

A Message from Reclaiming Earth Committee – August 7

The Gospel of Consumption: An intriguing title for an article found on page 54 of *Christian Simplicity: A Gospel Value*. Over and over we hear that consumption patterns are a matter of moral and ethical discernment and a definite component of integral ecology.

Author Jeffery Kaplan wrote: “The first commercial radio station didn’t begin broadcasting until 1920. The American public, with an adult population of about 122 million people, bought 4,438,000 radios in the year 1929 alone. But despite the apparent tidal wave of new consumer goods and what appeared to be a healthy appetite for their consumption among the well-to-do, industrialists were worried. They feared that the frugal habits maintained by most American families would be difficult to break. Perhaps even more threatening was the fact that the industrial capacity for turning out goods seemed to be increasing at a pace greater than people’s sense that they needed them.”

Charles Kettering, director of General Motors Research, wrote a 1929 magazine article titled “Keep the Consumer Dissatisfied,” that “along with his corporate cohorts, he was defining a strategic shift for American industry---from fulfilling basic human needs to creating new ones.”

“We can break the cycle by turning off our machines when they have created enough of what we need.” (page 55)

“If we want to save Earth, we must also save ourselves from ourselves.” (page 56)

“Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. Compulsive consumerism is one example of how the techno-economic paradigm affects individuals...” The gadgets and technics forced upon ‘humanity’ by the patterns of mass production and of abstract planning man accepts quiet simply; they are the forms of life itself.” (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 203, page 149)

Have you noticed that this is much deeper than ‘simple’ voluntary simplicity? Hmmm...

