



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Institutional Christianity is undergoing... the greatest credibility crisis in its history. Never before in the course of human events has there been such a need for persons in the highest places to speak out... To remain silent on this issue is not only wilful and culpable negligence on the part of Christian leaders, but threatens to undermine and destroy any remaining credibility that their religions may still possess. Many of these religious leaders align themselves one way or the other, politically or ideologically, with what are called Capitalism and Socialism. Both systems have protagonists who are self-confessed atheists. Both systems have zealous exponents who claim discipleship of Jesus.*

"They all have one thing in common. Whilst blindly pledged in seeming mutual antagonism, they are both openly pledged to opposing any others' antagonism to their common financial overlords. The latter hide behind the scenes and lust with bloated power as they watch their stupefied slaves engage in war games, of both military and economic nature, to their own self-destruction."

– "The Great Harlot" by Peter Lock, 2002

THE IMPRISONED WORLD OF THE FABULOUSLY RICH by Jeremy Lee:

As the earth is divided into the two rigidly-separated worlds of the rich and the destitute our concentration has been focused – rightly – on those dying of malnutrition, lack of water or the ravages of war. But the small, exclusive, guarded world of the wealthy seems just as miserable.

James Wolfenson, president of the World Bank, told a \$2,000-a-plate dinner in New York last year that those attending would be threatened by the world's poor unless something was done to rectify the yawning gulf between them. But those who have reached their status as a result of the existing credit monopoly seem incapable of taking the necessary steps to lift their fellows, even though it would make them immeasurably safer and happier.

The industrial West, and now many Third World countries, have become the scene of guarded citadels of privilege surrounded by oceans of destitution. That destitution exists in large measure in Australia, but does not appear in the GDP figures, which preoccupy the attention of economists and treasurers. George Monbiot, writing in *The Guardian* (UK), August 27th, 2002, commented:

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".... Over the past 20 years ... wealthy people have laid claim to human genes, public archives, town squares and village greens, playing fields, beaches, even clouds and landing spaces on the Moon. Having enhanced their wealth, they retreat to gated communities, hire guards and install CCTV and movement sensors.

"The rich lock themselves in and everyone else out. So many fences rise to exclude us that after a while we are no longer shut out but shut in. And if we try to cross those barriers we pay dearly, for the increasing freedom of capital has been accompanied by unprecedented rates of imprisonment. For both the secluded and the excluded, the fruits of economic growth become a substitute for human interaction: we prefer watching TV than talking to our neighbors. Plenty of evidence suggests that as we become richer, we become less content with ourselves. It is incorrect to say that necessity is the mother of invention. In the rich world, invention is the mother of necessity. When people already possess all the goods and services they need, growth can be stimulated only by discovering new needs. Advertising creates gaps in our lives in order to fill them. We buy the products, but the gap remains.

"Already, in the rich nations, the beneficiaries of development spend much of their money on escaping from it: it costs a fortune to live in a place that does not assault your eyes and ears with ugliness. To absorb our increasing wealth we must keep building. Our new cars need new roads, our new goods and services must come from new shops and warehouses and offices. One day there may be nowhere left in which we can shut the noise out of our heads. Wealth also appears to reduce our capacity to act. Our reliance on technology supplants our reliance upon ourselves and other people In other words, as Simon Fairlie argues, the rich world is approaching the point at which 'satiation turns into deprivation'. Even if we were to forget the damage our growing economies inflict upon the environment, even if we were to ignore the conflict between our greed and the fulfillment of other peoples' needs, we should be able to see that economic growth in nations that are rich enough already is a disaster"

Whether Monbiot understands how this whole lop-sided system is itself the prisoner of the global debt system and those who own it is not clear. But he is correct in his assessment that the rich are on a treadmill of fear like everyone else.

One result is the attempt to insure against any possible disaster, spawning a world of regulation and litigation that is now collapsing. Remote country people can't even have their annual show or a pony-club for the kids because they can't afford the insurance and are legally banned from proceeding without it! How far does that go? The annual Christmas party? Or even the Christmas carol service? Are we to coin a new axiom, "Wherever two or three are gathered together, they shall take out insurance as required by Big Brother?" And, of course, our fully-insured politicians, as they churn out more and more laws, are only doing it for our own good. In the process they are crushing the initiative and personal responsibility that built Australia in the first place.

If the imminent GATS Treaty designed by the World Trade Organisation is forced through, privatizing the whole of life into the hands of multinationals owned by the wealthy, will they be any happier? Or more fearful still.

Lionel Fifield, who runs Brisbane's Relaxation Centre, made these recent striking comments (*Peoples' Monthly*, November, 2002):

"Recently I came across a sign on a cliff edge which stated the very obvious 'Danger of Falling' and I began to reflect on how we are becoming surrounded by signs everywhere warning of this and telling us to be cautious of that.

"I wonder if in 20 years time all swimming pools will have notices indicating it is possible to drown in water, car salesmen will need to tell purchasers that people have crashes in cars, restaurants will need to warn us all of the potential dangers in eating food and when we buy a puppy we are given a warning that all puppies like to bite and chew?

"Whereever are we going? What sort of society are we creating? Politicians come up with slogans such as 'Ours is the Smart State' yet we can go to the courts and hear intelligent lawyers pleading our stupidity. 'I did not know that if I dived into a metre of water I would hurt myself – nobody put a sign there.' 'I didn't know that falling off a cliff could be dangerous.' 'That person should not have sold me a drink' and 'I certainly did not realize that the 2 metre fence with barbed wire on the top was designed to stop me going into that area.'

"We live in times when masses of people are reading books, attending courses and listening to tapes bringing ideas of personal power, individual healing and developing the potential for a more co-operative and compassionate society – however at the same time there seems to be an ever-swelling river in flood, watering the fields of fear, greed, blame, dishonesty and alienation from one another.

"I have often heard people say 'Well, everybody else seems to be doing it so I thought I might as well' or 'I wasn't going to sue but several of my friends said I'd be a mug not to get some money out of it – they can afford it!'

"The whole thrust of genuine personal and spiritual growth is taking responsibility for our lives. Embracing personal responsibility is the essence of personal empowerment.

"Each and every one of us has the potential to make our mark in creating the sort of society we want to live in, often the little steps we need to take will go unnoticed and almost certainly nobody will ever acknowledge them, yet it is the way that we can take a personal stand against greed and against dishonesty. If we can stand others can stand with us – BUT, even if they don't we are richer because we have acknowledged our integrity and our personal values and, most importantly, we've stood by them. The future is what we individually live and put in place today." (end of article)

The whole edifice of regulation and its enforcement is in danger of collapsing. The courts are clogged and the whole system of enforcement out of control. Older, more conventional people try to obey the law, but often are unable to cope because of its sheer size and complexity. The less conscientious, seeing its absurdity, are beginning to ignore "Big Brother" – and often get away with it. We are rapidly developing a class in Australia who evade, ignore or submit grudgingly to the law when they have to – but never willingly obey it. An example is the boast made when the GST was introduced that it would

destroy the cash economy. We waited with baited breath for a while. But now we see it for the absurdity it was. They'll have to abolish cash altogether, and risk waking all Australians to what is happening.

This has happened in previous civilizations. The number of laws and the size of the necessary bureaucracy to administer it, has become so heavy that societies have collapsed.

Just as the Society of Chartered Accountants is taking on the Tax Department, we need a movement to repeal unnecessary laws. The first political party that announced a policy of repealing laws would gain a lot of support. Why do we have over 8,000 pages in the Taxation Act? Wasn't Costello going to make it simpler?

The irony is that the original depository of freedom and responsibility, the Church, conforms more to the world of "Big Brother" than most other organizations. The idea of challenging Caesar in his predations into those realms reserved for God is viewed with horror, as though it was blasphemy. The few exceptions, such as the Anglican Primate, Archbishop Carnley, who has strongly condemned the probable war against Iraq, or the Catholic Archbishop George Pell, who insists that moral laws are not to be decided by majority head-counting but by God's authority, are to be cut down at any cost.

If ever such men really came to grips with the world of banking, debt and money we'd begin to get somewhere.

As we've said before, "the plight of the world is the hope of the world". Paradoxical though this might seem, every action breeds an equal and opposite reaction. We can ignore evil just so long. But finally, when it has attempted to block every avenue towards freedom, happiness and personal responsibility, it unleashes the means of its own destruction. Just how much damage is done before that moment comes is a matter of conjecture. But come it will, probably at that moment when we imagine all is lost.

THE GREAT HARLOT, THE WHORE OF BABYLON: Peter Lock's book "*The Great Harlot*" is challenging. He introduces his reader to the Science and Logic underlying Self-functioning Systems, in particular as it pertains to Sociology and Economics. He refers to the inability of the 'masculine straight-line logic of cause and effect' to recognise, let alone solve, so many of our current problems. What is required is the 'right-lobed elliptical non-linear logic' (something, he says, which is both childlike and feminine). But he warns, being foreign to the masculine straight-line logic of cause and effect, its understanding will require a more evolved and sophisticated attitude of mind. He has put the hierarchy of the nation's systems and institutions on notice.

His reference to the financial overlords' 'lusting with bloated power' lines up, in my mind, with J.R.R Tolkien's use of the hideous, foul smelling spider *Shelob* bloated with the blood of men to depict this evil power – the power of Mammon or money.