

The cities are important, and that they enrich life as collection and distribution points for wealth and culture no one in his right mind would deny. As places for human habitation they leave much to be desired. Air pollution, water pollution, crime that drives citizens from their streets at nightfall, transportation problems, and above all, personal non-involvement that strikes at the very roots of the human personality are some of the undesirable factors of our urban society. Man lives in the midst of a jungle of men and does not belong. None other than New York's Mayor John V. Lindsay described the cities thus, "Our cities exact too much from those who live in them. They are not only increasingly expensive places in which to live and work; more and more the price of city living is being paid by a sacrifice of fundamental personal freedoms."

In the countryside there is a continuance of the "face to face" or "man to man" relationship. Here in work, play, marketing, school, and worship people know one another by name and by association. This is helpful to each individual's personality. Scientific research shows that when animals are confined to crowded conditions, there is a constant harassment of each other. Man needs living space and it makes very little sense to have 70 percent of our people living on 1 percent of our land.

Mrs. Lyndon Johnson travelling through the midwest last fall stated, "There is no secret in this land that many of our cities are beset with problems that breed crime, bad housing, rats, pollution, congested traffic and streetside boredom—perhaps the most dangerous of all. Re-energized small towns across the country may offer one of the important answers to the rising problem." It takes little imagination to realize what happens to a rural town as it becomes surrounded with corporate-type agriculture; business on main street declines, churches and schools suffer, the tax base is eroded. Corporations negotiate loans at metropolitan banks instead of the local bank; cattle and other produce are sold directly on the major markets; feed is purchased directly from the mill; machinery is purchased directly from the manufacturer.

The well-being of the individual person and of society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of the family. The family planted on the land will put down its roots deep in the soil, which will give it a stability offered by no other surroundings in which man can live. Stability is the first requisite for any family, without it nothing permanent can be achieved. A family on the land lives together twenty-four hours of the day, works together, and prays together, thus establishing the unity of human relationships, that strong bond so necessary to achieve great human development. Civilizations have toppled, but never before family life had disintegrated.

Our agricultural production is a shining light of efficiency in a world darkened by the clouds of malnutrition and starvation. Our family farm system is chiefly responsible for this success story. We believe that the rule-of-thumb efficiency formula, one set of machinery with two sets of hands, is still valid. Many large corporate farming operations have succeeded only because of cheap labor and huge government payments. The minimum wage scale of \$1.60 against \$1.15 in agriculture tells us something. Yet, nearly all the individuals engaged in farming with the biggest incomes (\$500,000 a year and up) show losses on their farm activities. Either they are incredibly inefficient or they are deliberately using farming as a method to get into lower tax brackets. Neither is justifiable and should be eliminated.

These are some of the reasons the National Catholic Rural Life Conference is concerned over the entry into agriculture by an ever increasing number of corporations. We do not oppose the incorporation of a farming enterprise by a few members of a family. We are, however, opposed to the purchase of land of the operation of farms by large, nonfamily corporations.

Specifically, we recommend:

1. That State Governments adopt laws prohibiting the purchase of farm land by corporations with stockholders exceeding a specified number.
2. That no corporation or individual be permitted to write off farm losses against income earned in non-farm operation. Such loop holes deprive the Government of needed revenue and constitute an unfair competition with families who must earn their support from agriculture.
3. Federal payments for land retirement and crop reduction should be limited to a specified number of units. Distributive justice demands that huge sums of money should not be paid to already wealthy individuals and corporations. Moreover, such a policy enables these individuals and corporations to purchase still more land and push family farmers out of agriculture.