Wibberley, E.J. (2017) **AFTERWORD**

pp.221-223 In*Just Food? Food & Farming for a Sustainable Future* – ed. Barbara Butler

(Christians Aware, Leicester, UK, 229 pp.)

Indeed, as the psalmist notes (Psa 34:1) “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” In compiling this book, Barbara Butler has sought diligently to provide a worldwide insight into a host of the issues raised by applying the criterion of justice to the global food system. This has been done by approaching a diverse range of people and seeking stories from across the globe. While being necessarily eclectic, the resultant combination gives an inspiring and challenging picture for enquirers and for existing practitioners to glean new ideas. Everywhere, practical farmers prefer to learn from other successful practical farmers.

The interweaving of theological understanding is the crucial element of this book. God was indeed the First Farmer Who ‘planted a garden eastward in Eden’ (Gen.2:8) and He loves justice (Isa.61:8). God is Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and human beings are created in God's Image. All creation is fallen through sin but creation shares in Christ's salvation. Agriculture is stewardship of creation for food and primary products, and ‘dominion’ means authority to manage creation as God desires. The Kingdom of God is both now and future, global and beyond. Perfect relationship is exemplified within the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. People are designed for right relationships - UP to God, OUT to neighbours, and DOWN to earth. Only an integrated person will suffice for this (Psalm 86:11) since agri-rural systems need a (w)holistic approach. Thus farmers are intended to be human stewards in tripart relationship with God, neighbours and earth.

Viable rural communities are desirable objectives. It is observable worldwide that good farmers are sensitive to nature, related to land, decisive operators who pay attention to detail, well-integrated realists, and cooperators with God - whether consciously or not!

Rural development needs to provide capacity to:- CARE for creation e.g. Prov.12:10 - know one's beasts; SHARE with those who do not have enough; WORK in harmony with God (I Cor.3:9); BE IN PLACE - relate locally to land and community – a huge challenge in our increasingly displaced world with some quarter million migrants on the move - and ACCESS ENOUGH - avoiding excessive scale that displaces others (Isa.5:8). Greed can apply equally to production as to consumption. Christian Ethics are required in agriculture to reconcile simultaneously:- Economy, Ecology, Energy-efficiency, Equity and Employment. Agriculture needs linkage with Christian Spirituality. Agriculture is a vocation and earth is God's farm. This appears to give us the Biblical basis for a just food system. It is then vital to examine justice at individual enterprise, business and whole farm levels up to global agricultural trading.

Fairer International Agricultural Trading (*FIAT*) is patently needed in a world where one person in seven still goes to bed hungry or severely undernourished, yet we have food surpluses and very high percentage food waste (up to 50% and above recorded in both urbanised, industrialised countries and in poorly constructed grain stores in remote tropical communities). We accept that freedom on the roads consists in mutual observation of the protocols embodied within *The Highway Code* for traffic. Protocols proscribe the parameters within which management is to be exercised. Sidney Arnold Press, South African Businessman of the Year 1980, described management as ‘*the greatest of the arts since its medium is human talent itself*’. There should thus be no area of our life on earth and in civil society where the challenge of proper management does not apply. There is a clear distinction between true freedom managed within protocols and the false freedom assumed to lie outside them but which actually leads to anarchy and havoc. Management is needed to strike the balance between legalism and licence, between excessive regulation and unrealistic liberalisation. Equally, there is a clear distinction between management of frameworks within which mutually suitable and morally acceptable enterprise can flourish and the crass interventionism in micro-management of markets with bureaucratic interference, which is characteristic of communism and left-wing socialism. Genuinely free enterprise actually requires the sort of boundaries which are at present largely lacking in international trading both in fact and in policy aspiration. A ‘*Highway Code*’ protocol is urgently needed to rectify this situation. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has - since its inception in 1995 and in its prior form as GATT from 1947 - as its guiding principle (admitted to a farming audience in Geneva in 2001) ‘non-discrimination against imports’; it appears to dream of unhindered movement of goods across international borders. There are parallel calls for unhindered transnational mobility of labour and of capital. Such liberalisation is already having dire consequences for those seeking to start out in private enterprise and for those smaller businessfolks swept aside.

We need a rediscovery and celebration of place (as in rogation from rogare = ‘ to ask a blessing on place’). It calls for recognition and celebration of the ingenuity of management and of entrepreneurship to blend land, labour and capital sustainably in each place. Why do we still have the prevailing assumption that markets do not need management when it is obvious that management is crucial in the case of traffic, families, children, household budgets, businesses, and sports events? Markets can deliver and enable the sharing of many good things but they are not self-determining, beneficent panaceas for global harmony. Unregulated, they can be quite the reverse. Then, the livelihoods of producers in one place are adversely affected by the activities of producers elsewhere. There is an inexorable logic from the basic WTO aspiration for ‘non-discrimination against imports’ at the heart of trade liberalisation; it is an invitation to producers to grab markets wherever they are and whoever is serving them there already. Least cost production is the means of grabbing other people’s markets. Least cost production puts the larger-scale producer on a treadmill of downward costs and thus ever squeezed margins; this leads to even larger scale to try to gain economies of scale, with consequences for capacity of managerial care and welfare implications for farmers, rural communities, livestock and the soil. Meanwhile, the smaller producer at the destination of those cheap imports is forced out of business, and the environment is damaged by derelict farms and neglected land as well as by fuel wastage in processing, packaging and transport over increasing distances as ‘food miles’ mount up. The WTO urgently needs reform to take account of the pressing need to manage a proper marketing framework. Fair trade whereby the producer and the consumer get fair prices from ethical production and marketing practices product-by-product represents a step in the right direction. However, what is needed is a radical reform of the whole trading context towards fairer trading. That is, trading which is fair for people now and in future, and for the planet as a whole ecosystem. Sustainable production methods in agriculture are only half the process; agricultural trading needs sustainable management as well. Optimal Agricultural Trade is a biodiversity-sharing, deficit-correcting activity that must be sustainably profitable but not maximised, nor allowed to swamp viable communities and diverse food cultures.

The overall aim of future farming and land management must be towards **ECOSYSTEM SECURITY** = delivering security of food + water + energy + livelihoods + community culture + public benefit + ultimately geopolitical stability.

Objectives or ‘expected outcomes’ of agricultural management ventures derive from the vision of entrepreneurs duly informed by their values. Increasingly in our globalised world, those values must consciously encompass the public good – and be appropriately rewarded as such within government policies where market returns fail to deliver enough to sustain voluntary action. This book presents some food for thought from a range of farm/food entrepreneurs within a diversity of contexts and with distinctive motivations. Enjoy the mixture and the exploration of it, and may the well-being of food and farming be enhanced by the practical responses made by readers.

October 2017

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