



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“INTO FULL TIME CHRISTIAN SERVICE”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: Romans 12:1-13
Date: June 26, 1966

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on June 26, 1966.

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (Romans 12:1-13).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

You might also want to look at the words of the hymns that were part of the service that day:

When Morning Gilds the Sky

Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord

Christ of the Upward Way

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

I. The Down-Grading of the Corporation

A. Princeton choir man -- deciding whether he wanted to settle for being only a salesman.

B. Examination of theological candidate for "Full time Christian Service."

1. This question is no concern to the Presbytery -- this should be settled by the session when the man was confirmed.

2. The question before the presbytery was whether he was an appropriate candidate for a professional church vocation.

3. No mere semantics -- the residue of the RC dogma that the truly religious go professional.

a) *The rest of us play at being Christian, around the fringes of their work.*

C. Harvard Business School Bulletin

1. "The flight from business has never been more serious than it is now."

2. 14% of last year's class planned business careers as against 39% five years ago.

3. Vernon Alden, President of Ohio U. quotes a top student:

"Sure business is vital to the well-being of the nation. But so is garbage collection. That doesn't mean I want to get involved in it. What does business offer me? Money is no appeal, because I can earn good money in many occupations. And I cannot get excited about producing more products for an economy which has too many products already. A professor produces better human beings, and a politician produces public policy. But a business man just produces cars, or soap or candy bars."

4. Study of California State College, Long Beach "Contribution to society" listed as second only to "personal satisfaction."

5. We are stuck with a bunch of idealists on our hands.

a) From the clerical point of view, this should presage the millennium.

D. The only catch is that while most of them are looking down their noses at a business career, most will be eventually drawing their paycheck from one corporation or another.

a) 5 out of 6 of us are -- so will our sons

1. If the really acute young men turn their backs on business, what kind of leadership will that leave for the future?

2. If we are correct in thinking that ultimately most will be conned back into the corporations, with what kind of attitude will they be facing this career?

E. The decision-makers of America are, for the most part, business men.

1. Study of 11 cities, 132 men of top influence:

30 leaders of finance
29 merchants
12 manufacturers
5 utility and transportation heads
4 religious leaders
1 union leader

2. This may have been a biased study. Any national study would include our political and military leadership as part of the power elite.

a) Very few clergy, teachers, social workers are consulted in the decision-making processes.

II. The Ministry of the Corporation

A. Many people in business and industry down-grade the importance of what they do, for they never see the end of the assembly line.

1. They do not see beyond the nuts and bolts they personally are handling.
2. The human resources are made possible by business.
 - a) *A hospital drive for \$1,500,000 is in danger of falling on its face because two major corporations won't give.*
 - b) *College -- at best we pay only 2/3 the cost -- the rest, ultimately by business profits through endowment, gifts*
 - c) *Government's welfare programs are financed by corporate tax.*
3. Great social issues -- thousands of southern negroes are being dropped.
 - a) *Greenville, Mississippi -- Though tractor drivers make only \$500 a year, 6000 were dropped in this one community alone, leaving 30,000 destitute.*
 - b) *Government must step in as a stop-gap to feed and shelter, but only the industrialization of Mississippi, or the movement of the population to the industrialized north can resolve the basic issue.*
4. The salesman -- \$5,000,000 a year supports livelihood of 400-500 people.

B. There is the danger of slipping into the "corporation syndrome."

1. The very demand of industry too often limits one's reading to *US News and World Report* and other magazines which have biased outlooks.
2. One's viewpoint on national and world political situation may be seen only through the eyes of the corporation.
 - a) *Many business men were profoundly shocked by the Republican defeat of a year ago -- the thinking of the American voter was incomprehensible, for they had been reading only that which agreed with their predilections.*
3. One's sense of personal and social values becomes oriented to the corporation.

C. Business has not always been benevolent.

1. Northern corporations in the past have subsidized undesirable political machines in the south, because this guaranteed low price labor markets.

D. Business is ambivalent -- is not always on the side of the angels.

1. Business is the stuff of which ministry is made.
2. Business is not simply a setting in which we may practice private piety -- business itself is the ministry.
3. Coolidge said, "The business of America is business." Later it was said, "Whatever is good for GM is good for America."
 - a) *The business of business is America.*
 - b) *As a Christian, I would add, the business of business men is Jesus Christ.*

III. Conclusion

Being Christian is not playing around the fringes in personal piety -- but the consecration of the whole ball of wax to the will of God in Christ.

Study Questions -- Part I

Bible Reading: Romans 12:1-13

Romans 12:1 says: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

- The subject of the sermon is Christian service. The verse talks about offering our bodies as living sacrifices. Do you believe that means that only physical service is being asked of us in this verse?

Romans 12:2 says: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

- Why do you think the reference to the mind comes so soon after the inclusion of the body?

Romans 12:3 says: "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

- Take a few moments to reflect upon yourself "with sober judgment." Does what you see match what you think it should look like based upon the faith you have been given?

Romans 12:4 through 8 say: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

- This is an often quoted passage. When you have heard it, which of your gifts do you list for yourself? How do you use them in His service?

Romans 12:9 through 12 say: "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

- These verses provide a list of instructions to us. Which of them do you find the easiest to follow? Which is the most difficult for you?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

Before looking at specific aspects of this sermon, think first about the context of that time versus our own. What do you think are the differences in how we view the business world today from the way we viewed it in 1966? How would you have answered that question before the year 2000?

I.B.3.a. Dr. Galbreath's original note said "play around." Why do you think he struck the word around? And why did he also handwrite in the word "moonlighting" at the end of that comment?

I.C.4. If the study was replicated today, where do you think "contribution to society" would rank among today's college students? Where does it rank for you?

I.D.1. In what ways do you think business people can and should apply their faith to their careers? Are there any ways in which you think it is inappropriate? How can it be applied without infringing on the rights of others to their religious views?

I.E. What do you think that list would look like today?

II. Looking at this section in its entirety, do you think corporate American is doing a better or worse job of "ministering" to the community than it did in 1966? How would you like to see corporate America better serve Americans? How should they serve the world?

II.D.3.b Dr. Galbreath states that "the business of business men is Jesus Christ." How can business people serve in a way that models their status as Christians as a way of evangelizing?

III. How well do you carry your faith and a commitment to Christian service into your daily work life? What will you do tomorrow to move to a more "full time" approach to that service?

The article from the Harvard Business School Bulletin to which Dr. Galbreath referred in the sermon was written by Vernon R. Alden, then President of Ohio University and former Associate Dean of the Harvard Business School. It appeared in the September-October 1965 issue. It is entitled "Think Greatly of Your Function" and has a sub-head of "A university president with intimate knowledge of the School and HBS alumni discusses the flight of young people from business careers."

The other clipping to which Dr. Galbreath referred says:

"Project an image of social consciousness. A recent study at California State College in Long Beach shows students there rate the contribution they can make to society as the second most important characteristic of a career ("personal satisfaction" is first). This feeling is common to college students throughout the country.

"You don't just find it among the eccentrics,' says Elles M. Derby, associate personnel office of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. 'You find it also among good students and youngsters who have been around socially. Liberal arts students seem to be especially inclined this way. They want to do something for other people. Unfortunately, a lot of them don't identify business with doing good. So that means we must convince them that we do.'"

On the back of the bulletin that week was the following notice: "Under Catholic pressure, case workers in the Department of Public Assistance were denied the right to refer welfare recipients to medical facilities for the purpose of obtaining family planning services. Recently, the department lifted this ban. This past week, the twelve Roman Catholic bishops of Pennsylvania placed full-page ads in sixty papers in our state to pressure the state legislature and Senate into accepting the "Mullen Amendment" which would once muzzle the welfare workers and deny welfare recipients this service. If you feel (as does your minister) that this is an attempt to impose a sectarian viewpoint upon the entire population, please express your views by letter or wire to our Representative . . . or our State Senator . . . or write a letter to the editor of our daily papers. It is vital that Protestants be heard on this matter.

Also in the bulletin was an appeal to support the Negro Emergency Educational Drive. How does that tie to his comments about college funding?