

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

This manual is based on a simple analysis I undertook in my spare time over a number of years. The analysis consists in the main of Biblical texts relating to aspects of Poverty, Work, the Land, Agriculture, Ecology and Community Economics. However, I have also included commentaries on the subject of "Work" based on the same coding

The system I have used is not complicated. All I have done is read through the Bible several times and extract any text or group of texts that draw in, however seemingly obscure, some aspect of these subjects. The same text on context may therefore be repeated under different headings.

The choice of headings and sub-headings has been arbitrary. However, I appreciate that others using this material may wish to re-edit or re-code some of the material. I have therefore kept the original sort codes I used in case others would like access to this material on diskette and edit, revise or transfer texts across the coding for their own personal use..

These are not "proof texts" and need always to be referred back to their context. They are at best an aid, not a substitute, towards the observation, comparison, explanation and application of disciplined Bible study.

I undertook this analysis as an ordinary Christian who was trained in "the Science and Practice of Agriculture". I spent much of my working life within that discipline. My reason and concern for doing this analysis has been twofold:

Firstly because of the serious lack of thorough discipleship of the "ordinary people of God" within the life of most Western Churches. (Please read Os Guinness' succinct comment quoted on the first page).

Secondly, . Over twenty years ago a number of us in Exeter were challenged by the Rev. David Pawson to seek out where Satan has got into our profession, our trade, our field of work, and then seek to kick him out. In all my years of training, research then practical agriculture I had not allowed my understanding of my subject to be submitted to the searchlight of the Holy Scriptures .

Most of us, the laity, the ordinary people of God, meet the world outside of the church mainly through the world of work. It is there where our Christian commitment may be most tested. This surely needs to be recognised and carefully thought through within church discipleship strategy, as it is in, for example, Latin America through its very effective "grass root level" SEAN Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programme.. My hope is that other believes serving God in disciplines such as education, law, retail, politics, medicine, etc., would more and more be prepared to humble themselves before God, and submit to accountable, even demanding, discipleship within the church and then submit their field of learning or skill to the light of the Bible in the selfsame way.

Michael Huggins