

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Email: [Jrob1517@aol.com](mailto:Jrob1517@aol.com)

Website: [www.trinityfoundation.org](http://www.trinityfoundation.org)

Telephone: 423.743.0199

Fax: 423.743.2005

## Our Comrades at Calvin College

John W. Robbins

### *Through the Eye of a Needle: Readings on Stewardship and Justice*

**Third Edition, 528 pages**

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Christian parents spend enormous sums or incur great debt – Calvin College costs about \$15,000 per year – to obtain educations for their children at Christian colleges. They do not realize that nothing lies like a college catalogue. What a college says it stands for, especially while fundraising, and what its faculty actually teach in the classrooms are often two quite different things.

Take Calvin College, for example. It enjoys a reputation as a Christian college with high academic standards. Yet a book written and produced by the faculty of Calvin College, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, demonstrates that its teaching in the fields of economics, history, political science, and business meets neither minimal standards of Christianity nor scholarship.

### *The Authors*

On its title page, this textbook says it is for use in introductory economics courses at Calvin College. In the Acknowledgements [sic], the authors write, "over the last five years, this collection of readings has become an indispensable part of the teaching of economics at Calvin College." All economics

faculty members participated in producing the book. Members of the committee were Michael Anderson, John Dodge, Eugene Dykema, Kurt Schaeffer, John Tiemstra, Everett Van Der Heide, and Scott Vander Linde. In addition, the work of George Monsma and Roland Hoksbergen on previous editions continues to influence the project. The Acknowledgements conclude by saying, "a word of thanks is in order to Calvin College for its continuing support of this project. The college has absorbed many of the costs of phone bills, secretarial help, computer services and other staff time to provide this book to students at modest cost."

### *The Book*

The book is arranged in six sections of thirty-six essays by various authors. Some of the authors are Loren Wilkinson, Nicholas Wolterstorff, George N. Monsma, Jr., Fred Graham, James Halteman, Ronald Sider, Tracy Early, Lewis Smedes, John Stott, Leland Ryken, Bob Goudzwaard, Brian Griffiths, Michael Novak, and various others. This book, like some mainstream economics textbooks, uses grammatically incorrect but politically correct feminine pronouns. Unlike even the mainstream textbooks, this book is a sustained attack on economic and political freedom. It is a totalitarian and socialist tract, written with religious fervor by admirers of serfdom and the Dark Ages. It is only at the end, after 400 pages of socialist propaganda, that the book offers a half-hearted defense of

capitalism by Brian Griffiths and Michael Novak, which is easily disposed of by another socialist.

### **Loren Wilkinson**

After taking swipes at the "injustice" of the market (17-18) and private property (19), in his essay "Economics: Managing Our Household," Loren Wilkinson has a subhead, "The Problem of Individualism," under which he writes: "Our sense of participation in the community of other people and other life is much less than it was for the medieval person" (20).

"The Protestant Reformation," which Wilkinson also dislikes, "stressed individual salvation, based on individual interpretation of Scripture." He feels that is wrong. He laments the "breakdown of the ties of mutual responsibility between a feudal lord and his serfs, as well as the growing possibilities for trade and amassing wealth..." (20).

Wilkinson titles another section "The Problem of Common Property" and he turns the tragedy of the commons on its head: The tragedy is due to private property, not collectivism: "One of the most dramatic ways to point out the problems of individual ownership in a market economy is to consider the problem of common property, or what the biologist Garrett Hardin has called 'The Tragedy of the Commons.'" The tragedy, as Wilkinson sees it, is that people privately owned cattle: "in a system which is based on the hypothesis of individual interests, detached from ties with nature, humanity, or God, it is almost inevitable that resources held in common will be misused – or that common actions which need to be taken will not be taken unless someone can speak for the whole interconnected system, not just for one individual's interests" (24).

On page 25 Wilkinson writes; "Society is likely to prefer [can "society" prefer?] a different depletion rate for its [notice the collectivism] resources than are individuals for several reasons. The most obvious one is that a society is expected to have a longer lifespan [is "society" alive?] than an individual. Thus society would prefer [could "society" be another name for Wilkinson and his comrades?] to conserve a resource, while an individual, with no reason to be concerned for

posterity...would prefer to use it rapidly.... Society is more likely than an individual to feel [can "society" feel?] an ethical obligation to future generations. Society regards [can "society" think?] itself as continuing, whereas individuals, while concerned perhaps for their own progeny, lack interest in providing for the future of society as a whole.

The Bible and the Reformers, as Wilkinson realizes, emphasized the importance of each individual soul, for the individual lives and society does not, and each soul endures far longer than any earthly society. This Christian primacy of the individual Wilkinson finds reprehensible.

On pages 25 and 26, in a section titled "Doubts About our Economic System," Wilkinson writes: "Technically, it is not at all obvious – in fact, it is increasingly *less* obvious – that *laissez-faire* market views and systems or even government 'intervention,' based on all available knowledge, will solve the problems we have alluded to above and lead us to economic stability and a policy of wise and sustainable resource use.

"Morally, there is a growing doubt that it is *right* to go about economic life in the way briefly described in these pages. In addition to the rapid and wasteful use of resources which such an economy [the private property order] encourages, there are other problems even more immediate. The loneliness, the lack of enduring purpose and fulfillment, the absence of happiness..., the pain of treating others and being treated in an 'economic' way and basic questions about the justice of economic relationships – all of these contribute to doubts about the moral acceptability of our present way of economic life. Someone has suggested that the only problem with capitalism is that no one loves it. Perhaps a more basic problem is that it is not part of the ethos of capitalism that anyone should love *in* it or *through* it – at least all find it very hard to do so." This paragraph, of course, echoes Marx's theory of alienation. Wilkinson concludes his essay by quoting interventionist John Maynard Keynes and socialist Robert Heilbroner.

**Nicholas Wolterstorff**

Wolterstorff's essay is "The Bible and Economics: The Hermeneutical Issues." Displaying what ought to be an embarrassing ignorance of history and economic theory, as well as Christian theology, Wolterstorff writes on page 31: "while the productive impulses and capacities of capitalism have proved to be nothing short of astonishing, industrial capitalism, since its very beginnings about two centuries ago, has left a trail of poverty amidst wealth." "It is in the ideology of socialism and communism, not in that of capitalism, that alleviation of poverty is given high-priority..."(33).

On page 38 Wolterstorff writes: "There is in the Bible no ethic for nuclear arms; neither is there an ethic for religious pluralism, nor for a capitalist economy."

On page 40 Wolterstorff endorses Marxist "Liberation Theology": "I think there can be no doubt that the biblical theme of poverty has been brought to our attention today mainly by the poor of the world and by those who live among them. When poor peasants in the base ecclesial communities of Latin America themselves began to read the Bible and reflect on what they read, the theme of poverty leapt out at them and the tradition of interpretation which they had received was shattered. Liberation theology arose from the situation, and the agenda of the world church has been altered."

#### ***Thomas Ludwig and David Myers***

The seventh essay, "Poor Talk," is taken from *The Christian Century*. The authors write: "cross-national surveys on rich and poor nations do not reveal striking differences in self-reported happiness. Egyptians are as happy as West Germans. Cubans are as happy as Americans"\* (101). I guess this means the Berlin Wall was built to contain the exuberance of the East Germans, and thousands of joyful Cubans risk their lives rafting to America to tell us of their happiness.

#### ***Tracy Early***

The ninth essay is "Corporate Responsibility: Challenge, Confrontation, and 15 Years of ICCR." ICCR is the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. In the course of the essay Early

applauds the work of Ralph Nader, Saul Alinski, James Foreman, and the National Council of Churches. Early describes how the ICCR has pressured corporations to get out of South Africa and take other politically correct actions, and concludes with a statement from the National Council of Churches: "We recognize that there has always been a basic contradiction between the driving force of capitalist economics and the biblical values of justice, mercy, stewardship, service, community, and self-giving love" (132).

#### ***John R W. Stott***

On page 192 British socialist John Stott, in an essay called "Creative by Creation: Our Need for Work," says, "We must press for more job creation. Successive governments in Britain have done much, by methods of tax inducement, regional policies, retraining, and subsidies. But in areas of serious unemployment, Christians ought not to hesitate to lobby parliamentarians, local authorities, industrialists, employers, union officials, and others to create more employment opportunities."

#### ***Lewis Smedes***

On page 233 Smedes presents "Persons and Property": "Thus far we have drawn from the Bible a fairly clear picture. It comes to this: whatever rights a person has to possess property are rooted in the duty he has to use them for the good of his neighbor. Failing in duty, he has lost to that extent the moral right of possession." It follows, of course, that if he has lost the moral right of possession, then the property owner may be expropriated, and if he resists, shot. These writers should be candid enough to admit that their principles lead directly to Stalin, Mao, and Castro.

On page 234 Smedes quotes a Dr. Wurth, "There is no such thing as private property, except within limits." (Presumably Dr. Wurth has a mail order degree.) "And these limits," says Smedes, "are created by the need for a righteous, a just society." So private property seems to be unrighteous and unjust.

On page 235 Smedes writes, "we turn our backs on the Declaration of the French Revolutionary

Assembly that property rights are in themselves 'sacred and inviolable.' We will say No to Blackstone's dictum that property is an '*absolute* right inherent in every Englishman.' We will disagree with John Locke when he tells us that an individual has a natural and inherent right to property prior to his membership in a community. We will not be talked into the Manchester theory of property rights based on the sanctity of the individual's self-interest, enlightened as it may be. We will close the books on Adam Smith and open our Calvin again." Well, I appreciate this unwitting admission that these writers haven't read Calvin lately. They might begin by reading the *Institutes*, Book II, 8, 45-46; and Book IV, 20, 3, 8, 13, 20, 24.

Gottfried Dietze of The Johns Hopkins University, a world-class scholar whom the propagandists and dilettantes at Calvin have never read, wrote on Calvin's view of property:

"Luther's support of private property was matched by John Calvin. Calvin was so emphatic about the value of property that he was said to have enthroned the doctrine of the divine right of property. He realized that common ownership is utopian and denounced the Anabaptists' plan to abolish property and inequality. God, the supreme legislator, by decreeing 'Thou shalt not steal,' ordained the protection of property. What each individual possesses has not fallen to him by chance, but by the distribution of the Sovereign Lord of all. Criticizing idleness as sinful, Calvin felt that God ordained the possession of property as a reward for labor. Property gives man incentive and provides the basis of human progress. It can and should be used to acquire more property. It gives a man a vocation, enables him to provide for his family, and to help others. It is necessary for the peace of society. In view of its extensive blessings, Calvin urged that the institution of property be maintained and that counsel and aid be loaned to those who want to retain their belongings. The state should see to it that every person may enjoy his property without molestation. The prince who squanders the property of his subjects is a tyrant" (*In Defense of Property*, 18).

Smedes proceeds to quote someone named Smeenk, poor fellow, whom he describes as a Dutch Reformed moralist: "the principle that private property, recognized in general as useful for the people as a whole, may never be absolute. The individual interest must, in the event of a conflict, give in to the interests of society as a whole" (235). That, of course, is the ideology of cannibalism.

On page 236 Smedes begins an attack on the view that while an individual may be a steward of God's property, he is not accountable to the state or to society but to God alone. Smedes writes, "we must insist that a person has direct and immediate responsibilities to the community of man. The community not only can but must put its claims on man's duty to use his property for the maintenance of a just and properly ordered society. In short, a person's rights to own property are limited, not only by the everlasting divine law of love, but by the immediate and actual needs of society as they exist here and now."

On page 237 Smedes attacks democracy and free government: "God provides in His mercy and grace an institution charged with the securing of righteousness in the community. We call it government. Government is the voice of authority among men in the task of ordering society justly. Government is the steward of God, too, and His minister for good, for righteousness in society. Local government, state government, federal government – the principle is the same...; It cannot stand idly until a sufficient number of individuals are converted to an acceptance of stewardship before God. Nor can it wait until such people are informed of the needs of people in distant places.... *Nor can society wait on men to be converted into willingness....*" Rulers must expropriate property from unwilling men. They cannot wait for them to be persuaded of their social duty. Smedes makes it clear that those who pretend to be compassionate are eager to use guns to execute their policies, and perhaps their subjects.

### ***Loren Wilkinson, Again***

The next essay is titled "Inheriting the Land: Resources and Justice." On page 243 Wilkinson

finds in the Bible "a principle which we may use to determine what is a just distribution of the earth's [*sic*] resources.... Access to a country's [*sic*] resources is not to be determined in the first instance by social status, contribution, or effort. It is determined by need...."

On page 244 he writes, "The Old Testament legislation implies that basic human needs must affect the distribution of a nation's [*sic*] wealth and, by extension to today's interrelated world, of the world's [*sic*] wealth. The 'milk and honey' is properly shared only if each person has sufficient opportunity to meet basic needs."

On page 245 he concludes "Thus subsistence needs – for everyone – should be met first, even, it would seem, before the fulfillment of some development needs which we in the wealthy West have taken for granted." Thus no American should have a car until every Chinaman has a bicycle.

On page 246 Wilkinson writes, "Thus, when we speak of a 'just distribution' of the earth's [*sic*] resources, we cannot exclude other species. A society which meets all the subsistence and development needs of its people but which destroys or tortures all living things under its control is not a just society." *Ergo*, no American should have a house or a hamburger, for houses and hamburgers require the destruction of living things.

### ***Jasper Lesage***

"Justice for the Poor: The Political Problem of Poverties," says, "poverties in the U. S. cannot be alleviated by placing the onus on the poor. Neither can they be completely alleviated by private agencies, although their work is extremely important.... [W]e must recognize that poverties in the U. S. are evidence of injustice and therefore present a political problem requiring a political solution" (251).

On page 254 Lesage quotes the Roman Catholic bishops: "government has the responsibility to guarantee the provision and maintenance of the economy's infrastructure, such things as roads, bridges, harbors, and means of public communication and transport. It should regulate

trade and commerce in the interest of fairness. It has a specific obligation to assist the poor, the disadvantaged, the handicapped, the unemployed, and others who lack the means to care for themselves. It should assume a positive role in the generation of employment and the establishment of fair labor practices. Government may levy the taxes necessary to meet these responsibilities and citizens have a moral obligation to pay those taxes."

On pages 258 and 259 Lesage writes: "BUT the poor also have a RIGHT to expect that the state will alleviate injustices whenever those other institutions cannot or will not fulfill that responsibility. The poor do not have the luxury of being able to wait while individuals and institutions decide whether or not they have a responsibility to alleviate the plight of the poor.... The state is a God-given institution which allows society to promote justice actively. It cannot afford to neglect the poor."

On page 260 Lesage approvingly quotes Arthur Simon of Bread for the World, a political lobbying organization that has yet to produce any bread for the world.

### ***George N. Monsma, Jr.***

"Abraham Kuyper's Principle of Sphere Sovereignty and Government Economic Policy" argues that the state should intervene in the economy. Monsma refers to the "false faith" that a free economy will bring the greatest good to a society.

On pages 266 and 267 Monsma quotes Kuyper at length with approval. Perhaps some Kuyper fans in Reformed churches should consider these words – and reconsider their esteem for Kuyper:

"Now add the loosening of all social organization, followed by the proclamation of the mercantile gospel of 'laissez faire,' and you understand how the *struggle for life* was announced by the *struggle for money*, so that the law of the animal world, dog eat dog, became the basic law for every social relationship. The thirst and the chase for money, the holy apostle taught us, is the *root of all evil*; and as soon as this angry demon was unchained, at the turn of the century, no deliberation was sharp enough, no

cunning sly enough, no deceit shameful enough in order, through superiority in knowledge, position, and basic capital, to acquire money and ever more money at the expense of the socially weaker.

"This condition would have existed even if the opportunities at the beginning of this struggle had been *equal* for both parties; it became so in much worse degree now that the opportunities were so manifestly *unequal*. On the side of the *bourgeoisie*, there was [*sic*] experience and insight, ability and association, available money and available influence. On the other side was [*sic*] the rural population and the working class, bereft of all means of help, and forced to accept any condition, no matter how unjust, through the constant necessity for food. Even without prophetic gifts, the result of this struggle could readily be foreseen. It could not end otherwise than in the absorption of all calculable value by the larger and smaller capitalists, leaving for the lower strata of society only as much as appeared strictly necessary to maintain these instruments for nourishing capital – for in this system, that is all the workers are held to be.... And so in all of Europe a well-to-do bourgeoisie rules over an impoverished working class, which must steadily increase the wealth of the ruling class, and which is doomed, when it can be of no more use, to sink into the morass of the proletariat.

"The social need is also worsened by the fact that the luxurious bourgeoisie makes a display of its luxury which creates a *false want* in the poorer classes, and through the undermining of that contentment which can be happy even with little, insofar as there was less for the poor man to enjoy, fanned into flames his feverish seeking after pleasure."

On page 267 Monsma quotes Kuyper with approbation:

"Inevitably capital absorbs more and more capital, until it meets a power of resistance which it cannot break. That resistance is, in the present context, the impossibility of the worker remaining alive. And, whatever one may say, LaSalle is perfectly correct in saying that this brazen law of iron necessity is the

curse of our society. Yet this law is a spontaneous consequence of *laissez faire*, of absolutely free competition. Capital absorbs more capital in this way not because of any evil purpose, but simply because it does not meet with any other power of resistance short of the 'to be or not to be' of the worker, the instrument of capital-nourishment."

Monsma comments on Kuyper's words:

"Yes, this is Abraham Kuyper and not Karl Marx speaking. In an age when the injustices of an unrestrained capitalism have been lessened by various forms of government intervention (some of them supported by Kuyper himself, as is discussed below), we should remember the evils such capitalism brought about in the 19th century and thus not fall prey to those who would again seduce us with the siren-song of prosperity for all, if only the government will end its interference in the economy. It was just such a false gospel of the 'liberals' of his day that Kuyper was working against."

On page 269 Monsma quotes another Dutch socialist, Bob Goudzwaard, attacking what he calls the middle-class view of prosperity and the middle class notion of liberty. He talks about the common bourgeois concept of liberty. On page 270 Monsma quotes Goudzwaard as advocating price controls. On page 272 Monsma argues that the Food Stamp Program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and Social Security are proper activities of government. The entire essay by Monsma is a plea for more government intervention, larger welfare programs, more benefits and more "measures to provide for more equal distribution of wealth in the economy" (277).

### ***John Raines***

On page 287 John Raines echoes Darwin and Marx: "It is as beings who work that we become 'historical.' That is, we transform in a developmental way our natural and social environment, and through this same activity transform ourselves. As humans we are literally historical; we become. The most graphic example of this can be found in our early evolution as a species. We evolved biologically in a dialectical relationship

with our work. The opposing thumb, the expansion of the higher brain, and the increasingly elaborate use of tools all evolved simultaneously, over millions of years. Our working is our species' way of being and of becoming. This is the real meaning of God's command to 'subdue' the earth." The superstition of evolution affects all disciplines, not just biology. By the way, the biology department at Calvin College teaches evolution, too.

### **Charles E. Wiler and Kenneth P. Jameson**

The twenty-fourth essay in the book, "Toward a New Social Contract," is taken from a book titled *An Inquiry into the Poverty of Economics*, published by the University of Notre Dame Press, 1983. The authors argue for what they call Post-Keynesian Institutionalism (PKI) and against competitive enterprise and individualism.

A subhead on page 295 reads, "Neither Free Markets Nor Bureaucratic Control." It asserts that there are three possible mechanisms for allocation of society's [*sic*] resources: "markets, bureaucratic administration, and love." Wiler and Jameson, like the Beatles, believe that all we need is luv.

Writing of the Soviet Union and Communist Eastern European countries, the authors say on page 297, "They have made great strides toward providing life-sustenance, particularly for the poorest, but freedom and esteem (fellowship) are in little evidence and dictatorship and sycophancy are the rule." Great strides?

On page 304 they write:

"Before we move to specifics, it is important again to emphasize the inadequacy of reliance on one allocation mechanism alone. Thus when we advocate a type of national economic planning and an incomes policy [wage controls], this must be seen in the context of market allocation in most areas of the economy, along with decentralized, love-based organizational structures such as worker-ownership and subsidiarity that can act as a check on the pretensions of bureaucracy.

"We recommend that the United States begin a process that will lead to democratic national economic planning....

"It is difficult to say what precise form a national planning body would take and exactly what its duties and offices would be, as the specifics would emerge from the process of its formation. But certainly wage and price controls on the planning sector would have to be a central feature of the planning process. Since it is the price-making behavior of the large firms that has both inflationary and destabilizing tendencies, such controls would be essential in the effort to restrain large corporations and unions from behaving in socially harmful ways....

"What is necessary, to paraphrase [Swedish socialist] Gunnar Myrdal [*sic*], is to make the private profit-making system a servant and not the master of the general public. A number of authors have tried to sketch out the specifics of planning in the U.S. and we base the following on the work of two prominent PKIs, the late Gerhard Colm and John Kenneth Galbraith."

It is appalling that people who wish to be taken seriously as scholars are writing drivel like this 60 years after the publication of *Socialism* by Mises and 40 years after the publication of *The Road to Serfdom* by Hayek. Hayek, unlike the Calvin faculty, was opposed to serfdom.

### **Wolterstorff, Again**

Wolterstorff contributes another essay, "The Rich and the Poor," taken from his book *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, which is an extended plea for socialism.

The poor, Wolterstorff tells us, contradicting Christ, are not objects of Christian charity, for "we as human beings have *sustenance* rights. We have a claim on our fellow human beings to social arrangements that ensure that we will be adequately sustained in existence" (353). That, of course, is the ideology of slavery.

On page 354 Wolterstorff writes:

"The churches have not helped the situation. All too often when commenting of the rise of the welfare state they have spoken of the distribution of welfare as an act of generosity on the part of the government. Some have then insisted that the government had no business engaging in acts of generosity, that it should confine itself to ensuring rights of protection, freedom, and voice. Others have praised this new development in which the government acts generously toward its citizenry. I want to say, as emphatically as I can, that our concern with poverty is not an issue of generosity but of rights. If a rich man knows of someone who is starving and has the power to help that person but chooses not to do so, then he violates the starving person's rights as surely and reprehensibly as if he had physically assaulted the sufferer. Acknowledging this truth may make us uncomfortable, but it is a conclusion we must draw from our reflections on shalom and the solidarity of all humanity in the image of God."

If Wolterstorff is correct, of course, and governments may punish those who "assault" sufferers, then government have the duty to punish the rich. This is the ideology of envy.

### **David Beckman**

In an essay titled "One World: Rich and Poor," taken from his book *Where Faith and Economics Meet*, Beckman, echoing Lenin's *Imperialism*, writes:

"The moral problem of world poverty is aggravated by a history of *exploitation*. Most developing countries probably benefited, on balance, from their context with richer countries, but imperialist policies consistently favored the imperial powers.

"Modern imperialism began with European crusades in early colonial ventures for booty. By the eighteenth century the goal of exploitation had changed: European nations managed colonies abroad to provide cheap raw materials (including slave labor) and markets for manufactured goods. In the nineteenth century, colonialism expanded militarily; it was the era of the conquest of Africa, the dismemberment of China, and U.S. military impositions around the Caribbean. By then some

industrial powers, notably England and the United States, found it to their advantage to advocate free trade. But the prejudicial pattern of colonial development continued, with the colonies encouraged to rely on one or two crops or mineral resources for their exports and their industrial development discouraged."

He concludes by quoting some Marxist liberation theologians.

### **Brian Griffiths**

The last section of the book opens with a question, Is capitalism Christian? For four hundred pages, the answer has been a resounding No! The final section includes an essay by Brian Griffiths taken from his book *The Creation of Wealth: The Christian Case for Capitalism*. Its half-hearted defense of freedom appears after 400 pages of shrill and strident pleas for religious – I do not say Christian – socialism.

Griffiths gives a weak defense of capitalism, which no doubt explains why his essay was selected for this book. For example, he says,

"The kind of harmony which is frequently upheld as part of this belief in the market economy is little more than an act of pure faith. Once again, it is an emphasis on the system, the machine, to the exclusion of people. It is seen in its straight form in the demand for minimal or even no regulation in most areas of economic life. Civil aviation is an area which has been over-regulated in most countries, in many cases through fixed prices to the detriment of the passengers. To suggest however that the government need not be concerned with air safety and to allow complete freedom of choice might eventually produce some kind of equilibrium solution but there might be many who would not live to see it! Similarly the idea that in banking anyone should be allowed to open a bank and that there is no difference in principle between a bank and a retail grocery store, opens up the possibility of all sorts of fly-by-night operators taking advantage of depositors. Of course, in time, some sort of equilibrium would undoubtedly emerge. But it would be after many banks had failed, many fortunes had been made and many depositors lost their money" (480).

In sum, Griffith, like the socialists and statist, argues that the wise and good government must protect us from the evil capitalists who run banks and airlines.

### **Donald Hay**

Hay, author of the last essay in the book, "The Capitalist Market Economy," has no trouble knocking Griffith down. Hay presents a set of principles, number seven of which is, "Every person has a right to share in God's provision for mankind for their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter" (498). The "principle of personal stewardship of resources does not imply the right to consume the entire product of those resources. The rich have an obligation to help the poor who cannot provide for themselves by work" (498).

On page 521 Hay writes: "We have already noted that market capitalism is not particularly effective in ensuring that everyone has work to do. Nor is it evident, among those who do work, that their talents are properly utilized." Hay goes on to say on page 525,

"We suggest that institutional reform could go much further than Griffiths is prepared to contemplate. For example, the legal and fiscal constitution of companies could be changed so that ownership and responsibility is shifted, in part if not completely, to the people who work in it. One suggestion is that shareholders should no longer have ownership rights: their status would be that of bondholders, though their dividend returns might continue to be dependent on the success of the firm. Alternatively they might be permitted to retain ownership rights, but only if they would forgo limited liability, Such an arrangement would give them an incentive to act responsibly in their ownership.

"The other part of any such reform would be to give ownership rights in the firm to those who actually work in it. These rights would confer not only a share in the profits, but also the potential to influence the activity of the firm. A simple means to achieve this would be equity participation by long-standing workers. An alternative would be a recognition in the legal constitution of the firm that

its objectives include the long-term provision of employment for the labour force....

"We believe that government should be encouraged to tackle particular injustices like unemployment directly, even if it means 'interfering' in the market mechanisms. A job guarantee system, for example, would be a proper objective, and certainly much more consistent with Christian principles than an extensive welfare support system for the unemployed.... "

"A Christian would wish the political authorities to act to restrain the exercise of economic power in capital and labour markets, and in markets for goods and services. Our preference is for a framework of law regulating the activities of trade unions, financial institutions and firms, but we would not entirely rule out discretionary intervention where a perceived injustice cannot be adequately put right within the legal framework.... The government should not hesitate to use the traditional tax and transfer mechanisms to ensure that those without the means to acquire the basic necessities of life are provided for."

### **Conclusion**

*Through the Eye of a Needle* is socialist propaganda masquerading as Christianity and scholarship. In teaching Economics, I have examined many Economics textbooks, and Calvin College's text is the most blatantly socialist I have ever seen.

Worse, it has been used in introductory Economics courses at Calvin College for years. That means the textbook is read by students who have no background in history, economics, or politics, and so are unable to challenge – and perhaps even to recognize – the nonsense their instructors are teaching. It is a form of intellectual child abuse.

Worst of all, the book is presented as Christian. Far from being Christian, it is a good example of what even the non-Christian economist Ludwig Mises recognized as "statolatry," the idolatrous worship of the state.

What motivates the publication of books like this is not compassion, but hatred. One can smell it on

every page. There is no compassion in forcing others to give up their homes, cars, or savings. There is no charity in giving away the wealth or property of others. *Through the Eye of a Needle* is a sustained attack on Christianity, on private property, and on political and economic freedom, by men who are religious and claim to be Christian. We ought not be surprised at this, for religious men have always been the most ardent enemies of Christ and the Bible.

Calvin College, of course, is not unique in teaching these ideas. Many religious colleges teach the same things. If colleges were subject to the same laws against fraud as businesses, very few would be in operation, and very few college presidents would be out of jail. But the colleges will continue to teach falsehoods until parents, alumni, churches, and students stop giving them money.

Well, why *not* stop giving them money? The faculties of these colleges have already declared their contempt for money. Why insult them by giving them another dime?