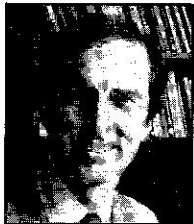


# EDITOR'S ETC.

BY DEAN MERRILL



Christopher Moran, the British financier who tried most of last year to buy control of Zondervan (the Christian book and Bible publisher) put it bluntly: "I don't allow my Christian beliefs to conflict with my business."

Well, at least he was honest.

Give him credit for recognizing that the narrow way of Jesus wasn't engineered to be a direct route up the corporate pyramid. The pinnacle of Christ's career, in fact, turned out to be atop a cross.

Nevertheless, there are other ways to be a Christian in the marketplace besides the Moran way. It's not impossible to integrate Sunday with the rest of the week, the fruits of the Spirit with office or factory life, the Bible with the bottom line. That's what a major chunk of this issue is about.

Because the real enemy is not one's job or profession. Business isn't inherently evil. God is, in fact, quite in favor of work (and for a lot more reasons than generating tithes). Too many modern Christians scowl about having to go to work because it means facing sticky questions and nasty people. Too

many people in general scowl about going to work because they'd rather sleep or watch TV. They think of employment like boxing: It feels so good each day at quitting time.

Last fall my wife and I spent a weekend in the Pennsylvania Dutch

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country and took a bus tour of the Amish territory. These are Christians who have decided the 18th-century way of living and farming is better than the 20th-century way, and so they function without electricity, central heating, or tractors. They remain, however, highly productive.

How? Said the tour guide, "The Amish believe one of life's central assignments is to teach children to work, and the best way is to work *with* them." Since the average Amish brood is seven children, that

means a lot of young workers are coming along.

Farmland, however, is at a premium, so some of the younger generation have had to take jobs in the factories and warehouses of nearby towns. "They perform tremendously as long as the work is there to be handled," the guide explained. "If you're the foreman, you must always keep the flow of materials coming—otherwise, your Amish workers will get very upset if there's slack time, if they feel they're getting paid for just standing around."

Maybe what this country needs is more Amish *off* the farm.

Work, in the final analysis, is not something Christians do for a boss, for stockholders or even themselves. They "serve wholeheartedly, as if . . . serving the Lord, not men" (Eph. 6:7). The Lord assigns some people to make sausage and hamburger (p. 24), while others think up ways to advertise it (p. 20), and still others cook it (p. 30). In each case, mixing in the "beliefs" is not only allowed; it's highly advisable.

*Dean Merrill*

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