

National Child Care

National Child Care Debate

Imagine a country in which nearly all children between the ages of three and five attend preschool in sparkling classrooms, with teachers recruited and trained as child care professionals. Imagine a country that conceives of child care as a program to welcome children into the larger community and awaken their potential for learning and growing.

So begins one of the chapters by Hillary Rodham Clinton in her book *It Takes a Village*. The discussion represents yet another attempt to erect a national system of child care. In the early 1970s, Senator Walter Mondale pushed the Child Advocacy Bill through Congress only to have it vetoed by President Nixon. Again in the late 1980s, Congress flirted with socialized day care when Senator Christopher Dodd proposed The Act for Better Child Care.

Fortunately, the bill went nowhere.

But has the time come again for a national discussion of day care? Hillary Clinton proposes that the United States adopt the French model of institutionalized day care: "More than 90 percent of French children between ages three and five attend free or inexpensive preschools called *écoles maternelles*. Even before they reach the age of three, many of them are in full-day programs." The First Lady then goes on to present the French experience in glowing terms and provides additional examples to bolster her push for a national day care system.

Many social commentators believe our contemporary day care debate has dramatically shifted from whether the federal government should be involved to how the federal government should be involved. What was once in the domain of the family has shifted to the government due in large part to the

increasing number of women in the work force. During the Carter Administration, a federal child care tax credit was enacted and the budget for this tax credit has mushroomed to billions of dollars annually.

The debate is changing as well because the child-rearing patterns in America are changing. Through most of our history, women traditionally assumed primary responsibility for rearing children. Now as more and more mothers head off to work, nearly half of the nation's children under six years old are in day care facilities.

This dramatic shift from child-rearing within the family to social parenting in day care facilities is beginning to have frightening consequences. Stories of neglect, abuse, and abandonment are merely the tip of the iceberg of a multi-billion-dollar-a-year industry that is largely unregulated.

Sadly, this change in the way we raise children has been motivated more by convenience and selfishness than by thoughtful analysis of the implications. Psychologist Burton White, author of *The First Three Years of Life*, laments that "We haven't moved to day care because we were seeking a better way of raising children, but to meet the needs of the parent, mostly the mother. My concern is that this trend constitutes a disastrous effect on the child."

This essay looks at the important issues concerning the subject of day care. What are the implications of a nationally-subsidized day care system? How does day care affect early childhood development? What are the psychological costs? What are the social costs? What are the medical costs? These are just a few of the questions we will try to answer in these pages. Psalm 127 reminds us the children are "a gift of God." Before we develop national programs that may harm our children, we need to count the costs and make an informed decision.

Use and Misuse of Statistics

Hillary Rodham Clinton isn't the only national figure proposing a nationally-subsidized day care system for the United States. In his 1996 State of the Union address, President Bill Clinton also proposed a national day care system.

Before we discuss the potential impact of a national day care system, we must deal with the use and misuse of statistics. Proponents of national day care frequently say that the traditional family is dead and that two-thirds of mothers with preschool children are in the work force.

Let's set the record straight. Reporters and social commentators have frequently said that less than 10 percent of U.S. families are "traditional families" with a breadwinner husband and homemaker wife. The 10 percent figure actually comes from the U.S. Labor Department and only counts families with an employed father, a stay-at-home mother, and two children still at home. Using that criteria, my own family would not be a traditional family because we have three children, not two children, still at home. Dr. Jim Dobson's family would not be a traditional family because his two children no longer live at home. In fact, a mother who works out of her home would not qualify as a member of a traditional family. I think you can see the problem. The 10 percent figure is artificially restrictive.

What about the number of women in the work force? Again, we need to check the definition used to define working women. The Department of Labor figure counts mothers who work part time (as little as one hour per week) as well as women who have flexible hours. The figure also counts mothers who work seasonally. Furthermore, it counts mothers who work from their homes. Again, you can see that this number is artificially inflated.

According to the recent Census Bureau data, 54 percent of the 17 million children under the age of five are primarily cared for by a mother who stays at home. An additional seven percent represents "tag-team parents" who work different shifts and share child-rearing responsibilities. And another four percent have "doubletime mothers" who care for their child while they babysit other children or earn income in some other way. Thus, the primary child care arrangement for 65 percent of all preschool children is care by one or both parents.

This isn't exactly the figure you will hear during a national debate on day care. Instead of hearing that two-thirds of mothers with preschool children are in the work force, we should be hearing that two-thirds of all preschool children are cared for by one or both parents.

Actually the percentage should be even higher. Another 11 percent of preschool children are cared for by grandmothers or other relatives. This would mean that a full 76 percent of all preschool children are cared for by a parent or close relative. But don't expect the mainstream media to use this figure when debating the so-called "crisis of child care."

Perhaps that is the most important lesson of this debate. President Clinton and the First Lady, along with countless child care advocates, want to talk about the crisis of child care. Statistics that do not justify federal intrusion into the family are ignored. Before we start down the road to socialized day care, we need to consider whether the problem is as acute as portrayed.

Psychological Costs

At this point I would like to discuss the psychological costs of day care. Now that we have been effectively conducting an unofficial experiment with day care over the last few decades, the evidence is coming in disconcerting evidence of the psychological harm done by institutionalized care. Jay Belsky,

a child care expert at Penn State's College of Health and Human Development, says "It looked like kids who were exposed to 20 or more hours a week of nonparental care in their first year of life what I call early and extensive nonparental care, and here comes the critical phrase, of the kind that was routinely available to families in the United States today seemed to be at elevated risk. They were more likely to look insecure in their relationships to their mothers, in particular at the end of their first year of life."

Unfortunately most parents are unaware of this growing research. So is the average citizen who will no doubt be convinced by "experts" that we need a nationally-subsidized system of institutional care. Marjorie Boyd, writing in *The Washington Monthly*, found that "Practically everyone is for day care, but practically all the evidence says it's bad for preschoolers in all but its most costly forms. Most people do not know that psychologists and psychiatrists have grave misgivings about the concept because of its potential effect on personality; nor do they know that the officials of countries that have had considerable experience with day care are now warning of its harmful effects on children."

The concerns can be categorized under three areas: bonding, personality development, and substitute care. Bonding takes place in the hours and days following birth, usually between the mother and the child. Bonding demands consistency, and day care interrupts that consistency especially when there is not one person providing the primary care for the child. Children placed in a day care center too early are deprived of a primary care giver and will manifest psychological problems.

Personality development is another concern. Most children will get off to a better start in life if they spend the majority of their waking hours during the first three years being cared for by their parents and other family members rather than in any form of substitute care.

A final concern is the negative effect of substitute care on a child. Jean Piaget has shown that children are not capable of reflective thinking at young ages. For example, they do not have a concept of object permanence. If you hide a ball, the infant will stop searching for it because it has ceased to exist in the child's mind. In the same way, when mom leaves the day care center, she has ceased to exist in the mind of the child. The mother may reflect on her child all day while at work, but the child has erased her from his or her mind.

These then are just a few of the psychological concerns knowledgeable people have about institutionalized day care. Before we begin to fund national day care, we should stop long enough to discuss the impact such institutionalized care would have on our children and the nation.

Additional Psychological Costs

Another concern is what Detrick Bonfenbrunner calls "social contagion." Poorly supervised day care creates an atmosphere that socializes the children in a negative manner. For example, Bryna Siegel (psychologist at Stanford University) reported in her nine- year study that day care children were "15 times more aggressive... a tendency toward more physical and verbal attacks on other children." By that she did not merely mean that the children were more assertive, but that they were more aggressive.

J. C. Schwartz and his colleagues have shown that children who entered day care before they were twelve months old are more physically and verbally abusive when they are older. They found this abuse was aimed at adults, and also found these children were less cooperative with grownups and less tolerant of frustration than children cared for by their mothers.

Christians should not be surprised by these findings given our biblical understanding of human sinfulness. Each child is born a sinner. When day care workers put a bunch of "little

“sinners” together in a room without adequate supervision, sin nature will most likely manifest itself in the environment.

Proponents of socialized day care begin with a flawed premise. They assume that human beings are basically good. These liberal, social experiments with day care begin with the tacit assumption that a child is a “noble savage” that needs to be nurtured and encouraged. Social thinkers ranging from Jean Jacques Rousseau to Abraham Maslow begin with the assumption about human goodness and thus have little concern with the idea of children being reared in an institutional environment.

Christians on the other hand believe that the family is God’s primary instrument for social instruction. Children must not only be nurtured but they must also be disciplined. Children are to be reared by parents in the context of the family, not in institutionalized day care.

Over the last three decades, America has been engaged in a social experiment with day care. As more and more children are put into institutionalized care, we are reaping the consequences.

Emotionally scarred children who have been “warehoused” in sub-standard facilities are more likely to drop out of school, be arrested, and end up on welfare rolls. The cost to society in terms of truancy, delinquency, and crime will be significant.

E. F. Ziglar (Yale University) has said that “When parents pick a day care center, they are essentially picking what their child will become.” This is not only true for the individual child; it is true for society. As a nation we have been choosing the children we will have in the future by promoting day care, and the future does not look good.

Financial and Medical Costs

Finally, I would like to look at the financial and medical costs of day care. The financial costs can be significant. Many women who place their children into institutional care fail to estimate the additional (often hidden) costs of their choice. Quality day care is not cheap nor are many of the other costs associated with going to work.

Sara Levitan and Karen Cleary Alderman state in their book, *Child Care and the ABCs Too* that “The cost of preschooler’s day care services added to work expenses can easily absorb the total earnings of some women working part time.” They continue,

Disregarding the cost of transportation and other work-connected expenses or the imputed cost of performing household tasks in addition to work (overtime duty), it is apparent that the daily salary of at least half of working women did not provide the cost of a single child’s day care meeting federal standards.

By contrast, the value of a mother is vastly underestimated. Financial analyst Sylvia Porter states that the twenty-five million full-time homemakers contribute billions to the economy each year, even though their labor is not counted in the gross national product. She calculates that the average mother contributes nearly \$30,000 a year in labor and services. She arrived at this figure by calculating an hourly fee for such functions as: nurse-maid, housekeeper, cook, dishwasher, laundress, food buyer, chauffeur, gardener, maintenance person, seamstress, dietician, and practical nurse.

Health costs are also considerable. Young children are still in the process of developing their immunity to certain diseases, and are more likely to get sick when exposed to

other children on a daily basis. While some ailments are slight, others can be very serious. For example, infectious diseases (especially those involving the middle ear and hearing ability) are three to four times as prevalent in group care as compared to home care.

Dr. Ron Haskins and Dr. Jonathan Kotch have identified day care attendance as the most significant factor associated with the increased incidence of bacterial meningitis. Likewise, cytomegalovirus (the leading cause of congenital infections in newborns) has also been linked to day care centers. These and other correlations should not be surprising given the intimate contact with so many unrelated children in an environment of playing, sleeping, eating, and using toilet facilities.

As we have seen in this discussion, the costs of day care are high. As Christians we must begin with the biblical foundation found in Psalm 127 that children are "a gift of God." God has entrusted us with our children for a period of time. We cannot and should not shirk our responsibility or pass that responsibility on to others.

At the moment, this nation seems poised to implement a comprehensive, national program of day care. Before we develop national programs that may harm our children, we need to count the costs and make an informed decision.

©1996 Probe Ministries

It Takes a Village

Does It Take a Village to Raise a Child?

We rarely do book reviews on the Probe radio program, but from time to time a book is published that is so significant that we depart from our normal format. This essay is a discussion of the book *It Takes a Village* by Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Now it should be obvious that a discussion of this book will no doubt be controversial. After all, the Clinton administration, as well as the First Lady, has been under attack. We will not even venture to discuss any of the allegations that are so much a part of the news. Likewise we will try to avoid any partisan considerations of particular programs and policies.

The focus of this essay will be on the book *It Takes a Village*. It sets forth a clear-cut agenda, and we as Christians need to ask ourselves if this is an agenda that can be supported from the Bible. Mrs. Clinton epitomizes what many people believe could be called "the new feminism." And it is fair to say that Hillary Clinton is perhaps the most visible, prominent feminist in the world. As First Lady her ideas are given national prominence. As First Lady she addresses international women's conferences (like the ones held in Cairo and Beijing). When she writes a book setting forth her ideas, it is appropriate to evaluate those ideas in light of Scripture.

I would like to begin by focusing on the title of the book, *It Takes a Village*. The title comes from an African proverb which states that "It takes a village to raise a child." This oft-repeated African proverb has become the mantra of recent international women's conferences (Cairo, Beijing). I believe it represents the new paradigm of feminist and socialist thinking.

At its face, there is nothing controversial about the idea that it takes more than parents to raise a child.

Grandparents, friends, pastors, teachers, boy scout leaders, and many others in the community all have a role in the lives of our children. In her book, Mrs. Clinton does acknowledge that "parents bear the first and primary responsibility for their sons and daughters."

Unfortunately, the rest of the book contradicts that early statement. The First Lady essentially extends her notion of the village far beyond the family to include various organizations, especially the federal government. By the end of the book, it appears that Mrs. Clinton has never met a government program she didn't like.

She says that those who hold to an anti-government position are the "noisiest" position and getting all the attention from the media. But she goes on to say that "despite the resurgence of anti-government extremism, it is becoming clear that most Americans do not favor a radical dismantling of government. Instead of rollback, they want real reform. And when a strong case can be made, they still favor government action, as they have demonstrated recently in their support for measures like the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Brady Bill, and the new Direct Student Loan program."

By the end of the book Mrs. Clinton has endorsed nearly every government program of the last thirty years including those mentioned above and others like Goals 2000, Parents as Teachers, and AmeriCorps. The *village*, in Mrs. Clinton's book, is much more than the communities in which we live—it is a metaphor for the continued expansion of government into every aspect of our lives.

Areas of Agreement

If you were to pick up Hillary Clinton's book and begin reading it, you would no doubt be surprised by what you found. Christians will find lots of areas of agreement. In fact, one talk show host even made a confession on air that he expected

to find more to disagree with than he did. Instead, he found lots of material in Mrs. Clinton's book with which he could wholeheartedly agree.

I believe this is precisely the reaction Mrs. Clinton intended. She spends countless pages analyzing the social problems facing our children and providing constructive ideas for parents and communities to follow. Not only is she critical of drugs, violence, illegitimacy, and the plight of American education, she is also critical of such things as the impact of no-fault divorce laws. People looking for a clearly stated liberal agenda will not easily find it in this book. In fact, it is probably fair to say that whole chapters in her book could have been written by Dr. James Dobson.

Mrs. Clinton hastens to add that "this book is not a memoir; thankfully, that will have to wait. Nor is it a textbook or an encyclopedia; it is not meant to be. It is a statement of my personal views, a reflection of my continuing meditation on children." Though it does contain a fair amount of technical material, it is still a warm, nurturing, and inviting book. The First Lady also tells of her own family, which she describes as looking "like it was straight out of the 1950s television sitcom *Father Knows Best*." As a counterpoint, she talks about Bill Clinton's dysfunctional family, and even shares tender, intimate stories about rearing Chelsea.

However, interspersed between these long, warm, nurturing sections which appeal to your emotions are political statements about how government should be used to help the family. I fear that readers without discernment will easily embrace the political agenda of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Each problem or concern is quickly answered by a government program or governmentally-sponsored community program.

Many will remember that the First Lady used a similar tactic in the past to try to sell her plan to nationalize health care. Often she would tell heart-rending stories of families

without health insurance in order to bolster her plan to implement nationally-subsidized health care. The same technique can be found throughout *It Takes a Village*.

No one will disagree with many of the problems she catalogs. In fact, former Secretary of Education Bill Bennett catalogs many of these same problems in his *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*. The source of disagreement comes when proposing government solutions to each problem. Many of these problems themselves are the result of earlier government "solutions" that created these problems. Discerning readers should always be asking whether or not these problems can more effectively be solved by individual initiative, community activities, and church programs.

Is This a "Campaign Book"?

At this point, I would like to raise the question of politics. In particular, many people wonder if this work isn't just a "campaign book."

I think we need to be honest enough to say that it is. After all, the publication of this book was originally intended to aid her husband's campaign. In the book, Mrs. Clinton lists what she believes are her husband's successes: Family and Medical Leave Act, AmeriCorps, Goals 2000, the Brady Bill, and the Direct Student Loan Program. On the other hand, she soft-pedals the radical parts of the Clinton agenda. Abortion is mentioned once (only in a passing reference to the Cairo Document). Condoms are ignored. Joycelyn Elders and Dr. Henry Foster, Jr., are not discussed. Certainly the book was intended to help the Clinton re-election campaign even if current events surrounding the First Lady have begun to cloud the issue.

In some ways, the book provides the most consistent and comprehensive statement available of the First Lady's agenda for the rest of the 1990s. Whether the President wins re-

election is almost irrelevant to the impact of this book. Mrs. Clinton has become the most visible, articulate feminist in the world. What she says in the United States, and what she says at international women's conferences (like Beijing, China) hold significant weight. So let's consider what she says.

Even though Mrs. Clinton attempt to soft-pedal some of the more radical aspects of her agenda, controversy inevitably slips through. For example, many of what she claims are the President's successes can hardly be considered successes, programs such as: Goals 2000 and Parents as Teachers. Many of her other favorites indicate a clear endorsement of socialist programs by Mrs. Clinton.

Let's look at just one example. Mrs. Clinton believes that the best way to solve what she believes is the problem of adequate day care facilities, is to adopt the French model of day care. She asks us to "imagine a country in which nearly all children between the ages of three and five attend preschool in sparkling classrooms, with teachers recruited and trained as child care professionals." She goes on to say this exists where "more than 90 percent of French children between ages three and five attend free or inexpensive preschools called *écoles maternelles*. Even before they reach the age of three, many of them are in full-day programs."

Her desire is to replicate this system in the United States so that the state can have an early maternal influence on the children of America. She envisions a country in which "Big Brother" essentially becomes "Big Momma."

But is this really what we want in the United States? A nationally subsidized day care system that puts three-years-olds (even two- year-olds) in institutionalized care? Throughout the book Mrs. Clinton seems to be making the tragic assumption that the state can do a better job of raising children than parents. She proposes a system in which the

First Lady becomes the "First Mom"—a system in which children are no longer the responsibility of the parents, but become instead wards of the state.

Nostalgia Merchants

Next I would like to discuss the issue of nostalgia. Mrs. Clinton believes that any attempt to return to "the good old days" is flawed. She says, "Those who urge a return to the values of the 1950s are yearning for the kind of family and neighborhood I grew up in and for the feelings of togetherness they engendered. The nostalgia merchants sell an appealing Norman Rockwell-like picture of American life half a century ago." She continues, "I understand that nostalgia. I feel it myself when the world seems too much to take. . . . But in reality, our past was not so picture perfect. As African-American children who grew up in a segregated society, or immigrants who struggled to survive in sweatshops and tenements, or women whose life choices were circumscribed and whose work was underpaid."

In reality, no one is calling for a return to the evils of earlier decades. Yes, racism and sexism are a sad part of our American history. But pro-family leaders are not calling for a return to those values. They are, however, reminding the American people that there was a time, not so long ago, when values and virtue were a part of the social fabric. Today that fabric is unraveling.

Former Secretary of Education Bill Bennett has compiled an *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* which compares social statistics from 1960 to the present day. Although the population has increased approximately 41 percent, crime has increased 300 percent, and violent crime has increased 560 percent. The illegitimate birth rate has increased 400 percent, the number of divorces has more than doubled, and the number of children in single parent homes has tripled.

Pro-family leaders rightly call for a return to the fundamental Judeo-Christian values that made America great. They are not calling for a return to segregation or Jim Crow laws. They are not calling for a repeal of laws mandating equal pay for equal work. Mrs. Clinton's comments about these so-called "nostalgia merchants" are disingenuous at best.

Another interesting comment has to do with Mrs. Clinton herself. Anytime someone disagrees with her perspective, the motive is labeled as chauvinism. In other words, if you disagree with the First Lady, it must be because you have difficulty dealing with a strong woman who exercises political power.

Let me say that my concerns with Mrs. Clinton's perspectives have to do with the issues, not the person. My disagreements are based upon the substance of those programs and are not based upon the fact that they are proposed by a woman. In fact, I highly admire a number of women who have served in political office like Margaret Thatcher and Jeanne Kirkpatrick. The ideas expressed in Mrs. Clinton's book are dangerous regardless of whether they are proposed by a woman or a man. The issue is not the messenger, but the message.

Mrs. Clinton's Government Solutions to Social Problems

At this point I would like to conclude by addressing some additional issues related to the book. First, Mrs. Clinton often proposes socialist solutions to the problems she raises in her book. Earlier I noted that she proposed a nationally-subsidized day care system modeled after France as a solution to her perceived problem of quality day care. In other parts of her book she also proposes liberal, government solutions.

She writes that "Other developed countries, including some of our fiercest competitors, are more committed to social stability than we have been, and they tailor their economic

policies to maintain it." She then goes on to make a case for the German economic model, complete with an industrial policy in which "there is a general consensus that government and business should play a role in evening out inequalities in the free market system."

When it comes to education, she proposes a national agenda over local control of the schools. Mrs. Clinton believes education will be enhanced by nationalizing it through such programs as Goals 2000 and School-to-Work programs.

And don't think that Mrs. Clinton has abandoned the idea of nationalized health care. She sees nationally-subsidized health care as the solution to everything from infant morality to health care delivery.

From start to finish, Mrs. Clinton proposes government as the answer to every problem. In some cases, the government is behind the scenes providing funding and direction to community-based organizations. In others, it is the primary provider. But whenever a problem is raised, the First Lady seems content to have government take care of it.

By the end of the book, Mrs. Clinton has endorsed such groups as HIPPY, Parent Education Program, Healthy Start, Children's Defense Fund, Parents as Teachers, Carnegie Council on Children, Head Start, and Zero to Three. Many of these groups, along with the government programs she endorses, make up the foundation of her liberal, big-government agenda for children in the 1990s. Readers without discernment may easily be seduced into believing that these programs are the only way to make life better for their children.

As Christians, I believe we must ask where is the church in this book? Where are communities? Where is individual initiative and responsibility? The world's largest bureaucracy is the Department of Health and Human Services. Mrs. Clinton seems to be saying throughout the book that the solution to

nearly every problem will come from enlarging this enormous bureaucracy even more.

I believe the real issue is that Mrs. Clinton's book, *It Takes a Village*, is flawed at its premise. Government is not a village. Parents do not need government bureaucrats and federal programs to raise their children. In many ways, the problems Mrs. Clinton discusses are the result of government "solutions" proposed decades earlier (through the New Deal and Great Society programs). Families don't need more government; they need less government. In a very limited sense we might agree that it does take a village to raise a child, but that doesn't mean it takes the government to raise a child. Children should be raised by families, churches, and communities—not by the federal government.

©1996 Probe Ministries

Congressional Reforms

The Flat Tax

"Our government is too big, and it spends, taxes and regulates too much. Of all the supposed crises we're facing today, this is the one that really matters." So said Representative Dick Armey when he introduced his proposal for a flat tax.

The American public sector is now larger than the entire economy of any other country except Japan. Government employment surpasses jobs in the manufacturing sector. "Today, the average family now pays more in taxes than it spends on food, clothing, and shelter combined. All told, nearly 40% of the nation's income is now spent not by the workers who earned

it, but by the political class that taxed it from them."

Congressman Armey believes we need a change. He wants to freeze federal spending, erase stupid governmental regulations, and retire the current Rube Goldberg tax code with a simple, flat tax and a form that could fit on a postcard.

The proposal has tremendous merit, which is why its chances of passing in this session of Congress are slim and none. But Armey is not a Congressional Don Quixote tilting at bureaucratic windmills. He knows that taxpayers are fed up with waste, fraud, and tax confusion. They are eager to change the system and willing to change congressmen if they won't take action.

In this essay we will be looking at the merits of this proposal. The center piece of the proposal is the flat tax. Seven decades of corporate lobbying and congressional tinkering have left the tax code in a mess. Rates are high, loopholes abound, and families must bear an unfair burden of the tax code. Armey's bill would scrap the entire code and replace it with a simple 17% flat tax for all.

All personal income would be taxed once at the single, low rate of 17%. There would be no special tax breaks of any kind except the following: (1) a child deduction of \$5300 (twice what it is today), and (2) a personal allowance – \$13,100 for an individual, \$17,200 for a single head of a household, and \$26,200 for married couples.

Businesses would pay the same 17% as individuals. A corporation would subtract expenses from revenues and pay the same, flat tax. The benefits should be obvious. Americans spend approximately 6 billion person-hours figuring their taxes each year. This lost time costs the economy \$600 billion annually, and people spend another \$200 billion in time and energy looking for legal ways to avoid taxation. Lawyers,

accountants, and all taxpayers will be freed up to focus their time and energy on more productive aspects of the economy.

Economic growth will be another benefit of the plan. Armey's bill not only lowers tax rates but eliminates double taxation of savings, thus creating a new incentive for investment. No more capital-gains tax, no estate tax, no tax on dividends. This bill will substantially stimulate the economy and create new jobs.

Perhaps the greatest benefit will be tax fairness. We say that in our society everybody should be treated the same, but we have a tax code that does anything but do that. Under the current code, politicians and lobbyists determine which groups should pay more and which groups should pay less. Under the Armey bill everyone pays the same.

The bill does more than simplify the tax code. It has two other major features. First, it would address the issues of spending cuts and program sunsets. Armey's bill uses a variation of the old Gramm-Rudman law to freeze total federal spending for one year and then allow it to grow only at the rate of inflation after that.

This proposal will eliminate \$475 billion in currently projected spending increases. It will guarantee the government will become no larger in real terms than it is today.

Armey would cut budgets the old-fashioned way: he makes bureaucrats earn them. If a department or agency doesn't perform, it won't continue to exist unless it can justify its existence. Can you imagine the hearings for various agricultural subsidies, pork barrel projects, or for the Strategic Helium Reserve?

Under this proposal new programs will be especially unwelcome. Currently Congress writes new spending bills authorizing "such sums as may be necessary." Armey's bill would require that "such sums" come from existing programs. Congress will no

longer be allowed to write a blank check.

A second feature of Armey's bill is to end indiscriminate regulations. The enormous number of government regulations are effectively a hidden tax on business and individual taxpayers. Armey estimates these regulations cost Americans \$580 billion a year. Thus, these regulations are an even greater burden than the income tax itself.

Armey's bill would force the President to produce a regulatory budget. This would expose, for the first time, the hidden cost of regulations. Congress would then be required to do a cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment on any bill with new regulatory authority.

The bill would also address the erosion of property rights. Any time government regulators write a rule that reduces the value of a person's property, the government must compensate that person just as if the government confiscated the land to build a park or highway. No longer would environmental extremists be able to take a person's land by regulatory fiat.

Finally, the bill ends the deceptive device that has made Big Government possible: income-tax withholding. If taxpayers paid their taxes the same way they pay for their houses or cars, government would not have grown so big. Withholding taxes before the taxpayers see it allows government to grow ever larger. This bill ends withholding and thereby puts one more check on the political class.

The flat tax has merit and is illustrative of the many Congressional reforms being put forward in this session of Congress.

Congressional Privilege

Thomas Jefferson wrote that "the framers of our Constitution... took care to provide that the laws should bind equally on all and especially that those who make them shall not exempt

themselves from their operation."

James Madison wrote in the *Federalist Papers* that Congress "can make no law which will not have its full operation on themselves and their friends, as well as on the great mass of the society. This has always been deemed one of the strongest bonds by which human policy can connect rulers and the people together."

Unfortunately, Congress has exempted itself from many of the laws you and I must obey. Recent votes in the House and the Senate have been an attempt to put Congress under some of these laws. Look at this short list of major pieces of legislation Congress has been able to exempt itself from in the past.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Protects against discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, religious affiliation.

Americans with Disabilities Act – Protects against discrimination based on disability. Has subjected employers to burdensome architectural renovations and hiring.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act – Protects against age discrimination. Does not apply to House. Applies to Senate through internal rules.

Occupation Safety and Health Act – Sets minimum health and safety standards in the workplace.

Fair Labor Standards Act – Requires employers to pay minimum wage, time and a half, and overtime. Amendments in 1989 covered House employees. Senate is exempt.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Requires federal agencies to submit affirmative action plans for the disabled to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

National Labor Relations Act – Proscribes unfair labor

practices, gives workers right to form unions, requires employers to bargain. Congress is exempt.

Freedom of Information Act – Provides public access to government documents. Congress is exempt, although it does publish floor and committee proceedings.

Privacy Act – Protects individual employees at agencies subject to the act. Congress is exempt.

You might wonder how Congress can justify exempting itself from the laws the rest of us must obey. You might think there would be some Constitutional justification due to the separation of powers. Well, not exactly. Though the argument does have some merit, listen to the justification given the last session of Congress.

Senator Wendell Ford (D-KY) spoke against extending a smoking ban to Senate rooms lacking separate ventilation. He said, “This is going to affect each and every member of this chamber, and the administrative confusion that this will cause for members will be enormous. One day we will have an EPA administrator in our office ...telling us our separate ventilation system for tobacco is insufficient. Then the next day the OSHA inspector is going to arrive and tell us we do not have sufficient ventilation for fumes coming from the new carpeting, or the paint or the varnish. Next thing you know, we will have HHS coming in and telling us we cannot eat at our desks.”

All I can say to Senator Ford is, “Yes, you will.” You will be subjected to the same regulatory insanity most of us have had to live with for years! Perhaps the members of Congress will be more careful about the bills they pass in the future, when they have to live under the same laws we must obey. No one should be above the law, not even members of Congress.

Capital

Last November, the Republicans won a battle for Capitol Hill. Now they are waging another battle for America's financial capital. Nearly every day, Capitol Hill is abuzz with discussion of cuts in the capital gains tax, a middle class tax cut, and even a whole new tax code. We are going to look at a number of these proposals.

The first proposal is a cut in the capital gains tax. Proponents say that the economy will be strengthened by cutting the capital gain tax and indexing capital gains to inflation. Instead of the current tax rates ranging from 15% to 28%, the rates would be cut to rates ranging from 7.5% to 19.8%.

Opponents of a capital gains tax cut say it would merely be a "tax break for the rich." But statistics show that the middle class would be the primary beneficiary.

President Clinton recently defined the middle class as those making less than \$75,000 (his middle class tax cut is intended for those making less than \$75,000). Even using this \$75,000 cutoff point, we find that 74% of the people who earn capital gains come from the middle class or below. Since 26% of people making capital gains have incomes above that cutoff point, reducing the capital gains tax is **not** "giving a tax break to the rich."

The benefit to the economy would be substantial. By lowering tax rates on capital, capital becomes more plentiful. Making capital more plentiful will make labor more scarce relative to capital and bid up the price of labor, resulting in more jobs and higher wages.

Another way to look at this is to recognize that more capital per worker makes workers more productive (better and more efficient equipment) making businesses willing to pay more for

labor.

Another way to strengthen the economy is to replace the current tax system with a flat tax as we discussed earlier. The income tax would be 20% in the first two years and 17% thereafter.

Individuals would deduct \$13,100, and married couples would deduct \$26,200. Each dependent would add \$5300 to the tax-exempt portion of the family. In other words, a family of four would not pay any taxes on the first \$36,800 of family income!

If a flat tax is passed, there would be no tax on income from capital gains, interest, dividends, or estates. The current tax code actually discourages capital formation by taxing future financial gains. This plan would promote capital formation by eliminating tax on such investments.

Essentially people can spend their money as they earn it or defer gratification until the future. Currently, if they spend their money immediately, they do not increase their income-tax bills. But, if they invest their money and plan to consume it in the future, they risk paying income taxes on their interest, dividends, or capital gains.

This tax plan would allow businesses to pay the same flat rate on the difference between their gross revenues and their business deductions. It would also change the method of depreciation. Currently businesses must now depreciate their capital expenditures over the life of the equipment they buy. Armey's plan would allow them to fully expense those costs the year they incur.

In essence, the proposals are simple: if you want more of something, reduce the tax on it. If you want more capital, then reduce (or eliminate) the current taxes on capital. In the end, people and the economy will benefit.

Welfare Reform

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) has boldly stated, "We have no health care crisis in this country. We do have a *welfare crisis*." The social statistics bear out his conclusion. Since 1960 the welfare rolls have increased by 460 percent. Since 1965 Americans have spent more than \$5 trillion on welfare. Currently more than 14 million individuals (including 1 in 7 children) are on welfare.

The current welfare system rewards dependency and punishes initiative. In Maryland, a single parent with two children would need to earn a minimum of \$7.50 an hour to earn the same amount as provided by welfare grants and benefits. No wonder so many welfare mothers therefore conclude that staying on welfare is better than getting off.

Various welfare proposals submitted to Congress attempt to modify the welfare system by addressing the following issues:

The first is child support. Many fathers are not providing child support, and these bills would tighten the loopholes and make these dads pay up. Currently unwed fathers are not named on birth certificates. The omission frequently foils attempts to collect child support. But if dad pays, then mom's check does not have to be so large. The proposed bills would require the mother to identify the father in order to receive a welfare check. States can threaten deadbeat dads with garnishing wages and suspending professional and driver's licenses.

Second is the marriage penalty. If a pregnant teen get married or lives with the father of her child, she is frequently ineligible for welfare. Congressional proposals would encourage states to abolish the "marriage penalty" and make it easier to married couples to get welfare.

A third proposal is a family cap. Welfare mothers in some

states can increase the size of their welfare checks by having more children. Congressional bills being considered would allow states to cap payments. If a welfare mother has another child, her check remains the same.

Already in New Jersey, Arkansas, and Georgia, families receive no increase for children born while on the dole. Congressional proposals would extend and encourage this opportunity to other states. The evidence so far is that this family cap may have some deterrence.

A fourth issue is work. Often if a welfare mother gets a job, her check is reduced, and she is likely to lose such benefits like Medicare and free child care. The new proposals before Congress would drop benefits after two years, but allow welfare mothers to work during that period.

Finally, these proposals address the government bureaucracy. Currently governors have to ask the Federal government if they can revamp their state welfare system. And the federal bureaucracy costs money. If you took the money spent for welfare and gave it to poor families it would amount to \$25,000 a year for every family of four.

These bills would also freeze or change welfare payments. They would replace Food Stamps and AFDC with block grants to the states. This money would come from savings from cutting cash payments to women having children out of wedlock. As states receive these block grants, they would be free to design their own system.

The Bible clearly admonishes us to help those less fortunate, but it instructs us to do it intelligently. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 we read that if "a man will not work, he shall not eat." We need to revamp the current welfare system to meet real needs and stop subsidizing those who will not work. Congressional proposals are designed to help the helpless but stop rewarding the lazy.

Government Programs

Affirmative Action, Part One

Janice Camarena probably never heard of *Brown v. Board of Education* when she enrolled in San Bernardino Valley College in California. No doubt she knows about it now. Mrs. Camarena was thrown out of a class at the college because of her skin color. When she entered the class, the instructor immediately told her to leave. That section of English 101 was reserved for black students only. Mrs. Camarena is white.

Mrs. Camarena (who is currently suing the California Community Colleges) has come to personify what is wrong with affirmative action programs in the 1990s. Forty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the civil right movement has strayed from the color-blind principles articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. Government bureaucrats and liberal judges have set up quotas and turned the 1964 Civil Rights Act on its head.

Title VII, Section 703 (j) clearly bans preferences by race, gender, ethnicity, and religion in business and government. The Act was a model of fairness, openness, and equality. Unfortunately the interpretation of the law fell into the hands of bureaucrats and judges who swept away fairness and replaced it with color-based preferences.

No wonder momentum is growing in California for a 1996 initiative (modeled on the 1964 Civil Rights Act) that would amend the state's constitution to prohibit the use of quotas

by state institutions. California is often the prairie upon which grassroots grass fires spread, and the California Civil Rights Initiative may be the start of a larger movement poised to spread from coast to coast.

As William Bennett has noted: "Affirmative action has not brought us what we want—a color-blind society. It has brought us an extremely color-conscious society. In our universities we have separate dorms, separate social centers." One might legitimately ask, What's next? Separate water fountains?

How bad has the problem become? Consider just a few examples of the impact of affirmative action quotas on government.

A Defense Department memo cited on the November 18, 1994, broadcast of ABC's "20/20" declared, "In the future, special permission will be required for the promotion of all white men without disabilities."

Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) cites a U.S. Forest Service document that actually states, "Only unqualified applicants will be considered."

Now that affirmative action appears threatened, suggestions are being floated by proponents to modify affirmative action rather than abolish it. The growing drumbeat from liberal proponents of affirmative action is that race-based affirmative action must be replaced by class-based affirmative action. After all, ask proponents, why should preferential treatment be given to an affluent, black Harvard law graduate over a poor, white West Virginia coal miner? Class-based affirmative action would supposedly be fairer and arouse less hostility because it was based upon economic need rather than race.

But the weaknesses of such a system should be quickly apparent. Race-based affirmative action has spawned an enormous governmental bureaucracy. A class-based system would no doubt be even larger and more byzantine. How would one

qualify for class-based affirmative action? Would we use the income of the supposed “victim”? Would we use the income of the victim’s family of origin? Would non-cash governmental support be counted? Who would decide? The questions are endless. At least in a race-based system, we can reach some consensus about what constitutes an ethnic minority.

Affirmative Action, Part Two

Affirmative action has been under review for some time, but it took a 1995 Supreme Court case to dramatically change the civil rights landscape. The case involved Randy Pech (owner of Adarand Constructors) who lost in the bidding for a guard-rail construction project in Colorado’s San Juan National Forest because he had the wrong skin color. He had the lowest bid, but was passed over because he was not a minority. The prime contractor was eligible for a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation for hiring minority-owned subcontractors. The grant was greater than the difference in the bids submitted by Pech and a Hispanic-owned firm.

Pech filed a discrimination lawsuit. When it reached the Supreme Court, the U.S. Solicitor General argued that Pech had no legal standing to sue, even though the U.S. Government paid the prime contractor \$10,000 to discriminate against him! And this illustrates the double standard currently upheld in the law. Protected minorities have standing to sue even if they were never actually the subjects of discrimination. But victims of reverse discrimination have no such recourse and often do not even have legal standing to sue.

Nevertheless, the court ruled in a narrow 5-to-4 decision that Randy Pech had been discriminated against. Some of the justices even went so far as to argue against the very foundation of affirmative action.

Now that affirmative action appears threatened, suggestions are being floated by proponents to modify affirmative action

rather than abolish it. The growing drumbeat from liberal proponents of affirmative action is that race-based affirmative action must be replaced by class-based affirmative action. But a class-based system would even go further in pitting one ethnic minority against another. This is already the case with race-based affirmative action. At the University of California at Berkeley, for example, thousands of qualified Asian-American students are turned away each year in order to increase the percentage of African-American and Hispanic-American students on campus. A class-based system of affirmative action would not only continue this practice but increase it.

The best solution is to abolish affirmative action quotas and move to a society that is truly color-blind. When an employer engages in discrimination, civil rights laws and judicial rulings provide a basis for legal remedy. But current interpretations of civil rights laws and affirmative action quotas do not provide equality before the law. They grant protected minorities racial privilege before the law.

In his famous dissent from the Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Justice John Marshall Harlan argued that the Constitution "is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law."

In his famous 1963 speech, Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed of "a Nation where they [his children] will not be judged by the color of their skins, but by the conduct of their character."

Affirmative action quotas violate the spirit of these dreams and turns the 1964 Civil Rights Act on its head. It's time to return to a Constitutional foundation. It's time to return to the true spirit of the civil rights movement. It's time for affirmative action quotas to go.

Missile Defense

A four-star general calling the President on a hot-line red phone:

"Mr, President, we have a national emergency. Our satellites have detected a ballistic missile launched from a former Soviet republic at the United States."

[Pause]

"No, sir. We cannot shoot it down. We have no ballistic missile defense. There is nothing we can do to stop it."

While the scenario is fiction (similar to the plot in the movie "Crimson Tide"), the problem is fact. If a rogue Russian or a Islamic fundamentalist or a North Korean general decided to fire a missile at the United States, we would be unable to defend ourselves!

It is not that we cannot deploy the technology to defend ourselves. It is that we choose not to deploy that technology. The reason is simple: the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Twenty-three years ago, the U.S. made the mad promise that it would not defend itself from ballistic missile attack. The MAD (mutually assured destruction) doctrine was the basis of the 1972 ABM treaty. Incredibly, President Clinton wants to keep this reckless pledge today even though the Soviet Union no longer exists and the world is no doubt more dangerous as nuclear proliferation continues.

Opponents of missile defense systems have argued that they are expensive and technologically impossible. Now a group of 16 eminent scientists formed under the auspices of the Heritage Foundation have put forward an affordable and doable plan.

They propose an upgrade of the Navy's Aegis air defense system to shoot down long-range and short-range ballistic missiles. The Aegis is a ship-board radar-tracking and interceptor

system that directs surface-to-air missiles.

The Navy is already working on an upgrade that would allow it to intercept missiles outside the atmosphere, in what is called the "upper tier." If developed and deployed on ships scattered around the world, the U.S. would effectively have a protective shield against strategic missiles.

But there is the problem. By agreeing to abide by this obsolete treaty, the U.S. is prevented from deploying an "upper tier" defense. At his recent summit with Boris Yeltsin, President Clinton reaffirmed his support for the ABM treaty signed with the Soviet Union, a country that no longer exists.

As questionable at the ABM treaty was during the Cold War, it is even more absurd in our current political and military environment. Former Reagan official Frank Gaffney points out that a Navy Aegis commander in the Sea of Japan would be in the absurd position of being able to shoot down a missile in North Korea heading for Tokyo, but would be prevented from shooting down a missile heading for San Francisco! Is it really in the interests of the U.S. to dumb down the "upper tier" system so that we can protect our allies abroad but not our own homeland?

The Heritage Foundation scientists believe an upgraded system could be deployed in three years at a cost of only \$1 billion. This is a plan we need to pursue. The United States is vulnerable to missile attack, and yet has the means to defend itself. In this dangerous post-Cold War world, we need to be able to defend ourselves from missile attack.

Is the threat that great? Well, consider the number of countries already in the nuclear club. They include the U.S., Great Britain, France, China, Russia, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and South Africa (South Africa is currently dismantling its nuclear program).

But that's not all. Most intelligence experts also put

Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus in that list because they control some Soviet missiles. Finally, four other powers Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria are working furiously to develop and deploy nuclear missiles. Thus, all of these countries make up what could be called "the doomsday club." They all have the capacity or will soon have the capacity to bring about a nuclear Armageddon!

Intelligence experts estimate is that there are as many as 25 countries that have or will have the technical capability to develop a nuclear weapon, and approximately 26 countries have access to long-range missiles. In many ways, the post-Cold War world is more dangerous now that the Soviet Union has fallen and nuclear proliferation has accelerated.

Soviet scientists are willing to sell their services abroad. Boris Yeltsin seems unwilling or unable to stop the spread of nuclear technology. Likewise President Clinton has been unable to stop nuclear proliferation. If there was ever a time we needed an anti-ballistic missile system, it is now.

The "Crimson Tide" scenario is great movie drama, but it's lousy foreign policy. A missile launched from Kiev or Baghdad or Pyongyang would devastate an American city, and the U.S. can do nothing to stop it. Although the movie does not mention it, the real reason this potential nightmare is so scary is because the U.S. has no defense against ballistic missile attack.

You must do two things. First, educate yourself and your friends about the danger. America is vulnerable to nuclear attack, and yet most Americans do not know this. Second, call for Congress to deploy an "upper tier" defense to the Aegis system. The cost would be less than one percent of the entire Defense Department budget. Building such a system would protect the United States from rogue leaders and military dictators who might someday decide to launch ballistic missiles on this country.

Corporate Welfare

Cutting a \$200 billion deficit from a \$1.6 trillion budget is not as difficult as the media might make it sound, especially when politicians target the easier cuts first. One of the most obvious cuts is so-called "corporate welfare." Both liberals (like Secretary Robert Reich) and conservatives (like Speaker Newt Gingrich) talk about cutting corporate welfare. When Congress reconvenes, politicians need to stop talking about cutting and begin cutting programs.

What should be placed on the cutting block? Here is a list of examples from the Cato Institute of corporate welfare that should be eliminated.

Department of Agriculture's Market Promotion Program puts \$110 million a year into the advertising budgets of major U.S. corporations. In 1991, they spent \$2.5 million promoting Dole pineapple products; \$2.9 million selling Pillsbury muffins and pies; \$10 million advertising Sunkist oranges; \$465,000 boosting the sales of McDonald's Chicken McNuggets; and \$1.2 million promoting American Legend mink coats.

Farm subsidies also should be cut. Consider the sugar price support program. A full 40 percent of its \$1.4 billion in subsidies goes to the largest one percent of sugar producers. The 33 largest sugar cane plantations each receive more than \$1 million in federal funds.

The Rural Electrification Administration and the federal Power Marketing Administrations are funneling \$2 billion in annual subsidies to some of the wealthiest electric utility cooperatives in the country. One firm (ALLTEL) boasted of sales exceeding \$2.3 billion.

Taxpayer-subsidized REA loans have helped big electric utilities serve ski resorts in Aspen, Colorado, and beach resorts like Hilton Head, South Carolina. They have also

helped serve gambling resorts communities in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The U.S. Forest Service dished out \$140 million for road building projects in national forests in 1994 to help harvest timber for firms like Georgia-Pacific and Weyerhauser. Last year the Clinton administration championed grants through the Advanced Technology Program. Some of the recipients last year were companies like Caterpillar, Dupont, Xerox, General Electric, and United Airlines.

The administrations also pushed over \$500 million through the Technology Reinvestment Project. Many of the recipients are some of the richest companies in America: Chrysler Corporation (\$6 million), Texas Instruments (\$13 million), Hewlett-Packard (\$10 million), Boeing (\$7 million), and Rockwell (\$7 million).

Recently the Congress considered a bill that proposed \$7.6 billion in cuts in corporate welfare. Here are a few highlights of that bill.

It would eliminate the Department of Commerce, beginning with the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It would also eliminate federal support for expensive projects with dubious commercial potential, such as high speed rail and "smart" cars.

The bill would also discard needless bureaucracy through the elimination of the Department of Energy, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Maritime Commission, the Maritime Administration, and U.S. Parole Commission. It would eliminate state and local tree-planting programs run by the Small Business Administration. It would also stop funding "transition expenses" from the Postal Service's reorganization that occurred 24 years ago.

There are more proposals, but you get the idea. There is a lot to cut. We can balance the federal budget, and a good place to

start is with corporate welfare. We need to stop talking about it and do it.

©1995 Probe Ministries

Welfare Reform

Many members of Congress have been pushing to reform the welfare system and break the cycles of illegitimacy and dependency. But changing the existing welfare system will not be easy. In its more than 50 years of existence, the system has indeed developed into a mass of bureaucratic idiosyncracies, and these experts say the numerous institutionalized workers are likely to resist attempts to reform them or their routines.

Most taxpayers are skeptical that real change will take place, and they have every right to be skeptical. Since 1960, Congress has passed at least six major welfare revisions so welfare recipients can find work. But the rolls increased by 460% in the same period. Nevertheless, welfare must be reformed. Since 1965, American taxpayers have been forced to pay \$5 trillion into a welfare system created to end poverty. The result? No measurable reduction in poverty. After three decades of Great Society programs to fight the war on poverty, poverty and families are doing worse.

The most visible and most cost-inefficient segment of the U.S. welfare system today is Aid for Dependent Children or AFDC. AFDC began in 1935 as a little-noticed part of the Social Security Act. Its principal purpose was to aid widows and their children until the Social Security survivors' fund could pay out claims. Currently there are more than 14 million individuals on AFDC, and 1 in 7 children is on welfare.

AFDC is not the only program of concern. In the early 1960s, the Kennedy administration proposed several other welfare programs. Their stated purposes were the admirable goals of eliminating dependency, delinquency, illegitimacy, and disability. And the modern welfare state was born during the flood of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs aimed at the war on poverty.

But the road to utopia ran into some devastating chuckholes. Most social statistics indicate that the war on poverty had many casualties. The unintended consequences of these welfare programs was a system which breaks down families, traps the poor in idle frustration, and perpetuates a cycle of government dependency. One aspect of this dependency is family breakdown. Approximately half of today's AFDC recipients are mothers who have never been married to the father or fathers of their children. Another 40 percent are mothers whose husbands have left home.

Another aspect of this dependency is poverty. Half of the poor live in female-headed households. And welfare has not improved their lot. The poverty level has remained relatively unchanged since that time, while illegitimate births have increased more than 400 percent. In the 1960s we declared war on poverty, and poverty won.

Obviously, reform must take place. In fiscal year 1992, the U.S. spent \$305 billion for AFDC. This is more than the current defense budget.

Good Intentions Gone Awry

The dramatic increases in the number of welfare recipients and the length of their dependency on welfare have alarmed both liberals and conservatives. But liberals and conservatives differ in their prescriptions. Liberals argue for more effective programs and for additional job training. Conservatives, on the other hand, argue that the intractable

pathologies of the welfare system (the destruction of the family unit and the fostering of dependency) are due to large-scale governmental intervention. Their argument has been strengthened by the earlier research of Charles Murray in his book *Losing Ground*.

His thesis is that our government not only failed to win its war on poverty, but ended up taking more captives. Under the guise of making life better, it ended up making life worse for the poor. Murray said, "We tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead. We tried to remove the barriers to escape from poverty and inadvertently built a trap." Murray proposes radical changes in the current welfare system, and a number of conservative proposals before Congress include various aspects of Murray's proposals.

But long before Murray's book provided a thorough statistical evaluation, social theorists and even casual observers could see that our current welfare system promotes dependency and destroys the family unit.

Welfare payments provide economic incentives for the creation of single-parent families since they provide a continuous source of income to young mothers. The welfare system was designed to assist when there was no father. But the system effectively eliminated the father entirely by tying payments to his absence.

An irresponsible man can father a child without worrying about how to provide for the child. And a dedicated father with a low-paying job may feel forced to leave home so his children can qualify for more benefits. Eventually the welfare system eliminated the need for families to take any economic initiative by rewarding single parents and penalizing married couples. The result has been an illegitimate birth rate for black women of 88 percent.

A second reason for the breakdown of the family is the

“adultification” of children. Various judicial rulings have undercut the role parents can have in helping their children with difficult decisions. Courts have ruled that parental notification for dispensing birth control drugs and devices violates the minors’ rights. Courts have ruled that children need not obtain their parents’ permission before they obtain an abortion. The natural progression of this continued trend toward children’s rights is the breakdown of the family.

The most rapid rise in poverty rates have been among the children the system was designed to help. This astonishing increase of illegitimate births by over 400 percent is a principal reason for poverty and the perpetuation of a poverty cycle of “children raising children.”

Third, the current welfare system rewards dependency and punishes initiative. Welfare does not require recipients to do anything in exchange for their benefits. Many rules actually discourage work, and provide benefits that reduce the incentive to find work. In Maryland, for example, a single parent with two children would need to earn a minimum of \$7.50 an hour to earn the same amount as provided by welfare grants and benefits. Is it any wonder that so many welfare mothers therefore conclude that staying on welfare is better than getting off.

Can Welfare Be Changed?

Now I would like to focus on the various congressional proposals that seek to end welfare as we know it. Although there has been much talk of welfare reform, there have been very few substantive changes in the welfare system in the last three decades. Since 1960, Congress has passed at least six major welfare revisions so welfare recipients can find work. But the rolls increased by 460 percent in the same period.

A report issued by the Department of Health and Human Services revealed the cost of administering welfare programs grows

twice as fast as the number of recipients. According to the Congressional Budget Office, welfare as a percent of the Gross Domestic Product has increased by 230 percent, and its cost will exceed \$500 billion by the end of this decade.

Various congressional proposals attempt to either substantially modify or else eliminate the current system. First let's focus on those proposals that want to modify welfare in the following five areas.

The first change would be in child support. Fathers are not providing child support, and these bills would tighten the loopholes and make these dads pay up. Currently unwed fathers are not named on birth certificates. The omission frequently foils attempts to collect child support. But if dad pays, then mom's welfare check does not have to be so large. The proposed bills would require the mother to identify the father in order to receive a welfare check. States can threaten deadbeat dads with garnishing wages and suspending professional and driver's licenses.

The second change is in the so-called marriage penalty. If a pregnant teen get married or lives with the father of her child, she is frequently ineligible for welfare. Congressional proposals would encourage states to abolish the "marriage penalty" and make it easier to married couples to get welfare.

Creating a family cap is another significant change. Welfare mothers can increase the size of their welfare check by having more children. Congressional bills being considered would allow states to cap payments. If a welfare mother has another child, her check remains the same.

Already in New Jersey, Arkansas, and Georgia, families receive no increase for children born while on the dole. Congressional proposals would extend and encourage this opportunity to other states. The evidence so far is that this family cap may have some deterrence.

Another change is to emphasize work. Often if a welfare mother gets a job, her check is reduced, and she is likely to lose such benefits like Medicare and free child care. The new proposals before Congress would drop benefits after two years. If an able-bodied welfare recipient does not find a private-sector job then she would be assigned a minimum-wage government job.

A final change would be to keep teenage mothers in school. In the current system a teenager can receive a welfare check, get her own apartment, and drop out of school. Congressional proposals would require a teen mother to live at home until age 18. She has to stay in school or she will lose her benefits. If the family's income is high enough, she does not receive any check at all.

These then are a few of the elements of the congressional proposals to end welfare as we know it. They take some solid steps toward ending illegitimacy and dependency. But there are even more radical proposals, and we will consider them next.

Congressional Proposals

Now we will turn our focus to some of the bills that attempt to do more than just modify the system and actually propose elimination of certain aspects of welfare.

One bill by Congressman James Talent would no longer provide welfare checks, food stamps, and public housing to women under 21 with children born out of wedlock. The justification for such actions stems from the original work by Charles Murray who believes that only this radical solution will cause teenage mothers to change their behavior.

Illegitimacy is the underlying cause of poverty, crime, and social meltdown in the inner cities. Proponents of these more radical proposals believe it is better to stem the tide of illegitimacy than trying to build a dam of social programs to

try to contain the flood of problems later on.

Illegitimacy leads to poverty and to crime. Nearly a third of American children are born out of wedlock, and those children are four times more likely to be poor. And the connection between illegitimacy and crime is also disturbing. More than half the juvenile offenders serving prison time were raised by only one parent. If birth rates continue, the number of young people trapped in poverty and tempted by the values of the street will increase. Illegitimacy is essentially a ticking crime bomb.

Welfare is supposed to be a second chance, not a way of life, but tell that to some children who represent the fourth generation on welfare. Proponents of these radical reforms believe we must scrap the current system.

Another concern is the entangled bureaucracy of welfare. Currently governors have to ask the Federal government if they can revamp their state welfare system. And the federal bureaucracy costs money. If you took the money spent for welfare and gave it to poor families it would amount to \$25,000 a year for every family of four.

These bills would also freeze or change welfare payments. They would replace Food Stamps and AFDC with block grants to the states. Each state would then be free to design its own system.

These proposals also emphasize work by providing a transition for able-bodied welfare recipients into the workplace. The federal government would double welfare payments during the transition period, but would send the check to the employer rather than directly to the welfare recipient. This would no doubt provide greater incentive to work hard and stay on the job.

Many in Congress are skeptical of proposals to provide jobs through job training programs. In the past job training has

been relatively ineffective. One 1990 study of New York welfare recipients found that 63 percent of black recipients and 54 percent of whites have received training while on welfare, but few left the rolls for employment. Even with the training, less than 8 percent of blacks and 5 percent of white recipients were working.

Finally, these proposals would also encourage marriage. Currently the welfare system encourages fathers to leave. These proposals would not only provide social incentives but economic incentives by providing two-parent families with a \$1000 tax credit.

These then are a few of the elements of the congressional proposals to end welfare as we know it. They do take some solid steps toward ending illegitimacy and dependency.

Biblical Principles

I want to conclude this discussion of welfare and welfare reform with some biblical principles that we should use to understand and act on this vital social issue.

The Bible clearly states that we are to help those in need. Christians may disagree about how much is necessary and who should receive help, but there should be no disagreement among Christians about our duty to help the poor since we are directly commanded to do so. Let's then, look at two important questions.

First, who should help the poor? The Bible clearly states that the primary agent of compassionate distribution of food and resources should be the church. Unfortunately, the majority of poverty programs in existence today are government programs or governmentally sponsored programs. While we can applaud the excellent programs established by various churches and Christian organizations, we must lament that most poverty programs are instituted by the state.

Poverty is much more than an economic problem. It results from psychological, social, and spiritual problems. Government agencies, by their very nature, cannot meet these needs. The church must take a much greater role in helping the poor and not be content to allow the government to be the primary agency for welfare.

A second important question is who should we help? Government programs help nearly everyone who falls below the poverty line, but the Bible establishes more specific qualifications. A biblical system of welfare must apply some sort of means test to those who are potential recipients of welfare. Here are three biblical qualifications for those who should receive welfare.

First, they must be poor. They should not be able to meet basic human needs. We should help those who have suffered misfortune or persecution, but the Bible does not instruct us to give to just anyone who asks for help or to those who are merely trying to improve their comfort or lifestyle.

Second, they must be diligent. Some people are poor because of laziness, neglect, or gluttony. Christians are instructed to admonish laziness and poor habits like drinking, drugs, or even laziness that lead to poverty. Proverbs says, "Go to the ant, you sluggard, and observe her ways and be wise." The Apostle Paul more pointedly says, "If a man will not work, neither let him eat." Lazy people should not be rewarded by welfare, but rather encouraged to change their ways. Third, the church must provide for those thrown into poverty because of the death of the family provider. The Bible commands us to provide for widows and orphans who are in need. Paul wrote to Timothy that a widow who was 60 years or older whose only husband has died was qualified to be supported by the church.

I believe the needs of the poor can and should be met by the church. Churches and individual Christians need to do their part in fighting poverty in their area. Homemakers can provide

meals. Educators can provide tutoring and counseling. Businessmen can provide employment training. The church as a whole can provide everything from a full-time ministry to the poor to an occasional collection for the benevolence fund to be distributed to those facing temporary needs brought about by illness or unemployment. The key is for the church to obey God's command to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Helping the poor is not an option. We have a biblical responsibility which we cannot simply pass off to the government.

©1994 Probe Ministries

National Health Care

One of the hottest areas of debate in our society today is in the area of health care. Congress, the President, state legislatures, doctors, insurance companies, and private citizens are talking about rising health costs and proposing ways to deal with this issue.

Consider the following scenario: Suppose the federal government decided to do something about hunger in America and instituted food reform. Imagine that the proposed solution was to herd everyone into food alliances. Then it required that everyone buy food from those food alliances or else required them to eat their meals in huge cafeterias, all offering the same government-approved menu at government approved prices.

What would be the impact? If everyone had to go to food alliances to buy food, the price of food would go up. Imagine if every month money were deducted from your paycheck to pay for food insurance. Then when you went to the food alliance, you gave the cash register receipt to the government for reimbursement. Since you aren't paying for it, you would

rarely comparison shop. You wouldn't be looking for bargains and eventually the cost of food would sky-rocket.

The only way the federal government could keep the price down would be to institute price control. It would have to tell manufacturers what they could charge for food. But this would lead to scarcity, because some farmers and manufacturers would conclude that the price was too low for them to make a profit. And some supermarkets would find the profit margin too small so they would go out of business.

Finally what would be the impact on you—the consumer? Well, you would see less diversity and less food at the food alliance. And there would be much more governmental regulation than is really necessary.

This, essentially, is what is being proposed in the area of health care. Government will establish health alliances, set prices, and implement employer mandates. These are just a few of the elements of what is called managed competition.

But is there a better way? Of course there is, and we can return to our food analogy to find it. Currently what does the federal government do to help people who do not have enough to eat? Does it assign people to food alliances or herd them into huge cafeterias? No. It gives them food stamps which they can use in local grocery stores. They comparison sop and find the food and prices they think is best.

Many are saying that this is the model we should use for health care. Don't socialize health care and turn over the decision-making to a few federal bureaucrats and national health boards. Put the power and responsibility into the hands of 100 million individuals who would effectively organize and regulate the health care market.

This of course is just one proposal, but it illustrates rather dramatically what could happen if we made people responsible to their own actions rather than enlarge the role of

government in health care.

How Many Americans Are Uninsured?

During the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton said that there were 37 million Americans who are uninsured. We were told we need to reform health care in the U.S. in order to provide for the millions of Americans who do not have health insurance.

How many Americans are truly uninsured? During the campaign Bill Clinton stated that 37 million Americans are uninsured. But during his 1994 State of the Union speech President Clinton began using the higher figure of 58 million. Did that mean that 21 million Americans lost health insurance during the first year of the Clinton Administration? Obviously not. So what is the correct figure?

Well, it turns out that these figures only work if you include the Clinton disclaimer "some time each year." This would include anyone who changed jobs, changed health plans, moved, etc. Using that criterion, it would be true to say that I have been homeless in the past since I have been "between homes during some time during a year." But that did not mean that I slept under an overpass. Perhaps a better way to look at this issue would be to figure out how many people do not have insurance over a longer period of time—this would be the people who are chronically uninsured.

So how many Americans are chronically uninsured? It turns out that half the uninsured used in President Clinton's statistic have insurance again within six months. Only 15 percent stay that way for more than 2 years. This produces a figure of about 5.5 million chronically uninsured.

But 37 percent of those people are under the age of 25. For them, insurance plans are often a bad buy or even unnecessary because they may still be covered by their parents' plans. So if we eliminate the 37 percent, this brings the number down to

approximately 3 million Americans who are chronically uninsured.

I might also add that some of these 3 million may not want to be insured. Some may be very wealthy and not want health insurance. Some of the other 3 million may want to be outside the system. The Amish may not want to be forced to buy insurance. Christians who are part of a group called "the Brotherhood" have opted out of traditional insurance and pay one another's bills.

So we may have even less than 3 million people are chronically uninsured and want to be insured. That is no small number and it certainly isn't insignificant if you are one of those people who are uninsured. But the 3 million figure does put the problem in a different light.

We could merely expand Medicaid to include these people. We could provide supplementary insurance for these people. We could even come up with free market alternatives. But we don't need government to take over one-seventh of the American economy merely to deal with the problem of 3 million uninsured Americans.

And that's the point, some of the numbers are being used to justify rash and draconian actions. We don't need health alliances, employer mandates, national health boards, or mandated universal coverage if the real problem is that 3 million Americans are chronically uninsured. We can develop a simple program to meet their needs and avoid the problems of socialized medicine.

What About the Costs?

At this place in the discussion it's appropriate to focus on the possible cost of health care reform. Most Americans want to know the price tag of health care reform. And when you hear people talking about the potential cost, recognize that you

probably aren't hearing the whole story. Proponents will talk about the direct cost of health care reform, but remember that are other hidden costs that may be more significant.

For example, what will be the impact of health care reform on business? Proponents argue that the impact will be minimal. Business owners are not so sure. They fear that employer mandates will hurt their business, affect their bottom line, and create substantial unemployment.

During a Presidential town meeting in April 1994, President Clinton got into a verbal sparring match with Herman Cain, president and CEO of Godfather's Pizza. The President asked, "Why wouldn't you be able to raise the price of pizza two percent? I'm a satisfied customer. I'd keep buying from you." Then he asked to see Mr. Cain's calculations. Mr. Cain replied in a letter to the President (later reprinted in the *Wall Street Journal*). The following is a brief summary of the letter.

Although there are over 10,000 employees with Godfather's Pizza, two-thirds are owned and operated by franchisees. Mr. Cain focused his calculation only on the approximately one-third which were corporate-owned operations.

Mr. Cain concluded that the Clinton Health Care plan would cost nearly \$2.2 million annually. This represents a \$1.7 million increase. In other words this increase would be a 3 1/2 times their insurance premium for the previous year!

If these calculations by Mr. Cain are accurate (and no one has challenged them so far), then how did President Clinton arrive at his figures of a 2 percent increase in price of pizza? President Clinton stated that restaurants with approximately 30 percent labor need only increase prices by 2.5 percent. Apparently he multiplied 30 percent by the employer mandate of 7.9 percent.

But Mr. Cain's detailed calculations show that it just isn't

that simple. He estimates that you would need a 16 to 20 percent increase in "top line" sales to produce the same "bottom line" due to variable costs such as labor, food costs, operating expenses, marketing, and taxes.

I would argue that even a 2 percent increase in pizza costs could be devastating. Most people buy pizza to save time and money. Even a small increase in the cost of pizza would affect business. Mr. Cain noted that half of all Godfather's Pizza customers use coupons to purchase pizzas. The impact of a 16 to 20 percent increase would be devastating to Godfather's Pizza. And what would be the impact on the economy? In essence the President was predicting that health care reform would require the inflation of prices.

Will a health care reform bill with employer mandates adversely affect business? Proponents say that health care reform will not be costly to the American taxpayer or to American business. But tell that to Herman Cain and Godfather's Pizza. Their detailed spreadsheets project that these health care bills will more than triple their insurance costs in just the first year.

Health care reform may cost much more than we think it will. The direct costs may not seem like much, but don't forget to count the indirect costs to you and to American business.

Other Issues

Other key issues being discussed along with health care reform need to be examined. The first is health care costs. Originally only about 5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product was spent on health care. And until the mid-1980s, it was less than 10 percent. But now it is approximately 14 percent of Gross Domestic Product and could be as high as 18 percent by the end of the decade. In actual numbers, health care costs were \$74.4 billion in 1970 and will be approximate \$1.7 trillion by the year 2000.

Part of the problem is that a third party pays for health insurance. If there were more personal accountability, people would comparison shop and bring market pressures to bear on some of the health care costs. For example, if I told you I was going to take you to dinner on the Probe credit card, you would probably spend a lot of time looking at the left side of the menu. However, if I said, "Let's go out to eat, Dutch treat," you would probably spend a lot more time looking at the right side of the menu. When someone else pays for our medical bills, we don't pay as much attention to cost. When we have a personal responsibility, we pay more attention and thereby lower costs.

A second issue is tax fairness. Nearly 90% of all private health insurance is employer-provided and purchased with pre-tax dollars. But the self-employed and those who buy their own insurance must buy theirs with after-tax dollars. Presently the government "spends" about \$60-billion a year subsidizing employer-based health insurance by permitting employers to deduct the cost.

Tax fairness would allow all people to buy health insurance with pre-tax dollars. One solution is to allow those who purchases their own health insurance to have a tax deduction or tax credit. This would eliminate the tax benefit for getting health insurance through an employer and employees could purchase their own insurance which leads to the next issue.

Portability is the third major issue. Americans usually cannot take their health insurance with them if they change jobs. A fair tax system would offer no tax subsidy to the employer unless the policy was personal and portable. If it belonged to the employee, then it would be able to go with the employee when he or she changed jobs.

In essence, health insurance is merely a substitute for wages. In a sense, it is an accident of history. Health insurance was

provided as a benefit after World War II. Health insurance should be personal and portable. After all, employers don't own their employees' auto insurance or homeowner's insurance. Health insurance should be no different.

Price fairness is another issue. Proponents of socialized medicine would force people with healthy lifestyles into a one tier system with people who smoke, drink too much, use drugs, drive irresponsibly, and are sexually promiscuous. A better system would be one that rewards responsibility and penalizes irresponsibility. Obviously we should provide for the very young, the very old, the chronically ill, etc., but we shouldn't be forced into a universal risk pool and effectively subsidize the destructive behavior of those who voluntarily choose sin over righteousness.

These are just a few of the key issues in the health care debate. Unfortunately many of them have been ignored. A truly ethical health care system must provide tax fairness, price fairness, and portability.

The Moral Costs

I would like to conclude by examining the social and moral implications of health care reform? Critics of health care reform warn that it will inevitably lead to rationing. Most of the government health care plans proposed will be forced to ration care and no doubt put a squeeze on the aged and on high tech medicine. This would be the only way to save money. For example, when Hillary Clinton testified before the Senate Finance Committee, she explained to the Senators their justification for health care services. She said their proposal creates "the kind of health security we are talking about, then people will know they are not being denied treatment for any reason other than it is not appropriate—will not enhance or save the quality of life." Medical services will be curtailed for those whose quality of life is not deemed necessary to treat. This has been the inevitable result

in other industrialized countries that have socialized medicine. If you increase demand (by providing universal coverage), you will have to decrease supply (health care benefits provided to citizens). Those patients whose quality of life is not deemed satisfactory will be denied treatment.

Canada, for example, has a single-payer plan. They have found that their health care costs are going up as fast as U.S. while their research is lagging behind. Patients find themselves in waiting lines and have been coming in significant numbers to the U.S. for health care. Those remaining in Canada wait in line. There are currently 1.4 million waiting for care and 45 percent say they are in pain.

There would also be a squeeze on high tech medicine. The quickest way to save money is to limit the number of CAT scans, MRIs, or other sophisticated forms of technology. In Canada high tech equipment is relatively rare and used sparingly. In the U.S., the latest technology is available to nearly all Americans.

Health care expert Danny Mendelson writing in *Health Affairs* journal predicted that “a few years down the line, you first start to see what we call silent rationing, where the patient’s don’t even know that they’re not receiving the beneficial care that they need. Further down the line, I think it would become very clear that we were denying patients some of the latest technology in order to save money.”

Finally, critics wonder if government should be entrusted with running the health care system in America. Government has not proven to be an efficient deliverer of services. As one wag put it, if we have government take over health care, we might end up with a system that has the efficiency of the post office, the compassion of the IRS, at Pentagon prices. No slight is intended to the good people who work in those areas of government, but the joke does underscore the growing concern over government delivery of services, especially

health care.

As Americans begin to evaluate the costs of various health care reform packages, they are beginning to find they are a bad buy. The solution is to reduce the scope of government in health care, not expand it.

©1994 Probe Ministries

Globalism and Foreign Policy

A small but powerful group of internationalists is bent on bringing every aspect of our world society under one, universal political system. The philosophy behind this movement is known as globalism. In this article we will be looking at the subject and describing how it has been promoted by the Bush and Clinton administrations. First, I would like to begin by looking at the goals of globalists. Though they are a diverse and eclectic group of international bankers, politicians, futurists, religious leaders, and economic planners, they are unified in their desire to unite the planet under a one-world government, a single economic system, and a one-world religion. Through various governmental programs, international conferences, and religious meetings, they desire to unite the various governments of this globe into one single network.

Although this can be achieved in a variety of ways, the primary focus of globalists is on the next generation of young people. By pushing global education in the schools, they believe they can indoctrinate students to accept the basic foundations of globalism. According to one leader of this movement, global education seeks to "prepare students for citizenship in the global age." They believe that this new

form of education will enable future generations to deal effectively with population growth, environmental problems, international tensions, and terrorism.

But something stands in the way of the designs of the globalists. As a result, they have targeted for elimination three major institutions whose continued existence impedes their plans to unite the world under a single economic, political, and social global network.

Three Institutions Under Attack

The three institutions under attack by globalists today are: the traditional family, the Christian church, and the national government. Each institution espouses doctrines antithetical to the globalist vision. Therefore, they argue, these institutions must be substantially modified or replaced.

The traditional family poses a threat to globalism for two reasons. First, it is still the primary socializing unit in our society. Parents pass on social, cultural, and spiritual values to their children. Many of these values such as faith, hard work, and independence collide with the designs of globalists. Instead, they envision a world where the norm is (1) tolerance for religion, (2) dependence on a one-world global community, and (3) international cooperation. Because these values are not generally taught in traditional American families, the globalists seek to change the family.

Second, parental authority in a traditional family clearly supersedes international authority. Children are taught to obey their parents in such families. Parents have authority over their children, not a national or international governmental entity. Globalists, therefore, see the traditional, American family as an enemy not a friend.

Well-known humanist and globalist Ashley Montagu speaking to a group of educators declared that, "The American family

structure produces mentally ill children." From his perspective, the traditional family which teaches such things as loyalty to God and loyalty to country is not producing children mentally fit for the global world of the twenty-first century.

One of the reasons globalist educators advocate childhood education begin at earlier and earlier ages is so that young children can be indoctrinated into globalism. The earlier they can communicate global themes to children, the more likely they are at breaking the influence of the family.

The Christian church, because of its belief in the authority of the Bible, is another institution globalists feel threatens their global vision. Most other religions as well as liberal Christianity pose little threat. But Christians who believe in God, in sin, in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, stand in the way of globalist plans for a one-world government and a one-world religion.

The coming world religion will merge all religions and faiths into one big spiritual amalgam. Hinduism and Buddhism are syncretistic religions and can easily be merged into this one-world religion. But orthodox Christianity cannot.

Jesus taught that "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). Globalists, therefore, see Christianity as narrow, exclusive, and intolerant. Paul Brandwein even went so far as to say that, "Any child who believes in God is mentally ill." Belief in a personal God to which we owe allegiance and obedience cannot be tolerated if globalists are to achieve their ultimate vision.

National governments also threaten globalism. If the goal is to unite all peoples under one international banner, any nationalism or patriotism blocks the progress of that vision. Globalist and architect, Buckminster Fuller once said that,

"Nationalism is the blood clot in the world's circulatory system."

Among nations, the United States stands as one of the greatest obstacles to globalism. The European community has already acquiesced to regional and international plans, and other emerging nations willingly join the international community.

By contrast, the United States remains independent in its national fervor and general unwillingness to cooperate with international standards. Until recently, Americans rejected nearly everything international; be it an international system of measurements (metric system) or an international agency (such as the United Nations or the World Court).

The globalists' solution is to promote global ideas in the schools. Dr. Pierce of Harvard University speaking to educators in Denver, Colorado, said, "Every child in America who enters schools at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with allegiance toward our elected officials, toward our founding fathers, toward our institutions, toward the preservation of this form of government." Their answer is to purge these nationalist beliefs from school children so they will come to embrace the goals of globalism.

All over the country programs on Global Education, Global History, and Global Citizenship are springing up. Children are being indoctrinated into a global way of thinking. Frequently these programs masquerade as drug awareness programs, civics programs, environmental programs. But their goal is just the same: to break down a child's allegiance to family, church, and country. And to replace this allegiance to the globalist vision for a one-world government, a one-world economic system, and a one-world religion.

New World Order

The term “New World Order” has been used by leading establishment media and think tanks. These groups advocate a world government, a merging of national entities into an international organization that centralizes political, economic, and cultural spheres into a global network.

Those promoting this idea of a new world order are a diverse group. They include various political groups, like the Club of Rome, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Trilateral Commission. The concept has also been promoted by foreign policy groups, secret societies, and international bankers.

Historically internationalists have used the term to describe their desire to unite the world politically, economically, and culturally, and it is hardly a recent phenomenon. After World War I, President Woodrow Wilson pushed for the world’s first international governmental agency: the League of Nations. Yet despite his vigorous attempt to win approval, he failed to get the United States to join the League of Nations.

But by the end of World War II, the world seemed much more willing to experiment with at least a limited form of world government through the United Nations. President Harry Truman signed the United Nations Charter in 1945, and a year later John D. Rockefeller, Jr., gave the U.N. the money to purchase the eighteen acres along the East River in New York City where the U.N. building sits today.

For the last forty years, globalists have tried to use the U.N. and other international organizations to birth this new world order. Yet most of their actions have been to no avail. Except for its peace-keeping action during the Korean War, most of the time the U.N. has been nothing more than an international debate society.

Although the U.N. has not provided internationalists with much

of a forum for international change, that does not mean they have not been making progress in their desire to unite the world. Through political deals and treaties of economic cooperation, internationalists have been able to achieve many of their goals.

How these goals fit within the current political context is unclear. But we already have an emerging world order in Europe through the European Economic Community. This European Community is more than just a revised Common Market. Europeans are beginning to speak of themselves as Europeans rather than as Germans or as English. They have developed various cooperative arrangements including a common European currency.

Even more surprising is talk of a United European Community that stretches from the Atlantic to the Eastern end of the former Soviet Union. In his book *Perestroika*, Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a United Europe stretching "from the Atlantic to the Urals." And Pope John Paul II, during a mass held in Germany, appealed for a United Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

Other signs of a change in thinking came when former President Bush delivered his September 1990 speech to a joint session of Congress when he referred four times to a "new world order." Supposedly the reason for all of this talk of a new world order is a changing world situation. Lessening tensions in Eastern Europe and increasing tensions in the Middle East are the supposed reason for President Bush talking about a new world order. But, as we have already noted, this term precedes any of the recent world events.

Notice how *Newsweek* magazine described the genesis of President Bush's vision of the new world order: "As George Bush fished, golfed and pondered the post cold-war world in Maine last month, his aides say that he began to imagine a new world order."

It went on to say that "It is a vision that would have chilled John Foster Dulles to the marrow: the United States and the Soviet Union, united for crisis management around the globe." Perhaps it would have surprised former government leaders, but it is noteworthy that nearly all secular media and most politicians seem ready to embrace the concept of a new world order.

When President Bush addressed the joint houses of Congress, this is how he expressed his vision: "The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge; a new era, freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can prosper and live in harmony."

Recently President Clinton has proposed a variation of this idea. He describes it as global multilateralism. When the Clinton foreign policy team took office, they wanted to extend President Bush's ideal of a new world order. Dedicated to the rapid expansion of U.N.-sponsored "peace keeping operations," the Clinton team began developing agreements to deploy American troops to hot spots around the globe. The goal was to upgrade the professionalism of the U.N. troops and placement of American troops under U.N. commanders using U.N. rules of engagement.

All seemed to be going well for the Clinton policy until U.S. troops in Somalia got cut down in an ambush, and Americans discovered that the operation was led by a Pakistani General. Suddenly, American fathers and mothers wanted to know why their sons' lives were put at risk by placing U.S. troops in harm's way and by placing them under U.N. command.

The Clinton policy of global multilateralism attempts to honor

the U.N. request for a standing rapid deployment force under the secretary-general's command. But what it ends up doing is calling for American servicemen to risk life and limb for ill-defined causes in remote places under foreign leaders with constrained rules of engagement. The loss of American sovereignty and the undermining of strategic interests of the United States is significant.

What's the solution? We need a foreign policy based upon American interests, not the ideals of the globalists.

Practical Suggestions

We must challenge the goals and vision of globalists. In an effort to unite all peoples under a one-world government, one-world economic system, and one-world religion, globalists will attack the traditional family, the Christian church, and the American government. We, therefore, must be willing and able to meet the challenge. Here are some important action steps we must take to prevent the advance of globalism in our communities.

First, we must become informed. Fortunately a number of books have been written which provide accurate information about the goals and strategy of globalism.

Second, find out if globalism is already being taught in your school system. Materials from groups like the Center for Teaching International Relations at the University of Denver are already being used in many school districts. Look for key words and names that may indicate that global education is being used in your district.

Other names for global education are: International Studies, Multicultural International Education, Global R.E.A.C.H. (Respecting our Ethnic and Cultural Heritage), Project 2000, Welcome to Planet Earth, and World Core Curriculum. Key buzzwords for globalists include: global consciousness,

interdependence, and new world order.

Third, express your concerns to educators and leaders in your community. Often educators teaching globalism are unaware of the implications of their teaching. Globalism in attempting to unite nations and peoples will have to break down families, churches, and governments. Educate them about the dangers of globalism and its threat to the foundations upon which your community rests. Encourage them to be better informed about the true goals of globalists and the danger they pose to our society.

Fourth, Christians should be in prayer for those in government. We are admonished in 1 Timothy 2 to pray for leaders and others in authority. Pray that they will have discernment and not be lead astray by the designs of globalists.

Finally, I believe Christians should question the current interest many of our leaders have in developing a new world order. What are our leaders' calling for us to do? Are they proposing that the United States give up its national sovereignty? Will we soon be following the dictates of the U.N. Charter rather than the U.S. Constitution?

These are questions we should all be asking our leaders. What does President Clinton intend with his policy of global multilateralism? What role will the United States play? Aren't we merely being moved towards the globalists' goal of a one-world government, a one-world economy, and a one-world religion?

Moreover, what will this new world order cost the American taxpayer? From the operations of Desert Storm to the more recent military actions in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti we can see a trend. American troops do the fighting and the American people pay the bill. If we do not re-evaluate our foreign policy, it may end up costing the American taxpayer plenty.

If you have concerns, I would encourage you to write or call and express your thoughts. Congress and the President need to know that you have questions about current attempts to move us into a new world order.

©1994 Probe Ministries

World Hunger

Kerby Anderson helps us consider the fundamental reasons behind the prevalence of hunger in our world today. He points out our responsibility as Christians to make our resources available to help those caught in this crises. He tells us we need to be praying and working to end world hunger.

Frequently we see pictures of starving children and are overwhelmed by the awesome task of feeding the world's hungry. Why, we wonder, is there so much hunger in the world today? The answer can be broken down into three categories: poverty, population, and priorities.

Poverty, Population, and Priorities

The first reason for hunger is poverty. The poor are hungry, and the hungry are usually poor. In First World countries, we talk about our quality of life or our standard of living. But in Third World countries, the focus shifts to the mere sustaining of life. A major problem in Third World countries is capital investment. There is very little money that can be spent on agricultural development or even basics like seed and farm tools.

A second reason for hunger is population. Nearly every country has experienced a growth in population, but the greatest

impact has been on the world's poorest countries because they have been experiencing exponential growth in their population.

Notice how exponential population growth shortens our response time to crises. This planet did not reach a population of 1 billion until about the turn of the century. It took the world thousands of years to reach a population level of 1 billion. By 1950, the world's population grew to 2 billion. So the population doubled in just 50 years. By 1975, we had 4 billion people, so the doubling time decreased to just 25 years. Many experts estimate that we will have 6 to 8 billion people by the end of this century.

This exponential growth puts an enormous strain on our ability to provide resources and services to a starving world. Imagine if your own city or town had its population double every 20 to 25 years. That would mean you would have to double the number of houses, double the number of grocery stores, double the number of roads, and double the number of sewage-treatment plants.

Such growth would be a significant strain on the budget and resources of a First World country. Imagine the strain this would put on a Third World country. So the problem of world hunger is exacerbated by population growth.

A third reason for world hunger is priorities. Those of us who live in an industrialized society place a high priority on comfort and convenience. Our standard of living places a significant strain on the world economy.

In the First World countries, we only have a 1 percent growth rate. But that 1 percent growth rate affects the planet eight times as much as the 23 percent growth rate of the lesser-developed countries. The reason for this is that we use a lot more resources to maintain our standard of living. Currently it costs 30 times as much in terms of energy and resources to feed a North American as it does to feed a Pakistani.

Certainly this is something Christians must consider in terms of their own economic lifestyle. At a time when people are not getting enough to eat, we are living a lifestyle far beyond what many could even imagine.

We have a great challenge before us. We must not only consider what we can do to feed the hungry, but we must also consider what we should do to limit our indulgent lifestyle.

Exploitation

I would next like to focus on some of the most publicized causes of world hunger. The first is exploitation. There is a tremendous amount of exploitation in the world, which has led to the problem of hunger. Christians should not be surprised. Many Old Testament verses in the books of Proverbs, Amos, and Micah speak of poverty that results from exploitation and fraud.

Many countries were exploited by colonial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries. But while this is true, let me also hasten to add that liberals have perhaps made too much of the colonial connection.

P. T. Bauer, in his book *Dissent on Development*, shows that many of these countries that had some contact with the Western world actually did better economically than those countries that did not have any contact at all. Hong Kong and India, which were ruled by colonial powers, did better economically than countries in the deepest part of Africa that had little contact with Western economies.

When these countries gained independence, they did not have to start from scratch. The colonial powers left behind roads, schools, and hospitals, all of which provided an infrastructure to build upon.

But another aspect of exploitation that is often ignored is not the colonial connection but the Marxist connection.

Countries such as Ethiopia with authoritarian Marxist governments bring great suffering on their populations because of government policies that prevent food and compassionate aid from reaching their people.

Misfortune and Persecution

A second cause of hunger is misfortune and persecution. Again this should come as no surprise to Christians. In the book of Job we have an example of poverty that comes through misfortune. In other places we see how poverty results from persecution. And sometimes poverty comes because of God's judgment on a people who disobey Him.

Because we live in a fallen world, we must not be surprised when misfortune strikes. During the last two decades, for example, we have had fairly stable weather patterns. Now that the weather has become more erratic, we wonder what is going wrong. Although many doomsayers want to blame these changes on the much-publicized greenhouse effect, most of these climatic fluctuations are typical. We have been lulled into thinking that weather is predictable and must remind ourselves that the earth still "groans in travail" because we live in a fallen world. Hurricanes, monsoons, and droughts are going to exacerbate our problems with world hunger.

As we look at these problems, we can see that the problem of world hunger is going to increase rather than decrease. As our weather continues to be erratic and as terrorism and persecution intensify around the world, problems with hunger will intensify.

We are going to have to find ways to help the people and countries that are suffering. Part of the solution may be for our government to provide help through foreign aid. But another important and often neglected part of the solution is for Christian organizations to provide food and resources to the needy. The problem of world hunger is massive, and all of

us must do what we can to solve the problem.

Governmental Control

Along with these well-known causes of hunger are a few less-publicized, more obscure causes. One of these causes is governmental control. Hunger and poverty are often due to the very structure of governments. This is important to realize when we begin to talk about cures for world hunger, because we as a country are often limited in what we can do to lessen hunger in a foreign nation.

The statement by Jesus that the poor will always be with us takes on a new meaning when we realize how intractable many problems like world hunger are. Lack of food and unpredictable weather patterns aren't the sole causes of hunger. Many times governmental control makes hunger worse.

Even a cursory look at the world market shows that those countries that provide the greatest economic freedom also have the greatest amount of economic success. Hong Kong, for example, is a country that has received no foreign aid. But because it has a relatively free market, it enjoys one of the highest standards of living of any country in Asia.

Economic freedom allows personal incentive and pushes the economic engine of development. We can see this in the example of the former Soviet Union. In addition to the large governmental plots of agricultural land, smaller plots were allocated to the individual farmer. It is estimated that nearly 25 percent of all the Soviet agricultural produce came from these small, private plots of land. Soviet production on small plots of land demonstrates the power of incentive created by economic freedom. If a government focuses all its time and attention on the commonality of property, it will lead its country down the path towards poverty and hunger.

Indifference

Another cause of hunger is indifference. Individuals and their governments should be more concerned about world hunger than they are now. The affluence of North America often keeps us from being concerned about those who do not have enough to eat. Although the United States has set the standard for many other nations in its compassionate giving, still more could be done.

Particularly troubling is the lack of compassion of Third World countries for their neighbors. The OPEC countries, for example, have vast financial resources, which they are unwilling to share with countries in the region not blessed with such geological resources. They need to show compassion to their neighboring countries.

The Culture of Poverty

A third cause of hunger is the culture of poverty. Proverbs 10:15 says, “The ruin of the poor is their poverty.” The reason for poverty is often the prior existence of poverty. Poverty breeds more poverty, and more poverty breeds more hunger.

Those people who come from an impoverished situation do not have the means by which to better themselves. They are not getting the necessary calories and nutrition, so they are caught in the web of poverty. Moreover, they are being raised in a culture of poverty that perpetuates dependence and prevents advancement.

This is where the gospel can have an impact. Poverty and hunger are not just economic problems. There is a strong psychological and spiritual component to poverty. A person who is born again changes his worldview, and this is an important aspect of dealing with the problem of hunger.

Curing World Hunger

When we talk about solutions to world hunger we should realize that there are a number of unbiblical solutions. One of the most incredible is the “lifeboat ethic,” which proposes the use of the principle known as *triage*.

The Lifeboat Ethic

This idea was popularized by Dr. Garrett Hardin at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He uses the metaphor of the lifeboat to explain how rich nations are surrounded by poor ones who want to get into the lifeboat. He says, at some point, we have to push them back into the water to prevent us all from sinking.

He further argues that the problem will become worse because many of these countries will not control their populations. Thus, he says, it is inevitable that these people will eventually starve. He believes that feeding them will only prolong the suffering. Hardin therefore proposes we use the principle of triage. This concept as it is used in military medicine attempts to classify war or disaster victims according to the severity of their wounds in order to maximize the number of survivors. As incoming wounded arrive, they are placed in one of three groups. The first group has superficial wounds and can be treated later. The second group has more substantial wounds and must be treated immediately. And the members of the third group have such massive wounds that they are simply set aside and allowed to die.

Proponents of this lifeboat ethic suggest that we use the principle of triage and stop shipments of food to Third World nations facing starvation. After all, they argue, there is only so much room in the lifeboat or on “Spaceship Earth.” We must push the rest of these people off the boat in order to save ourselves.

This idea certainly raises profound ethical questions. But the metaphor only makes sense if you accept the following three assumptions. The first assumption is that there is no distinction between people and animals. The second assumption is that we are pushing the limits of the world's resources. The third assumption is that population growth is not being brought under control. However, all three of these assumptions are false. First, there *is* a distinction between people and animals. Humans have dignity because they are created in the image of God and are therefore distinct from animals. Yet we live in a world where evolutionists blur this distinction between humans and animals.

The second assumption is also questionable. We do live in a fallen world, and there are some limits to growth. But an even greater production of resources is possible, and numerous conservation techniques can increase production.

The third assumption, that population growth is not being brought under control, is also in doubt. There is evidence that many countries are serious about controlling their population explosion. In fact, many nations are experiencing a decline in their birth rates and will eventually have declining populations.

What we have to recognize is that there are many people who are proposing unbiblical solutions. And we as Christians have a responsibility to make sure these propositions do not become law.

The Christian Ethic

Often I find that Christians look at the problem of world hunger and become overwhelmed. They ask, What can we do? After all, many solutions to world hunger come from governmental agencies and large organizations.

We need to recognize that governmental agencies and even

private organizations are only part of the solution and often are not as effective as Christian organizations and missionaries. In Marxist countries like Ethiopia, the United States has limited diplomatic relationships. Moreover, the government has used some of the incoming aid as a weapon against their enemies. Indigenous programs through missionary organizations can sometimes be more effective since they do not have to go through as many diplomatic channels. Christians should realize there are things we can do, and we can learn about these from Scripture. The first obvious thing we can do is to give. The Bible talks about the compassionate distribution of food and other resources in passages such as 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 9. The New Testament church gave to other Christians who were in need.

One way a church can foster an attitude of compassion is to emphasize our responsibility to the hungry. One program called "Skip a Lunch and Feed a Bunch" encourages Christians to save the money they would have used to buy lunch and place it in a container for those who are hungry.

Some agencies have programs for adopting a child in another country and providing for his or her food and educational expenses. You can write letters to the child and have a personal involvement in this often abstract problem of world hunger.

Another solution to world hunger is missionary work. As missionaries go into various cultures, they are able to change attitudes and values that perpetuate the cycle of hunger and poverty. They can teach people how to become more independent economically and how to develop the resources available to them. In the famine in Ethiopia, many Christian relief organizations provided both food and resources. Unfortunately, their efforts were hampered by inadequate ports and a primitive transportation network. Many of the nation's trucks were being used to fight a civil war, and others were crippled by a lack of spare parts. So the relief organizations began to

airlift food in order to feed those starving in remote areas of the country.

Missionary outreach has also had an impact by preaching the gospel. As I mentioned previously, spiritual conversion changes a person's worldview and can break the culture of poverty. Many of the problems of poverty and hunger are not economic but psychological and spiritual. These include such things as poor training or wrongful attitudes.

Preaching the gospel can change not only individuals but a culture. Just think of the impact the Hindu worldview has on countries like India. False religious beliefs keep the Indians from utilizing beef, an important source of protein. Other ideas such as the concept of *karma* keep Indians from meeting the needs of the underclass. Conversion to Christianity can change not only individual lives but a culture that rests on a false foundation. World hunger is certainly a major problem. As Christians we need to be praying and working to provide solutions to the awesome problem of feeding the world.

©1992 Probe Ministries

Politics and Religion

Nearly everywhere you go, it seems, you hear statements like, "You can't legislate morality," or "Christians shouldn't try to legislate their morality." Like dandelions, they pop up out of nowhere and sow seeds of deception in the fertile, secular soil of our society.

Unfortunately, I have also heard these cliches repeated in many churches. Even Christians seem confused about how they are to communicate a biblical view of issues to a secular

world.

Part of the confusion stems from blurring the distinctions between law and human behavior. When a person says, "You can't legislate morality," he or she might mean simply that you can't make people good through legislation. In that instance, Christians can agree.

The law (whether biblical law or civil law) does not by itself transform human behavior. The apostle Paul makes that clear in his epistle to the Romans. English jurists for the last few centuries have also agreed that the function of the law is not to make humans good but to control criminal behavior.

But if you understand the question in its normal formulation, then Christians can and should legislate morality. At the more basic level, law and public policy is an attempt to legislate morality. The more relevant question is not whether we should legislate morality but what kind of morality we should legislate.

Much of the confusion stems from our country's misunderstanding of democratic pluralism. Our founders wisely established a country that protected individual personal beliefs with constitutional guarantees of speech, assembly, and religion. But undergirding this pluralism was a legal foundation that presupposed a Judeo-Christian system of ethics.

Thus, in the area of personal ethics, people are free to think and believe anything they want. Moreover, they are free to practice a high degree of ethical pluralism in their personal life. To use a common phrase, they are free "to do their own thing." But that doesn't imply total ethical anarchy. Not everyone can "do his own thing" in every arena of life, so government must set some limits to human behavior.

This is the domain of social ethics. To use an oft-repeated phrase, "a person's right to freely swing his or her arms,

stops at the end of your nose.” When one person’s actions begin to affect another person, we have moved from personal ethics to social ethics and often have to place some limits on human behavior.

Government is to bear the sword (Rom. 13:4) and thus must legislate some minimum level of morality when there is a threat to life, liberty, or property. An arsonist is not free “to do his own thing” nor is a rapist or a murderer. At that point, government must step in to protect the rights of citizens.

Perhaps the most visible clash between different perceptions of ethics can be seen in the abortion controversy. Pro-choice groups generally see the abortion issue as an area of personal morality. On the other hand, pro-life advocates respond that the fetus is human life, so something else is involved besides just personal choice. Thus, government should protect the life of the unborn child.

Promoting Christian Values

Christians must consider how to communicate biblical morality effectively to a secular culture. Here are a few principles.

First, we must interpret Scripture properly. Too often, Christians have passed off their sociological preferences (on issues like abortion or homosexual behavior) instead of doing proper biblical exegesis. The result has often been *a priori* conclusions buttressed with improper proof-texting.

In areas where the Bible clearly speaks, we should exercise our prophetic voice as we seek to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). In other areas, concessions should be allowed.

The apostle Paul recognized that the first priority of Christians is to preach the gospel. He refused to allow various distinctions to hamper his effectiveness and tried to “become all things to all men” that he might save some (1 Cor.

9:22). Christians must stand firm for biblical truth, yet also recognize the greater need for the unsaved person to hear a loving presentation of the gospel.

Second, Christians should carefully develop biblical principles which can be applied to contemporary social and medical issues. Christians often jump immediately from biblical passages into political and social programs. They wrongly neglect the important intermediate step of applying biblical principles within a particular social and cultural situation.

In recent years, there has been a dangerous tendency for certain Christians to identify their message with a particular political party or philosophy of government. Christians must be more careful to articulate the connection between biblical principles and specific programs. While Christians may agree about the goal, they may reasonably disagree about which program might best achieve that goal. In these non-moral areas, a spirit of freedom may be necessary.

Third, Christians should articulate the moral teachings of Scripture in ways that are meaningful in a pluralistic society. Philosophical principles like the “right to life” or “the dangers of promiscuity” can be appealed to as part of common grace. Scientific, social, legal, and ethical considerations can be useful in arguing for biblical principles in a secular culture.

Christians can argue in a public arena against abortion on the basis of scientific and legal evidence. Medical advances in embryology and fetology show that human life exists in the womb. A legal analysis of the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision shows the justices violated a standard principle of jurisprudence. The burden of proof is placed on the life-taker and the benefit of the doubt is given to the life-saver. Since the Court never determined when life begins, they erroneously ruled that states could not prohibit first trimester

abortions.

Likewise, Christians can argue against the depravity of homosexuality on the basis of the dangers of sexual promiscuity in an age of AIDS. Epidemiological and sociological data can provide a convincing case for public health measures that will prevent the spread of AIDS.

This does not mean we should sublimate the biblical message. But our effectiveness in the public arena will be improved if we elaborate the scientific, social, legal, and ethical aspects of a particular issue instead of trying to articulate our case on Scripture alone.

In conclusion, Christians should develop effective ways to communicate biblical morality to our secular culture. Law and public policy should be based upon biblical morality which results from an accurate interpretation of Scripture and a careful application to society.

Role of Religion in Politics

What should be the role of religion in politics? A number of years ago I participated in a panel representing a Baskin-Robbins variety of religious opinion that considered this controversial question. The scenario we were to consider was that of “a candidate running for office who comes from the far religious right and uses his religious beliefs as a major part of his political credentials.”

I was intrigued by the addition of the adjective “far,” especially since the moderator, Hodding Carter, served in the administration of an evangelical president. Jimmy Carter—hardly considered a member of the “far” religious right—became the only Democrat to win a presidential election in the last twenty years because he successfully used his “born-again” beliefs to influence voters.

Moreover, how plausible is the scenario? Pat Robertson

withdrew from the 1988 presidential primaries with few delegates. Jerry Falwell has withdrawn from his previous active role in the Moral Majority. And many surveys suggest that American voters still have some misgivings about mixing politics and evangelical Christianity.

The Williamsburg Charter Survey on Religion and Public Life (taken a number of years ago) showed that while only 8 percent of Americans would refuse to vote for a Roman Catholic on the basis of religion, 13 percent would refuse to vote for a "born-again Baptist" and 21 percent wouldn't vote for a candidate who has been a minister of a church.

Nevertheless, two ministerial candidates did campaign for the presidency in 1988, perhaps hoping that voters who shared their convictions would overlook their lack of experience in public office. Although they both achieved some minor success, the delegate counts confirmed American voters' wariness of ministers in public office.

Is it possible too much is being made of the religious factor in elections? While it may make great copy for ACLU or PAW fund raising letters warning of "religious ayatollahs" taking over the government, the reality is that the American electorate may be looking more for competence than convictions.

Two notable evangelicals in Congress in the last few years have been Senator Bill Armstrong and Senator Mark Hatfield. Both come from states geographically removed from the Bible Belt, suggesting that they are elected for more than just their religious convictions.

Certainly the evangelical vote has played a factor in past presidential elections. Jimmy Carter won one of the closest elections in American history because of the "born-again" vote and lost it four years later when many of those voters abandoned him for Ronald Reagan. American voters, perhaps

because of the Carter experience, seem less inclined to use religious conviction as the litmus test for public office.

If anything, the Williamsburg Charter Survey seems to show that Americans are applying an inverse religious test. The Constitution prohibits a religious test for public office, but the voters may be reversing that idea and really wanting someone who doesn't take his faith too seriously.

This is indeed unfortunate because religious ideals should undergird this republic. Yet voters seem willing to settle for a president with nothing more than a lukewarm Christian faith.

Thirty years ago, President Eisenhower declared a national day of prayer and then used the day to go golfing. Later revelations from the Reagan White House suggest the president spent more time consulting the stars than praying to the Creator of those stars. Perhaps nothing has changed. If so, then the hypothetical scenario we were asked to consider on the panel will remain hypothetical.

Pluralism in this Country

This country was founded on the idea of a tempered pluralism that allowed for a civil debate among the citizens. Although we take this pluralism for granted, it is instructive to remember how radical this concept was in the history of political philosophy. In the past, secular political philosophers argued that a legitimate state could not tolerate much freedom and diversity. After all, how would the dictator or monarch rule effectively if that much dissent were allowed?

Foundational to this idea is the belief that government should not be the final arbiter of truth. It should not be an institution that settles by force the truthfulness of an issue. This is why the framers of the Constitution specifically provided freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. Government should not have power to

impose its version of truth by force.

Christians should be strong supporters of this idea. We believe that God governs this world by His grace. His final judgment awaits, and we should not take His judgment into our hands. Overly anxious Christians often want to pull up the tares in the field instead of allowing the wheat and the tares to grow together.

Tyranny results when an authoritarian leader comes along who wants to impose his brand of truth on others. It is wrong for secularists to try to remove religion from the public sphere, and it is equally wrong for religious leaders to impose religion on others by force. In either case the political arena becomes a religious battleground.

What we should develop is a civil debate where Christians are allowed to promote biblical morality without imposing it. This has been made more difficult by the current anti-religious climate in our society.

Richard John Neuhaus talks of the “naked public square,” where religious values have been stripped from the public arenas of discourse. In this case, the tempered pluralism of the framers has been replaced by a radical pluralism which assumes that all values are relative. Public moral judgments, therefore, seem out of place. In recent years, we have seen a great deal of prejudice against such pronouncements simply because they are rooted in biblical morality.

So, the “naked public square,” where religious values are excluded, is wrong. Likewise, the “sacred public square,” which seeks to impose religious values, is also wrong. What Christians should be arguing for is a “civil public square” that allows an open, civil debate to take place. In such an arena, controversial ideas can be discussed and debated in a civil manner.

This form of pluralism must be more than just window dressing.

Christians and non-Christians alike must be dedicated to maintaining a pluralism that allows vigorous interchange and debate. Unfortunately, there is some indication that many in our society see pluralism as merely a means to an end. English historian E. R. Norman believed that "pluralism is a name society gives itself when it is in the process of changing from one orthodoxy to another."

If this is what secularists really want, then pluralism is in trouble. When religion is excluded in the name of pluralism, then pluralism no longer exists.

Biblical Principles

Christians should first develop a comprehensive program of social involvement. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is not a temporary, issue-oriented crusade. Christians are not merely to march against injustice and then cease their involvement. They have an on-going responsibility to build positive alternatives to existing evil.

Second, social and political involvement based upon biblical absolutes must be realistic. We should not fall prey to utopian political philosophies but squarely face the sinful nature of man and the important place government has in God's creation. Because of a general cynicism about the role of government, Christians are often guilty of neglecting their role in society.

As Christians we must remember that although the times are evil, God's common grace restrains sin. Even though perfect justice cannot be achieved until Christ returns, we are nevertheless responsible for doing what we can. If we co-labor with God, we can have a measure of success in achieving a better society.

Third, Christians should focus attention not only on individual change but on societal change. Changing lives is

fundamental but not completely sufficient to change society. Revival must lead to reformation. Christians should not merely be content with Christians thinking biblically about the issues of life. They must also be acting biblically and building institutions with a Christian framework. A Christian world view implies a Christian world order.

Christian obedience goes beyond calling for spiritual renewal. We have often failed to ask the question, What do we do if hearts are not changed? Because government is ordained of God, we need to consider ways to legitimately use governmental power. Christians have a high stake in making sure government acts justly and makes decisions that provide maximum freedom for the furtherance of the gospel.

In situations in which governmental redress is not available, civil disobedience becomes an option. When such conditions exist, Christians might have to suffer the consequences as did their first-century counterparts in a hostile Roman culture.

We are to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29) when civil government and civil law violate God's commands and law. Christians therefore were correct when they hid Jews from the Nazis during World War II. Hitler's Germany did not have the right to take innocent life or persecute the Jews.

Finally, the major focus of social involvement should be through the local church. Social action in the church is best called *social service*, since it attempts to move from the theoretical area of social ethics to the practical level of serving others in need. While evangelicals are to be commended for giving to the poor and others faced with adversity, our duty does not stop there. A much neglected area is personal involvement with people who need help.

The local church is the best place to begin to meet many social needs of a society. In the New Testament, the local church was the training ground for social involvement and

provided a context by which the needy were shown compassion. Christians, therefore, should begin their outreach to society from the church and work together to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

©1991 Probe Ministries

Economic Issues

Minimum Wage

Although the minimum wage law is more than 50 years old, it is still a very controversial measure. In fact, a battle over the minimum wage occurs every time Congress tries to increase it. Minimum wage seems like one of those political issues that compassionate people should support. But the opposite is true. The minimum wage leads to maximum unemployment for people with few job skills trying to enter the work force.

My own experience is illustrative. I started job hunting as a teenager during a rather depressed economy. The minimum wage requirement nearly kept me from getting a job because, as an unskilled laborer entering the job market for the first time, I had nothing more to offer than a strong back and conscientious work habits. Whether I was worth the minimum wage in my first job is questionable. But after working in a machine shop and as a ditch digger, I developed skills that made me more valuable to my employer.

Back in 1938, establishing a minimum wage of 35 cents an hour seemed admirable. But today it effectively shuts less-skilled people out of the work force. In essence, the minimum wage law requires employers to discriminate against young people with

few job skills. A teenager whose services are worth, say, only \$3 an hour is not going to be hired at \$4.25 an hour (plus benefits like Social Security, which raise the cost to the employer to over \$5 an hour). The choice is not between working for \$3 an hour and working for \$4.25 an hour. The real choice is between working for \$3 an hour and not working at all.

The effect of minimum wage on young people is devastating. When the lowest rung on the ladder is higher than your head, that necessary first step into a job will never be taken. The high rate of unemployment among teenagers is due in large part to the minimum wage laws that place the rungs on the ladder too high. Eliminating the minimum wage would allow more young people to get on-the-job training.

Minimum wage's effect on the poor is also troubling. Research indicates that for every 10 percent rise in the minimum wage, there is a 3 percent drop in employment among workers covered by the Fair Labor and Standards Act. In other words, if seven workers get their wages increased, three workers either get fired or can't find work. Notice how the minimum wage law has changed the nature of employment in America. More and more restaurants are switching from waiter service to self-service. Gas stations have followed suit. It explains why you see fewer ushers at movie theaters and fewer "bag boys" at supermarkets. In the past, these jobs allowed young people to develop job skills. Today, many don't exist, and young people are the losers.

Raising the minimum wage may seem compassionate. But in the end, those with limited job skills in need of work experience are the ones hurt by good intentions.

Comparable Worth

Although the idea of comparable worth has been roundly criticized, it is still gaining proponents. Like the minimum

wage, it seems at first glance like an issue we should back. But it has not exactly generated a groundswell of support.

Clarence Pendleton (former chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights) called comparable worth "the looniest idea since Looney Tunes came on the screen." But even so, its proponents are resolved to make it the law of the land.

The seeds of comparable worth first found fertile ground in the judicial system. A number of years ago, Federal Judge Jack Tanner, citing a consulting firm's comparable-worth study, ruled that the state of Washington was guilty of sex discrimination. His judgment of nearly \$1 billion against the state provided impetus for a similar suit in California.

Proponents of comparable worth argue that the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are not enough and urge the adoption of comparable worth legislation. But underlying this movement are some questionable assumptions.

First is the dubious assumption that differences between male and female wages are due to discrimination. But sexism has less to do with the wage differences than with the way women participate in the economy. Many work part-time, and most leave the job market to raise children. Economist Walter Williams estimates that women on the average spend about one-third of their potential working years in the labor market and therefore have less job-related experience than men. When relevant criteria such as education, experience, and seniority are factored in, many wage disparities vanish.

A study released by the Rand Corporation demonstrates that the gap between male and female wages is decreasing steadily, and the rate of decrease has begun to accelerate in the last few years. Economists James Smith and Michael Ward show that this rise in wages is commensurate with improvements in women's education and job experience, "rather than legislation, government commissions, or political movements."

Second, the approach assumes that personnel studies can adequately compare different kinds of jobs. Yet there is no such thing as an objective scale of economic values. Economists from Marx to Ricardo have tried to devise non-market criteria for the value of labor, and there is still no consensus after 100 years of work on the project.

What will happen when the studies disagree, as they inevitably will? The potential for disputes is endless. Should nurses earn as much as doctors or paramedics? How about a secretary who can drive a car? Should she make more than a truck driver who cannot type? There simply are not enough courts to handle the many kinds of questions that will surely follow.

Third, comparable worth assumes that governmental bureaucrats should decide pay levels. Even in situations of obvious discrimination, we should question whether a bureaucracy is the best way to rectify the problem. In fact, in light of the last 25 years of research into the nature of governmental bureaucracies, one might wonder whether bureaucracies are the best way to deal with any social problem.

Wage inequity deserves attention, but the solution is not to force employers to pay wages established by bureaucrats rather than by the free market. We need better implementation of existing laws and prosecution when discrimination occurs.

Comparable worth plays a game of “worthier than thou” by trying to compare vastly dissimilar occupations without utilizing the market system and depending solely upon subjective judgments. We would do better without it.

Budget Deficits

A theme in recent campaigns has been the budget deficit. And for good reason. We are drowning in tides of red ink, and something must be done. Some candidates suggest that the way to balance the budget is to increase taxes. But that won’t

solve the problem and most likely will make it worse.

The problem is not that we are undertaxed but that we are overspent. Consider these budget statistics. First, taxes have continued to increase throughout this century. That's not so surprising since the cost of living has increased as well. But tax receipts as a percentage of the GNP have also steadily increased over time.

A second way to look at the problem is to plot the increase of the federal government's budget. In 1938 the budget was \$7 billion. Today the budget exceeds \$1 trillion. That's an increase of over 14,000 percent. In comparison, in 1938 a Hershey bar cost 5 cents, a first-class stamp 3 cents, a new Ford \$600, a good suit \$40, and gold \$35 per ounce. However, if these costs increased by the same proportion as the cost of government, the prices would be astronomical. A Hershey bar would be \$7, a first-class stamp would be \$4.20, a car would sell for \$84,000, a suit for \$5,600, and an ounce of gold would be \$4,900.

Moreover, a tax increase is not a solution; it is part of the problem. Economist Walter Williams has shown that the facts simply do not square with the oft-repeated assumption that more taxes will reduce the deficit.

Williams has studied the federal budget figures for the last 25 years and found the following. The budget has been in the red 24 of the last 25 years. And in 19 of those years there have been tax increases. His studies show that for each \$1 in tax increase during that period, there was a \$1.58 spending increase. In other words, when taxes rose, deficits skyrocketed.

In 1982, when Congress passed the largest peacetime tax increase in U.S. history, the new revenues were not used to decrease the deficit. Instead, they were used to increase spending in a number of budget categories.

The solution is to cut the federal budget. Bloated bureaucracies drain America's economic competitiveness and often dole out grants to things ranging from obscure scientific projects to obscene art. Certainly it is time to begin cutting the federal budget in significant ways.

A major budget category is federal pensions. There is nothing wrong with providing pensions to civil service employees and military retirees. But some of these pensions have grown much more lucrative than anything found in the private sector.

For example, retired Senator Al Gore was making more than his son, Al Gore, Jr., until the younger man was given a Congressional pay increase in the mid-1980s. When Gore senior retired from Congress in 1970, his salary was \$42,000. But, thanks to federal cost-of- living increases, his pension was over \$78,000, while his son's salary was only \$77,000. When a current member of Congress makes less than a retired one, something is wrong with pensions. The Grace Commission found that if federal pensions were trimmed to resemble the "best" private sector pension programs, \$58 billion in taxes could be saved over a three-year period.

The federal budget is a problem, but many are looking in the wrong places for solutions. Americans are not undertaxed. The American government is overspent. We need to cut expenses, not raise taxes.

Housing

In recent years, Congress has made significant changes in the way it funds public housing. As the next budget considerations loom in the future, we can learn a great deal from the successes of the past.

One of the most important successes was the adoption of the housing voucher concept. The argument for housing vouchers is simple. Many current federal housing policies focus on bricks

and mortar. These programs provide incentives to private developers and thus place an emphasis on buildings. Direct rent assistance in the form of housing vouchers is used to replace construction subsidy programs, which often benefit contractors more than the poor. These voucher programs, therefore, direct government resources at people, not projects.

Housing vouchers given to renters utilize the free market system to bring about desired changes. When rent subsidies are allocated for construction of housing projects, we create a seller's market. When we give housing vouchers to renters, we create a buyer's market. A housing voucher system encourages landlords to improve run-down apartments.

Government housing policies make families dependent upon governmental subsidies and lock them into inadequate housing situations. In our effort to win the war on poverty, we have lost the war on independence.

To be poor is to be caught in a culture of poverty, frustrated and without choices. The voucher system provides not only a roof and walls, but choice and dignity. Although government pays only the amount of rent that exceeds 30 percent of a family's income, the family can choose to pay more than that and is free to move to a different housing situation.

A second program success has been the privatization of public housing. A few years ago a bill encouraging privatization was sponsored by conservative Jack Kemp and liberal Walter Fauntroy. Kemp, invoking memories of the Homestead Act of 1862, referred to this legislation as the "urban homesteading bill."

The bill offered tenants of the nation's 1.25 million public housing units the chance to buy their own homes and apartments at 75 percent below market value with no money down and at greatly reduced interest rates. Only units that were

"modernized" were offered for sale.

The bill also empowered public housing tenants to run their own projects. Legislators recognized that tenant management would provide better management of public housing.

Inspiration for resident management came from the example of the Kenilworth-Parkside project in Washington, D.C. In 1982, Mayor Marion Barry granted self-management to the residents. An analysis by an international accounting firm indicated that the tenants cut operating costs significantly, boosted rent collections by 77 percent, reduced the vacancy rate by two-thirds, and halved the rate of welfare dependency, thanks to jobs in the project created by the management team. These savings and new revenues, say the accountants, added close to \$10 million to Washington's tax collections.

These have been constructive changes in public housing policy. Housing vouchers provide choices and dignity and arm the poor with a mechanism to improve housing. Resident control of public housing provides for initiative and independence. We need more housing programs like this in the future.

Churches and Taxes

One of the oft-cited criticisms of Christians is that they attend churches that should be forced to pay their fair share of taxes. But once you understand the history of this issue, it is easy to see why critics of tax-exempt institutions miss the point.

When the United States was founded, the framers of the constitution wanted to protect churches from governmental influence. The first amendment to the Constitution specifically states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This protected the churches from the intrusive hand of the state.

But when Congress began to tax its citizens, a question arose. Could it tax churches? The answer then was very simple.

The first two modern income-tax statutes were the Revenue Act of 1894 and the Revenue Act of 1913. In both the laws, only "net income" was to be taxed. Churches and all other non-profit organizations had no "net income," so they were not taxed. The author of the 1913 Act, Cordell Hull, even resisted the call for establishing explicit categories of exemptions. He argued that the law was designed to impose explicit categories of taxation, therefore, all organizations not listed would be exempt.

But that was not sufficient for many in the bureaucracy, and so, over time, the Internal Revenue Service began to define what a tax-exempt organization might be. In the IRS code, it is defined as a 501(c)(3) organization.

From the IRS's point of view, it made sense to define a church, because they began to see the rise of bogus churches with names like the "Church of the Marijuana" or the "Hot Tub Church." But from the Christian point of view it seems most unwise to have IRS agents define in legal language what the Bible provides in explicit detail. Sometimes there was a significant confrontation.

Fortunately, Congress has passed a bill which more clearly specifies the role the IRS can have in securing church records and determining whether a church qualifies under the IRS code.

Many critics of churches argue that they can unfairly compete in the marketplace because of their tax exemption. But most of that objection was answered years ago.

The Tax Reform Act of 1969 ended churches' tax exemption for income from profit-making enterprises. Before 1969, churches exempt under the IRS code did not have to pay corporate income tax on unrelated business income, but Congress closed that loophole.

Critics also argue that exemptions are given as a legislative grace in return for specified public services which government would have to provide. But the U.S. Supreme Court held in a 1970 case that traditional property-tax exemptions for churches are constitutional and rejected the notion that exemption is a legislative grace. The argument may have its merits in reference to colleges, hospitals, libraries, or parks. But it is not applicable to churches, since government could not constitutionally set up or operate a church to provide the religious services churches provide. Despite allegations to the contrary, churches are not "getting away with something." They do not pay taxes because they do not have net income. When they do make a profit in a business enterprise, they pay taxes on it. The rest of the time, they should be tax exempt.

©1991 Probe Ministries