take off in Ireland and the socialist movement scarcely developed beyond the embryonic stage. The main targets of attack for Catholic social teaching were thus either weak or largely absent in Ireland — or were present primarily as external conditioning circumstances. Ireland had evolved as a peripheral agrarian offshoot of the capitalist, industrialised economy in Britain and in the process had created a distinct smallholder social structure centred on the non-commercial family farm. Cleavages between landlord and tenant, between large farmer and small farmer, and between native and coloniser were more central to Irish concerns than those between employer and worker or between free enterprise and state regulation. While the Irish bent for the rural and the small scale was highly compatible with the anti-urban, anti-industrial sympathies of papal social teaching, the corresponding forms of social organisation were neither derived in any way from the papal social teaching nor were they adopted as a model of social development which Catholic social thought was prepared to analyse or recommend.

A further feature which conditioned the impact of Catholic social teaching was its tendency towards negativism. It was better at rejecting than recommending, clearer on what it was against than on what it was for. It did not strive to hold out a clear, appealing model of how society should be organised but rather warned about the threats and dangers which it saw in the current situation. *Quadragesimo Anno* came closest to providing an exception to this oppositional orientation as it flirted with a positive social programme. In that encyclical, Pius XI outlined the main features of Mussolini's corporative state in Italy with what he called 'benevolent attention' (Dorr 1992, pp. 79-80) and spoke at length about the merits of vocational organisation and the principle of subsidiarity. However, the programmatic content in Pius XI's social commentary was limited. He hesitated to adopt corporatism as an officially endorsed Catholic model of society and, in raising positive proposals, as Donal Dorr says, he

‘carefully avoids details and specific applications’ and confines himself instead to ‘general norms’ dealing broadly with vocational organisation and the principle of subsidiarity (Dorr 1992, pp. 79-80). The latter norms were used more as means to assess and criticise existing social systems rather than as foundations of an alternative social programme.

In keeping with its reluctance to commit itself to any particular social model, Catholic social thought held aloof from technical analyses of existing social systems. Pius XI defined the church’s role in social teaching as belonging to the moral rather than the technical sphere. This meant that the specialist competence which the church required in order to enunciate social teaching lay in the field of moral theology rather than social science. In consequence, Catholic social thought took no systematic cognisance of economics or any of the other emerging branches of secular social analysis. It was largely indifferent to the increasingly extensive and rigorous empirical examination of social problems and declined to equip itself with the analytic tools necessary to grapple with such forms of enquiry. It thereby set itself on the margins of major intellectual currents then beginning to shape secular thinking about social and economic issues and lost the opportunity either to draw from them or to influence them in a Catholic direction.

Few places were more willing in principle to embrace Catholic social teaching than Ireland, but its actual impact on social policy was smaller than the level of interest and comment it generated would suggest. This was not entirely surprising given the generality and lack of positive direction in Catholic social principles, and the lack of relevance to Irish conditions of many of the Vatican’s preoccupations in the social field. Even the Church’s activities in social service provision seemed little touched by Catholic social thought — the religious congregations providing such services acted much the same way after *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* as they had before.¹⁶³ The doctrine

¹⁶³ Some papal pronouncements in the social field did have a direct bearing on the role of the church in the social services, but the most important of these, such as Pius XI’s encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929) on education, had the effect in Ireland of confirming and shoring up what the church was already doing rather than offering a basis for new developments.

of subsidiarity did lead to some resistance on the part of the Catholic church to the expansion of state social service provision, but even that was more intermittent and unsystematic than is often believed.¹⁶⁴

An rare attempt to define a blueprint for governance based on Catholic vocationalist principles was undertaken by the Commission on Vocational Organisation, which had been appointed by De Valera in 1938 under the chairmanship of the bishop of Galway, Dr Michael Browne. Its report, which was completed in 1943, was strong on criticism of the existing system but its proposals for an alternative were grandiose, uncosted and lacking an air of realism. A smaller effort in a similar direction was presented by Dr John Dignan, bishop of Clonfert, in his pamphlet, *Social Security: Outlines of a Scheme of National Health Insurance* (1944), which grew out of his experience as chairman of the National Health Insurance Society. While confining its attention to health insurance, Dr Dignan's pamphlet echoed the report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation in being severe in its criticisms of existing provision while being fanciful and speculative in proposing an alternative. Both documents, in J. H. Whyte's words, were 'intellectually undistinguished documents', they were received unsympathetically both in the cabinet and the civil service (some ministerial responses to them were scornful) and did more to expose the poverty of Catholic social thought in Ireland than to influence policy (Whyte 1980, pp. 103-6).

¹⁶⁴ Thus, for example, while the church's role in opposing the government's Mother and Child Scheme in 1950-51 has been dwelt on at length, less attention has been given to the broad welcome (or at least acceptance) which it simultaneously accorded the 1952 Social Welfare Act. See Keogh (1996) for a useful account of the diversity of views within the Catholic church on the state's role in social matters.

The 1960s and after

The 1960s brought a double transition in the Catholic church's role in the social field in Ireland. First, the long expansion in the numbers of Catholic religious personnel came to an end and soon turned into a decline. This turnaround struck earliest and hardest in the religious congregations, both female and male: having begun to fall in the 1960s, vocations to female religious congregations and male orders of brothers quickly collapsed and had dried to a trickle by the 1980s (recruitment to the diocesan clergy held up for a good deal longer — Weafer 1988). The consequence today is that the religious congregations have dwindling and rapidly ageing memberships and some have begun to plan for their own demise. The process of disengagement from the schools, hospitals and other services which they built up in over the previous hundred years is now well underway. This process typically has two stages — first a withdrawal by religious personnel into administrative and managerial positions and then an orderly exit in which they are sometimes strive to retain links or influence of a vestigial kind with the institutions they leave behind. As this movement has become general throughout the Catholic church in Ireland, the consequence is that the role of the church as mass provider of social services is fast coming to an end.

The 'option for the poor'

As Catholic strength in social service provision began to fade in the 1960s, Catholic social thought entered an extraordinary period of ferment and development. The accession of Pope John XXIII in 1958 and the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 were key markers of the start of this phase. Its high-point was the conference of Latin American bishops in Medellín in Colombia in 1968 and the eruption of liberation theology into the consciousness of the international Catholic church. Concepts of solidarity with the poor and marginalised, of 'conscientisation' of the masses and of confrontation with secular authority in the cause of social justice which were espoused in Medellín electrified those in the Catholic church who were impatient with old conservatism. John XXIII had abandoned traditional

Catholic suspicion of the welfare state and had adopted a hopeful view of what capitalist development could do for human kind. The Latin American experience took many in the church a step beyond this optimism, including John's successor, Pope Paul VI. Paul's encounters with the reality of Third World poverty in Latin America and with the daring of liberation theology had radicalised him to a degree previously unknown in Rome. He hesitated to endorse the scepticism about 'development', the call to confrontation and the 'option for the poor' with which Medellín had challenged the church worldwide. But his pronouncements (particularly his apostolic letter, *Octogesima Adveniens*, which marked the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*) did endorse the view that social problems required political solutions and also required that the church be guided by local wisdom and the precise nature of local social circumstances in deciding what form local political solutions should take (Dorr 1992, pp. 205 ff.).

The changes in Catholic social teaching wrought by Medellín and Paul VI's responses to it were as much about method and the nature of the church's teaching authority as about content. They reflected a view that social teaching should not emerge from on high by way of deductions from broad, Vatican-ordained social principles. Rather, they should emerge from the 'signs of the times' as evident in local or regional circumstances. Since Rome could not read the signs of the times around the world, this approach also meant that local and regional voices could be authoritative in determining the proper course for the Catholic social action to follow in particular regions — just as the Latin American bishops had done at Medellín. Since local and regional voices from around the world could not all be expected to say the same thing, this in turn allowed for variation and flexibility in Catholic teaching in place of the old claim to universal validity. Thus a whole new set of principles entered Catholic approaches to social questions. Attention was directed downwards to local circumstances rather than upward to general doctrines, teaching authority on social issues devolved to some degree from Rome to those in touch with local circumstances, and regional diversity was allowed for in place of the old universality and uniformity. The very notion of Catholic social

thought as a unitary, general and universally valid set of principles, laid out in Rome and handed down to the faithful everywhere, was implicitly abandoned and replaced by a more fragmentary, variable and democratically sensitive approach.

Social justice and the Irish Catholic church

While the new departures on social justice which emerged during the pontificate of Paul VI have since generated conservative counter-reaction within the church, they have left their mark everywhere in the Catholic world, not least in Ireland (for a good general account, see Fuller 2002, pp. 213-224). A noticeable shift towards left of centre took place in the Irish church in the late 1960s and 1970s, the empirical analysis of Irish social conditions, with a particular focus on issues connected with poverty and underdevelopment, began to be pioneered under church auspices (the discipline of sociology was initially established in Ireland by priests), and Irish bishops adopted a more consistent focus on issues of social justice in their pastorals (as reflected especially in the joint pastoral, *The Work of Justice* 1977).

Two institutional developments in the Irish church can be pointed to as indicative of these developments, both of which in their own way reflect a new growth emerging out of old traditions.

Trócaire

The first was the founding of Trócaire in 1973, the Irish Catholic church's agency for Third World development. Set up as a trust by the Irish conference of bishops, this was a response to the call by Paul VI and the Third World church for a concerted Catholic championing of the poor and the marginalised. Trócaire quickly became Ireland's largest non-governmental agency in the field of Third World development and, since non-governmental development aid was relatively strong in Ireland, it became a significant actor in the world of international aid.

Trócaire has a number of strong links with the mainstream Catholic church. As an episcopal trust, it is under the general control of the bishops and is viewed within the diocesan church as an important form of institutional witness to the gospel message. It also is rooted in a very practical fashion in an element of traditional Catholic ritual practice — its main means of fund-raising (and one that has proved highly successful) is the Lenten collection, which is run in conjunction with parishes and Catholic schools throughout the country. This collection gives a new form of expression to the old tradition of ritual self-denial during the Lenten period (and as such appeals especially to children). At the same time it gives Trócaire the life-blood of substantial popular subscription.

While Trócaire is thus clearly a Catholic agency, it nevertheless marks such a radical break with past traditions of Catholic social action that its Catholic identity is blurred, in wider public perception if not within the church itself. For one thing, in its work overseas, it is careful to present itself as a determinedly non-missionary organisation — its purpose is development, not Catholic propagation. In stark reversal of traditional priorities, its work in the field is drained of any overt Catholic message, and its inspiration in Catholic thinking is held firmly in the background. While it works cooperatively with Irish missionary agencies in developing countries, it maintains a strict non-missionary identity.

The secular nature of its mission is reflected in its personnel. It is staffed by lay people, hired for their professional expertise in development work rather than for their devotion to the faith. This in turn reflects the conviction that the organisation's worth lies in its technical competence and commitment, not in its denominational colour.

In all these ways, Trócaire has moved far outside the mould of traditional Catholic provision of social services and in its day-to-day work has merged in with the style and structures of its secular counterparts. This is not to say that its foundations in Catholic social teaching have been lost, but rather that its work is designed as a form of Christian witness for the existing institutional church rather than as a means of expanding the reach of the church or winning converts.

CORI

The second institutional development I want to point to here is the collective forum for social action which has been created by the religious congregations under the umbrella of CORI, the Conference of Religious of Ireland. This organisation was founded originally as the Conference of Major Religious Superiors in 1960, at which time it played a largely defensive, obstructive role designed to protect church interests in social provision. Today it brings together some 135 member congregations incorporating more than 10,000 personnel in 1,200 locations around the country. Some of its members continue to regard it as a rearguard defensive mechanism, designed to protect as much as possible of the congregations' influence in the social services as their numbers decline and their hold weakens.

For other members, however, it has provided the platform for a re-grouping and re-direction of the congregations' efforts, as required by the dictates of the new Catholic thinking on social justice. This has occurred particularly under the auspices of CORI's Justice Office for which the cause of solidarity with the poor requires a lesser emphasis on mass social services for a society increasingly well-endowed with secular provision and a more concerted focus on the plight of the marginalised. Furthermore, Christian solidarity with the marginalised requires not simply the provision of services, along the lines of the congregations' traditional role. Rather it requires a challenge to the structural causes of poverty and social exclusion, the articulation of detailed alternatives and peaceful struggle to bring these alternatives into being. This role requires it to maintain an interest in education and health services, the main traditional preserves of its membership. However, this interest is increasingly directed at shaping those services from outside rather than at mainstream involvement in their delivery. It also extends into a wider range of areas such as unemployment, poverty, taxation and public spending, discrimination, community participation in decision making and so on.

While this radical wing of CORI might be thought of as the parallel within Ireland of the overseas development work carried on by

Trócaire, it differs from Trócaire in a number of respects. First, it is in the form of a conference rather than an active agency and its main focus is on the development of policy rather than on implementation. Its focus on policy sometimes involves it in devising and testing out new forms of service provision (such as the Part-time Job Opportunities Programme which it piloted in the 1990s) but these are transitional activities designed to influence state policy rather than to provide new fields of activity for the church itself.

Secondly, as an organisation of religious rather than of the hierarchy, it is somewhat removed from the popular pastoral links of the diocesan church. It has no popular outreach along the lines of Trócaire's Lenten collection, though it has made efforts to engage lay people around the country in its work through a system of regional associations and networks. Its material base lies in the resources which have been accumulated by the religious congregations rather than in direct popular subscription. It is thus somewhat less constrained by popular conservatism in the stances it adopts on social issues (though a degree of conservatism in its own membership means that it is far from entirely free in this regard).

However, despite these differences, many of its operational methods echo those of Trócaire. It relies heavily on technical expertise in the fields of economics, sociology and social administration as a basis of its influence — it aims to speak to policy makers in their own language and at a level of competence which matches anything the public policy system can throw up. It often draws on lay professionals to provide that expertise, and does so without undue regard for their religious outlooks. The central secretariat which carries out this analytical function is small and its capacity for technically sophisticated analysis and lobbying is organisationally precarious given its dependence on certain key individual personnel (measures to increase the number of religious with the necessary skills and experience have been undertaken in recent years). Yet, it is capable of offering a sustained, technically sophisticated critique of social and economic policy. This critique is informed by the new Catholic thinking on social justice, but

it relies on detailed technical analysis of real conditions rather than on an appeal to theology as its source of authority.

Effects

The effects of the new Catholic approach to social questions in Ireland are hard to quantify. This is so in part because the new approach is by no means universal within the church. Strong residues of a defensive stance in regard to the powers and privileges of the church are still present and these sometimes work at cross-purposes to the social justice mission. However, the authority and standing of the church have been thrown behind a large part of the new agenda and these amount to substantial moral backing for the cause of social justice. In spite of the church's weakened position in Ireland today, its stance on these issues continues to carry considerable moral weight. At a minimum, the attention it has focused on social justice issues has helped to keep them on the table in national debates about policy development. Neo-liberal doctrines calling for a freeing of the market and the rolling back of the state have not succeeded in pushing these issues to margins in Ireland, as they have done in some other countries. While there may be many reasons for this, the counterweight offered by church support for a social justice perspective is undoubtedly one.

This effect also operates beyond the level of general doctrine. The technocratic dimension of the church's work on social issues has also given it a role in shaping the details of policy. It is significant in this regard, for example, that CORI Justice is included in the community and voluntary pillar which was added to the national partnership process in September 1996. This gives CORI a direct role in the partnership negotiations which have played such a central part in shaping both the details and the general evolution of public policy. In this it acts not as a defender of the institutional interests of the church but as a representative of the marginalised groups to which the community and voluntary pillar is intended to give a voice.

Conclusion

The Catholic church's role in social policy has experienced a major transformation in the last thirty years. Prior to the Second Vatican Council and the upheavals of the 1960s, it had built up a massive presence in the delivery of social services. However, despite its scale, the impact of Catholic social service provision on the evolution of social policy was more limited than one might expect. This was largely because social services were designed to propagate the faith rather than influence social distribution or shape the secular ordering of society. As a result, the church did not subject them to the continuous quest for improvement in purely social terms which would have made them into a more dynamic element of social provision.

In contrast to the strength of the church's presence in social service provision, the church's formal social teaching was often vague and didactic and its positive effects on social policy are hard to discern, in Ireland or elsewhere. While serving to maintain a general concern for the poor in Catholic teaching, it was too unwilling to grapple with specifics and recommend solutions to serve as an inspiration to sustained action.

The pre-1960s pattern of strong social provision and weak social thought has been reversed in the decades since then. Catholic social provision has declined in the face of a rapid fall in the numbers of religious, but Catholic social thought has become more assertive, sharp edged and committed to the cause of social justice (even though there may be less than complete unanimity within the church on the desirability of this development). It has also become more empirical and technocratic in its methods of analysis, and more geared to influencing public policy at a detailed technical level as well as at the level of general principle. Its strengths as a constructive critic of the state's social policies have helped counter-balance the severe set-backs to the church's moral authority that have flowed from the scandals and revelations of abuse of recent years. In earlier decades, massive numbers of church personnel were deployed to deliver social services,

but they had little creative impact on thinking about social issues. Today the massive numbers are quickly shrinking, the system of Catholic social services is in decline, and the church itself is on the defensive for its failings in the past.. However, the new models of Catholic social action that have been created suggest that smaller numbers, concentrated and deployed at the cutting edge of social policy, can have a substantial impact on the shape of future developments in the field of social justice.

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7.

Addressing Public Policy from a Catholic Social Thought Perspective: An Irish Experience

*Seán Healy, S.M.A. and Brigid Reynolds, S.M.*¹⁶⁵

Catholic Social Thought

Jesus summed up the way of life of the Christian as ‘loving God and loving the neighbour as oneself’. The core value is love and life is to be lived in right relationship with God, people and the environment. Catholic Social Thought is about concretising this understanding in the historical reality of the time.

The Catholic Social Thought Tradition encompasses a large and diverse body of teaching. Among the main themes are the following: dignity of the human person and human rights, the common good, the universal destination of goods, concern for the poor, family, the dignity of work, the right to work and the rights of workers, subsidiarity, solidarity, participation, peace, international cooperation for development, care of the environment etc. This tradition looks at the pressing social issues of the day. In analysing these issues it critically assesses the negative dimensions of society that diminish ourselves, dehumanise others, and degrade the environment and it promotes the positive forces in society that dignify, humanise, and sustain the delicate bonds that unite us all as a human family.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ An earlier version of this paper was presented to the conference *The Call to Justice: The Legacy of Gaudium et Spes* in Vatican City, March 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel G. Groody, *Globalisation, Spirituality and Justice*, Orbis, New York 2007

The goal of Catholic Social Thought is not to offer an answer to every economic or social question but instead to offer a lens through which to view specific social and economic problems. This perspective argues that economic and social actions are inherently moral actions. Yet the assertion that values matter is a contested issue in many policy areas. Catholic Social Teaching is not a fixed unchanging body of doctrine but a developmental understanding of the church's social mission in a dynamically changing world. While it draws heavily on theology, it also bases its reflection on philosophy, economics, sociology and other social sciences. It is addressed to all people of good will and it seeks to understand better the challenges of the current world and to provide an ethical foundation for global transformation. It provides a particular challenge to groups like CORI Justice who commit to living the Christian way of life.

CORI Justice's rationale for social engagement based on Scripture and the Catholic Social Thought tradition

CORI Justice subscribes to the values of both human dignity and the centrality of the community. The person is seen as growing and developing in a context that includes other people and the environment. Justice is seen in terms of relationships as proclaimed in Christian scriptures where justice is understood as a harmony that comes from fidelity to right relationships with God, people and the environment.¹⁶⁷ CORI Justice works from the understanding that a just society is one that is structured in such a way as to promote these right relationships so that human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated and the environment is respected and protected.

¹⁶⁷ For a more detailed presentation see Seán J. Healy and Brigid Reynolds, *Social Analysis in the Light of the Gospel*, CORI 1983

CORI Justice's analyses and reflections have led it to the conclusion that the society of today is not the kind of society envisaged in the Scriptures and the Catholic Social Thought tradition. It does not accept the divisions it sees. Like many others it wishes to work for a society where the hungry are filled with good things (Luke 1:53). Taking inspiration from the Beatitudes it seeks to work with Christ and all who share His values, for the coming of the Kingdom where the poor will be happy because they have sufficiency, where those who hunger and thirst for what is right will see their vision concretised in the structures of society, where the gentle (or 'the lowly') will be guaranteed their right to a part of the earth's resources (Matthew 5:4). With St Paul it is conscious that the entire creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth (Romans 8:22). It strives to play a positive role in this great act of giving birth to a future society based on Christian values.

CORI Justice is challenged, energised and encouraged by this Scriptural vision as it is carried forward in the Catholic Social Thought tradition. From Pope Leo XIII who began the call for major changes in the socio-economic order to the present day, the Church is calling us to transform society. Pope Paul VI called for *bold transformations, innovations that go deep*.¹⁶⁸ His exhortation, that *it is not enough to point out injustices and to utter pious words and denunciations; such words lack meaning unless they are accompanied by responsible political and social action*,¹⁶⁹ directs the agenda. The Synod of Bishops (1971) echoed this appeal when it asserted that *action on behalf of justice and the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel*.¹⁷⁰

More recently Pope John Paul II called for a complete analysis to reveal unjust structures so that they may be examined and transformed to build a just earth.¹⁷¹ It is not possible to transform society until the present "form" is known. This requires a rigorous social analysis to

¹⁶⁸ Pope Paul VI, 1967, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 32

¹⁶⁹ Pope Paul VI, 1971, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 48

¹⁷⁰ Synod of Bishops, 1971, *Justice in the World*, no. 6

¹⁷¹ Pope John Paul II, 1981, *Laborum Exercens*, no. 2

*scrutinise the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel.*¹⁷² Secondly it is necessary to articulate a vision of the transformed society that is in keeping with Christian values. This vision needs to engage the imagination of others and so involve them in the debate. It also needs to be sufficiently practical so that people can envisage new structures to bring about the new reality. This is a process of empowering people to be transformers of society so that they have *reasons for living and hoping.*¹⁷³

Later Pope John Paul II talked about the virtues needed to be involved in this transformation. *To destroy such structures (of sin which impede the full realisation of those who are in any way oppressed by them) and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience.*¹⁷⁴ He also alerts us to our responsibilities to change the structures that cause destruction of the environment. *Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone...there is an order in the universe which must be respected...the ecological crises is a moral issue.*¹⁷⁵

Structural analysis and working for structural and systemic change are cornerstones of the agenda of CORI Justice. As our societies have grown in sophistication the need for appropriate structures has become more urgent. While the aspiration that everyone should enjoy the good life, and the good will to make it available to all, is an essential ingredient in a just society, the good life will not happen without the deliberate establishment of structures to facilitate its development. In the past charity, in the sense of alms-giving by some individuals on an arbitrary and ad hoc basis, was seen as sufficient to ensure that everyone could cross the threshold of human dignity. Calling on the work of social historians it could be argued that charity in this sense was never a *sufficient* method for dealing with poverty. Certainly it is not an adequate methodology for dealing with the problems of today.

¹⁷² *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Orbis Books, no. 4

¹⁷³ *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Orbis Books, no. 31.

¹⁷⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 38

¹⁷⁵ Pope John Paul II, Message of January 1, 1990.

As world disasters consistently show, charity and the heroic efforts of voluntary agencies, which are very admirable and inspiring, cannot on their own, solve these problems on a long-term basis. Appropriate structures are required to ensure that every person has access to the resources needed to live life with dignity, and to give long-term protection to the environment.

Few people would disagree that the resources of the planet are for the use of the people, not just the present generation but also the generations still to come.¹⁷⁶ In Old Testament times, these resources were closely tied to land and water. A complex system of laws about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years (Lev 25: 1-22, Deut 15: 1-18) was devised to ensure, on the one hand, that no person could be disinherited, and on the other, that land and debts could not be accumulated or the land exploited.

Interdependence, mutuality, solidarity, connectedness are words which are used loosely today to express a consciousness which is very Christian. All of creation is seen as a unit which is dynamic, each part is related to every other part, depends on it in some way and can also affect it.¹⁷⁷ When we focus on the human family this means that each person depends on others, initially for life itself and subsequently for the resources and relationships needed to grow and develop. To ensure that the connectedness of the web of life is maintained, each person is meant to reach out to support others in ways that are appropriate for their growth and in harmony with the rest of creation. This thinking respects the integrity of the person while recognising that the person can only achieve his or her potential in right relationships with others and the environment. All of this implies the need for appropriate structures and infrastructures to ensure that every person and all people¹⁷⁸ have access to the resources needed to enjoy fullness of life (John 10:10). The compelling conclusion from studying Catholic Social Thought is that

¹⁷⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Obis Books, no. 69.

¹⁷⁷ An interesting analysis of the connectedness of all creation can be found in two books by Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life*, Harper Collins, London, 1996 and *The Hidden Connections*, Harper Collins, London 2002.,

¹⁷⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 1967, no. 14

Catholics are called to be involved with the socio-economic and cultural reality of their time in a way that contributes to their own development, the development of other people and the care of the earth simultaneously and in solidarity.

In summary then CORI Justice understands its role as a call to analyse reality, to take action to transform what is destructive and dehumanising and to cooperate in building structures that promote the reign of God.

Linking theory and action

CORI Justice believes that if these themes are to be actualised in the real world then various outcomes must be realised for all people on the planet. This would require, among other things, that every person have:

- Sufficient income to live life with dignity,
- Meaningful work,
- Appropriate accommodation,
- Adequate healthcare,
- Relevant education,
- Cultural respect, and
- Real participation.

This is not an exhaustive listing but it identifies key aspects of any future that would be consistent with the Catholic Social Thought vision. These and related issues also place a series of responsibilities on individuals, on governments and on society as a whole. They have implications for what is expected of individuals and of how these conditions are to be secured.

CORI Justice is involved in addressing the policy and implementation dimensions of a wide range of issues crucial to securing this future for all. These include:

- Poverty,
- Income distribution

- Work, unemployment and job-creation
- Housing and accommodation
- Taxation
- Sustainability
- Public services
- Education¹⁷⁹
- Healthcare¹⁸⁰
- Rural and regional development
- Participation
- Third World Aid
- Migration
- Social exclusion

Again, this is not an exhaustive list of the issues addressed .

CORI Justice has believed from its inception that initiatives based on on-going action and reflection were crucially important if change was to come and if its work was to be credible. The themes already identified have provided a framework to underpin its agenda. Talking about solidarity is not enough. It is crucial that action is taken to generate the necessary change to build solidarity. CORI Justice understands that building the reign of God involves doing what we can to move the present reality from where it is towards the Gospel vision of a just society. This provides a context and a framework for the work. It involves CORI Justice in:

- *Identifying what the present reality really is.* Much of the work is underpinned by detailed social analysis. In doing this work CORI Justice follows a relatively standard approach in trying to identify the economic, political, cultural, social and historical reality. It also draws on and engages with the work of Ireland's major research institutes and providers of statistical data.

¹⁷⁹ Within CORI work on education is led by CORI Education

¹⁸⁰ Within CORI work on healthcare is led by CORI Healthcare

- *Developing some awareness of what alternatives to the present situation are viable or possible.* From the perspective of faith, CORI Justice believes that if it is to play a role in moving the world from where it is towards a future consistent with the Gospel vision, then it is essential that it seek alternatives to what is being offered in the present reality. From the perspective of the wider world which is experiencing so much change CORI Justice believes it is also important to seek alternatives to the vision guiding current policy. Consequently, it puts a lot of work into seeking out alternatives, re-imagining the way things might be and assessing what could be both desirable and viable.
- *Discovering which of these are closest to the Gospel vision.* Much effort is invested into assessing the various possibilities and deciding on which, if any, to promote or support. In doing this CORI Justice has developed a series of mechanisms including ‘round tables’ and ‘conversations’ involving theologians, social analysts and people working on the issues or areas being addressed, together with its members, in a process of analysis, reflection and discernment to discover what the Gospel might be calling them to do in the situation being considered.
- *Taking action to move towards these alternatives.* Following on the preceding steps CORI Justice seeks out models of good practice that could lead towards the desired alternative or involves itself in designing action to reach such a goal. This results in involvement in a range of activities that must be addressed if the ‘vision’ issue is to be treated seriously by others who are sceptical or threatened. In practice this has involved CORI Justice in a wide range of activities ranging from piloting programmes to researching issues to organising conferences and seminars and workshops to advocating positions. As in other stages of this process, a wide range of people and organisations are involved.

- *Recycling the process on an ongoing basis.*

In practice the CORI Justice develops its work through four programmes:

- Public Policy
- Enabling and Empowering
- Spirituality
- Advocacy and Communication

Within these programmes there are more than twenty projects.

In the *public policy* area the major projects include:

- involvement in national Social Partnership (cf below);
- an integrated Budget project that provides a detailed analysis and critique of the Irish Government's annual Budget.
- Production and publication of an annual Socio-Economic Review.
- Organisation of an annual public policy conference on a specific issue of relevance to the time.

In the *enabling and empowering* area the projects include:

- Development of an MA in Social Justice and Public Policy accredited by Dublin City University and taught in All Hallows College..
- Anchoring of two national networks involving substantial numbers of people in addressing issues of social justice and public policy from a values perspective.
- Workshops, Seminars, Teaching

Under the heading of '*spirituality*' the projects include:

- 'Spirituality for Social Engagement' which involves conferences, seminars, publications and local groups focused on this issue.
- Development of a series of 'conversations' on this topic involving a range of people from different disciplines in various locations across the country.

In the area of ‘*advocacy and communication*’ projects include:

- Production of a range of publications annually which include three books, five policy briefings and a regular newsletter.
- Ongoing implementation of a media strategy that includes regular coverage of the issues under consideration.
- The website is updated regularly to keep pace not only with the activities of CORI Justice but also to publicise relevant reports and papers from other sources. This ensures that the website is a useful tool for students and practitioners of public policy.

In line with the Catholic Social Thought tradition CORI Justice seeks to involve people from all strata in society in debate on the issues of concern. It recognises and acknowledges that it does not have all the answers. Rather, it is always struggling to get more accurate answers to the questions it asks and trying to seek out and develop better alternatives to what is already available. It offers its analysis and vision and proposals for action to the wider society for comment and critique on a regular basis. It seeks an ongoing dialogue on these issues with the wider society as well as with those who share its Faith.

Social Partnership

Social partnership as it is structured in Ireland today emerged in the late 1980s when Ireland’s economic and social development was in dire straits. There was deep recession, falling living standards, declining employment, very high unemployment levels, large-scale emigration, huge exchequer borrowing requirements and a debt/GNP level that was unsustainable. O’Donnell¹⁸¹ concluded that “by the mid-1980s, Ireland’s economic, social and political strategy was in ruins, and its hope of prospering in the international economy was in considerable doubt”.

¹⁸¹ O’Donnell, R. (1998) *Ireland’s Economic Transformation*, University of Pittsburgh Centre for West European Studies.

Social partnership emerged from a concerted effort by Government, trade unions, employers and farming organisations to address this reality. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC), of which all of these sectors were members, produced a strategy document which, in turn, provided the basis for a three-year national agreement entitled *The Programme for National Recovery*.

Following this programme there have been six further national agreements, five of which covered a three-year period. The sixth (i.e. the current) programme is a ten-year framework covering the period 2006-2015 (with regular reviews). In this process the various social partners did not give up their own goals, objectives or tactics. However, they did agree “an inclusive overview of options, challenges and trade-offs, in the period covered by each of these strategy reports” according to McCarthy.¹⁸²

Three pillars negotiated and agreed the first three programmes with Government, namely, the business community, the trade unions and the farming organisations. During that time CORI Justice frequently pointed out that a large section of society was not represented in this process but was affected by the decisions made. Among the (overlapping) groups identified by CORI Justice as not being represented in their own right were poor people, unemployed people and women. Eventually, the Government decided to add a fourth pillar to the process representing the Community and Voluntary sector. A number of groups, including CORI Justice, were invited to be social partners in 1996. Since then CORI Justice has been one of the social partners that negotiated and signed four national agreements covering the period 1997 to 2015.

¹⁸² McCarthy, D. (1997) “Building a Partnership” in Reynolds, B. and Sean Healy (eds) *Social Partnership in a New Century*, CORI Justice, Dublin

Strategies

Social analysis and vision building

In its various programmes and projects and especially in the social partnership arena CORI Justice approaches its work from the perspective already outlined. Social analysis is the basic tool. The stance taken in approaching this analysis is the perspective of securing the human dignity of poor and excluded people. This analysis is updated each year. On the academic side CORI Justice engages with the many pieces of analyses produced by a number of reliable and credible research institutions both State and private. This analysis is also tested ‘at the coal face’ against the experience of people who are excluded from the benefits of decision-making and by our many members who work with these groups.

Communication and dialogue

CORI Justice has regularly articulated and shared its analysis of the present situation, its vision for the future and its ideas of how the Irish situation could be moved towards this vision. It has been involved in an ongoing dialogue with all the various actors in Irish society involved in these processes. It has sought to involve as broad a range of Irish society as possible. In conducting this ongoing dialogue with those who share its Faith and with the wider society it has developed the bilingualism required to ensure these dialogues are fruitful. It seeks to translate this perspective into a language that can be understood by the wider society that does not share its faith and uses all modern means of communication to share this perspective with as wide an audience as possible.

Impact in specific areas

In its efforts, from a Catholic Social Thought perspective, to engage with various disciplines and impact on Government, Social Partners, others involved in various public policy arenas and the wider society, CORI Justice has been involved in a wide range of issues in recent

years. We list some of these below, together with a key impact CORI Justice has seen emerge from its work. In each case CORI Justice:

- Produced an analysis of the issue (sometimes updated on an annual basis).
- Identified the problems as seen from CORI Justice's values-based; perspective as outlined above;
- Articulated an alternative or series of alternative initiatives or courses of action that would see the issue addressed to produce a situation more in keeping with a Gospel-based view of the world;
- Provided the research to support its position;
- Communicated its position on the issue in a wide range of arenas including public media;
- Developed an advocacy campaign on the issue;
- Conducted an ongoing dialogue with those involved in policy development (politicians and others) to test and/or advocate its proposals;
- Revised its proposals in the light of the responses it received if the critiques provided were seen as valid.

In some cases CORI Justice had to pilot its ideas (e.g. on turning welfare payments into paid jobs for many people) or produce original research (e.g. on issues related to Basic Income) to convince a wider audience of the viability or validity of its proposals.

Below we list the impact, or otherwise, we had in the following areas

Issue	Impact of CORI Justice
Income Adequacy	Got agreement that the lowest social welfare rate for a single person should be set at 30% of gross average industrial earnings. This was a huge improvement on the previous situation and was necessary as 50% of those at risk of poverty in Ireland live in households headed by a person who is neither employed nor among the unemployed. They are outside the labour force (i.e. elderly, ill, caring, disabilities) and depend on social welfare payments. The Government committed itself to reaching this level of payment for the lowest social welfare rates for a single person by 2007 and delivered on that commitment.
Work	Promoted the recognition of unpaid work, much of it done by women in caring roles in the society. This issue is now on the national policy agenda. There is a growing recognition of the need for work/life balance as it is called in Ireland. The major challenge is to ensure that people will have sufficient income to underpin the emergence of such a balance. Ireland is still some distance, however, from giving appropriate recognition to unpaid work. The need to provide some form of basic income for people in this situation is being progressed slowly.
Housing and Accommodation	Played a key role in having Government accept that social housing should be a major priority in policy. Targets have now been accepted for the first time that, if implemented, would lead to the elimination of ‘waiting lists’ for social housing, a reversal of the trend of the last two

decades when the number of households on these lists remained consistently high. Implementing these new targets will require very substantial financial investment. The outcome will have a huge impact on people's access to appropriate accommodation - a basic requirement if human dignity is to be respected.

Migration, refugees, asylum-seekers and racism

Highlighted the need for an integrated migration policy that encompassed migrant rights, refugees, asylum seekers and racism. Government has now taken a number of key initiatives towards developing such an integrated policy. CORI Justice is directly involved in this policy development.

The issue of what constitutes 'progress'

Challenged the generally accepted measurement of progress and sought to broaden it from GDP/GNP to encompass a wide range of other issues. CORI Justice played a key role in having a comprehensive list of progress indicators produced by the Central Statistics Office (funded by Government). These are now measured on a regular basis and the results are published. CORI Justice also contributes to the work being done by the OECD to generate a standard set of progress indicators to be measured by all countries.

MA in Social Justice and Public Policy

Developed, and continues to play a major role in, a Masters Degree programme that integrates the study of social justice and public policy. This MA programme emerged from CORI Justice's internship programme, implemented over a ten-year period, where all the modules were originally developed.

The ‘Lisbon’ Agenda	Sought to ensure that the EU did not promote competitiveness and growth at the expense of social inclusion and social cohesion. Despite much work in this area there is little evidence as we write that CORI Justice has been successful in this regard. It has, however, succeeded, with others, in putting it on the Irish Government’s agenda.
Third World Aid	Played a leading role in the grouping of organisations that convinced Government to commit to meeting the UN target for Third World Aid (0.7% of GNP) by 2012. After a shaky start, progress towards meeting this commitment is now on target.

These are just some of the issues addressed. There are many more that could be listed and elaborated. CORI Justice has not always been successful in its efforts. However, any fair evaluation of the past twenty five years would acknowledge that CORI Justice has addressed many difficult issues and has developed widespread credibility across the spectrum. The Catholic Social Thought perspective has been and is a very valuable lens through which to view issues and discern action.

Engagement with Policy-Making Structures

Reflecting on the experience of CORI Justice in its various projects and efforts to influence the shape of society a number of conclusions emerge.

- CORI Justice is now deeply engaged in the policy-making process in Ireland particularly through its recognition as a Social Partner and its involvement in the negotiation and implementation of national agreements.
- CORI Justice is represented in a wide range of other policy-making arenas that flow from its involvement in social partnership. For example, it is currently a member of the Board of

COMHAR, the national sustainable development partnership forum. Since 1992 it has had a seat on the National Economic and Social Forum. Since 1997 it has been elected to membership of the National Economic and Social Council. It was also a member of the National Strategy for Women Review Group. It is, or has been, a member of a range of working groups addressing issues such as housing, taxation policy, poverty and social exclusion, equality, Travelling People, Third World Aid, etc.

- CORI Justice produces about twelve publications a year. These publications form part of the landscape of policy development and are widely used by a range of actors in the various policy making arenas.
- CORI Justice has good working relationships with all political parties who have elected members in the Dail and Seanad.
- CORI Justice also meets from time to time with civil and public servants who are dealing with the various issues it seeks to have addressed.
- It is involved in enabling and empowering a wide range of other organisations and individuals to play an active part in promoting the issues it addresses. This involves training, mentoring and a range of other activities.
- It facilitates two national Networks focused on social justice and public policy
- Its annual Budget project is recognised as a comprehensive, competent, timely body of work on which a large number of actors in policy-making arenas draw. This project includes research, publications, meetings, media interventions and a range of other work before and after the Government produces its annual Budget each year.
- CORI Justice has developed links and a structured, ongoing dialogue with a wide range of other actors in civil society.
- When appropriate CORI Justice seeks and receives media coverage (electronic and print; national and local) for its initiatives.

Being Credible

Developing and maintaining credibility is crucial if a Church body such as the CORI Justice is to have an ongoing impact and engage constructively with the various institutions working on policy development. From our experience with CORI Justice we suggest a Church body should meet the following seven requirements if it is to be a credible actor in the economic, political, cultural and social spheres. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but these seem to us to be especially relevant given our experience in the social partnership and related contexts of Ireland at the start of the 21st century. The seven we suggest are:

- *Social analysis*
For the most part there is no one, clear, obvious, unambiguous reading of reality. However CORI Justice seeks to underpin its work by a detailed and objective as possible social analysis.
- *Dialogue - the issue of conversation*
This involves dialogue with CORI Justice's own membership and constituency, with the wider society and with the policy-making process.
- *Being bilingual*
Dialogue involves CORI Justice in two different 'conversations' going on all the time. These dialogues or conversations are with those who share our Faith and with the wider society. The conversation CORI Justice conducts with the wider society is deeply informed by the conversation it conducts with those who share our Faith. The stance taken in the wider society stems from the insights being shared in the Faith conversation.
- *Vision-building*
CORI Justice believes that if we are to be serious about the reign of God then we must be serious about this issue of vision-building. We need to be willing to envisage alternatives that are attainable. This is especially important in the Irish context, as much of Ireland's development is dependent on the wider world providing a positive environment.
- *On-going action*

CORI Justice seeks to design actions that could lead towards reaching that alternative future. This results in CORI Justice being involved in a range of activities that must be addressed if the ‘vision’ issue is to be treated seriously by others who are sceptical, threatened or comfortable with the status quo.

- *Being prophetic and resisting the temptation to be absorbed by the status quo*

The more one is involved in the wider reality the greater the danger that one will be absorbed by the status quo. Instead of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and working for a world that is closer to its core message, there is a temptation to accept the dominant core meaning underpinning the status quo. This must be resisted.

- *Realising credibility comes through involvement*

Credibility never comes by ‘speaking from on high’. Involvement is essential for credibility to be present. Being a voice is not enough. One must also be involved in action. If CORI Justice is to be credible in the economic, political, cultural and social context then it is crucial that it be involved in a real way.

Ongoing Challenge

CORI Justice always offers its analysis, critique, vision, alternative ideas, and activities etc. as contributions to the public debate on the specific issues addressed. It seeks responses to its positions. It realises that dialogue and conversation with the wider reality are crucial aspects of seeking the truth. It is also aware that it must be open to change in response to what emerges in the dialogue. This dialogue gives new meaning to the challenge presented by the Second Vatican Council when it said: ‘The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping’ (Gaudium et Spes 31)

Do values matter in economic and social policy?
Can Catholic Social Thought help us understand
economic and social issues, especially the goal of a
just society? This book sets out to answer these and
many related questions.

The chapters are papers delivered at a policy
conference held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of
the CORI Justice Office and its work to promote social
justice in Ireland. The book seeks to offer insights into
our understanding of economic and social issues,
particularly efforts to promote a just society.

The goal of Catholic Social Thought is not to offer an
answer to every economic or social question but
instead to offer a lens through which to view specific
social and economic problems. This perspective
argues that economic and social actions are inherently
moral actions. Yet the assertion that values matter is a
contested issue in many areas of public policy.

The authors come from a range of disciplines and
areas of work but all are committed to ongoing public
debate around these key issues and to promoting
public policy which leads to a fairer, more just society
for all.



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