

THE CHURCH AND THE LAND: Part Two

this was seen as a story of the recognition, by the powers of manipulation and sorcery, of the presence of the ruler of the universe within the created order.⁴ It is an occasion of handing over, to the rightful Lord of the universe, of all the secretive or occult powers which human beings use to exploit each other. And, however unpleasant we may think these sorcerer-astrologers may have been, we have to admit that they recognised and acknowledged the true Lord of the universe before the professional people of religion and holiness came near him.

So, perhaps, we can expect that the professing Christians may come rather late on the scene in the discovery of the truth. But it also means that those who inherit the Gospel and seek to live by it may have been given tools by which they can recognise the spirit of God at work in the world; and they may also have a responsibility for detect-

ing and exposing ways in which the systems of this world both encourage violence to the truth and also cause damage and hurt to the most disadvantaged of the children of God scattered across the world. This, in any situation, has to be a large part of the responsibility of those who count themselves as members of the Christian movement.

We are calling this lecture "On Creating Wealth". I wish to suggest some questions concerning the meaning of these words. First of all, concerning common understandings of the word "Wealth".

I want to suggest that there are some very important differences between "wealth" and "money". They are, perhaps, expressed most sharply in the remark which I heard on the radio by a political commentator, to the effect that some people living on one of the islands of the Hebrides did not have any fuel costs to pay because they had lots of free

LVT to 'save Appalachia'

SEVENTY-FIVE West Virginian officials and citizen activists have engaged in strategy sessions with 20 of the nation's leading economists to seek solutions for their impoverished state.

"Prospects for Appalachia: From Poverty to Prosperity by 2000" was directed by Dr. Arthur Rybeck and Walter Rybeck, both natives of West Virginia.

The conference was aimed at helping the State resolve its widespread poverty, high jobless rate and lack of government finances for schools and other basic public services.

Joseph W. Powell, President of the W. Va. Labor Federation, Rev. Homer Davis of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, State Delegate Lyle Sates, Susan Beard of the (United Methodist) Bishop's Task Force for Economic Recovery, Roberta Fowlkes, manager of Telecommunications Dev-

elopment for the C&P Telephone Co., and others painted a picture of a region rich in coal, timber, natural gas, waterways and scenery, with a good and reliable labor force.

Officials described current efforts to revive the economy. Coal and timber spokesmen presented their perspectives of the current situation.

Sein Lin, who directed the Taiwan Land Reform Training Institute, told how constructive land tax policies transformed Taiwan from an equally depressed area to one of the most prosperous nations in several decades.

Steven Cord gave statistics showing how the two-rate property tax reversed the urban decline in 11 Pennsylvania cities, generating much greater construction and

growth than in neighbouring cities that did not adopt this method of down-taxing buildings and up-taxing land values.

John Kelly described how a modified land tax is giving new life to a blighted industrial area of Peoria. He noted that some politicians and development specialists dislike the approach because they cannot take credit for each new project. These good things just happen by themselves once the tax structure is set straight, Kelly said.

Ted Gwartney proposed that West Virginia tap its rich natural resource base with a statewide land value tax earmarked for schools and distributed to local districts on a per pupil basis.

He said this would re-

move disparities between tax-rich and tax-poor districts. And it would release county tax revenue, which are now used overwhelmingly for education, for roads, health care and other vital services.

Among those calling for reduced taxes on production and higher land taxes to overcome the highly concentrated ownership of coal and the present maldistribution of incomes were Missouri State Senator Walt Mueller, Minnesota State Representative John Burger, Prof. Mason Gaffney and Lowell Harriss, President of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, who also chaired the conference.

George Collins, Director of the Henry George School of New York, suggested that labour and capital, while often perceived as enemies, are natural allies and should address the land question as partners in the march toward prosperity.

WALTER RYBECK