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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Every year that passes it becomes less possible, for money reasons alone, to make a money-living by any work of former quality, care and honesty, and this in a world of ever-increasing productive power which is becoming a threat to the planet. The churches themselves have given outstanding examples of slavish devaluation of their service to people by the merging of parishes, surrendering the spiritual values of the parish priest and his parishioners, including those outside the inner ring of devout churchgoers."*

"There has been not a whisper of challenge to the taken-for-granted assumption than when money-values are devalued, all other values must follow them, nor any realisation that now that money has become a symbolism based only on faith, the power which enslaves us all is of the spirit and not material."

– Dr. Geoffrey Dobbs in 1984 Postscript to *The Just Tax*

BUT IS OUR FUTURE IN THE STARS by Eric D. Butler:

Ever since man solved the problem of providing himself with the basic requirements of life – food, clothing and shelter – without devoting all his time and energies to obtaining these basics, he has used the time he has saved to speculating on the nature of the Universe in which he found himself. Foremost among the speculators were members of the great Greek Civilisation. Perhaps never in recorded human history has such a relatively small population produced such a galaxy of the creativeness in every sphere of human endeavour. Even today's doctors are expected to adhere to the traditions established by the great Greek Hippocrates. What is the explanation of this outpouring of such brilliance? Beyond doubt one of the major factors was the fact that the Greeks had no experience of work as is generally understood today. The Greeks lived in a leisure state where activities essential to produce the basic requirements were performed by slaves. This did not result in Greek citizens lolling around in a slothful state; rather the opposite; Greek society was one in which enormous mental and physical energy were constantly being poured out. It was not unusual to have an outstanding philosopher training to take part in the numerous games which were held. The early Greeks were pioneers of astronomy and pondered on the nature of the Universe. The stars have always had a special fascination for Mankind. Literature of all kinds is full of references to the moon and stars. Romantic references will be found in the works of Shakespeare and other artists. But then came the visionaries like H.G. Wells who wrote of man conquering space. The planet of Mars has long been a subject of intense interest. It is not surprising therefore that the successful arrival of the appropriately named **Pathfinder** on Mars and the transmission of films back to earth has seized the imagination of people everywhere.

There can be no doubt that this latest space exploration project is yet another great technological achievement, following upon those early pioneering space projects. But these very achievements highlight the disturbing truth that these achievements are in stark contrast with the disturbing truth of the growing failure of man to solve the problems he has created on Earth. These problems are the result of asking the wrong questions. Early in the history of space projects I was invited by an American friend to accompany him to a Seminar near Chicago where economists were presenting papers on the economic implications of space programmes. Two economists, whom I was assured were regarded as being distinguished, seriously advanced the view that the main value of the space programmes was not the scientific fall out, but that it would help to solve the U.S.A's. most pressing problems: how to achieve what the economists call a "favourable balance of trade". Space projects offered unlimited opportunities to export into outer space without any other nation trying to export anything back! In simple terms, the view was that by blasting materials into outer space, this would help to create incomes to purchase the abundance of consumer production available on earth.

Some years after this incident I read with interest the report of a Sydney Seminar being conducted by a group of criminologists. I was fascinated with the contribution of a visiting American criminologist, who argued that a "reasonable" amount of crime was beneficial for society. It provided work, and incomes, for policemen, judges, court officials and others involved in attempting to maintain law and order. If the American criminologist who offered this viewpoint is still alive, it would be instructive to know what he thinks of an American society in which there is a rising tide of violent crime. In Australia the police are now openly conceding that they are losing the battle to contain the growing use of hard drugs, the victims generally being a young generation which has progressively lost faith in its politicians and their institutions. Youth unemployment in Australia is now estimated to be as high as 40 percent in some areas. The victims of a system which offers them such a barren future are unlikely to be inspired by great technological achievements such as that now being demonstrated on Mars.

The spirit of adventure and exploration is a natural attribute of much of Mankind. It was this attribute which resulted in Captain Cook and his scientific entourage of scientists sailing around the world in their relatively small ship the *Endeavour*. But, as the author of Social Credit, C.H. Douglas, said many years ago, while it perhaps is technically possible to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, such a project was a waste of time and energy if the objective was to distribute incomes to people to buy what had already been produced, or could easily be produced. Why not distribute the incomes without so much waste and destruction? The gospel of "growth" and "expansion" is the result of asking the wrong questions about the true purpose of man and his economic system.

Anyone who thinks it is farfetched to suggest that exploration into outer space may be exploited to try to keep Man controlled on earth might consider that the controversial American guru LaRouche, whose followers think he is a great economic genius who offers some weird theories about the British Royal family, has outlined a major project for colonising Mars! This is the way, says LaRouche, to re-generate the economy on Earth. Any such project must be considered against the question of why undertake unnecessary projects to make the economy serve the individual. Man's real destiny will not be found on Mars or any other part of the Universe, but within himself. The Kingdom of God, said Christ, resides within each and every individual. Within that Kingdom Man can solve his problems, once he is clear what those problems are.

CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCH by David Thompson:

In a speech to the Eighth Assembly of the Uniting Church, the new Moderator, Reverend John Mavor, condemned "policies of economic rationalism without compassion", which he claimed were "spreading over Australia like poisoned gas". *"A country without compassion lets economic rationalism rule and endless people suffer,"* he is reported as saying.

In language that is sure to provoke conflict with government, Mavor identified the problem with vigour and frankness. *"Without compassion, this nation will not deal with the problem of youth unemployment. At 27% across the nation and up over 40% in some areas, it is having a devastating effect,"* he said. *"It is seen as one of the factors leading to 5,000 attempted suicides by young people per year."*

While squadrons of "rationalist" economists continue to preach the virtues of the global market, the elimination of tariffs, and economic "efficiency", alternate views of dissenting economists are unheard, and the plight of the victims appears mainly as a government-laundered statistic. The morality of what is being done to the individual in pursuit of a kind of ideological puritanism fully merits harsh criticism from the church, and Rev. Mavor should be congratulated for speaking up.

But while the Moderator of the Uniting Church condemns "economic rationalism", he attributes the pursuit of Market-driven economic policies to a general lack of "compassion". This is not entirely the case. Many politicians agonise over issues like unemployment and poverty, without a clue about alternative policies. It is **the lack of alternatives**, or the lack of courage to fairly consider alternatives that leave the field clear for the economic rationalists to dominate. The dreadful human fall-out will continue while ever there is a lack of courage and vision, not "compassion".

The challenge for Reverend Mavor is whether he is prepared to consider alternatives? Lamenting unemployment is easy; finding alternatives will test his vision and commitment.

POWER SELL-OFF COULD BE SHORT-CIRCUITED: N.S.W. Premier Bob Carr faces increasing difficulties in attempting to follow the Victorian lead in selling off the State's power generation and transmission industry. Carr faces solid opposition, but it does not come from the Liberal-National Parties. Liberal leader Peter Collins maintains that the Coalition Opposition fully supports the "privatisation" of the power system, but would achieve it more "efficiently and profitably" than the A.L.P.

Opposition to the power sell-off comes instead from inside the Labor Party itself, and also from the N.S.W. unions. Such is the dissatisfaction with the corporatisation of N.S.W.'s power supply, that the State Government appears to have postponed the sell-off until after the A.L.P. State conference. It is the State conference which claims the right to set A.L.P. policy, and a large proportion of delegates will be instructed to vigorously oppose privatisation. Carr and others fear that those opposed may have the numbers to prevent the Government proceeding.

It is a source of some embarrassment to Mr. Carr that his Victorian counterpart, Mr. Brumby, is scathing about the Kennett Government's handling of the power privatisation. Brumby was alarmed by the results of a confidential survey, which claimed that the State Government was prepared to "put the interests of the market ahead of electricity users". *"Having sold off this vital public asset,"* said

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Brumby, *"the Government is apparently happy for the private power companies to use the State's electricity supply as nothing more than a profit-making market tool."*

The survey, conducted by Coopers & Lybrand, revealed that one-third of Victoria's privatised power companies believe they will provide a **less reliable service** than previously experienced, and that power failures were necessary to teach Victorians to "appropriately value" their power supply!

The doubtful companies do not believe existing legislation can empower the Victorian Power Exchange (V.P.X.) to "keep the lights on". Further, any attempt by the V.P.X. to intervene to ensure a reliable power supply would constitute an **"unacceptable market distortion"**. Thus, the needs of the Market are more important than the needs of consumers. In fact, Victorians need to be taught to value the Market's function: *"Customers need to experience some disruptions in order to correctly value supply and demand side responses,"* said the report.

Consumers in the new "privatised" electricity system need to know where they stand: they exist to serve the Market, and assist the Market in the pursuit of profits!

ABORIGINAL "AFFIRMATIVE ACTION": N.S.W. Attorney-General, Mr. Jeff Shaw, used the Canberra ministerial summit on Aboriginal deaths in custody to call for "practical and radical" solutions to Aboriginal problems. In particular, Shaw suggested that "indigenous Australians" should have seats set aside in State Parliament to which they could elect their own representatives directly. Fortunately, a referendum would be necessary to implement a dedicated-seats system in N.S.W., but may not in other States.

Shaw's suggestion is certainly radical, if not very practical. How would it operate? In New Zealand, where four Maori-only seats offered Maoris their own voice in Parliament, it was found necessary to maintain a Maori electoral roll. Would Mr. Shaw envisage an Aboriginal electoral roll? Would part-Aborigines be permitted to enrol, as part-Maoris were in New Zealand? What tests would be applied to ensure that the system was not abused by non-Aborigines purporting to be Aborigines? What definition would Mr. Shaw suggest for "indigenous"?

Shaw's suggestion is exactly the type of ham-fisted approach that is jeopardising any chance of achieving 'reconciliation' between Aborigines and others. One law for Aborigines and another for other Australians simply generates further resentment. A kind of "reverse racism" is nevertheless still "racism" to those who have felt the lash of the politically correct. Any new race-based initiative will be seen to undermine the grassroots demand for one Australia, irrespective of background.

Meanwhile, a "high-level" Aboriginal delegation begins to tour Europe, Africa and the United States this week to highlight Australia's "human rights abuses". Six delegates from the National Indigenous Working Group on Native Title will condemn Australia at the United Nations and elsewhere, until their demands are met. It is not clear who is funding this treasonous jaunt, but we will be amazed if it is not the Australian taxpayer.

The delegation has conceded that if their demands are ignored, boycotts of Australian companies overseas, and trade sanctions on Australia would be considered.