

conclusions are not optimistic. Roy sees the main hope for the future as being the Church's example as a caring community, although he appears pessimistic about the church fulfilling this role: 'the church has itself become privatised and has shrunk from the public arena until relatively recently.' (p.23).

The pamphlet is a good, concise introduction to the issues and a suitable lead in for group discussions, before going on to some of the other longer and weightier considerations which are given as suggested reading.

S. Dex

#### FAMILIES IN DEBT:

The Nature, Causes and Effects of Debt Problems, and

Policy Proposals for Their Alleviation

(Jubilee Centre Research Paper No.7; November 1987)

Household debt - comprising both consumer credit and mortgages for house purchase - is not only growing rapidly in the UK, but is of growing concern. The Jubilee Centre has recently completed a major piece of research on the issues, and this may well be of interest to some ACE members. The above paper has chapters on Christian principles, the legal framework, and policy initiatives, and describes the results of a survey of over 1000 cases of serious debt. A further chapter analyses the economics of debt, and discusses alternative explanations of the growth of household debt. It concludes that the standard explanation - i.e. that people are borrowing more because they feel wealthier, and because financial deregulation has removed artificial constraints on lenders - does not adequately explain the available evidence. It is argued that a significant part of the growth is supply-driven, and is not due to deregulation.

Both this chapter, and also that on policy proposals, need serious thought and comment, for the issues raised go to the heart of our contemporary economy. It is hoped that some ACE members will put their minds to these crucial questions. Copies of the research paper, and/or individual chapters, are available from:

The Jubilee Centre  
Jubilee House  
3 Hooper Street  
CAMBRIDGE. CB1 2NZ  
(0223) 311596