

Purpose Of This Document

It is felt that the vital importance of the land problem has been largely ignored until recent years, with extremely damaging consequences, particularly in the underdeveloped nations. In those lands there has often been no alternative offered to the present system of oligarchic land monopoly other than the demagogic demand for forcible expropriation offered by the Communists.

Speaking on the disastrous results in ignoring this problem, Lester Mallory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the United States for Inter-American Affairs succinctly stated this problem on October 16, 1960 as follows:

"The issue of 'land reform' or 'agrarian reform,' about which we have heard so much, is no other than the problem of land and of its use. It is unquestionably one of the most burning issues in the world today, and is at the heart of revolutionary movements in the Orient, the Middle East, and Latin America.

"The Communists' championship of the 'land reform' movement has tended to give the term a vaguely communistic connotation. This circumstance has been exploited by enemies of the movement, particularly the great landholders abroad who have for centuries resisted any reduction in their privileged status and are deaf to all arguments that they stand to lose everything, soon, if they do not cooperate in promoting orderly reform. Too many of them ignore the proverb: 'for want of a nail a kingdom was lost.'"

We hope that the principles here outlined may help constitute that nail which may be used to achieve a kingdom of justice and equity. It is felt that they may constitute a practical method to achieve those goals which the Church has pronounced, and to offer, at long last, a realistic alternative to Marxism.

The Church has had at its disposal many devoted priests and nuns working for land reform under adverse conditions, as well as many brilliant economists and political scientists. The Henry George School regrets not having brought to their attention the empirical success of application of its principles in achieving land reform, the replacement of huge estates by family-sized farms, and the rebuilding of slum and blighted areas in urban centers.

Of even greater regret is the School's failure to bring to the attention of the Church the fact that Henry George principles provide a method by which common right to the earth, so often emphasized by Church doctrine, may be achieved with full protection of an individual's right to the fruits of his labor. As far back as 1939, writing in *The Catholic World*, Joseph H. Fichter, S.J. stated: