

Correspondence about *Caught in the Middle*¹

Anonymous

October 25, 1993

Dear John:

You do us a service by trying to get CRCNA to address these issues. I wonder, though, whether your image of TNC's will be interpreted as fair. Are there no TNC's that you could present in a positive light? I fear that you may not be taken seriously if you are not perceived as being objective.

For example, if the conclusions at the end of chapter 5 are already stated, how seriously can the reader take a qualifier like, "I am not saying that all TNC's are bad or that there is nothing useful about any of them." (p. 116) - - especially when, "only an ignoramus can think of his investments as certainly contributing to the host peoples." (p. 124).

I too feel uncomfortable when I see luxury hotels – "elite-oriented prestige projects" (p. 31) – in poor countries. But development specialists have told me that hotels, being very labor intensive, are actually good for the local economy and development.

Do you make a distinction between investing and purchasing? For example, do business transactions with Muslims, "subsidize the propagation of Islam" as you assert is the case for ITT investments? Do we have to approve of everything the French Government is doing, or ever did, before we purchase a Peugeot? Does flying KLM support euthanasia?

If Christians write off TNC's as unredeemable, what about other areas of society: politics, entertainment, health care? If Christians do not exercise as much dominion over these areas as we would like, are we to create our own institutions

¹ Oct. 25/1993. Since I have not sought permission to reveal the author's name, I will treat this as anonymous. I reproduce only the relevant paragraphs.

in all these areas? What is the end result, separate TNC's/communities/states for Christians? On this side of eternity, will these Christian organizations even be "clean"? Are the ecumenicals more persistent than John Boer in their efforts to reform the sphere of economics? Is your "radical" proposal more Amish or Reformed?

Enough questions for one letter, it's over to you.

Regards,

Boer's Response²

Jos, Nov. 9, 1993

I acknowledge receipt of... your letter about my *Caught in the Middle*. Thanks for taking the time to read and comment. I will wait with replying till I have received additional comments and when I feel more mentally clear than I do today.

Generally you and I have been on similar wavelengths. Perhaps some divergence is occurring with regard to this issue. That is not bad. I do want to say, however, that I have been expecting just those kinds of questions, for people generally resist having their participation in the world of investments challenged. In fact, I expect yours to be the major objection from most people. I have already heard it from ... as well. And, no, my reaction to capitalist corporations should not be generalized to cover other spheres of life. Each sphere needs to be analyzed on its own merits.

Sooner or later I will produce a response, but I want to wait for more reactions. Please have hakuri.

Yours in Christ

John H. Boer

² As in the previous letter, I reproduce only the part that relates to the book.