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Aid for the Overdeveloped West (Book Review)

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note the Boston Massacre, the Tea Party, the Intolerable Acts, the First Continental Congress, Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress, Saratoga, the French Alliance, Valley Forge, or the Treaty of Paris. Muhlenberg does comment on the turn of affairs upon occasion, however. At the time of independence, he cited Romans 13 and argued that, "Contending parties cannot be their own judges, and private persons possess no infallible scales to weigh without error the preponderant arguments of both sides" (164). He further questioned whether the people of Pennsylvania "would allow themselves to be governed under a new form by men who did not profess the Christian religion" (165). He inquired, "Are these many thousands of souls to be governed by men who neither believe nor confess the Saviour of the world and his Word?" (165). By the time of Yorktown, however, Muhlenberg had changed his mind. He stated, "The event in Virginia clearly shows that the sublime Saviour has accepted a prevailing intercession for the unfruitful fig tree in his vineyard and has allowed that it should not be hewn down and cast into the fire but rather be digged and manured" (224). There is no attempt to rationalize this change in attitude and again the reader is at a loss as to whether the omission is due to editing or to lack of reflection upon Muhlenberg's part.

On the other hand, the diary is filled with commentary upon daily routine and the reader glimpses intimately that part of colonial life that is usually omitted from textbooks. The clergyman records his problems with dissident church members, the hazards and hardships of serving several congregations simultaneously, and the primitive nature of colonial medicine. His numerous references to infant burials at which he officiated attest to the high infant mortality rate.

To those who are seeking evidence as to the role of clergymen and instituted religion in the formation of American political theory and its implementation, the book will be a disappointment. However, to those who wish to catch a glimpse of the "underside" of American history, to observe the lives of those colonials whose activities were not considered newsworthy, the diary offers rewarding reading.

Aid for the Overdeveloped West, by Bob Goudzwaard, Wedge Publishing Foundation, Toronto, Ontario, 1975. 89 pages, \$3.50 (paper).

This book by Goudzwaard is a compilation

of articles written for various Christian publications. The theme in each case is some variation of the economic problem of scarce resources and the way in which Christians must view these problem areas. Although we may initially suspect some discontinuity as a result of the fragmented structure, the theme in each essay is similar enough so that continuity of thought is maintained throughout.

The emphasis of the book is on the development of thought patterns which integrate biblical teachings with economic problems currently receiving discussion. One outstanding problem which Goudzwaard deals with extensively is the consumption of resources in western countries. In this discussion Goudzwaard joins Malthus and other doomsday prophets in pointing out the dismal consequences of extreme rates of production and consumption. More importantly, he examines the underlying attitudes which are portrayed by society in these actions. High consumption rates are evidence of man's turning from biblical principles to materialistic desires in search of meaning for life. Our socio-economic lifestyles are confessions of what we believe. Christians are called to a lifestyle which differs substantially from those around us.

In addition to focusing on economic growth, the author extends biblical directives to other areas of discussion. For example, insight is given into the problem of industrial and labor relations. Problems arise primarily out of misunderstandings over responsibilities on both sides. Improper views of enterprise coupled with desires to promote one's own self interest intensify and aggravate decision making. Controversy over which type of economic system is biblical is another area which Goudzwaard presents as a misapplication of Scripture.

The overall message presented by the author is that we must apply our Christian values to economic areas of decision making. Although we often claim scriptural direction in our lives, the economic area is one in which our "confessions" are often contradictory. Unlike many other writers, Goudzwaard analyzes methods by which incorporation will be made effective.

An understanding of economic principles is not enough for the Christian. These principles must be examined to see if they are truly acceptable. This series of articles is an excellent discussion of how these principles should be applied in our lives. It helps to organize a Christian approach to economic problems as well as to give insights into judging the important issues.