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5 big lies that underlie consumerism

Carol Meyer | Dec. 7, 2010 Eco Catholic

Mindless consumption may be the greatest underlying cause of the planet?s environmental woes. Think about it. Can?t you trace every environmental ill back to greedy humans wanting more and more of everything?

Consumerism is escalating out of control with no end in sight. And it?s a vicious cycle ? as we lose touch with the natural world, emptiness engulfs our souls that we seek to fill with things. The more consumption, the more harming of nature and the less it has to offer us.

We?ll never overcome our consumption addiction unless we become aware of the unexamined assumptions that underlie it.

1) **My worth is in what I own or how much money I have**. A friend told me he had five guns in his home. I asked him why, because I knew he never used them. He said, ?Pride of ownership.? What is there to be proud of in having just for the sake of having? As Catholics, we know our worth is in being children of God. When did we cast that aside to join the throngs deluded by the notion that things outside of us can give us worth?

2) **We need to consume to keep the economy strong.** Baloney! Yes, buying products keeps the whole rotten system going, but it?s only a temporary solution. Eventually our natural resources will run out if we keep on the way we are. To survive, we must create an economy built on a solid sustainability foundation.

3) **Having all the latest and best things will make me happy.** This insidious lie never fails to entice us, even though we have ample proof to the contrary. We see the wealthy commit suicide or ruin their lives with drugs, yet we think we?re the exception, that things will make us happy. But they never do, and that?s why we go after more and more, seeking that illusive thing called joy. Our faith tells us that the source of joy is love and service. No more need be said.

4) **Owning more things will make my life easier.** Advertising tells us we need the latest thing to save us time and work, and enable us to do more things faster and better. In truth, all it does is make our lives more complicated, burdensome, and busy.

5) **I have to be like everybody else.** So what if granite countertops are all the rage? So what if our neighbors have a bigger flat-screen TV? We are supposed to be followers of Jesus, the man poor in earthly possessions, but enormously rich in his inner life. Surely we can muster up the backbone to live by higher values and resist pressure to conform.

Who ever knows
what the silent soul came to say?
All our lives
the time we have to sing its song
gets spent on everything but.
We're captured by capitalism,
imprisoned by consumerism,
silenced by the self-loathing
we learn from commercials
not good enough,
not young enough,
not pretty enough,
not thin enough,
not light enough
or dark enough
never right-can't be
or the economy would fall apart.

What if we thought we were perfect
AS IS
didn't need the products and fixes
streaming our way day and night
what if we settled into our divinity
once and for all
spoke it, sang it, shared it
with the world

would wars end then?
would we care for the children then?
would we create a nation, a culture
that wasn't an embarrassment to our very souls?

I'll start right now by saying
I am full of Light
and so are you.
Will you let it out please?
Will you shine yourself
into this darkness?

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