

## Work in American Values System

I wish to speak about the present, the global village, and its future. But, could I start telling you the story from the middle? I don't think so. Therefore, I should go back to the very beginning of the human life, through the centuries of Reformation to the centuries of economic revolution. I should trace the position of work in the American society values system as a permanent component of it, and as one of the main reasons for our globalized world.

I wish to speak about diligent labor that was one of the main factors that provoked human evolution; about the time, when people used to hunt, to gather seeds and pick fruits; about the time when land cultivation was an equivalent of surviving. Migration those days was in sake of food and better place for living, and once the place was found we had the first settlements. In other words, it was a matter of nature, and... hard work. It was time when humans started gathering, founding villages, learning how to live in a society.

I know you already know these facts. But, don't they remind you the birth of the New World? Don't they make you think of Colonial America and the first settlements? You would be right to say that it happened later. It was the time, when Luther had "opened the door" for salvation of soul through hard work on land and handicrafts;<sup>1</sup> when idle people were pursued and made work in glory of God. While Luther seemed to support only manual labor, Calvin opened the door widely by supporting all kind of work and claiming that "men were created for activity" and work is the only way to fulfill the calling we were born for.<sup>2</sup> Calvin's definition of work was influenced by the new situation, the commercial and scientific revolutions. He and his successors had the task to shape the attitudes of people toward work as a value.<sup>3</sup> Calvin's call for diligent labor and self-discipline influenced widely people thinking in northern Europe and England hard work gave results on the economic development of these societies in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Work values, deeply rooted in the evolution process of human society, appeared to be in the basis of Puritan ideology. Puritans as the first settlers on the American continent saw themselves as the chosen of God. They had their vocation and it was to cultivate the immense territory. They had to start from the very beginning – from working on land as farmers to founding factories and banks.

Rapid economic growth and the period of industrialization made from the USA a leader in the world economy. Colonial America, which used to cultivate the land some few centuries ago, appeared to be a world power in twentieth century; and was said to be the land of the opportunities and the American dream; a promised land, open for new people from all round the world.

Self-discipline of Calvin opened the door for the "self-reliance" in new-born USA. It was a prerequisite for the individual rights movements and the support of the entrepreneurial spirit and competitiveness in the New World.

That is how we came to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – the period of globalization; the age of communication, when our world seems to be a "global village". Let me put it *our time*, when people can see and talk to each other at the same time, never mind where on earth they are.

That is how America from the land of farmers and cultivators became the land of opportunities and a society of individuals. People that feel the world is their, because they made it as they wanted it to be... by working hard.

**References:**

- [1.](#) *American Work Values*, Bernstein, P., p.31
- [2.](#) Ibid, p.199
- [3.](#) Ibid, p.54