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How To Judge Institutional Programs

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TO EVALUATE a program of social action it is necessary to have criteria for selecting the objects to be evaluated and for making judgments of relative value. We have to determine the facts of the case, the "reality situation," and we have to decide whether the events and policies that exist are to be regarded as desirable or not. We may agree, let us say, that the rate of farm labor mobility has become increasingly responsive to changes in the level of nonfarm employment. But we may differ greatly in our judgment as to the desirability of this supposed fact.

Moreover, the specific value criteria involved in evaluating particular programs are never independent of still other value standards. In a preconference memorandum, Lee Burchinal listed six broad classes of issues concerning goals and values in American agriculture and rural communities that seem especially important and relevant. These six categories of issues were said to be associated with (1) freedom, related to agricultural production and distribution; (2) justice; (3) efficiency; (4) security; (5) general welfare, including questions about the role of government; and (6) order and stability related to community organization.

It does not require much reflection to note that none of the broad criteria suggested in this list stands alone as an absolute standard. To what extent does freedom turn out to be consistent with justice? How far can we press efficiency without endangering security? To evaluate is necessarily to balance and weigh different values implicated in the same concrete decision, act, policy or program. It is rare to find a case in which one, and only one, value is of clear and overriding importance as a basis

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for a major decision. Most human action is multi-valued and is permeated with ambiguities and conflicts of values. Most institutional policies and programs concerning American agriculture involve a great multitude of judgments as to what the realities of the situation are and a complex set of interdependent value judgments.

It might be thought that the complexity and contradictions to which we have just pointed represent a passing phase of contemporary programs. It might be supposed that clear and consistent policies will emerge as action programs are based on increased knowledge and logical analysis. But the tension between contradictory values is not a temporary and accidental aspect of current programs and policies. It is a permanent and inherent characteristic of value systems in human societies. Oppositions and contradictions among major values are inevitable. Theoretically we might have complete agreement that each of a finite set of values is valid and must be used as a criterion of conduct. But even in such a case, balancing of the demands generated by differing values involves at least the tension of deciding how much each shall count. In this sense all value systems have an "economic" aspect. So long as men cannot do everything at once, they must allocate time and energy in the service of one value rather than another. The human world is a world of inescapable choices among values. Not all values can be simultaneously and equally satisfied.

The values of liberty and equality are clearly central themes in our democratic traditions. They are closely linked historically. They appear together in the Declaration of Independence, in the Gettysburg Address, and in other classic statements of national credos. Yet it can be shown quite definitely that liberty and equality are in various ways inherently contradictory. In concrete cases, your freedom to hire and fire me is a restriction on my freedom. The institutional arrangements necessary to guarantee farmers "economic equality" with urban occupations (whatever this means) may diminish farmers' freedom of action. The fact that such oppositions are not always total nor immune to compromise does not allow us to blink away the real tensions and incompatibilities. From the standpoint of the operator of a large-scale commercial farm in the Imperial Valley, the values of freedom and efficiency may seem to call for maximum mobility of hired farm labor. From the standpoint of the migratory worker, the situation may result in violation of values of freedom, equality, individual dignity and humanitarian values. Farm programs may be able to work out politically viable compromises among the conflicting values. But they will rarely be able to abolish the contradictions.

So far we have suggested three main points: (1) judgments of fact and value are partly separable, but also interdependent; (2) policy judgments involve multiple values; (3) some contradictions and oppositions of values are enduring and inevitable.[2] The issues involved in these propositions would seem to be crucial in any evaluation of institutional programs, but they are not always made explicit. Nor are they always taken into account in appraisals of the merits of agricultural policies.

A fourth preliminary point is that values are not found in completely separable, discrete units which combine with other values in purely additive fashion like laying one brick upon another. Rather, particular standards of desirability combine with other values in ways which modify, often radically, the original meaning of each component. Emphasis upon the worth-whileness of efficiency may be linked with values of individual achievement and humanitarianism. The actual meaning of efficiency changes if, instead, it is combined with values of nationalistic superiority and racism, as with National Socialism in Germany.

Fifth, value emphases and value conflicts shift with changes in the social environment. There is a two-way interplay between values and other aspects of the existing situation. Values affect the social structure, economic processes and technology. In turn, existing social structures, economic processes and technological developments react upon values. Under early American conditions of scarce labor, open resources and small-scale, decentralized economic production, freedom of enterprise had a meaning radically different from that implied in our present society. In an urbanized and industrialized society of tight interdependence, the concrete implications and actual meanings of freedom necessarily change.

We have to face the phenomena of urban sprawl, mounting agricultural surpluses, urban and rural slums, smog, water pollution, soil erosion and silting of reservoirs and hundreds of other instances in which the freedom of some individuals and social groupings creates conditions found to be noxious by others. Many of the pressing problems of modern American society are simply different guises of what an economist I know calls "the universal smoke nuisance." By this phrase he calls attention to all these situations in which the individual finds a given action profitable — his gratifications from burning trash outweigh the immediate

[2]We recognize that this contention may be disputed on the grounds that there are unified philosophies of life in which all values are hierarchically ordered in the service of a single unifying conception of the good life. Our reply would be simply that we have been unable to discover actual cases of individuals or social groupings devoid of any value conflict.

costs to him individually — but the collective outcome is a condition generally evaluated as undesirable. Where each finds it advantageous to act in a way that has consequences unfavorable to all, some type of social regulation must be invoked, if it is decided to reduce the undesired effects. Parking meters and traffic signals restrict my freedom to park and drive as I please. But existing technology has created a situation in which other aspects of freedom as well as other values call for some social regulation.

Sixth, and lastly, the generalized standards of desirability that we are calling values are not directly related to specific institutional forms. Thus, a genuine commitment to freedom as a worth-while condition of human life certainly is compatible with more than one specific set of economic and political arrangements. There are limits, of course; not all institutional forms are equally compatible with this value. But we have to be cautious in assuming, without careful analysis, just what any particular set of arrangements implies for any given value. It may be recalled that the Taft-Hartley legislation was condemmed by some as a slave labor law. The wisdom of that particular legislation certainly can be debated. But it is questionable whether it marked the end of freedom for labor unions. Federal farm programs no doubt have many implications for freedom as a value; but the presence of regulation does not of itself allow us to say whether there has been a weaker or stronger commitment to freedom as a value.

From what has been said thus far it follows that for full consideration of institutional programs the evaluating observer needs to know: (1) the existing conditions to which the programs apply, (2) the values involved in the goals of the program, (3) the value implications of the means proposed to attain projected or implied goals and (4) the probable consequences of the programs upon both existing conditions and the values held by the members of the affected population themselves. In short, we require knowledge of conditions, standards of evaluative judgment and serviceable predictions of consequences.

MAIN TYPES OF CRITERIA FOR POLICY

By what standards can we judge programs designed to affect American agriculture and rural life? What are the main criteria we conceivably might use in judging the desirability of one or another policy? Merely identifying the more important possible bases of judgment would appear to be an essential, if rarely undertaken, step toward greater clarity.

Surely the most obvious criterion for policy would be the preservation of the status quo. This position may not be merely a matter of unreasoning conservatism. It can be argued that the vested interests represented by the social and economic commitments of the rural, or more narrowly agricultural, population have a genuine ethical claim to protection. In this view, the onrushing technological and economic changes are destroying the moral basis of our society — as when a lifetime of farming ends in the obliteration of the individual's total enterprise in spite of his industry, frugality and maximum efforts in rational entrepreneurship. Left to itself, it may be said, the remorseless cost-price squeeze will continue this social and spiritual destruction. The best stopping point is now; the goal: to preserve the present situation. Something like this criterion was involved in the early programs of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in the form of the historical "base" of past production on individual farms.

It is conceivable that our policy might be primarily oriented to some criterion of humanitarian equity. Such a standard of justice would call for a definition of need, which necessarily implies a standard for deciding what is an appropriate or decent level of returns and way of life for rural people. An acceptable level of living might thus be defined for all rural people, for all agricultural workers, for all farms, for all commercial farmers or for any other segment of the population. To use an occupational or residential criterion, of course, is to introduce a kind of status justice into the economic process. Any test of need must face the question of differentials in need, depending upon social rather than sheer subsistence-physical requirements. Distribution of rewards on a need-criterion basis inevitably involves governmental action. Establishing policy for such action necessarily is a political act. Any policy of a "just standard of living" which expects to be implemented must therefore accept political involvement.

We might attempt through national governmental action to set agricultural policy or rural life policy in terms of politico-military security. The criterion would be to maintain sufficient numbers of people in rural and farm settings under conditions which would provide agreed-upon amounts and kinds of human and physical resources for survival under various military and political circumstances. For example, a dispersed and properly equipped and trained rural population might be envisaged as survival insurance under certain assumptions concerning post-strike conditions in a nuclear war.

Institutional policies and programs might be guided in part by

aesthetic-expressive values and considerations of physical and mental health. The maintenance of open areas, plant cover, animal life and protection of soil and water might be justified by values of recreation and health and maintenance of an aesthetically satisfying environment. As urban congestion and its physically and psychologically irritating and debilitating accompaniments increase, even a task-centered, pragmatic and unsentimental people may come to rank these values higher in their appraisals.

Policies and programs concerning agriculture and rural life may be based upon and judged in terms of certain values of character or personality development. It may be believed, for instance, that the family farm provides a setting especially conducive to the development of self-reliance, ethical individualism, high evaluation of work, or any one of dozens of other characteristics. Although evidence demonstrating the alleged effects is scanty, beliefs of this kind may be important in the politics of agricultural programs.

If we allow ourselves to recall that in the field of foreign relations the United States since 1945 has done a very great many things that would have been regarded as altogether impossible and unthinkable a generation earlier, we may feel free to speculate further. It is possible to imagine circumstances under which the nation might seek to increase agricultural production for distribution abroad. The test of policy might then be production needed to meet international commitments, even when domestic supply-demand conditions would not have dictated so large a volume. Unlikely as this policy line now seems, it should nevertheless be on our list.

Under certain other conditions, we can imagine that the guiding criterion of policy would be reduced to sheer pressure-group effectiveness in the political process. The reference here is to a situation in which narrow political expediency came to override most of the other values we are reviewing.

Finally, policy might be guided, in whole or in part, by the touchstone of economic efficiency, expressible in various kinds of maximizing formulae. The basic criterion here would be the optimum allocation and utilization of factors of production in the economic system as a whole, or within the agricultural sector.

The above sketch of types of criteria for establishing and judging policy is intended to be merely suggestive and is very far from being complete. It may serve, however, to render somewhat more concrete the idea of a complex set of really major value considerations which influence institutional programs. We must immediately hasten to add that our listing must not leave the impression that policies are based alone upon such values.

Policy is based also upon knowledge, lack of knowledge, error, mistaken beliefs and a variety of specific situational influences. Furthermore, in the actual processes of policy determination, legislation and administration, a merely permissive or supportive consensus on values may be no match for the driving power or "clustering" impact of powerful leaders and groups with clear-cut objectives serving specific but strong interests. Whatever may be the part played by values in action programs, the standards we have reviewed provide convenient points of reference for our evaluations as observers of programs.

In evaluating institutional programs it is useful to keep in mind the two different senses in which our ordinary language uses the term value. We find ourselves speaking quite naturally of value in the sense of an evaluation of an object, as for example, "the family farm is of the highest value in our civilization," or "rural slums are a disgrace to our affluent society," or "free public education is one of our most valuable national assets." In this type of usage the standards by which the judgment is being made are left implicit. On the other hand, we also use the word value to refer to standards or criteria for evaluation – to conceptions of desirability which guide our particular appraisals of events, men, policies, or any other objects of regard. Throughout this paper we shall be thinking of values as the standards of goodness, appropriateness and the like by which value judgments are made.

It is essential to make these distinctions explicit, for the preceding papers use several different implied definitions of values. Mr. Cochrane's paper, for example, makes values refer to intensity or degree of need to live according to certain beliefs; these beliefs, in the first place, were ".... concepts of ways of living and making a living which people feel obliged to follow." Thus, values are conceived as degrees of need to live according to concepts of a worth-while life. This conception of values overlaps with the notion of value orientations as used in the well-known formulation of Clyde Kluckhohn. However, it contains a motivational component that is conceptually separated in most anthropological and sociological analyses.

In the remarks to follow, the problem of evaluation is first approached through brief reviews of those papers which were available to the writer in advance. By selective comments upon the papers, both the objects and the criteria of evaluation hopefully may be brought into focus. Then in the concluding section of this paper, certain general problems of policy will be examined against the criteria provided, on the one hand by contemporary social reality and on the other by historic American values.

SELECTIVE REVIEW OF CONFERENCE PAPERS

In the statement of Rev. Father O'Rourke we find the conception of a single unifying goal for social action: the establishment of a Christian social and economic order. We must note, of course, that the single goal may not be universally accepted in a religiously pluralistic society lacking an established church. And, we must be attentive to actual differences in interpretation and emphasis as the goal is specified in terms of particular policies.

The paper by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Speltz provides a philosophic background for a well-defined position concerning the involvement of religion in the concrete social and economic affairs of our times. Necessarily such an admirably concise review of these complex questions has had to pass quickly over points which merit extended discussion. Because of my own sociological work on values in American society I was struck, for example, by the brief comment that "... The good of the person is a true end whereas freedom is but a means and requires further specification before it can qualify as a value." Here we are in the hazardous realm of the historically derived connotations of words. As I understand the term value and the term end, I suspect that many millions of Americans have regarded freedom as an end and a genuine value. Whatever the assumptions, e.g. about human nature that may have been concealed in the regard for freedom as a value, freedom has not been conceived as entirely nebulous. Indeed, as I appraise the historical record I have the impression that freedom has often been thought of and felt to be an intrinsic part of the "primacy of the person" and inseparable from the unfolding of personality. One may hypothesize that there is probably some positive correlation between a high evaluation of individual freedom and the view that human nature is mostly good, or at least is not radically evil, under proper conditions of freedom.

With regard to the main points made by Msgr. Speltz concerning the characteristics of a rural way of life, I see a need to specify just what particular properties of rural living, or more specifically of the family farm and private property in land, lead to the values historically believed to be fostered by rural living. This specification becomes a crucial datum for policy determination in an increasingly urban and industrialized world. As urbanism permeates the country areas it is essential to know more exactly how desired values are developed and maintained under various social conditions.

Both Rev. O'Rourke and Msgr. Speltz lay stress upon the desirability of order and integration in life styles. A variety of

specific goals of church programs are seen as means organized around a unity of religious purpose and devotion. So, for example, work is valued as a means of personal development, life on the land as a condition favoring piety and property in land as a support for the dignity of man. A general reluctance to approve centralized state power rests partly on the belief that personal freedom and dignity are best protected where power is diffused.

It may be important to observe that certain industry-council plans may be open to question on the grounds that they would create gigantic concentrations of power over and above unions, firms, cooperatives, trade associations and other agencies of economic life below the level of the national state or of the "peak association." The dangers of a corporate state obviously have to be carefully weighed against the merits of particular proposals for national politico-economic organization.

Another point meriting more attention than can be given here is the ethics of "self-sacrifice." The idea of self-sacrifice for the common good easily lends itself to distortion in the struggles of the secular world. Perhaps all we can say just now is that if the individual does not include himself in the ethical equation, his sacrifice for others will not have the quality of a principle generalizable to other men.

In the closing paragraphs of his paper Msgr. Speltz poses a crucial dilemma of values — "...which is the ultimate norm for determining goals and values in agriculture: will it be the ethical-religious norm or the technological-economic?" In pointing directly to the ambiguity of national policies in regard to the relative weight of these two sets of values, this paper sounds a theme that recurs, explicitly or implicitly, throughout the various papers.

In noting the connection between the goals and values of the Extension Service and the "job description" and "metes and bounds" laid down by federal legislation, Mr. Claar's paper suggests that in reality one is discussing the goals and values held by the representatives of the people. I am sure that this statement is intended to be taken in a very broad and free sense. Certainly there are directors of Extension in some states who would bridle at the suggestion that the goals and values of their programs were predetermined by Congress in the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service. We all know that local conditions, local interests and pressures, distinctive subcultures and many internal organizational processes generate values and goals of a most complex array over and above the rather formal dictates of legislation.

If a genuinely analytical social history of Extension is ever

written, it will have to give particular attention to the phrase "all of the people" as a description of Extension's clientele. I am thinking not only of the fading rural-urban boundary but also of migratory farm workers, low-income farmers and rural people of various minority, racial, ethnic or religious groups. It seems reasonable to suppose that data and objective analysis would show many fascinating variations and changes in local policies and practices in different states and regions. Naturally enough the leaders of the Cooperative Extension Service do not wish to state its goals in a manner likely to make the program a focus of intense controversy or political conflict.

In a society which pays great homage to education, it is no doubt wise to state Extension's objectives in terms of education. As Mr. Claar puts it: "Stating the goal of Extension in terms of increased knowledge and understanding of individuals keeps Extension free of the conflict between the goals so that it may concentrate on its job of objective education." The consequences of what Extension does, however, are not, and cannot, be neutral. Education is always education for something; it is always relevant to values. One may say, that we will simply inform farmers of modern methods of economic management, and let the farmers decide what to do. But by what we teach and what we omit, by how we teach and to whom, we inevitably influence choices and shape the character of our society. Extension does in many ways reflect widespread values in the environing society; but it is very far from being a mere mirror, a simply passive transmission agency.

In the early paragraphs of his paper Mr. Rohde points to tremendous changes which have occurred in the twentieth century in technology, in the economic situation and in the social pattern of U.S. rural society. Without making the point fully explicit, he clearly is suggesting that objective changes in the social system have definite and important effects upon values and beliefs, either in changing the latter directly or in producing strains and tensions. In common with several other papers, Mr. Rohde's statement emphasizes the connection between a desire to preserve values of freedom and the dignity of the individual and an agricultural fundamentalism which "involves a judgment that the family farm as it performs the social function of feeding and clothing the nation is a superior institution."

It seems correct to say that one form or another of agricultural fundamentalism has characterized the general farm organizations. I would suggest in addition that the conflict of ideas and values that has emerged as agricultural fundamentalism results in part from the identification of certain highly generalized and

basic values with particular, historically limited institutional forms.

I hope I may be forgiven for saying that the principle of economic justice stated by Mr. Rohde's paper to be indisputable is surely one of the most vigorously disputed indisputable propositions known to history. The whole nub of the parity concept is that parity of income, like the medieval "just price," does not even appear to be automatic or inevitable. The laissez-faire free market was not automatic or inevitable either, but for a long time many people believed it to be so, and in believing this they made it partly true.

We should take special note that Dr. Greene's first major step is to disavow any special theology of rural life on the ground that "... Christian theology does not separate men into groups, classes or categories and offer a different gospel for different states of mankind." In this ultimate religious universalism lies one of the main foundations for the ethical universalism which is a central component in the ruling systems of values and beliefs in our society.

Dr. Greene presents a concise summary of some of the main elements in Protestant theological postulates: the omnipotent, creating God, the divine-human covenant, the ethical tension of the limited freedom of the fallible human creature confronting his divine mandates, the centrality of Jesus Christ, the law of love, the radical evil in the world, the sinful nature of man, the struggle for righteousness, the reality of rebirth and redemption. The relations of these doctrines to ethical criteria for policy are sketched in broad outlines, beginning with the statement, "Love, in short, is the essence of God's will and purpose for man."

It surely is a clarifying note to have a distinguished churchman, known for his interest in rural life, given a penetrating refutation of rural fundamentalism: "...for every virtue attributable to country living and to the agricultural vocation there is to be found a countervailing vice."

Also, I have not heard elsewhere a more pithy statement of the view that basic religious beliefs provide no basis for deducing precisely the most appropriate economic doctrines and economic arrangements. The writer does not find a religious basis for giving absolute sanction to any particular economic system or accompanying ideology. Any given religious position, at the level of basic doctrine, leaves open a range of possibilities in this area of life, as in others. The limitation on the Christian's capacity to give religious prescriptions for complex and specific human problems is generalized in this statement: "If Christian faith could provide such definite and specific answers, all Christians would

inevitably belong to the same political party, the same farm organization and the same school of economic thought. That such is not the case is testimony to the wide margins of freedom and the vast areas of responsible decision-making which God has left in the hands of His children." What is available instead is a generalized religious value standard, the Law of Love, plus a specifically religious motivation to apply this principle in all specific cases.

When the basic doctrines are applied to particular questions of policy implicated in goals and values, it becomes clear that no value stands alone in the empirical world. Stewardship may conflict with freedom, and freedom with justice, and so on. Does stewardship involve "rational problems of population planning and control?" Clearly, it does in the views of some people; to others it clearly does not. Since policies ultimately must be translated into specific terms, such questions are not easily solved by initial agreement on highly general beliefs and values, although such agreement may nevertheless be highly important in a variety of ways.

I have said elsewhere that the meaning of freedom as a value is not to be fully apprehended by particular historical expressions of it in American institutions. Freedom as a value is surely compatible with a fairly extended range of social and economic arrangements. In any case it must be understood that no one can be free from all consequences of his action; in the universe as it is he can ask no more than to be free to choose and to cope as best he may with the consequences which flow from his choosing.

There is no doubt that Dr. Greene is doing us a service in making explicit the fact that parity is an ethical concept, analogous to the old doctrine of just price. The criterion he proposes for justice in this area is that diligent farm families operating efficient farms should receive net real returns (level of living) equivalent to their counterparts in other economic pursuits. How diligent? How efficient? Shall we equalize marginal real returns through the market? Can we? If not, why not?

In short, real value conflicts are immediately raised as soon as we begin to consider policies in the concrete. I would press this point much further had not Dr. Greene partly obviated the need by his forthright statement that "... human goals and values are forever in conflict with one another."

With reference to the discussion of community as a value, I hope that as a sociologist I may be permitted to welcome the comments of a theologian. However, I really had not been aware that any unusual fog had settled around the term. Varying definitions no doubt sometimes trouble the casual reader, but this is

a difficulty easily remedied. And we must remember that there is no point in quarreling with definitions, only with the consequences of using one rather than another.

Research has added impressive evidence in support of the idea that the human being is an "open system" requiring continuous multiple interchanges with his environment, especially his social environment. Experiments on sensory deprivation suggest that much varied physical stimulation is necessary to psychological balance. There probably are profound psychobiological bases for the need of human beings for social interaction. All this is important to know as a touchstone of policy. But it will not help us very much in determining how to create the conditions for effective community under present-day conditions.

An important assumption, often made, finds expression in Dr. Greene's contention that "... the rural life is, by classic definition, composed of small communities of intimately and sensitively interacting human beings and families." And this situation allegedly provides optimal social conditions for the expression of the Law of Love. Clearly this is a view difficult to test by exact empirical means. Nevertheless, it may be valuable to interject a note of skeptical caution. Some of the most insensitive behavior this sociologist has ever observed — indeed, callously brutal might be an appropriate term — has occurred in small rural communities. It is appropriate to point out that lynchings in the South for many years were rural phenomena of great frequency. Country air does not automatically create virtue.

In the same cautionary spirit, it should be noted in passing that it is not at all certain that the tide of urbanization will lead to a totally homogenized culture. Indeed, it is possible to demonstrate that such total uniformity cannot occur under the conditions of urban life in our society in any forseeable future. The sources of diversity lie deep in the nature of man and in the essential processes of large-scale social systems. This is not to discount severe threats to individual freedom and social diversity in the modern world. But the issue is far from simple. Not all the trends point to automatons living in bleak conformity in a regimented society, to complete homogeneity in beliefs and values.

Rev. McCanna's concise summary of goals and values affirmed in the programs of the National Council of Churches provides rich material for discussion precisely because it indorses particular policies and programs. It advocates support of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, asks for elimination of programs importing foreign contract labor for temporary agricultural employment,

approves collective bargaining on the part of employers and employees in agriculture and advocates legislation to protect seasonal farm workers. It clearly confronts the existence of massive poverty in rural areas.[3] It does not hesitate to declare that "pauperization is sin."

In coming so close to concrete issues, the religiously related views expressed in this paper will at some point attract the attention of critics who will wish to deny that religious values call directly for the particular types of policies and actions here advocated. When Rev. McCanna calls for local pastors to "seek out and help the dispossessed become articulate" he also notes: "To assume that the present county or town power structures will do this is an illusion – too much of vested interest is at stake." We see in these considerations the eternal dilemma of social religion: to change the world it must be involved in the world, and in the world of power and material interests the church has a difficult role to play. Studies of the local pressures brought to bear upon clergymen who bring religious norms to bear upon controversial issues do not encourage us to believe that Protestant pastors will be allowed to depart radically from views tied in with the social and economic interests of their congregations.

The recurring theme of value conflict which runs through the papers already reviewed comes to full and explicit expression in the presentation by Mr. Cochrane. As evidence for this judgment I cite only two samples of his forthright exposition on this point:

> Abandonment of the long-run myth of ultimate deliverance from all conflicts among our deeply cherished beliefs and values will enable us to divert otherwise wasted energies into lines of action that minimize the discomforts of our conflicting beliefs and values.

...and more specifically:

> ...a fair return to agriculture cannot be achieved without some management of market supplies, hence some sacrifice of entrepreneurial freedom.

Although the mode of statement is careful and restrained, Mr. Cochrane's paper leaves little doubt that severe conflicts of

[3] In this it is at one with views expressed by the President's Study Group on National Voluntary Services, A Report to the President, Jan. 14, 1963: "A startling fact is that over half of the poverty in America is rural poverty. The number of rural families with inadequate income exceeds the number in urban areas. About 6,200,000 rural families have an annual income of less than $2,500. We have excess productive capacity in agriculture, declining rural population and decaying towns and villages."

values probably will center around governmental agricultural programs in years ahead.

In general, I concur with Mr. Cochrane's analysis of American value patterns and their relation to the basic economic and political situation now confronting our agriculture. Indeed, the 1951 edition of my American Society[4] contained an analysis of values which stressed the clustering of emphases upon activity, work, achievement, success, practicality, efficiency, science and secular rationality, material comfort and progress. At the same time, that analysis showed enduring and powerful commitments to a moral orientation involving ethical universalism. Also, to humanitarianism and to the values (sometimes conflicting) of democracy, freedom, equality and the dignity of individual personality. The analysis pointed, finally, to nationalism-patriotism and to sentiments of group superiority and racism as other main foci of evaluation. Drawing upon further reflection and the analyses of others, the 1960 edition stressed the importance of activism and moral orientations. Both analyses emphasize multiple conflicts among values. The analyses also showed how the dynamic economic interdependencies of our society create trends toward greater involvement of government in economic life and of economic interests in political and administrative processes.

Having noted these major points of agreement, it is necessary to register some questions and a possible difference of emphasis on the relation of values to public policy. Mr. Cochrane says: "Policies and programs stand or fall depending upon whether or not they are in line with basic beliefs and values. What does this mean? How long and how widely must policies and programs diverge from basic beliefs and values before they fall? Clearly one can imagine programs that would so obviously and radically violate important values and beliefs held by a majority of the voting population as to fall completely outside the range of political feasibility, But the limits of tolerance are rather wide, and the boundaries very fluid and vague. There is a vast range of permissive public opinion within which a variety of programs are conceivable. Within that range the important practical question is: how closely does a program have to "fit" what values of which sectors of the electorate and of its leaders? In the book Public Opinion and American Democracy, V. O. Key, Jr.[5] has shown that in many situations there is only a loose relationship between general public opinion and specific legislative and executive action in

[4]Williams, Robin M., Jr., American Society: A Sociological Interpretation. Alfred O. Knopf, Inc., 1951.

[5]Key, Valdimer O., Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy. Alfred O. Knopf, Inc., 1961.

the national government. This circumstance implies the need to pay close attention to the values and interests of articulate and well organized segments of the public.

CONCLUSION

A return to the nineteenth century's concepts of unlimited economic individualism and "boycotting government" is literally impossible. Nor are the American people prepared to let submarginal farmers starve nor even to let unrestrained market processes work out their full impact upon the agricultural sector. Humanitarian and equalitarian values stand opposed to the consequences that would ensue from unregulated technological and economic change. At the same time, considerable resistance to new social controls has been generated, not alone by selfish interests but also by commitments to values of independence and active mastery of environment. High evaluation of certain material standards of living and strong attachments to symbols of social prestige render many rural people too dependent upon money incomes to allow them to renounce their involvement in the market. As one upstate New York broiler producer recently said, "We have to keep running in a race where everyone does better than a 4-minute mile."

Complete entrepreneurial freedom is incompatible with several of the other important goals and values desired by our farm people. Because we want several incompatible things, the agricultural programs of the future will continue to represent complex compromises among different values and goals. There is a limit to the subsidization of comparatively well-off commercial farmers that will be politically tolerated in an urbanized democracy. There is a limit to the acceptability to the conscience of the public of the mass misery of migratory farm workers or of the rural slums of stranded populations. A societal equilibrium is not identical with an economic equilibrium. Nor can a societal balance — however we may define it — be found by frozen commitments to vested interests. The only hope for an effective agriculture and an enduring rural life is in selective change and adaptation to new conditions. There is no simple panacea. Some answers will be found in research, teaching or extension services. Some will be devised by individuals, by cooperatives, by local communities, by private voluntary associations. A very substantial amount of governmental regulation and guidance will continue. New social inventions will be needed and will emerge — new forms of organization, new procedures.

We cannot say whether or not a more sophisticated understanding of value conflicts and value priorities will gradually develop in our society, permitting greater effectiveness in achieving a humane and free society in an interdependent and changing world. But these papers surely represent a step in the direction of increased clarity and depth of comprehension.