

(*Human Rights in the Americas: The Struggle for Consensus*, Georgetown University Press, 1982). Langan contended that Roman Catholicism has come to an appropriate position on human rights more from historical experience than from a logical unfolding of the implications of a theological anthropology—a fact that makes it difficult to hold that theological reflection about human nature is the main, if not sole, source of this social concern. But Langan also recognized that theological anthropology has a contribution to make in understanding human rights. Consequently, "Christians need both to ground human rights norms in their own theology and to acknowledge the positive contribution of non-Christian and non-religious individuals, movements, and institutions in formulating, applying, and defending human rights norms against the excesses of inhumanity which mark the troubled progress of humanity." The other 1983 paper, by James Will, looked at "Church and Theology in the Struggle for Human Rights in Poland." Drawing on the insights of Paul Tillich about social conditions under tyranny, it examined the political and economic power of Marxism in Poland, the rise of groups like Solidarity, and the role of the Church in relation to attempts of Polish society to solve its economic problems.

There is an instructive contrast between the theoretical considerations presented in Langan's paper and the historical and descriptive account of an actual situation in the paper by Will. One paper got to experience by raising a theoretical question and the other got to theory by looking at a historical situation. Perhaps that very contrast is a clue to the nature of Christian ethics and the uniqueness of the Society in holding together two very necessary aspects of a momentous task.

## 9

### **Economics, Technology and Vocational Ethics**

All of the presentations to be considered in this chapter are concerned with how the pursuit or provision of goods and services affects the human condition. The first set of papers to be discussed concerns economic matters; the second, technology and the problems it poses; the third, ethical issues that arise while earning a living or engaging in a professional career.

#### *Economics*

While the Society opened its very first meeting with a panel on "A Christian Ethic for an Affluent Society," (see chapter one), it was eight years before the program again focused attention on the ethical issues related to economic policy. But a topic long left untouched would then get attention from several directions. A session with Senator Eugene McCarthy had been scheduled in 1967 on the topic, "Some Aspects of Ethics in Government." When McCarthy was unable to keep the commitment, President Victor Obenhaus was able to get Frank McCollough of the National Labor Relations Board to substitute. Another session that same year featured Hyman H. Bookbinder, Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, who spoke on the "Ethical Philosophy of the Poverty Program." Shortly after speaking to the Society, Bookbinder jointly authored (with Loral K. Shulz), "Lovers' Quarrel Over the Poverty Program," *The Christian Century* 27 (July 24, 1967): 177-79.

The presidential address for 1967, given by Victor Obenhaus, was on "The Ethics of Income Distribution." Obenhaus noted that while much attention was then being given to the amelioration of poverty, relatively little was being devoted to the closely related, but distinctively different, problem of income distribution. The address was laced with statistics concerning the patterns of income that prevailed at the time, and reviewed the provisions of various plans, both private and public, that were being suggested to alleviate the plight of those without sufficient income.

Considering the ethical issues, Obenhaus contended that the main obstacles to lifting the burden of poverty from the lowest 20% of the population were not financial, but philosophical, sociological, and even theological. Noting that a country where neighbors once rather routinely got together for barn raisings does have a heritage of mutual aid as well as of private entrepreneurialism, Obenhaus argued that there is no reason why that concept of mutual aid cannot be legitimized in new ways, so that every citizen of our society is cared for. Any scheme for doing this, Obenhaus observed, would need to take the problem of incentives into account as well as the principle that no one in an affluent society should starve. Obenhaus asserted that "a society capable of technological 'miracles' can resolve the dilemma of inequality and make dignity available to all."

Economic issues reappeared on the program in 1971, and again they would be addressed in more than just one session. In one presentation Richard Dickinson, Jr. looked at "World Economic Development and the Question of Justice" and Norman Faramelli, at "Structural Economic Power in America: An Ethical Critique." According to Dickinson we lack the basic technical knowledge of how best to promote development (not merely the political will to do so); we should not think of world development in merely economic terms or expect Western technological models to be adequate for achieving it; and we need a global and systemic strategy to grasp the problem vigorously. Dickinson also declared that uncontrolled private enterprise cannot produce justice. He called on seminary faculties to prepare themselves in the technical aspects of economics so they can provide a credible witness about these issues. Faramelli's paper focused on the economic and political power of large American corporations and the ethical issues raised by that power. He showed how pervasively the tax system favors the rich, how the government provides subsidies for large economic undertakings, and how the concentration of wealth has remained fairly constant since 1929. He cited the dominance of two huge forces--the military industrial complex and the highway industrial complex and set down four principles by which economic policy should be governed: 1) individual freedom and community self-determination should be enhanced; 2) trends toward economic equality must increase; 3) technical achievements must respect the laws of the natural order; and 4) a genuine pluralism of economic forces should be developed. He suggested several steps for coping with corporate power, including improved regulation, the creation of private technical institutes to protect the consumer, and the devising of new kinds of community organizations to monitor these problems. He pleaded with Christian ethicists to

recapture the concern for economic justice that once characterized ecumenical bodies.

The other part of the 1971 program devoted to economic issues was the Sunday morning plenary session, which was on the topic, "National Priorities: Who Should Get What, How, and Why?" This period was devoted to a critical evaluation of the papers at the previous sessions and Peter Paris launched a general discussion by suggesting that it is important to begin with concrete practice and move to theoretical considerations in dealing with these issues.

The discussion of economic questions as a problem of national policy would return to the programs of the Society in six years, when the problem of poverty would again be in the forefront of discussion. The few papers presented in the interval between 1971 and 1977 examined certain other issues that bear on how people are affected by economic conditions. In 1973 Donald W. Shriver, Jr. gave a paper entitled "Millhands and Preachers Revisited: Ethics and Ideology in a Southern Mill Community." This paper shared with members of the Society the findings of work then in progress toward the publication in 1976 of *Spindles and Spines* co-authored with John R. Earle and Dean D. Knudson and published by John Knox Press, 1976. In 1974 there was a paper by Keith Bridston with the title: "Wilson Dis-tributors: A Case Study in Ethics." Bridston's paper examined a Harvard Business School case of a trucking firm having trouble with pilfering. The owners regarded the matter as theft; the drivers as a fringe benefit. Bridston showed from this case how perceptions of things differ depending upon the perspective from which they are seen. This paper was more concerned with exploring the problems in teaching ethics than with the economic issues involved. Bridston was at the time publishing articles about the case method way of teaching ethics. One of these appeared as "Case Study in Teaching Theology," *Atlanta Theological Library Association: Proceedings* (1973): 71-4; and the other as "Metaphysics of the Mundane: The Theological Implications of the Case Study Method," *Theological Education* 10 (Spring, 1974): 139-52.

A paper by Ronald Stone given in 1976 examined the thought of Paul Tillich on both economic and political affairs. Stone, aware that some scholars were suggesting that Tillich abandoned his socialist vision in later years to settle for belief in a dispersion of power in a mixed economy, contended that the vision of religious socialism remained an essential ingredient in Tillich's thinking all through his life. Stone showed that many of the ideas Tillich advanced were very similar to outlooks being currently advanced by political and liberation theologians.

Shortly after giving this paper Stone published two articles on the subject: "Tillich: Radical Political Theologian," *Religion in Life* 46 (September 1977): 44-53; and "Tillich's Critical Use of Marx and Freud in the Social Context of the Frankfurt School," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 83 (Fall 1977): 3-9.

In 1976 Henry B. Clark II gave a paper "pressure for Change: Ethical Reflections on American Life Style." The Selected Papers for that same year also contain a paper that was originally delivered before the meeting of the West Coast Section of the Society by Donald E. Miller: "Life Style: A Category for the Analysis of Moral Identity." Miller's paper covered a broad range of issues concerning how Christian social ethics ought to be done. It suggested that the ways in which people work, eat, worship, entertain, consume, and recreate provide a distinctive way of learning "what is going on" in a given situation. "The ethicist's role," argued Miller, "is to clarify varying patterns of value commitments by depicting and analyzing the life styles that predominate in the community being studied."

In 1977 papers dealing with public policy aspect of economic issues reappear on the Society's program. Unfortunately a goodly number of these papers were given by guests or have not been obtainable for the record. Gregory Baum gave a paper at the opening plenary session entitled "Democracy and Capitalism: Canadian and Theological Perspectives." John Dillon discussed "The Struggle for a More Just Trade Policy." James F. Smurl looked at "Debates About Poverty: Henry George's Response to Pope Leo XIII." This historical exploration entitled, "Ethics and Culture: An Historical Instance with Theoretical and Practical Implications," focused on the way in which Henry George responded to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On the Conditions of Labor). George, a religious socialist, felt that the encyclical attacked his single tax movement and its underlying philosophy, and he also felt that while Leo verbally rejected socialism, he also had embraced much of its underlying approach. Smurl suggested that George intended his tract to be read by an American audience that was hostile to claims of distributive justice but he also indicated that George felt Americans were repelled as much or more by complex argument as by the basic premises of distributive justice. Smurl suggested that ethicists must be more concerned, along with other humanists, with the ways in which moral arguments impact those whose response patterns are shaped by cultural outlooks. Prevailing mores often preclude serious and rigorous attention to moral principles.

This same year, in a paper on "The Ethics of Entitlement," Major J. Jones raised many issues involving economic justice, the significance of work, the difficulties of charity, and the problems of welfare. He took note of the rising feeling that people are entitled to a decent standard of living simply because they are human, and noted that this creates a quite different premise than does a welfare system. The one stresses rights; the other, charity. A shift to the idea of entitlement can, in turn, produce contempt and condescending disdain among the privileged, who believe that the right to an acceptably decent livelihood is earned, not guaranteed. But, Jones indicated, the bulk of welfare goes to people who for a variety of reasons cannot work. Among the poor in general there is a latent incentive to work, though as the assumption of entitlement gets strong, this incentive can give way to a feeling that it is acceptable to use assertive techniques to insure that one gets that to which one is entitled. For instance, the looters who rampaged through the city during the New York blackout revealed how quite a few persons were ready to commit crimes in order to obtain that to which they thought themselves entitled. Alas, the privileged also assume, on a quite different level, that they are entitled to certain privileges and immunities--for instance, the right to leave the less fortunate behind in the scramble for success.

Jones then sought to balance the idea of legitimate entitlement with the traditional moral repudiation of greed, and asked how far and to what extent the natural right to an adequate standard of living can be carried. He suggested that the Western work ethic, which has dominated thinking about these matters for a long time, is threatened, and noted how many persons on the margins of society find it more tempting to resort to crime, or to a street existence that turns a legal but largely unearned buck, than to submit to the depersonalizing and relatively unrewarding kinds of work offered to so many on the bottom of the productive ladder. This underclass lives by using the same cunning at the bottom of the economic scale as does the upperclass at the top. Jones indicated that great difficulties face a culture in which these changes in value commitments are taking place on a wide scale and at a rapid rate.

In 1979 Prentiss Pemberton delivered a paper on "Justice and Efficiency in a Christian Economic Ethic." Daniel Finn responded. This paper is not available, but Pemberton and Finn are working on a book on economic justice that will probably develop the ideas explored at this session.

Attention to economic justice picks up considerably in the programs during the 1980s. The first year of the new decade saw three sessions devoted to this issue. One of these, entitled "Is America Fair? Ethics and Current

"Economic Prospects," was presented as the opening plenary session. Robert Lekachman of Lehmann College and Harvey H. Segal of Citibank gave different responses to the question. Segal later published "Economics for People: Hope on a Far Horizon," in *Christianity and Crisis* 40 (September 29, 1980): 257-261. The same year Daniel R. Finn delivered a paper on "The Ethical Orientation of Schools of Economic Thought." This was published in *The Annual*, but in the year 1982 rather than the year in which the paper was given. Finn outlined the ethical orientation of six of the seven major schools of economic thought and suggested that this may provide an opening for the needed dialogue between economists and ethicists.

Another 1980 paper, originally given by Norman J. Paulhaus with the title "The Friboourg Union and Social Catholicism," was published in *The Selected Papers with the revised title "Social Catholicism and the Friboourg Union."* This paper gave a historical account of the yearly meetings of the group and its basic social teaching. While opposed to socialism, this relatively small gathering was adamant in its advocacy of social justice, and did much to address the economic problems of the late nineteenth century. The Friboourg movement in Europe was contemporaneous with the efforts of Francis Greenwood Peabody and others in America to address the social question. Finn's paper examines the efforts of this group to hammer out doctrinal positions in matters such as just compensation, state interference in economic processes, the proper significance of private property, the banking system, workers' insurance, and the concept of the "corporative ideal." According to Finn, although the views of the Friboourg Union have been considered outdated and sterile, they may indeed yet prove to be more prophetic than has been realized.

In 1981 the opening plenary session on Friday afternoon was devoted to a panel discussion on "Ecology, Energy, and Equality: Distributive Justice in a Time of Diminishing Resources." (A further discussion of this panel will come in the section of this chapter on technology). At this same meeting Jon P. Gunnemann gave a paper on "Ethics, Markets, and Theodicy." In his paper Gunnemann showed how free market thinking is used as a means of legitimizing a difference between private and public behavior postulated in "the axiom of the social paradox." This axiom is found in different ways in the economic thinking of Adam Smith, Albert Hirschman, Robert Malthus, and others, and in the political thinking of such different figures as Niccolo Machiavelli and Reinhold Niebuhr. The thought of these very different figures has served in quite different ways to differentiate between individual moral obligations and the behavior considered

appropriate or functional between larger social groups. In a sense, "the paradox of the social axiom" becomes a kind of theodicy that is used to justify the evils that persist in the social order as the necessary condition for achieving a higher good. Gunnemann did not call for the paradox to be lightly dismissed, but he did suggest the importance of taking the classical ideals more seriously than is done when the social paradox is accepted too easily and uncritically as the starting point of analysis. This paper indicates the ingredients for an analysis of economic issues that is as insightful as the analysis that Gunnemann has made of political questions in his book *The Moral Meaning of Revolution* (Yale, 1979), and perhaps someday it will be made more generally available for us. John Raines, who responded a year later to Gunnemann's paper, gave his own presentation on "Economics and the Justification of Sorrows: A Critique of Free Market Ideology." The thrust of Raines's paper was to push more forcefully toward a concern about economic justice. In yet another paper in 1982 Jerome Kurtz discussed "The Social Impact of American Tax Legislation."

In 1983 the second plenary session in three years to be devoted to economic issues was held on Sunday morning, with William Tabb of Queens College giving an address on "The Social, Political, and Ethical Meaning of the 'Reagan Revolution.'" Tabb noted that Reaganomics is built on the theory that the liberty of the market place is to be exalted above collectivistic paternalism, but conceded that it might be little more than a raw power play threatening to divide the nation along income lines and to produce class conflict. Tabb also indicated how the whole Reagan approach appeals to a faith. It asks the nation to trust it will work prior to showing results, and to sustain its commitment even in face of evidence that it is not working. Another analysis of Reagan's economic policies was given at the same meeting by Warren Copeland in a paper entitled "The Economic Policy Debate and Sturm's Prism of Justice." Copeland suggested that the United States now had a truly ideological president, whose policies were based upon a consistent application of a fundamental philosophy of government. He charged that ethicists are unable to respond to the Reagan challenge with a reasoned critique because they have too long neglected the social question and those concerns for elementary economic justice that furnished the main impetus for the discipline. He commended Wogaman's *The Great Economic Debate* (Westminster Press, 1977) as furnishing the right criteria for evaluating economic programs, and transposed Sturm's prism of justice so as to apply it to economic rather than to political alternatives. He argued that ethicists must deal with economic issues by focusing attention

on the need for equality and community--factors too often neglected when the only concern is upon freedom.

A discipline with the heritage of Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, and a host of others having a great concern for economic justice, should look at this series of papers soberly. At the beginning of the Society's life some members were overly confident that a commitment to social justice was a well-established aspect of the national ethos, and that the main task was to implement that commitment more wisely and fully. Meanwhile a frontal challenge to that basic commitment has been mounted, and the result is that, in company with many others, the Society now finds itself "reactive" to almost revolutionary transitions that are transposing the economic and social realms into places for the free reign of Social Darwinism. Perhaps the most important papers of those given during the period just examined will turn out to be those which have looked at historical efforts to face social questions under conditions of severe economic injustice. By providing insight into how this was done in the past we may learn how it has to be redone in the present.

#### *Technology and Society*

Over the years some sixteen items on programs of the Society have been devoted to discussions of the impact of science and technology on the human condition. These discussions encompass a rather wide range of issues. Only one of these papers was given in the first twelve years of the Society's existence and ten of them were given in the last six years.

In 1963 Robert Batchelder looked at "Some Issues Confronting an Automated Society." Taking note of the simultaneous increase in technological automation and the growth of hard-core unemployment, Batchelder suggested that while there is considerable disagreement on whether automation produces a net loss of jobs, it is clear that those who are replaced by automation are frequently the unskilled who work at the bottom of the pay and status scales, while whatever new jobs are created are those demanding high skills. The result is that automation exacerbates the problem of hard-core unemployment among minorities and teenagers. Considering several proposed solutions to this problem, his paper indicated how difficult it is to get a consensus for the elimination of unemployment in a nation that rather quickly agrees on goals such as defeating Hitler, beating the Russians to the moon, or building an interstate highway system.

There were four papers on technology given before the society in the early 1970s. In 1971 James E. Allen and

L. Harold DeWolf shared a session entitled "Population, Environment, and Ideology." Allen's paper argued, from the facts then generally held to be true, that the United States (as other parts of the world) has a population problem brought about largely by the enthusiasm for reproduction found in middle class families, and that we must make two rather than three children the norm for the average American family. Allen explored various suggestions for accomplishing this result and asked to what extent we would be warranted in restricting individual liberties in order to curtail the population boom. DeWolf, indicating with many detailed illustrations the extent of the pollution problem, suggested that the ecological crisis, although threatening disaster only if unchecked, provides an unprecedented opportunity to unite all races and ideologies in the pursuit of a common purpose, to turn our efforts away from materialistic endeavours, and to create a new partnership between science and religion.

In 1973 Jürgen Randers was invited to be the Society's guest at the opening plenary session. Prior to his appearance, a complimentary copy of his book, *The Limits of Growth*, was sent to every member of the Society by Rodney Shaw of the Methodist Board of Social Concern. Members were urged to read this document (popularly known as "The Club of Rome Report") before coming to the meeting, since Randers expected to confine his presentation to highlighting certain issues and then open the session to discussion. Norman Faramelli and Robert Stivers initiated this discussion by providing the first responses to Randers. Another paper was given in 1973 by Arthur J. Dyck on "Population and National Responsibility: An Ethical Analysis of the Report on the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future." Dyck characterized the report as an essentially moral document concerned with issues such as the quality of life, freedom, and social justice. He examined three different positions on the population question from which the report might be judged, and distanced himself from the abortion policy implied in it. Dyck later published two articles dealing with related issues: "Population, Abortion and Human Welfare," *Perkins School of Theology Journal* 27 (Fall 1973): 41-9; and, "Procreative Rights and Population Policy," *The Hastings Center Studies* 1 (1973): 74-2.

In 1976 Waldo Beach looked at the impact of technology in a paper: "The Wheel and the Cross: A Christian Response to the Technological Revolution." The title of this paper became the title of a book that Beach published in 1979 with John Knox Press. In the paper Beach showed how technology as a faith system extols efficiency and brackets questions of purpose. This leads people to think that it is

legitimate to do whatever can be done rather than to ask what ought to be done. Only a moral norm symbolized by the cross can insure that questions are asked about the human consequences of technological achievements.

Beginning in 1977, two years before the World Council of Churches Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the programs of the Society showed a marked increase in the number of papers dealing with scientific developments. Karl D. Hartzell delivered a paper on "Science and Valuation." Robert L. Stivers, having published his book *The Sustainable Society* (Westminster Press, 1976), gave a paper "The Sustainable Society: Realism and Hope," and several months later published an article, "The Sustainable Society: Religious and Social Implications, *Review of Religious Research* 21 (Fall 1979): 71-86. The year of the World Council Conference, Paul Abrecht, the staff member most closely involved in its planning, spoke to the Society on "Technology, Science and Values," and the year following the conference Roger Shinn and five other members of the Society who had attended (Paul Abrecht, Merle Longwood, Jane Gary Peck, Robert Stivers, and Preston Williams) presented a panel that looked at the accomplishments of the Conference.

Walter G. Muelder's presidential address in 1979, entitled "The Science of Limits and the Limits of Science," took direct note of the forthcoming World Council Conference, which Muelder saw as involving a tension between an endless striving after technical achievements and the limits that obviously must function if a society is to be "just, participatory, and sustainable." This address surveyed various efforts to develop a science of limits that was concerned with the conditions of organic and coherent growth in contrast to the mechanistic triumphalism and ruthless expansionism that have too often characterized the technological enterprise. It pointed out how both overdeveloped capitalism and technocratic communism fail to take adequate account of this science of limits, and are predatory and exploitative with respect to both nature and human potential. Examining in detail three studies--the Club of Rome's first report, its second report, and the United Nations's study of *The Future of the World Economy*, Muelder supported the point of view that people should participate in the decisions that affect their futures. But, he observed, this requires special social conditions and public skills. It requires a freedom in Christ to pursue the non-material aspects of life as well as the material ones. This address is found in *The Selected Papers*. A short while after giving this paper Muelder also published an article on closely related themes: "The New Debate on Faith, Science, and the

From 1978 to 1983 several presentations focused in one way or another on questions of energy. A panel in 1978 with Frederick Garney, Margaret Maxey, and Alvin Pitcher discussed "Ethical Aspects of the World Energy Crisis." Another panel in 1981 looked at "Ecology, Energy, and Equality." Distributive justice in a Time of Diminishing Resources." This panel was given the plenary slot at the opening of the annual meeting and included as participants Wallace Ogb, Emeritus Professor of Economics at Iowa State University; Marty Strange, Director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, Nebraska; and Larry Rasmussen. In setting up this panel the planning committee hoped that the problem of providing energy, the problem of preserving the environment, and the problem of social justice--which are often discussed separately--might be considered in their interrelationships.

Other papers have dealt somewhat more generally with the impact of science on social behavior. Two were on the program in 1979. The first of these was a paper by Henry B. Clark and Donald Miller on "Energy Policy and Life Styles in California," and appears in *The Selected Papers 1979*. The second, by John T. Pawlikowski, examined "The Catholic Bishops' Statement on Energy: Its Implications for Public Ethics." Pawlikowski's paper was interesting, not only for its analysis of the content of the Bishops' statement, but for its description of the process that was used to formulate it. In fact, the planning committee had urged him to focus on the process more than upon the substance, for this statement was developed using the open hearing method and involving the resources of many groups, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The process used to draw up this statement broke new procedural ground within the Roman Catholic Church and may well have been precedent setting for the more highly publicized Bishops' letter on nuclear weapons that was prepared subsequently. The bishops' letter on energy manifested a concern both for the care of persons and for the care of the earth. According to Pawlikowski, the relationship also moved to a more dynamic understanding of the relationship between the natural and human orders and may well have momentous implications for traditional natural law morality based upon more static understandings. It also called on Roman Catholics to accept some degree of limitation on their expectations, and modestly embraced the principle of subsidiarity as a strategy for dealing with energy issues. A third paper, presented in 1982 by Terence R. Anderson, dealt with "Ethics, Uranium Mining and Public Participation in Development Decisions: Canadian Perspectives on Ethics and Ecology." It was printed in the 1982 *Annual*.

It is interesting to note that in all this discussion of technology and related issues none of the papers has considered the space program or the landing of a human being on the moon, efforts into which the country was pouring enormous resources during those years and about which the public was intensely interested, albeit in an adventuresome rather than a moral way.

#### *Issues Related to the Professions*

The professions are a part of an economic/technological complex. All of the professions are involved in earning a living—and within narrow limits each of them codifies what practices are acceptable in that endeavor. To the extent that people are professional they must acknowledge the claim of more than the monetary bottom line. Even managers often take more than purely commercial factors into consideration in deciding upon policies to pursue. Many professionals utilize highly technical knowledge in doing their work, and some have to judge how much technical knowledge can be legitimately utilized in dealing with persons. So, while there is a conceptual hyphen, which the reader is asked to note at this point, between economics and technology on the one hand, and the professions on the other, there is also a conjunction of concerns. These concerns have appeared on the programs in a number of ways, but this report about them will be limited in scope because the record of the papers and presentations in which they have been discussed is one of the least satisfactory parts of the archives. The discussion of professional and vocational ethics also provides an opportunity to look at some papers dealing with related issues that are not easily placed into the other categories of this study.

1) Biomedical Ethics and Health Care. During the last twenty-five years by far the most prevalent conjunction of professional concerns and ethical reflection has appeared in biomedical ethics. As judged by the amount of literature, the interest aroused, the intensity of involvement, and the extent to which the services of ethicists have been sought out by a professional group to help them think about their work, biomedical ethics has had an unprecedented and unmatched development. If there is a surprise in the history of the Society it is the relatively limited attention paid in its programs to this development. Perhaps members of the Society have been able to discuss the issue in other settings (of which there have been a good many), or have not found the meetings of the Society sufficiently interdisciplinary to make them the best place to deal with these issues.

This is not to say that biomedical ethics have been

overlooked entirely. Papers dealing with various facets of this subject have periodically appeared on the programs since 1965. In that year biomedical ethics was still an embryonic specialty but Joseph Fletcher and Henry Kolbe were paired in a panel on "Ethics and Medicine." Fletcher was an early pioneer in treating the ethical implications of medical practice and spoke largely out of what he had been writing in books like *Morals and Medicine* (Princeton: 1954). In 1974 another panel, with John C. Fletcher, Karen Lebacqz, Richard McCormick, and Paul Ramsey did another general coverage of the subject matter under the title "Current Issues in Bio-medical Ethics." Only John Fletcher's contribution to the panel has surfaced in the research done for this study, and it consisted of an examination of the relationship between abortion decisions following prenatal diagnosis and decisions to forego treatment of newborns with serious handicaps. Fletcher held that there are ethical reasons to support abortion when genetic disorders are involved that do not necessarily hold in cases of active euthanasia with the newborn. In 1978 Joseph Fletcher and L. Harold DeWolf shared a program on "Continuity and Change in Ethics with Special Attention to Medical Technology and Criminal Justice." Fletcher dealt with the medical issues; DeWolf, with the problems of criminal justice, but no papers are available that enable the reconstruction of the session.

Most of the other papers given about biomedical ethics addressed more specific issues. In 1969, for instance, James B. Nelson, Kieran Nolan and Paul Ramsey were members of a panel addressing the topic, "Ethical Methodology and Euthanasia." Ramsey remembers that at the time he was at Georgetown University Medical School preparing his 1969 Beecher lectures and he "soundly speculates" that what he said on that panel is rather like chapter three of the published Beecher Series: *The Patient as Person* (Yale, 1970). The same year Roger L. Shinn gave a paper on "Christian Ethical Methodology and Questions Related to Ethics." Shinn's paper was distributed to members and was followed by the appearance of an article on closely related issues: "Genetic Decisions: A Case Study in Ethical Method," *Soundings* 42 (Fall 1969): 299-310. Shinn suggested that traditional authority and the idea of conforming to nature do not help very much with decisions about genetics, and that utilitarian and pragmatic methods yield only some help. He examined the difficulties of sorting scientific considerations from value judgments, and called genetic manipulation one of the most momentous forms of the human ability to either threaten or enhance human life. In 1976 Karen Lebacqz, David Louisell, Charles McCarthy, and Leroy Walters

were together on a panel entitled "Bioethics and Public Policy: The National Commission and the Problem of Fetal Research." In 1980 Daniel E. Lee gave "A Critique of Ramsey's Idea of Quality of Life," and Dennis Doherty, a paper on "the Morality of Non-Punitive Compulsory Sterilization." At the same meeting George Kuykendall looked at the issues that arise in terminal cases in a paper entitled "On Caring for the Dying." This was published with the title "Care for the Dying: A Kübler-Ross Critique," *Theology Today* XXXVIII (April 1981): 37-56.

Three papers given before the Society have focused on the delivery of health care. While each of these papers has raised issues of political policy and economic feasibility, they have never lost track of the conditions that are needed for good medical practice. In 1975 an opening plenary session heard Edward Pelligrino, then of Yale, speak on "Humanizing the Health Care System." Robert L. Shelton has twice considered issues of health care delivery. In 1977 the title of his presentation was "Human Rights and Distributive Justice in Health Care Delivery;" in 1979, "Health Care and Society in China: A Visitor's Report." The first of these papers indicated that interest in this aspect of medical practice--too long neglected--was beginning to become evident in a number of places and that there was a growing consensus that health care is a human right rather than a merely purchasable commodity available to those who can pay for it. This view of the matter is better understood outside of the United States than within our borders. Even so, Shelton observed, even in the United States, which does not formally acknowledge access to health care to be a right, there was (at the time he wrote!) a growing tendency to make it available to all who need it, despite the lack of moral teaching or legal sanction for doing so. But, argued Shelton, this tendency needs a formal financing mechanism that will so order national priorities as to insure it can be implemented. The government is the appropriate instrument for devising such a mechanism. (Little did Shelton foresee that within five or six years a new national administration dedicated to a free market ideology and viewing health care as a commodity would significantly alter the situation and threaten to make the universal delivery of health care highly problematic.) Shelton's 1979 presentation included slides taken on a trip to China. These helped the members of the Society who attended to envision the shape of China's Cultural Revolution and actually to see some of the health care practices associated with it. In commenting on those practices, Shelton took note of the way in which the Chinese are integrating old and traditional medicine with modern means of care, of the wide use of

"barefoot doctors" who carry services to the people as para-medics, of the constitutional provision that makes health care a guaranteed right, and of the lack of a Western type national health insurance plan. One of the unique features of the overall program is the emphasis it places on training persons to take responsibility for their own care. A paper dealing with an issue closely related to health care delivery was included in the 1981 program. James M. Childs, Jr. reported on the "Dialogue with Ross Laboratories: A Chapter in the Infant Formula Controversy." Childs, along with several other church persons, had participated over several months in discussions with Ross Laboratories of Columbus, Ohio (the makers of Similac) as the company sought to determine a responsible stand in the face of the world-wide infant formula debate. The group was received quite openly and was given access to working documents used in drawing up company policy. It was also asked to do some field investigations of the problem. The paper details this experience, indicates the possible dangers of being co-opted, but concludes the church bodies have much to learn and to contribute through this kind of mutual interchange.

One of the most controversial of all medical procedures is the practice of abortion. This issue finds members of the Society deeply divided, not infrequently according to ecclesial identity. The ethical issues stemming from the abortion question arise more from controversy about public policy than from any inherent dilemmas in the medical procedures involved. The Society has discussed the abortion problem only in the last five years. The 1979 John Reeder did a study of "The Relevance of 'Potentiality' in Abortion;" in 1980 Theodore Steeman, a paper on "Ethical Issues in Public Policy Debates on Abortion: A Working Paper;" in 1982, Thomas Shannon, "Abortion and Public Policy: A Review of the Issues;" and in 1983 Marjorie Reiley Maguire, "Covenant, Personhood, and Abortion." Steeman's paper, which has been deposited in the archives in a greatly enlarged and reworked version (with an expression of appreciation for the responses at the time it was given) frankly faced the problems created by different attitudes in different faith traditions, and attempted to bridge the gulf that exists because of them. That gulf was evident, for example, in the controversy over "The Call to Concern," which was a full page magazine advertisement that many members of the Society signed in 1977 to question the lobbying efforts of the Catholic bishops to cut off federal funds for abortion. "The Call to Concern," which argued it was unfair to deny poor people access to medical procedures that could be enjoyed by those able to pay for them privately, was a highly controversial matter and much invective as well as



appropriate criticism was engendered by it. One of the most valuable meetings in the life of the Society was an unscheduled gathering late one evening at the 1978 meeting at which members of the Society who had participated on both sides of this altercation came together face-to-face and assured each other of mutual respect and a desire to discuss these problems in a continuing way on a scholarly basis.

2) Business Ethics. While the problems related to the practice of medicine have attracted the largest interest, the other professions have also been the subject of scrutiny. The second of all the papers dealing with vocational ethics, which was delivered in 1966 by Robert C. Batchelder, dealt with "Ethics in Business Decision Making: Management Goals and Christian Ethics." Batchelder affirmed the key elements in the management role as a foundation for criticizing certain abuses, and chided those who take a condescending stance toward business. He noted how the goals of management are often complex--seldom merely a simplistic drive to maximize profits--and how the goals of individual managers are frequently even more complex than those of their companies. He then illustrated the kinds of moral choices managers may have to make. Business ethics were not discussed again until 1981, when Donald G. Jones gave a paper, "Ethics and Economics: The Teaching of Business Ethics," which was published in *The Annual*.

3) The Ethics of the Ministry. Ethical problems relating to the role of the clergy were examined in a presidential address given in 1968 by Murray H. Leiffer on "Ethics and Expectations in the Profession of the Ministry." Leiffer was engaged in making an extensive study of attitudes in the clergy in the light of the social changes of the past several decades and had polled a large group of Methodist clergy as one sample and the membership of the Society as another sample. A large percentage in both groups expressed the conviction that organized religion presents a number of problems for those who serve in its professional leadership, though interestingly somewhat fewer members of the Society were critical of church bureaucracies than were those engaged in the pastoral ministry. Both groups were overwhelmingly of the opinion that ministers should be acquainted with the occupational problems of the laity and that the church should be concerned to influence the power structures of society. But, although both samples favored such involvement theoretically, far more members of the Society (95%) expressed a willingness to conduct a civil rights meeting than did the pastors (59%). With regard to the clergy's life style, both samples repudiated the idea of a distinctive differentiation of the clergy from the laity, yet, interestingly, the members of the Society were

more inclined than pastors to believe that ministers should live a simple life style regardless of the standards followed by members of their congregations. Leiffer also discovered a decided difference between age groups in attitudes toward participation in civil rights marches and reported many comments on the questionnaires that indicated a major generation gap within the clergy. The problem of participation in social action which Leiffer uncovered has been discussed several times in the life of the Society. It was the subject of James Gustafson's presidential address in 1970 and of a panel in 1975 in which John C. Bennett and Gayraud Wilmore both participated. It was the ongoing focus of concern of the Action/Reflection Interest group.

4) The Ethics of Lawyers. The ethics of lawyers have been the subject of two presentations, both of them made very recently. In 1981 Charles L. Kramer, Jr. gave a paper on Vocations and the Professions: Ethics and Law." This paper, which appears in *The Annual*, focuses attention on both medicine and law, suggesting that the religious concept of vocation furnishes a good basis on which to overcome the tendencies of the professions to neglect the human and social needs of clients. In 1982, Thomas Lombard gave a paper entitled "Ethics and Law: Current Controversy About Professional Ethics of Attorneys." It should be remembered that some of the papers dealing with jurisprudence that were discussed in the previous chapter are germane to the understanding of the lawyer's role in society.

Many years ago, the sociologist Max Weber treated the role and functions of professional groups together. Most of the papers we have reported on in this section have treated just one profession and its ethical problems. Two papers have looked at the professions as a group rather than merely at the problems of a particular group. In 1976 Samuel Calian did a paper on "Toward a Common Ethic Among Professions," which was published in *The Selected Papers* under the title "Ethics and the Professions: Renewal Through Cooperation." Calian scrutinized various professional codes of conduct, including some guidelines for the clergy, and discovered over a dozen similarities. He noted various transitions that were affecting the lives of professionals and examined the prospects for greater interprofessional exchange. In 1981 Karen Lebacqz gave a general treatment of professional ethics under the title "Professional Ethics: Powers and Principalities."

The ethics of pedagogy and governance have been treated in the papers on higher education that are discussed in the next chapter, though it may be a bit of a surprise to see how relatively little attention has been paid to the ethical problems of the teaching profession by a group composed of

so many teachers. There has been almost nothing in the program dealing with the problems of those who are engaged in the enforcement of law. Hopefully, we will find ourselves exploring many new dimensions of vocationally related ethics in the years ahead.

## 10

### Other Topics on the Programs

In the previous chapters each of the subject categories discussed was explored in quite a large group of papers. This chapter considers several issues with which a smaller number of papers wrestle, issues that are nevertheless frequently of key importance. It also discusses the attention given in the programs to the teaching of ethics.

#### *Specific Discussions of Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Traditions*

Starting as a group with a mainly Protestant orientation, the Society was somewhat slow to pay attention to the contributions of other traditions, even to the traditions which have the same biblical roots as Protestant Christianity. For instance, while the Hebraic heritage of Christianity had always been presupposed, it was only the prompting of a special task force, which was formed late in the period being canvassed by this study, that led the Society to give serious attention to the ways in which Jewish ethical thinking has developed alongside the growth of Christian reflection. Likewise, while the common heritage of Protestant and Catholic in the pre-Reformation experience of the church was tacitly assumed, it has only been in the last dozen years that the Society's programs have paid conscious attention to the further development of the Roman Catholic moral tradition as a distinctive entity. Eastern Orthodoxy came to be looked at only in the past few years.

when two papers have focused on ethics in that tradition. 1) Jewish Ethics. Ten years after the Society was founded, Charles Kegley gave a paper on "Martin Buber and the Problem of Norms." Kegley identified many Protestant-like elements in the thinking of this Jewish thinker, and suggested that Buber placed a strong emphasis on the relational aspects of ethical decision-making. For Buber, the meaning of the good is integrally related to the will of God, and abstract systems or principles have no place in ethics. But, argued Kegley, Buber's thinking makes a plac