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CLASS ISSUES WITHIN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

(summary notes and bibliography)

by the Rev. Lynn Strauss

C. Wright Mills identifies five myths about class in America

Myth #1: the U.S. is fundamentally a classless society

Myth #2: we are all equal in the eyes of the law

Myth #3: we are essentially a middle class nation

Myth #4: we are all getting richer

Myth #5: everyone has an equal chance to succeed

Debate over minimum wage . . .

Five Classes in America

1. the wealthy or rich
2. the upper-middle class
3. the middle class
4. the working class
5. the poor

A clarifying **definition of poverty**:

“Poverty is a lack of options.” If you have few options in work or lifestyle, in healthcare or education, in where you live, in vacation choices, in transportation, in childcare . . . then you are poor.

The Hierarchy of Options

Predictors of Class in America

1. Property & birth (inheritance)
2. Occupation & education
3. Income

According to Barbara Ehrenreich, working class people and poor people are generally more aware of their class position and think more about money, than the middle classes.

Theological implications

For the middle class, salvation is seen as the end of striving, the content of faith is a task rather than a promise. Salvation seems to be in the hands of the individual and can be achieved through good works. Deed, not creeds.

Mark Morrison-Reed point out that the intellectual thread of our tradition are freedom, reason and tolerance – all ideas of the mind and of individual autonomy – all values that could be argued and claimed.

Autonomy vs. community! HUBRIS COMFORT

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