

# ECONOMY OF TIMES - 1965

Lectures 1-5

Feringer notes

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## Contents

- **Lecture - 1**
- **Lecture - 2**
- **Lecture - 3**
- **Lecture - 4**
- **Lecture - 5**
- **Economy of Times - 1965 - Review**
- **Index**

[RF-This is his most extensive set of essays I have seen to date about social time and its meaning, as differentiated from the measurement of time in natural science.]

## Lecture 1

1/1.ERH begins as usual with anecdotes centered around the location where he is speaking, in this case Santa Barbara. Economy has two meanings. Pre-dating 1800, it meant that, from the house of God (nature), plenty was created out of the wilderness.

After 1800, following Adam Smith, it came to mean simply the production of goods and services, buying and selling. 1) The old meaning inferred sacrifice was necessary in order to become a human being. 2) The new meaning inferred an avoidance of sacrifice. The old meaning meant we must be convinced we are not wild animals, and exist within the House of God where we are obligated to maintain an orderly house; the new meaning omits community strictures. The old meaning inferred that there was a father, mother, and children. Learning what was right would open the gateway for achieving bounty. (p.1-3)

2/1God's world cannot stand without sacrifice of its creatures. You are needed in creation in this massive process of processes that go on: water running down, storms blowing. You, too, are like a natural force that has to find its proper use. And if you don't flow in the right direction, there will be a blackout of civilization. (p.3)

3/1 Tillich coined the word "theonomics" to indicate the complete meaning of the term economics. (p.5) "...knowledge that a living soul has is conditioned on his obedience." The modern day economist doesn't appear to be so obligated.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY IS TO EXPLORE THESE TWO DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF ECONOMY AND TO RE-ESTABLISH AN INTEGRATION OF THE TWO.

Capitalists and communists alike, Adam Smith and Karl Marx both hold to the new meaning of the word "economics," Their philosophies speak of the individual, but not of maintaining a house of God where individuals are expected to sacrifice for the home (individual and community).

The Latin translations of the Bible took the word "economy" in Ephesians and in Corinthians to mean "dispensation," from the Greek word "economy." (p.7)

5. All of this leads up to the notion that **time** in social life is entirely different than the time of the physicist. The miracle of the Bible was that the entire portrait of mankind was demonstrated in a few years of a single life-time, that millennia may be required to achieve social peace, and finally that the immediate past and future in social terms is of little importance. Sacrifice is always in the present, while goal achievement is always in the (usually distant) future.

## Lecture 2

1/2 John Calvin's teaching of economy was in line with the idea of theonomics.

"...the salvation of economics must have to do something with our power to distinguish serious things and leisure things, or things of leisure time that are not serious." (p.3)

Work in the peace corps or any other meaningful endeavor cannot be fruitful if it is done with an attitude of leisure, of curiosity, of casualness.

2/2 ERH asserts that, today most people don't (or can't) make the distinction between seriousness and play. Their life becomes something to "play" with; work is said to be "fun," and learning the same. [RF - I know of no important learning that is fun.]

3/2 God is **in** things and ourselves, but not to be seen otherwise. (p.9) ERH goes on to explore how the divine cannot be seen, and contrasts that idea with the notion that in a scientific world the emphasis is on what can be seen, in space. The distinction is made that in God's world, rather than in space, **time** is crucial, as contrasted with the secular, scientific orientation to life, one based only on concrete evidence. People who are vain and ambitious want to see results in the short-term. People who work for the long-term benefit such as teaching or counseling must have faith that their work will eventually be fruitful. In many such jobs it is difficult to know of one's success. This is what he means by "doing God's work."

...the people who do not want to know what's going to happen to their good deeds, they are able to concentrate on the good deed, and on the goodness of the deed so much that they really reach posterity. (p.12)

In effect, anyone who teaches, or administers seriously knows that his efforts must last far beyond his own ministrations or even life-time.

In the life of Jesus, we see the reach of time, as the infinitely small (few years) becomes a measuring stick for all eternity. Thus, mankind no longer needed to be lost in an eternity of time. (p.13)

4."As soon as you leave the paths of the Bible and of Christian tradition, you lose all power to go beyond your day.." (p.15) [RF - And one might add, to transcend the measurement of achievement by concretely present data.]

## Lecture - 3

1. The only basis by which cultures can survive is that the people know themselves and their goals over three generations; by contrast, when time is fragmented, when one generation cannot understand another, degeneration occurs and brings on catastrophe. Humankind, like animals, can only know the present, and certainly cannot understand one hundred years. Unless, that is, the people are imbued with God's spirit by sharing the lifetime of Jesus through the Bible. [RF - The Bible, ERH asserts, represents the life-time of humans from the beginning to the end of time.]

It is precisely through the passing on of great thought and deeds that revives the spirit of any culture. "...everything we call 'religion', we call 'church', we call 'Christian era', we call 'western man', has to do with times, and not with spaces." (p.3)

2.To achieve the goal of becoming human, of being imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and of God, takes time. To overcome the mere animal notion of time as in present culture and have our achievements bear fruit in human affairs, we must listen to the message of our creator.

One of our constant experiences is that through the years nothing seems to change. Certainly the news media is interested only in the present, and thus time tends toward becoming fragmented.

3.The pre-history of a catholic church lies not with the hero, or in sects, but in the act of hospitality. "The house of God is where the known man and the unknown man meet on equal terms. And this is always called "economy." (p.5) Over time it allowed mankind to experience a unity - or at least for some to see the unity of all humans. Today the notion seems to have been abused.

4.In the theories of Marx and Adam Smith, the driving forces of western and Marxist theories, "enlightened self interest" is oriented toward individuals rather than "houses" and nations.

That cannot be the aim and highest goal of life. For him [RF - I presume he refers here to Helmut von Moltke], the most important thing was the relation and bond between people; and finally between God and him. (p.7)

This is to say that one's highest goal cannot be enlightened self-interest! Self-interest may be part of our goal, but not the highest.

3-5The difference between the individual and a home is that in the home no single individual is always at the center; it is the whole house (all for one and one for all?), as "...man in a house is powerful, is human, if he can set the tone between the outer world and the inner world." (p.9)

The centrality of the home is fading, and the last remnant we have now is thanksgiving, when we take a stranger into our home. In the home, brothers and sisters take care of everyone, even if one is feeble-minded or otherwise handicapped. TODAY THE COMMUNITY IS EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT MANY OF THESE FUNCTIONS. The centrality of the home, and therefore of this type of learning (to become human), is thus fading.

3-6Ethics are never individual; they depict relationships between people. We can never know what we can do tomorrow. Love must therefore dictate our behavior, not some abstract principle like ethics. (p.16)

In the household we think of three generations, - grandparents, parents, and children. The economics of the state are for a year. The economics of society are for a much longer period.

## Lecture 4

1/4Basically the east and west, the Russians and the Allies, follow the same philosophy, that of down-grading the importance of family, of pushing individual pursuit. Of assuming that small, long-range support organizations are unnecessary for survival. "We are homeless today." (p.1/4) We need the house of three generations where no "individual" predominates.

2/4Today, there is no central spirit that holds the house together. The town has become a world market, goods-oriented, space-oriented. The trouble is that we live only in the outer world of space, with no (or only weak) spiritual center of an inner world.

Here ERH differentiates "people" from "public". The public is the mass man. There is no sacrifice with "public," there is no central spirit. The public lives for the moment, living only in the outside world. "PEOPLE" is just the opposite on every count. People live in houses, after the public meeting they go home, and they are at home with the spirit of their creator, thus living in both an inner and outer world are integrated into one. "Anybody who cares for public opinion has forfeited the right to be listened to." (p.7)

3.PEOPLE are thus not slaves to everything in the concrete world, and live in a time span longer than the present, living from the past into the future as well as the present. Power is related to the

concrete world for the most part. The normal person is liked and loved and needed, but he doesn't need massive power.

In the spacial world, time is of the essence. In the spiritual world, one lives out of time. One must therefore have patience and wait for the right time for peace to come. That is why a marriage can last forever! (p.10)

4. And that is the reason why the Church has always spoken of eternity, and of Heaven and Hell. They exist...You can think they cannot be painted; that may be, but everybody who wants to live without the notion of Heaven and Hell cannot rule, cannot teach, cannot get children and educate them. He's unfit for society. The infinite is the condition of our finite actions. (p.10)

ERH goes on to state that the true teacher is concerned with how the student will think about his studies in a year or five years, or twenty, not just how he thinks about them for the day. It is the same with all important activity, especially with leadership.

5. The greatness of Adam Smith and Marx was that they admonished us to go forth into the world and seek out the unknown, create infinite space, don't be provincial!

Any world that functions on the basis of space only, of gold and war, can only produce more war or injustice. It can never produce peace.

## Lecture - 5

1/5 In these lectures ERH claims to have pointed out that in the past three centuries we have learned to measure space "ad infinitum." Man under the guidance of Adam Smith and Karl Marx has unified space, has equalized people at home and abroad with regard to their market. **HOWEVER, ALL THE HOUSES OF MAN HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.** "Factory time" applied to other elements of life destroys the meaning of experience. In the times of faith, people did not believe that one could live by the factory or the school.

2/5 Factories are based on the brain, while marriages are based on sex and love. Science and technology cannot tell us who we are or what to do, they cannot tell us how to use science and technology. (see Hutchins quote (p.2)

Nations, communities, homes are not built by factories or technology, but by congregations and brotherly love.

3. All of this takes time, a great deal of time, and cannot be built by the values of space. Marriages take a life-time to build, and communities many life-times of individuals. Something important must last for 50 or 100 years, at least 3 generations. **OUR INDIVIDUAL LIVES HAVE MEANING ONLY IN TERMS OF HOW WE CONTRIBUTE TO THESE TYPES OF "PEOPLE" GOALS.**

Even the factory does not survive by wages alone, or the vision of the inventor, but by the spirit of all its workers.

So calculable things are the shadow, the projection of incalculable life. And any society has as its future only the amount of investment in incalculables that will make all things that can be bought inferior--subservient is perhaps the best word--instrumental. (p.9)

4. We do not live, cannot live by money values as the highest value. We rely on people telling us the truth, otherwise we would not listen to them, nor they to us. The brain always ends in figures. This is merely ancillary to how we maintain vital elements in society. In society that is, not in physics. Numbers scratch the surface of things, and tell us nothing as to how we must maintain a vital home.

5-5 All of this is because:

We have in us the very strange arrangement, that the past and the future are demanding on you and me to be represented at this moment. Thinking, speaking, singing, playing, everything is a decision: how much of the past has to be kept; how much of the future has to be introduced anew, against the hindrance of the past: how much of the outside world, the traffic on the street, has to be respected: we don't want to be run over; and how much of the inner man has to be kept intimately with your own poetry, and your own songs, and your own love? (p.15)

6. A home is not by the will of its inmates peaceful. It's a gift of the gods if a husband, and a wife, and the children, and the grandparents can establish peace in a home. (p.17)

END OF LECTURE

## **Economy of Times - 1965 - Review**

This is the most comprehensive and tightly-knit expression I have read from the author about time and its basic meaning to society, as differentiated from the meaning of time in natural science.

Economy has two meanings; pre-dating 1800 it meant that from the house of God, plenty was created out of the wilderness. After 1800, following Adam Smith and Karl Marx, it came to mean simply the production of goods and services, buying and selling. The old meaning inferred sacrifice was necessary in order to become a human being: the new meaning inferred an avoidance of sacrifice. The old meaning meant we must be convinced we are not wild animals and we dwell within the House of God, obligated to maintain an orderly house. The new meaning omitted community strictures .

## **Index**

Adam.....	1, 3-5
Bible.....	1, 2
community.....	1, 3, 5
economics.....	1-3
economy.....	1, 3, 5
ethics.....	3
experience.....	3, 4
faith.....	2, 4
future.....	1, 4, 5
generation.....	2
God.....	1-3, 5
history.....	3
individual.....	1, 3, 4
Jesus.....	2
John.....	1
knowledge.....	1
Latin.....	1
learning.....	1-3
life.....	1-5
love.....	3-5
Marx.....	1, 3-5
nature.....	1
orientation.....	2
past.....	1, 4, 5

peace..... 1, 2, 4, 5

Peace Corps..... 2

philosophy..... 3

physics..... 5

poetry..... 5

]...... 1, 2

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