

**JOE HOLLAND
PETER HENRIOT, S.J.**

**SOCIAL
ANALYSIS**
LINKING FAITH AND JUSTICE

Revised and Enlarged Edition

SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Linking Faith and Justice

Revised and Enlarged Edition

JOE HOLLAND
PETER HENRIOT, S.J.

DOVE COMMUNICATIONS and
ORBIS BOOKS

in collaboration with

THE CENTER OF CONCERN

Fourteenth Printing, October 1998

The Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) recruits and trains people for overseas missionary service. Through Orbis Books Maryknoll aims to foster the international dialogue that is essential to mission. The books published, however, reflect the opinions of their authors and are not meant to represent the official position of the society.

First edition copyright © 1980 by the Center of Concern, Washington, DC 20017

Revised and enlarged edition copyright © 1983 by the Center of Concern, Washington, DC 20017

Revised and enlarged edition published in 1983 by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545, in collaboration with the Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017

All rights reserved
Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Holland, Joe.

Social analysis.

Bibliography: p.

1. Church and social problems—Catholic Church.

2. Social justice. 3. Social change. I. Henriot, Peter. II. Title.

HN37.C3H583 1983 261.8'3 83-6259

Revised and enlarged edition published in Australia in 1983 by Dove Communications, Box 316, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia

Dove ISBN: 0-859-24-263-3

SOCIAL ANALYSIS

It is up to Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words, and to draw principles of reflections, norms of judgment, and directives of action from the social teaching of the Church.

Octogesima Adveniens, No. 4

*For William F. Ryan, S.J.,
Founding Director, Center of Concern, 1971–1977,
whose strong leadership, friendship, and support
have helped us link faith and justice*

Foreword

In the Autumn of 1980, we published the first edition of *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. The response has been dramatic.

Over 45,000 copies have been distributed in two years from the Center of Concern. In England, the Catholic Institute for International Relations distributed 2,500 copies to its subscribers. In addition, there has been a separate Asian English edition published in the Philippines (3,500 copies), a French edition published in Montreal, and large sections translated into Spanish for use in Latin America, as well as into Japanese and Chinese. There are also translations of Section 2 into several African languages.

Besides the written word, we prepared this past year a four-part video cassette series, which has enjoyed great popularity in the United States.

All of the staff of the Center of Concern have been asked to present workshops and seminars on the theme of social analysis. This has taken us to colleges, dioceses, religious congregations, and conventions throughout the United States. We have also travelled to Canada, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rome, Ireland, England, Mexico, and Colombia, responding to invitations for seminars on social analysis.

Our material has been picked up and used by many others—in newsletters, books, courses, workshops, and in countless other ways.

After several reprintings of the first edition of *Social Analysis*, we decided to prepare a second edition. We do this for two reasons. First, this provides us an opportunity to offer further reflections by way of a newly-written "Preface" and "Afterword." Second, we can present the text in a more durable version.

The "Preface," written by Joe Holland, situates the task of social analysis within a wider understanding of the crisis of modern civilization. By concentrating on the meaning of "root metaphors," Joe probes some of the subsequent reflections which have come out of our social analysis work. In particular, he discusses the relationship between social analysis, theological reflection, and spirituality.

Peter Henriot presents in the "Afterword" a practical methodology for doing social analysis at the local level. This topic was repeatedly requested of us after the first edition of our book, as readers sought some concrete guidance for applying social analysis in their immediate environment. Peter also outlines some approaches to the theological reflection called for by the "pastoral circle."

Two words about the "pastoral circle." First, the role of *experience* is primary. But obviously we are not speaking about "raw" experience, as if we have access to something that exists in a vacuum, unrelated to the interpretations we place upon it. Experience is fundamental, but always mediated. In order to clarify this important point, we have in this second edition redesigned the pastoral circle to show that the four moments, or elements, of our approach are all mediations of experience. The first moment, then, we have called "insertion," the lively contact with the experienced reality which is being analyzed.

Second, the four elements—insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning—all need to be located in an atmosphere of celebration, infused with an ethos of prayer. This provides a time of discernment, openness, liturgy, song and music. It means that the more intellectual elements of analysis, reflection, and planning are continually grounded in experience. Celebration and prayer make the pastoral circle genuinely human and spirit-filled and give the struggle for linking faith and justice new meaning, new life.

Many people have contributed to the development of *Social Analysis*. We owe much to our colleagues at the Center of Concern for their continuous support, helpful suggestions, and invaluable insights. We appreciate the editorial assistance of Jane Blewett and Elizabeth Schmidt and the long hours of typing of many drafts by Anne Stygles and Lucinda Williams. Thousands

of people in the United States and other countries have, by their lively participation in our workshops, sharpened our own understanding of the meaning and application of social analysis. And we are especially grateful for our benefactors, whose encouragement, prayers, and large and small contributions make possible our life at the Center of Concern.

Joe Holland

Peter Henriot, S.J.

Preface

by Joe Holland

In the few short years since helping to write *Social Analysis*, I find that my thinking on our social crisis grows ever more radical. By “radical” I mean going to the root of the question. Specifically, my focus has shifted from “society” to “civilization.” In the first edition of this book, the focus was on the social crisis of advanced industrial capitalism. I would now argue that *our whole Western civilization has entered into a profound and irreversible crisis.*

The words “society” and “civilization” are of course both wide-ranging, but “civilization” runs deeper. The term “society” came to dominance with the modern “social question” and the rise of the modern social sciences. It focuses on economics and politics. The term “civilization,” by contrast, belongs more to a deeper tradition in the West. “Civilization” connotes greater emphasis on culture, and, within culture, on religion. It is this *question of culture, and within it religion, which reveals, I believe, the most radical dimension of our social crisis.*

This may sound strange, for our book *Social Analysis* focuses primarily on economics and on politics. Is this then a rejection of that approach? I don’t think so. Rather it is a deepening.

It is true that within industrial capitalism, which is analyzed in this book, economic life largely shapes political and cultural life. But is that all there is to say? Are there not still deeper questions? For example, was the emergence of an industrial capitalism, where economics is largely determining, itself to be explained by

economics? Or is there perhaps a deeper cultural key? Still further, is the transformation of an economically determined social system to occur simply by economic drives or political forces? Or is there again a deeper cultural key? To these questions, both of the roots and of the transformation of industrial capitalism, I believe culture is basic.

This is not to deny that culture arises from and is shaped by its economic and political context. Of course it is, and it cannot be understood except as embodied in such a context. Culture is never an angelic spirit floating above society.

But it is the other extreme to conceive culture simply as the prisoner of its context, or the mere reflection of economic drives and political forces, or only an ideological justification for social structures. Certainly culture often functions in the mode of legitimation, but it can also be the point of critique and creativity. Again this critique and creativity always have a social base, but the energy which flows from them has still deeper roots.

The deepest source of cultural energies, indeed the deepest source of all human creativity, flows from *participation in divine creativity*. The creativity of human culture is humanity's participation in the creative Spirit of God who brooded over the waters in Genesis and still moves within the depths of human civilization.

But in the crisis of our present civilization these energies of creativity are being converted on a massive scale into energies of destruction.

Crisis of Civilization

Increasingly the energies of our civilization are pointed toward destruction—toward destruction of the poor, toward destruction of those who speak for life and justice, toward destruction of family and community, toward destruction of our precious earth, toward destruction of the human race. At their root, these energies of destruction are extinguishing the image of God in humanity and in all of creation. They become demonic.

The classical analyses of the secular Left and the religious Right break down before this cultural crisis of all industrial civilization. (Industrial civilization is a more comprehensive concept than industrial capitalism, although industrial capitalism is at its heart.)

The *classic secular Left* has rightly perceived the great drive toward social destruction at the heart of modern civilization. But it has generally failed to perceive the destructive blocking of divine creativity, which flows from an ever-deepening “progressive” secularization of society. The classic Left thus challenges social destruction, but cuts itself off from the religious root of creativity.

As a result, its efforts to stop the destruction often prove sterile, and sometimes even compound the crisis. The flat vision of secular scientific socialism, or of a secular scientific state as the key to the future, feeds the loss of cultural creativity.

The situation on the *classic religious Right* is just the opposite, with the same unfortunate result. For the religious Right, the main problem is secularization. It correctly sees the whole “progressive” movement as deepening secularization and therefore cutting itself off from the divine root. But the religious Right fails to understand the prophetic side of the divine, and winds up defending the very social destruction that the Left fights against.

The Right tries to retrieve an authoritarian, patriarchal, militaristic society tied this time to powerful modern technology. It appeals to a divine image, but that divine image is no longer the living God of justice and peace. It is rather a war god, a god of oppression, an idol. This idol in turn provides religious legitimation for demonic destruction.

Thus on one side the secular Left often makes of secularization its own idol and cuts itself off from the divine root of human creativity. On the other side, the religious Right holds high the principle of religious transcendence, but often allows a false god to unleash the demonic.

The complete task is to link faith energies with energies of justice and peace in service of the Living God and social transformation. Faith and justice need to become as one flesh in service of both. The secular hunger for justice from the Left needs to find its deeper root in spirituality. The spiritual hunger of the Right needs to find God’s true face in justice and peace.

There are two seeds of creativity in the world—social engagement and spirituality. Similarly within the Christian community, these two movements have their echo—on one side the justice and peace movement, often developed in a secular style; and on the

other side the prayer movement, often without social engagement.

It is sad when good people from both sides fail to see the other's complementary gift. It is sad when some from the justice and peace movement are uneasy with the powerful explosion of spiritual energies from the charismatic and evangelical movements.¹ Do they fail to understand the spontaneity of religious energies? Similarly it is sad when some from the prayer movement develop analyses and alliances aimed at fighting the justice and peace movement.² Do they fail to understand the prophetic call of God?

Is it the terrible sin of human pride on both sides which causes this division? Is it the pride of secularism on the Left—afraid of spiritual energies because they are not subject to rational control? And is it the pride of religiosity on the Right—afraid of the Spirit's prophetic power in the secular arena because it is not subject to religious control?

Fortunately, there are positive signs of healing and merger. Liberation theology, for example, represents a re-rooting of the secularized prophetic sense of the Left back into its religious source.³ Similarly we see new outreaches from charismatics and evangelicals toward prophetic social engagement.⁴ Both these sources of energies are needed to face the deepening destructiveness of our industrial civilization.

Thus we may speak of *two criteria* for guiding our path in the crisis which envelops us. The first criterion is *openness to the creative transformation of our civilization*. The second criterion is *openness to the spiritual roots of creative energies*. The classic secular Left fails the test of the second criterion. The classic religious Right fails the test of the first criterion.

Both criteria are needed to challenge industrial capitalism, and more widely the whole of industrial civilization, including its extension into industrial communism.

Industrial capitalism, based in Western Europe and North America, has marginalized religious energies and tried to crush their prophetic face, even while honoring religion. This has resulted in a destructive industrial civilization whose cultural-spiritual roots are everyday withering, and which threatens vast destruction.

Industrial communism, based in the Soviet Union and Eastern

Europe, has tried to eliminate religious energies in a scientific society, but it treads the same destructive path as industrial capitalism. Indeed, one might argue, both industrial capitalism and industrial communism are entering into negative convergence in the single social and spiritual crisis of industrial civilization.

Both industrial capitalism and industrial communism are struggling to shape the destiny of the Third World, but there we see new signs of social and spiritual creativity which transcend both. This is particularly true with the church.

Root Metaphors and Culture

The move toward this wider and deeper perspective shared here has two main sources, which it might be helpful to report on briefly. The first is the recent work of Gibson Winter around the question of the "root metaphors" which shape civilizations. The second is the social and religious reflection of Pope John Paul II on the crisis of modern Western civilization.

Gibson Winter, a professor of social ethics at Princeton University, has drawn attention to the *mechanistic root metaphor at the cultural foundation of modern civilization*.⁵ In other places, I have tried to summarize and elaborate on Gibson Winter's insights, especially as they provide a mediating instrument to link social analysis and theological reflection.⁶ But here let me offer a brief summary.

In essence, since the rise of modern autonomous science, whether mediated through the free market of the capitalist system or the centralized state of the communist system, or a combination of both, industrial civilization has been constructing itself in the model of *the machine*. This model flows from the thinking of seminal figures like Bacon, Newton, Descartes, Locke, Hobbes, etc.

Ideally the mechanistic drive in society sought to free humanity from its chains to nature and tradition. But the drive of the machine has now become all-consuming. It is dissolving the civilization's spiritual depth. It is converting people into objects. And its energies, without rhythm or rest, are increasingly destructive. Designed to free humanity, the mechanistic society is now trying to make humanity and the earth into its slave, and then move to destroy both.

Over against this mechanistic root metaphor, at the cultural foundation of modern imagination, Gibson Winter proposes that a new root metaphor is emerging as an antidote to protect the preciousness of humanity and the earth. It is the *artistic root metaphor*. Rather than seeing society as a scientific machine, it proposes a vision of society as a *work of art*, flowing from the creativity of rooted communities in solidarity with each other. The crisis of our civilization is precisely a struggle for which root metaphor will shape our cultural imagination—an increasingly destructive mechanistic one, or an emerging creative artistic one.

All kinds of social and religious consequences flow from this conflict of visions, but there is not space here to develop them. Yet I might just propose a basic social and religious principle flowing from this new root metaphor, namely *the social and spiritual creativity of rooted communities networked in solidarity*.

Similar lines of analysis are developed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclicals, speeches, and other writings.⁷ Again there is not space here to develop or cite his thought in any detail, so I will just lay out what seems to be the essence of it.

People on the Left are sometimes critical of the pope's thought. Indeed on certain themes, especially bearing on women, role models, and clericalism in the church, he seems partly a prisoner of his traditional past. But in his wider social analysis of militarism, unions, human rights, and the role of faith in the modern world, I believe he is one of the most original and powerful thinkers of post-modern times.

Basically, the pope argues that we have come to an *inescapable crisis of modern civilization*. There are two sides to this crisis.

On the negative side, if its destructive energies are allowed to continue, they will destroy humanity and the earth. Thus he constantly refers to the danger of slow destruction by ecological contamination or rapid destruction by nuclear holocaust. These same destructive tendencies are played out in the death of the unborn, the oppression of labor, the abandonment of the poor, the collapse of the family, and the massive world-wide violations of human rights, especially through torture.

On the positive side, new energies are emerging to create a fresh civilization. The pope does not refer to this in traditional Catholic terms as "Christian civilization," but rather as a broader "civilization of love."

Basically, to overcome the destructive crisis of modern civilization, the pope argues, we need to create a new civilization based on human dignity and cooperative solidarity. This means new economic and political institutions and a new cultural foundation.

Industrial capitalism is clearly wrong, for it has put capital over labor and thus inverted the basic structure of human dignity, leaving labor as an economic victim.

Industrial communism rightfully protested against this inversion, but failed to change it. Instead it simply placed capital in the hands of a centralized state, and left labor as its political victim.

The key economic and political task is to restore the primacy of labor over capital by means of workers' self-management and cooperatives, with the state as their servant in an open, participatory model. But to move toward this solution, we need to go deeper than economics and politics, to the cultural foundations.

Culture for Pope John Paul II is the deeper key. Buried within the cultural foundations of modern civilization is a basic flaw. It has both a religious and social expression. The religious expression is negative—the culture has lost contact with its spiritual roots. The social expression is also negative—it is turning against humanity. Both expressions are inextricably bound together. Our path back to healing is via the human, but through the human to the divine. *Humanism and theism are not antagonistic, but complementary.* The human is not safeguarded without its foundation in the divine, and the divine is not accessible except through the human.

But modern civilization, which has produced two sequential forms of ideology, first industrial capitalism and then, in reaction, industrial communism, now finds that these ideologies are exhausting their energies. The deepest answer is not in liberating the free market, although economic creativity remains important. Nor is the deepest answer in state-centered politicization, though politics is central to the task. Rather the deepest answer is in a new cultural vision.

Deeper Vision

What is the nature of this new civilization struggling to be born? Some would call it a communitarian socialism, others sim-

ply a communitarian society. Many have pointed out the ecological and feminist principles as foundational. Certainly it needs to be grounded on a vision which begins with the poor. And finally the analysis suggests it will be a more explicitly religious civilization, not setting the spiritual against the material, but discovering that the material world is indeed spirit-filled. This question of the nature of the new civilization needs to become one of our most important social and religious challenges. Again, culture, even more than economics or politics (but never in isolation from them), may be the key to the vision.

Both Gibson Winter and Pope John Paul II call us to this deeper cultural vision. The vision does not repudiate what we have offered here in *Social Analysis*. Indeed insofar as human experience is the path, this book is an important step toward that deeper vision. But it is only a step. The deeper task of cultural and spiritual analysis still lies before us.

But again, this task needs social roots. For that reason, I believe the most important single step we can take is to begin *to root our cultural analysis and theological reflection within the life of those who make up the mainstream of the Christian community, namely the laity*.

“Laity” is, however, a misleading word. We often use it in the sense of amateur, as opposed to specialist. Most of us understand ourselves as lay people in the field of health, yielding to the scientific mystique of the medical priesthood. So too in the field of religion, we normally condense religious competence into the clergy or, more widely, religious professionals. But “laity” has an older root meaning, in the sense of the Greek *laos* or “people.” The laity of the church is the *People of God*, including all Christians.

In our increasingly technical and professional culture (with roots in the clerical Middle Ages), we have so differentiated the professional from the common people as even to set professionals antagonistically over against the people. Medical doctors for example have become a new priesthood, failing to provide broad popular education in preventative medicine and thereby creating a professional monopolization of skills which rewards them financially but injures society. The same thing has happened in the religious field where the more we have professionalized our ministries, the more uprooted they have become.