

The Snelling Spirit

September-October 2008

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Part V: Christianity's Legacy — *Politics, Society and Economics*

The Christian priority of extending respect to ordinary persons — while taking into account human failings and shortcomings — can be seen in the emergence in the West of new political institutions. These political institutions existed nowhere else in the world, and they did not exist in ancient Greece or Rome. Something changed within the West to give rise to them. That something is Christianity.

Consider our modern concept of “rule of law.” In his book *Law and Revolution* Harold Berman argues that the modern Western legal system is “a secular residue of religious attitudes and assumptions which historically first found expression in the liturgy and rituals and doctrine of the church, and thereafter in the institutions and concepts and values of the law.” This is quite true, but there is much more to the story.

Plato says that the highest form of law is discretion. This sounds strange to us, but it is correct. The best form of justice is to give each person his appropriate deserts. In the

family, for example, you don't treat your children exactly alike by establishing “laws” for them. You adapt your instructions and requirements in keeping with their individual personalities and situations. So it is, according to Plato, in politics. The best form of government is a benign monarchy or aristocracy ruling by discretion and dispensing justice in each individual case.

But we don't do this in the West. Consider the simple example of speeding on the highway. We establish fixed rules (such as a limit of seventy miles per hour) ... and then enforce them. This does not however, seem like the best system. Some people drive safely at eighty miles per hour. Others are a danger to themselves and others at fifty miles per hour. So why don't we let the authorities decide each case on its merits? The simple answer is that we don't trust the policeman to do this. We consider him a fallible human being who may be guided by prejudices. We would rather all live under a uniform rule that applies to everyone.

This idea that power should be very cautiously entrusted to fallible human beings became

the basis of the modern idea of laws. The people choose the government; but the American system imposes “separation of powers” and “checks and balances” as internal mechanisms to keep the government honest and accountable. The American founders devised a structure that deliberately fostered economic and political rivalries in order to prevent unhealthy concentrations of power. In *The Federalist*, Publius describes such measures collectively as “supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives.” Moreover, in the West we insist that the people who make the laws be subject to them and to the recall of the people on whose behalf they are making them.

Christianity enhanced the notion of political and social accountability by providing a new model: that of servant leadership. In ancient Greece and Rome no one would have dreamed of considering political leaders anyone's servants. The job of the leader was to lead. But Christ invented the notion that the way to lead is by serving the needs of others, especially those who are the neediest. Mark 10:43 quotes

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President's Corner

Greetings in Jesus' Name!

I would like to thank those who responded to my article on prayer. Thank you, Beck Van Meter for your message on prayer, it was timely.

I would like to title this article: "The Wonderful Name of JESUS." *"The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it, and is safe."* (Proverbs 18:19) *"And at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."* (Phil 2:10)

The name of Jesus is an instrument for signs in the hands of a believer. It is also like a tap which when turned on releases signs and wonders. The name of Jesus has what it takes to put you in charge of situations. It establishes your authority in times of conflict. Many Christians do not know the value of the name of Jesus. Once they realize and discover it's worth, and used, signs and wonders are answered.

The moment you declare the name of Jesus in faith, there is a strong release of unction for manifestation. *"Yokes are destroyed by the reason for anointing."* (Isaiah 10:27) When you declare the name of Jesus in faith, whatever burden is upon you, sickness, failure, discouragement, depression, etc., hanging around you is destroyed. The name of Jesus is a burden destroyer. When you pray with a sick person, and pray in the name of Jesus, you can expect God to act. Just like when Peter looked at Aene'as in Acts 9:34 and said, *"Aene'as, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, arise and take up your bed."* Jesus released the

power of His name to heal Aene'as.

The name of Jesus is no ordinary name, it carries the same immeasurable anointing as Jesus did in person. Therefore, when you call His name in difficult situations, the power of the owner of the name goes into operation. Remember, the name of Jesus carries a lot of power that can bring you into total liberty.

The name of Jesus is not just a conjunction in prayer. It is not a religious emblem either. It is an authentic weapon of warfare and deliverance. In Proverbs 18:10, the Bible says, *"the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."* The name of Jesus in the hands of believers will produce miraculous wonders. May the name of Jesus be prominent among our chapel members. God's riches to each of you.

Building the Kingdom,
Bob Peterson
Foundation President
(651) 484-5285

Here is a "little tidbit" I received. We used to say at school, "you are what you eat." Someone has said, "be aware, you are what you read."

The Wall St. Journal is read by people who run the country.

The N.Y. Times is read by people who think they run the country.

The L.A. Times is read by people who wouldn't mind running the country if they could spare the time.

The S.F. Chronicle is read by people who aren't sure there is a country or that anyone is running it.

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The *Board* welcomes input from members. If you have an idea or suggestion, please feel welcome to contact the appropriate *Board* person.

Scheduled 2008 Board Meetings:

Saturdays (9:00 a.m.) ...
20 Sep, 15 Nov ... @ Federal Building
Sunday (1:00 p.m.) ...
21 December ... @ the Chapel

If you would like a copy of the **2007 Annual Report**, please secure one in the Fellowship Hall or call the *Foundation Office* at (612) 970-7866 and leave your name/ mailing address that we may send you a copy of this impressive report of last year's accomplishments.

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Christ as saying, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant ... for even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.” And in Luke 22:27 we hear Jesus say, “Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves?” In the new Christian framework, leaders are judged by how well they respond to the concerns and welfare of the people. Over time, people once known as “followers” or “subjects” become “customers” and “constituents.” As a consequence of the new ideal, the job of the political leader, the merchant, and the priest becomes serving the people by attending to their political, material, and spiritual needs.

The system of modern capitalism arose in the West. To some it is surprising that capitalism developed so easily in conjunction with a Christian ethic. But capitalism satisfied the Christian demand for an institution that channels selfish human desire toward the betterment of society. Some critics accuse capitalism of being a selfish system, but the selfishness is not in capitalism — it is in human nature. Selfishness, like lust, is part of the human condition. It is hopeless to try to root it out, although some zealous utopians have certainly tried. Over the centuries, Christianity came up with a much better solution. The Bible is often quoted to say that money is the root of all evil, but the relevant passage actually says that “love of money is the root of all evil.” This is a condemnation of a certain human attitude to wealth, not a condemnation of either wealth or commerce.

The effect of capitalism is to steer human selfishness so that, through the invisible hand of competition, the energies of the capitalist produce the abundance from which the whole society benefits. Moreover, capitalism encourages entrepreneurs to act with consideration for others even when their ultimate motive is to benefit themselves. So while profit remains the final goal, entrepreneurs spend the better part of each day figuring out how better to serve the needs of their actual and potential customers. They are operationally, if not intentionally altruistic.

And when it came to capitalism, Christian civilization created the basic rules of modern economics. In the “Middle Ages,” people first realized that prices should be determined through supply and demand. In the past, prices had been set by law or custom. But Albertus Magnus, a thirteenth-century Dominican friar, explained that prices reflect “what goods are worth according to the estimate of the market at the time of sale.” And this of course is what we believe now.

In his classic work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber traces the rise of capitalism to a spirit of calling or election introduced by Calvinism. But as in the case of market pricing, the core elements of capitalism all predate the Reformation. Some scholars have traced them to the monastery communities of the early Christian era, in which bands of monks demonstrated a strong work ethic, practiced specialization and division of labor, borrowed and lent money, and engaged in long-distance trade involving a fairly wide range of foodstuffs and other commodities.

My goal here is not to settle the issue of which Christians got there first. Capitalism grew in stages, each of them influenced by a different aspect of Christianity. When Francis Bacon and Descartes called for a technological system in which man becomes a master and possessor of nature, they made their case in terms of recovering the prosperity of the Garden of Eden. When Locke defended property rights and the cultivation of nature by practical intelligence, he saw humans as imitating the creativity of God and thus acting “in His image.” Even today we think of work in terms of a “calling” or “vocation.” In this Christian understanding, we receive our talents from God and use them to benefit ourselves, our families, and our society in line with God’s will for us.

With capitalism and prosperity came something new: the idea of progress. This is the notion that things are getting better and will continue to get better in the future. History is seen as moving in a straight line, onward and upward. In the past century the idea of progress has seen some strange and ugly manifestations, such as “survival of the fittest” and the supposedly inevitable “revolution of the proletariat.” Tarded as it now may be, the ideal of progress endures, and in some form it is now part of the furniture of the modern mind. Most of us, for example, fully expect our children to live better than we do. We also tend to believe in moral progress. The abolition of slavery, for instance, seems to be an irreversible moral achievement. We hope that future

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Special Patriotic/Veterans Events . . .



Sun, 21 Sept 08 — POW/MIA Remembrance — remembering those who are prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Sun, 9 Nov 08 — Veterans Day Remembrance — recognizing U.S. veterans of all branches of the armed forces.

Sun, 7 Dec 08 — Pearl Harbor Remembrance — recognizing survivors ... with a candle lighting tribute to those who have passed away since last year.

World-Wide Communion

The origins of World-Wide Communion go back to the winter



of 1935; a group of clergy in the United States called for world-wide communion to focus on peace. They chose November 1, 1936 - this being the month in which many nations observed the Armistice, or ending of the WW1. The idea caught on and the Federal Council of Churches in the U.S. promoted this as an ongoing event, moving it back to the first Sunday in October so as not to conflict with All Saints Day (1 Nov).

Today many denominations and national church councils encourage Christians of all traditions to observe the symbolism of all Christians gathered at one table on this special day.

POW/MIA Remembrance Day

POW/MIA Remembrance Day is a day of reverence and reflection for those who never came home in making the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

To date there are more than 125,000 POW/MIA's since WWI to the present — unaccounted for.

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff (whose husband is missing) believed that the cause lacked a standard — a flag to remind more fortunate families of those who were still unaccounted for. The POW/MIA flag consists of images of a barbed wire, a tower and most prominently the image of a gaunt young man. The POW/MIA flag was never copyrighted; it became a flag that belongs to everyone with a design that hauntingly reminds us of those we dare never to forget.



Congress has set aside every 3rd Friday of September of each year as a national POW/MIA recognition day. The flag is to be flown over: the Capital and White House in Washington D.C.; the Korean War & Vietnam Veterans War Memorials; every national cemetery; any building containing the official office of the Secretary of State; the office of Secretary of Veterans Affairs; the office of the Director of Selective Service System; every major military installation; every VA Medical Center; and every post office.

The POW/MIA flag is displayed daily in the rotunda of the United States Capital building, and should be flown at all VA Medical facilities on any day the national colors are displayed.

In addition to POW/MIA Day, the flag should be displayed at all the above locations on: Armed Forces Day; Memorial Day; Flag Day; Independence Day; and Veterans Day.

The POW/MIA flag is displayed at all times at the Fort Snelling Chapel (just to the left side of the altar).

Although those missing are gone from our sight ... they remain in our hearts.

Remember them with us on **Sunday 21 September** (11:00 a.m.).

We are fortunate to gather on World-Wide Communion Sunday (**5 Oct**) free from fear of reprisal. Many around the world are not so fortunate as they gather at the communion table.

— Kay Schoen

Sometimes I feel like a drop in the bucket, but when I am at the Lord's Table I am a drop in His blood. On World-Wide Communion Sunday it's a powerful emotion to realize all over the world brother & sisters in Christ are all covered in His blood. Jesus shed enough to cover us all!

All Saints Day

At Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel we have a number of *saints* ... who were called home to be with our Lord and Savior ... this past year. Join us on **Sunday 2 November** (11:00 a.m.) while we reflect on those we knew and loved so much; and give thanks for all their faithful service to our beloved Chapel.

— Kay Schoen

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generations will be more morally enlightened than we are, take better care of the planet, and stop killing the unborn.

This is not, however, the way the Greeks and the Romans — or the Chinese and the Indians — saw it. Most cultures believe that history moves in cycles. Things go up and then they go down. An alternative view is that things were better in the past, and the further you go back, the better they get.

Our modern ideas of “development” and “progress” are a secular version of the Christian idea of providence. The Christian narrative of history guided by God from beginning to end — a story of creation, incarnation, and last judgment — is converted into a story of human advancement. Thus through human effort we fulfill a kind of spiritual mandate to continually make things better.

Which leads me to the Christian legacy of our culture’s powerful emphasis on compassion, on helping the needy, and on alleviating distress even in distant places. If there is a huge famine or reports of genocide in Africa, most people in other cultures are unconcerned. As the Chinese proverb has it, “the tears of strangers are only water.” But here in the West we rush to help. Massive relief programs are organized. Sometimes even military intervention is considered as a last resort to stop the killing. Part of the reason why we do this is because of our Christian assumptions. Those people are human like us. They too deserve a chance to be happy. If we are more fortunate than they are, we should do what we can to improve their lot.

The ancient Greeks and Romans did not believe this. They held a view quite commonly held in other cultures today – Yes, that is a problem, but it’s not our problem. Aristotle, who came closest to the Christian view wrote that the great-souled man does in fact assist those in need. But in Aristotle’s view he does so out of liberality, in order to demonstrate his magnanimity and even superiority to those beneath him. Ancient aristocrats funded baths, statues, and parks that prominently bore their names and testified to their family nobility and personal greatness. This is not the Christian view ... which demands that we act out of compassion; which means “suffering with others.” We help starving infants in Haiti and Rwanda – not because we are better than they are, but because we are (humanly speaking) all in the same boat. Christian humility is the very opposite of classical magnanimity.

It was the Christian spirit of mutual love and communal charity that astonished and impressed the pagans and the Romans. The emperor Julian, seeking to revive paganism in the fourth century professed admiration for the way in which Christians looked after their poor, their widows and orphans, and their sick and dying. However paradoxical it seems, people who believed most strongly in the next world did the most to improve the situation of people living in this one.

In the West, the Christians built the first hospitals. At first they were just for Christians, but eventually they were open to everyone, even Muslims who had entered Christian lands with the aim of conquest. Today many hospitals have Christian names (i.e., St. John’s, St. Joseph’s, St. Luke’s, Methodist and so on) — and relief organizations like the Salvation Army and the Red Cross bear, sometimes lightly, the Christian influence that brought them into existence. So do organizations like the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, and the YMCA, all of which are involved in civic and charitable activities.

Christianity has also produced many great figures ... from Vincent de Paul to Mother Teresa ... who have dedicated their lives to the service of the poor and sick. Nowhere else — not in other religions nor in secular society — do we find anything like this. One does not have to be a Christian or even a believer to acknowledge that this Western faith has done an incredible amount to improve human life and reduce human suffering.

Serving God and Country,
Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr., *Chaplain*
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Benevolent Giving ...

The Story of Stone Soup ...

Long Ago and Today

Long, long ago, in a faraway land, some soldiers were marching home from war. They were very tired, for they had traveled a great distance, and they were very hungry. The villagers were hiding all of their food and would not help the soldiers. The soldiers would have welcomed even a small bowl of soup, but they had nothing to put into a pot ... except the stones they found in the road. One soldier asked the villagers if they had a pot to put stones into for soup. Whoever heard of stone soup? The mayor gave them a pot. Each of the soldiers then found a stone for the soup. "Something is missing", said a soldier, so they asked the villagers for salt and pepper and one of the villagers gave some to them. One of the soldiers said the

Photo (left to right): Majel Carrol, Becky Monson and Patrick Hoy.

soup would not be good without an onion, so a peasant woman gave them an onion. Another soldier said it would be a pity without celery, so a farmer gave them some celery. Then a soldier said, "It sure could use some carrots and potatoes," and a peasant woman said, "I might have some." and put them into the pot. The villagers all thought the soup was fit for a king, so some of them brought loaves of bread to share. The villagers and the soldiers ate and drank into the night and the whole community was fed. Afterwards, the villagers took the soldiers into their homes for the night so they would have a comfortable bed. The next day the soldiers all said, "Thank you for everything." In response to the soldiers, the mayor said, "You have taught all of us something very important. Who would have thought a thick and rich soup could be made from stones." The moral of the story is that we can all give a little to the community pot which then enables the community to give back to the people. This way of thinking is represented by a community thrift shop called **Stone Soup Thrift Shop**.

Stone Soup Thrift Shop is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, serving the basic needs of South Washington County. *Stone Soup* was started in 1997 after a group of Washington County community leaders and citizens decided that South Washington County had a need for a store that could collect donated items, clean them up, and resell the items at very affordable prices.

Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation has been supporting *Stone Soup* for the last two years and again approved a gift of \$500 at the last Board meeting. I decided I wanted to learn more about *Stone Soup*. I contacted Ms. Majel Carrol, who is the *President of the Board of Directors*, and Ms. Becky Monson, the *Store Manager*. On July 29th, I visited *Stone Soup* and Majel and Becky gave me a tour of the operation. We started in the warehouse where people can drop off items; then went on to see where and how the volunteers clean and organize the items, and put them onto the shelves for resale; and observed the volunteers who work at the front cash register.

Items for resale range from clothing (adults and children) that can be purchased for \$7.00 per bag, to furniture, house ware items and electronics. At times there are people who come into *Stone Soup* with no money, such as a young mother, someone coming out of jail, or just someone down on their luck, and *Stone Soup* will donate goods at no charge to help them get back on their feet.

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Stone Soup rents their 6,200 square foot facility in St. Paul Park for \$4,700 per month. Their employees consist of 2 full-time paid staff, 4 very part-time paid staff and various volunteers. They average \$1,400-\$2,000 per week in sales. *Stone Soup* donates over \$30,000 back into the community to those in need and has served 413 adults and 385 children.

During my visit, I witnessed many people in the store that really appreciated having a place where they could purchase items at very low prices. It is sad to say, however, the need for this kind of service is growing every-day. One of their customers wrote a letter that stated, "By shopping at *Stone Soup Thrift Shop* we've furnished our home, clothed our family, saved money, saved natural resources, and helped preserve the environment. Over the years, we've always been able to make our mortgage payment and keep our house. We were always able to provide our children with some of life's niceties. If it hadn't been for *Stone Soup*, we don't know how we would have done it. I don't have the records to show the thousands of dollars we've saved over the years by purchasing used goods at *Stone Soup*, but today when so many families' homes are in foreclosure, they need *Stone Soup Thrift Shop* more than ever to help them save money."

The *Stone Soup Thrift Shop* Mission is — "To engage the community in supporting families and individuals by providing access to quality used clothes, household items and furniture in a convenient, dignified manner."

Stone Soup is in great need of volunteers with knowledge in such things as electronic repair and appraising antiques. I was very impressed with the dedication of the staff and volunteers who are there to help those in need. Many of the staff and volunteers started out using the *Stone Soup* services themselves.

I want to thank Majel Carrol, Becky Monson, and all of their staff for their hard work and dedication to helping residents of South Washington County. If you would like to donate or volunteer you may call Becky Monson at 651-458-9786, stop in the store at 950 3rd St , St. Paul Park , MN 55071 or visit their **web site at** www.stonesoupthriftshop.org.

— Pat Hoy, Chair
Benevolence Committee

This congregation tithes (10 %) from its plate offerings. If you know of an organization/ministry ... that is in keeping with our purpose ... please feel free to secure an application to submit for financial support in 2008. Simply call the *Foundation* Office at 612/970-7866 ... and provide a name and mailing address.

Social Events ...

One of the new and exciting programs added to the *Foundation's* ministry is occasional social events ... to provide more opportunities to fellowship. This is a result of a recent survey conducted by the *Fellowship Committee*. These events are being coordinated by Barbara Sommerville. Already, we've hosted a tour to the Minnesota Military Museum in Little Falls, MN. Now we are pleased to announce these two upcoming events:



Sat 13 Sep (9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) — **Paddleboat Ride** on Lake Phippen aboard the *Pearl of the Lake* (Lake City, MN). Cost = \$20 each (incl: bus transport and boat ride) Lunch will be *dutch* at a cute restaurant in Lake City. Reservations must be made NLT Sun 7 Sep.

Sun 19 Oct (5:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.) — see "The Church Basement Ladies II - Second Helping" at **Plymouth Playhouse**. Cost = \$30 each (incl: bus transport and theatre admission) Reservations must be made NLT Sun 5 Oct.



Pre-paid reservations can only be made with Barbara Sommerville ... on Sundays ... in the Fellowship Hall.

The Snelling Spirit

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Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation

This is a non-denominational Christian church founded in 1967. We invite you to join us for worship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. at this historic Chapel.

The Fort Snelling Veterans Memorial Chapel is a unique Minnesota memorial — a splendid monument to the patriotism, the moral earnestness and the convictions of the people of this state — a shrine to commemorate those who have died for their country. Weekly Sunday worship is sponsored by the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel

Foundation and is not subsidized by the state.

For Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation information call the Foundation Office at (612) 970-7866, or write to the **Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation**
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or e-mail to info@fortsnellingmcf.org

or check our web site at www.fortsnellingmcf.org



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The Snelling Spirit is a bimonthly publication of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation. We welcome your input, your letters and your suggestions.

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