

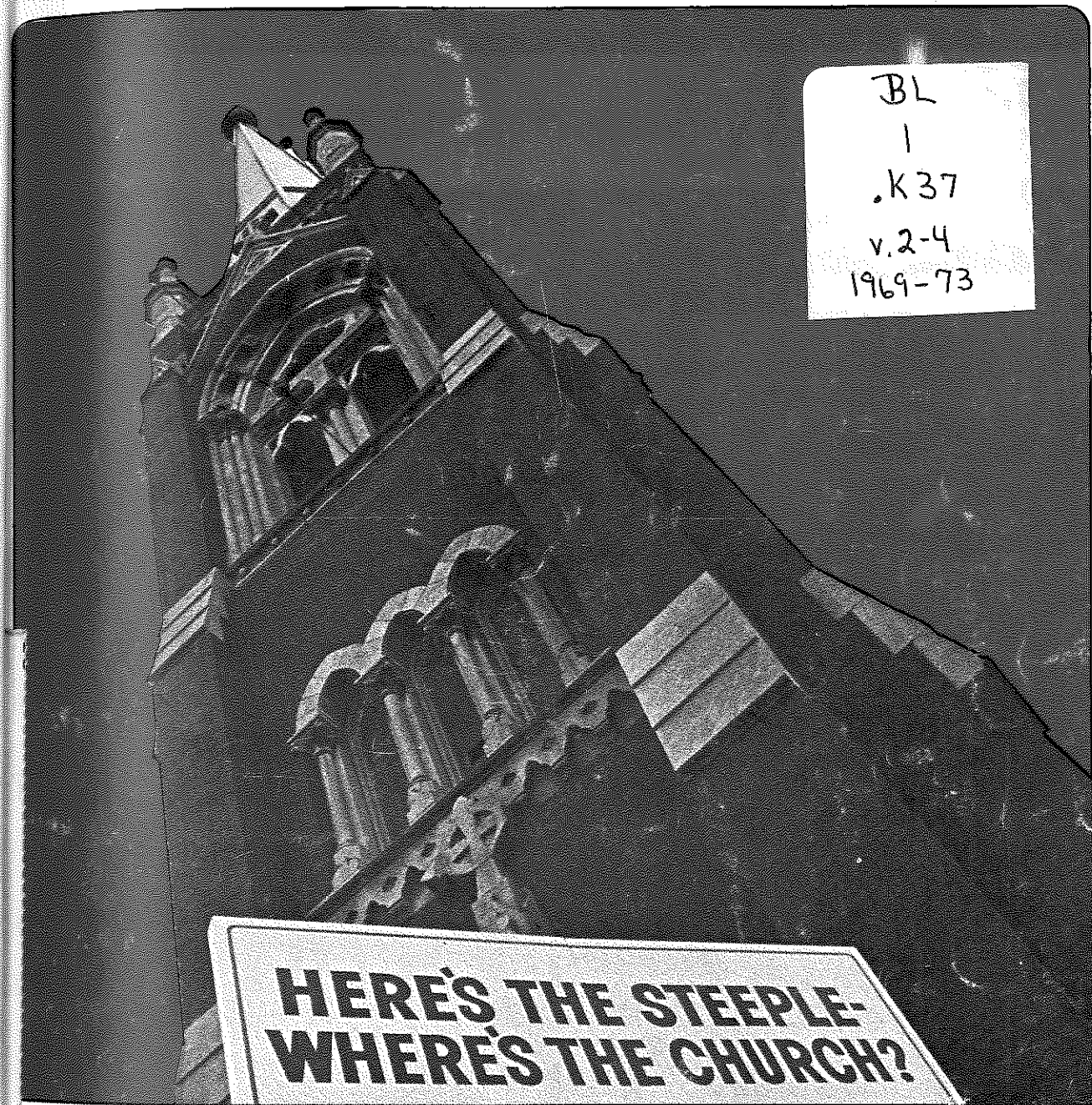
BE RECONCILED

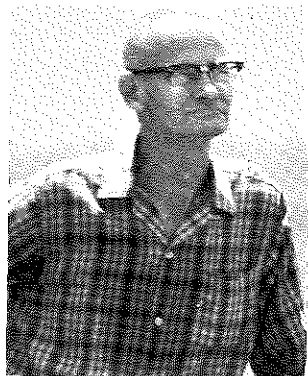
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KATALLAGETE

WINTER 1968-69





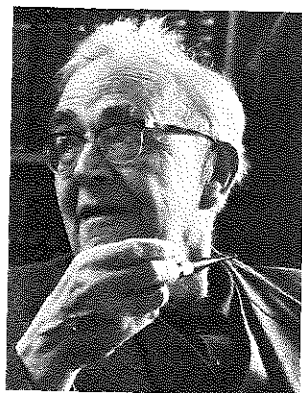
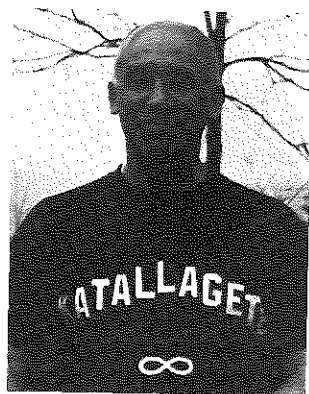
Eugene Smathers was a founder of the Fellowship and Committee of Southern Churchmen and was always an active worker with us. Thirty-seven years ago he came to a small seventy-five member congregation at Big Lick, Tennessee. When he died a few months ago he was pastor of the same congregation, and it still had seventy-five members. He was also immediate past moderator of the United Presbyterian, which, unlike his beloved Big Lick, had grown large in the thirty-seven years.

Thomas Merton helped to start this journal and helped to keep it going. He served on its Board in the finest Cistercian manner. Last month he died, twenty-seven years to the day that he had knocked at the great doors of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky. At the services and Mass for him, where we cried while his brother monks rejoiced (because they know something we do not), a fellow priest stated in the manner of a reporter: "Tom and John XXIII, both revolutionaries, are together now, leading the vanguard, directing their revolution."

Karl Barth, who hovers over *Katallagete* with mystical nearness, preceded Tom by one day.

So there they are in that vanguard, now in full accord as to whether the revolution is complete, or is beginning.

Because this journal is a small part of each of them, because each of them raised the questions to the Church they served so well, and because we love them, we dedicate this issue of *Katallagete* — *Be Reconciled* to them (that is, *not* to their memory), and to the revolution in and of Jesus Christ.



What are We Going to Do?

Some young friends of ours who have said some polite things about this journal often follow-up with: "But you and your people never make concrete suggestions for action. You always stop before saying what the Christian is supposed to do! The point of all talking must be action. What are we going to do?"

Is this what *Katallagete* (Be Reconciled!) is about? "What are we going to do? Our action?"

We are so conditioned and trained by the power the world has over us that we believe the Christian and the Church are *doing* "something" only when we do the way everyone else does: send all the staff the budget will allow to scurry around every boondock and ghetto, dispensing weak tea and sympathy for the victims of the American Way, so that the program can be written up as a budget request for next year; and hold conferences which import articulate black radicals and articulate poor white militants for the sole purpose of reassuring us that, "By God, we are guilty as hell, how can we help you?" (the conferences seldom import the *inarticulate* and *unlovely* victims because they remind us of who we are, and that they are the victims of who we are); and sponsor voter registrations, petitions, rent strikes, protest marches against anything; and involve the middle-class churchman up-to-his-steeple-in-(liberal) politics; and conduct seminars, consultations on "next steps in race relations, war, disarmament, urban renewal; and infiltrate the political power structure as speech writers and research associates; and launch projects which interview our victims in the ghettos to determine which among them qualifies for the charity of this particular member of Christ's Body.

But in any case — double the existing staff; create staff where there is none; hold at least two emergency conferences on every issue the world classifies as a "crisis"; appoint a committee on an Afro-studies

course and call it a "curriculum enrichment committee"; above all, do a survey.

This is what we Christians do and are expected to do because this is the power of the "what are we going to do!" which the world holds over us.

And this is what this number of *Katallagete* is about: we have brought together in these pages some men who have been "something" — on that, we believe everyone would agree. Ecumenism wants to find out what the Christian has to say about the action of the world in the light of God's reconciliation of it, and Jacques Ellul, who refuses to accept any separation between word and deed, has written *The Presence of the Kingdom* and *The Technological Society*, the message (largely rejected in the chancelleries of church and theological empires) being that the Christian must "demythologize" the end of the twentieth century, not the beginning of the first, *anno Domini*. Of all the things that have been said about James Bevel, he has never been accused of doing nothing. Church bureaucrats talk about "new forms of the ministry," and John Fry has one in the midst of Chicago's ghetto. Julius Lester, a revolutionary in the age of anxiety, writes music, political columns, poetry, books on subjects and in a prose style that rival anything in the twentieth century, and plays a guitar. Everyone asks about "the Church — Universal, Militant, Triumphant," but the Berrigans are an answer. Folk still moan about the silent *South*, but Dubose, Gray, Ulmer ring more true than those who only a few years ago confidently tied Christ's reconciliation to civil rights legislation.

In our view, what these men have been is a "something" quite different from all those doings we have been conditioned and trained by the world to

expect the Christian and the Church to *do*. That is why we have asked them to write for us what ever came to their minds (and to their hearts) about Christ, about people, about the Church as an institution and as the Body of Christ, about reconciliation — today, 1969 *anno Domini*.

We humbly and with strict sincerity ask our friends (and those who are not so friendly) who are so anxious with their demand: "What are we going to do!" to listen, and then ask it, has anything to do with the Christian — today, 1969 *anno Domini*.

In the last issue of this journal, we tried to answer the then-most-pressing-question of "what are we going to do!" (about the election) with an account of "Up To Our Steeple in Politics." We hold to its every word now, after the election. In the past few years, we have done our share of seminars, conferences, panels, "next-step" consultations, urging the very same message. Toward the end of the question-and-answer period, someone usually demands, "Why, you're saying 'do nothing! do nothing!'" And that is when we know we're coming through. That is when we say: "Brothers, just nail *that* down. Now you have

the message. Do *nothing*. Be *something*."

Finally, we remind our friends (and those not friendly) that this issue of *Katallagete* is dedicated three men who, in the current worldly-churchly standards of "do something," did little and were proud it, and always checked to see if their sense of humor was on straight whenever they were threatened by their brothers to "do something!"

One of them, Thomas Merton, in his first article for this journal almost three years ago, observed that "Bonhoeffer himself said it was an 'Anglo-Saxon failing' to imagine that the church was supposed to have a ready answer for every social problem." The point of Merton's observation was given in a later issue when John Howard Griffin recalled that good Trappist's answer to the perennial question of oppression to victim: "When can we, as Christians, do to help?" "Before you do a damned thing," Tom would reply, "just *be* what you say you are, a Christian; then no one will have to tell you what to do. You'll know

Do? *Nothing*. Be? What you are — *reconcile to God and man, Katallagete!* And . . .
Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.

KATALLAGETE BE RECONCILED

Journal of the Committee Of Southern Churchmen

WINTER 1968-69

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STAFF

EDITOR

JAMES Y. HOLLOWAY

Box 936, Berea College Station
Berea, Kentucky

PUBLISHER

WILL D. CAMPBELL

for the Committee
of Southern Churchmen

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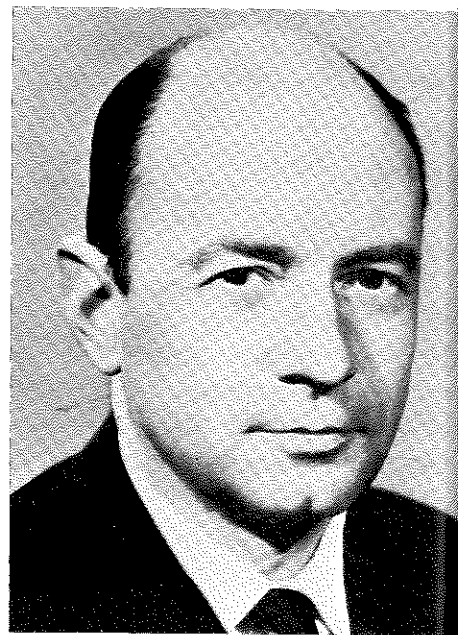
Post Office Box 12044
Nashville, Tennessee 37212
Telephone (615) 242-2448

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Jacques Ellul



Cain, the Theologian of 1969

To me, the most striking feature in the current trends of the "new theology" is the old-fashioned quality of their efforts and constructions. It cannot be denied that most of the theological affirmations today — concerning the death of God, the primacy of the love of humanity over faith in God, the dissociation of the message (*Kerygma*) from all reality, all that was completely formulated and elucidated long ago in the works of Ludwig Feuerbach in the nineteenth century. But we should also remember that in doing so, Feuerbach in no way meant to attack Christianity. On the contrary, he meant to say what could be saved. That is to say, over a century ago Feuerbach had much the same preoccupation as our contemporary theologians, engrossed by the failure of the Gospel to communicate to modern man — a finding which again leads theologians to call into question the Gospel, not modern man. That they feel, is their essential choice.

Without pressing the point at all, we can easily observe that the program to "demythologize" the Gospel so that it can be communicated to modern

man is not a new invention at all, but even before the creation of the scientific spirit, we find it practiced almost in the same terms and for the same reasons proposed today by the seventeenth century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes, in Book III of *The Leviathan* lays down the principles of "a new hermeneutics." As for the theology of "the death of God," it was perfectly elucidated in very modern terms by Lodovico Antonio Muratori at the end of the seventeenth century.

These little examples, which could be multiplied very easily, are not manifestations of vain erudition but are meant simply as a reminder that the "new theologies" about which so much fuss has been made in recent years, are really very, very old. If it is true that God Himself can make (and has promised to make) all things new, man does, of course, succeed in fabricating new things, but in spite of the great novelty of his scientific and technical equipment, man hardly succeeds in actually *being* new or in actually formulating his relationship to God in new terms. It is a profound error to believe that we may resolve modern man's incomprehension of the Gospel by means of the propositions of the "new" theologies, e.g., that the Gospel and man in his present situation should be brought together by new concessions by, or formulations of, the Gospel; that modern man's scientific discoveries and his self-styled "coming of age" leads to a *new* theology. Instead, I should merely like to make a reminder: that contemporary theological affirmations find their meaning and their roots in something entirely different from the scientific spirit of modern civilization. "New" theological affirmations are always the "renewed" protest by man against God, the reaffirmation of the excellence of what man does in the face of being called into question by God and, finally, the assertion of the primacy of man's intelligence over the way chosen by God for His revelation. That is why we cannot and should not put much hope in the efforts of these "new" theologies to respond to the anguish of man, or to fill the gap between the Gospel and modern society. Certainly the Bible knows about these efforts of man against God. Indeed, as the evidence shows in the accounts it transmits to us, the Bible oft times knows the precise contents of our most modern efforts. That is why Cain appears to me to be the oldest of the modern theologians.

Of course, it is necessary to leave out this account's most spectacular features — generally the only ones that are emphasized, such as God's apparently arbitrary choice in Abel's favor (a choice that generations of interpreters have tried to justify), and

the murder of Abel. In fact, the Biblical narrative is definitely much richer if one does not let himself be obsessed by these two features. So I shall concentrate upon two other aspects of the narrative. First, Cain is irritated by God's arbitrary choice of Abel, which of course is not satisfactory to Cain. But we should notice straightaway that God in no way rejects Cain: as soon as Cain manifests his anger, God speaks to him. Moreover, it is necessary to recall that whatever else it may appear to be, the Word of God is always a Gospel, a Good Word. God does not condemn Cain for his anger. Instead, He asks him a question (Why are you hot with anger?) and puts before him a commandment (get mastery over your sin). Thus, God is there, in His word; by it, Cain receives the *possibility* of fulfilling the commandment. Cain is, thereby, put to his most significant test, but he is accompanied by God Himself in this situation.

Now what does he do? First, he does not reply to God. It is exactly as if the word of God meant nothing to him. He does not take into consideration either the commandment or the promise. He does not accept interrogation by God's word. Because of this, obviously, he receives not the slightest bit of the strength which was contained in that word. So he remains "Cain-who-wants-to-be-alone," and when he speaks, he speaks not to God but, on the contrary, to his brother. I am in no sense twisting the text when I say that, in modern terms, Cain refuses the "vertical relationship" (man-God) so that he may be free to consider only the "horizontal relationship" (man-man.) Theologians of today do not want modern man, whom they say has come of age and gained dignity, to be treated paternalistically by God. Therefore, they have decided that the traditional image of the vertical relationship (man-God) must be broken, keeping only the relationship with his fellow man, and by this means alone, they say, God is discovered. So these modern theologians reproduce exactly the attitude of Cain. But if Cain discovers God in Abel (which he does), it is precisely the God he can only hate, the God he assumes has made him the victim; the unjust God, the oppressive God, the God who has wronged him. Of course, when Cain considers only the horizontal relationship (man-man), he makes an abstraction out of the question, the commandment, the promise. And he is right. And from that time on, he can only kill Abel. This is not because he is jealous of Abel, but because he tried to retain only the horizontal relationship, rejecting the relationship with God, so that Abel himself became the proof of the wrong God did to Cain.

Now I definitely do not think that today our excellent theologians of the horizontal relationship

JACQUES ELLUL, a lay leader of French Protestantism, is professor of the history of law and social history at the University of Bordeaux. His writings so far translated include *THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM* (Seabury) and *THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF LAW* (Doubleday), as well as *THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY*, *PROPAGANDA*, *THE POLITICAL ILLUSION* and *A CRITIQUE OF THE NEW COMMONPLACES*, all published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. His theological writings which will appear in English in the near future include *VIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE*; *THE WILL AND THE DEED*; *THEOLOGY OF THE CITY*.

An early issue of *KATALLAGETE* will be devoted to interpretations and reflections on the social and theological writings of M. Ellul.

are going to kill their neighbor. They probably would not have the courage. But they ought to understand that their theology — inspired as it is by the best feelings about man, affirming the validity of man in himself, and regarding the horizontal relationship, the dialogue, the communication, as being the special means of God's revelation — can have only that consequence. Man deprived of the vertical relationship established by God can only become his brother's murderer, precisely because he no longer has to answer any question other than the one he asks himself. It is not meaningless to observe that it is definitely in the same intellectual circles that the theology of the death of God and the theology of violence are elaborated.

We ought to retain a second aspect of the Biblical narrative: even after the murder, God continues to be Cain's protector while informing him of his new condition. Cain will be a wanderer, but he is placed under the protection of God, who puts the famous "sign" on him. Even if one does not accept W. Vischer's interpretation of it as the sign of Yahweh, of salvation and particularly of the Cross (which is a very well-established interpretation), it is the sign of the alliance that God establishes with Cain. In any event, the Hebrew word for "sign" itself derives from a verb meaning "to make an agreement with." There again, Cain does not want to know anything about this sign, this protection, this promise. Again, he rejects the vertical relationship and he takes his destiny in hand. At the same time, he refuses to accept either his situation as a wanderer (he builds a city and lives there), or his situation as a man under the protection of God. Rather, his city will be his protection, as well as the iron instruments which his descendants will forge (Tubal Cain: even the name of Cain means "lance"). All of this is placed under the sign that Cain chooses. He calls both his son and his city "Enoch," which means "initiation," and I believe that both senses of this word are meant here: "to initiate into secrets and rites" and also "to start." Cain lays down *his* beginning (opposing the one which God had decided for him) in a secret, confidential world — that is, a world closed to God. If Cain is shown to be the ancestor of the arts, technology, the sciences, animal-rearing, etc., it is not at all for the reasons given in the superficial exegesis of some modern interpreters, *viz.*, that Israel distrusted "civilization," but as the result of a much more profound insight. Insofar as the world of the arts, technology, the sciences, animal-rearing, etc., is the world of man, the world of which man wants to be the sole master, where man will assure himself of his situation and

protect himself, then only the Hero who broke the vertical relationship with God (which Adam did not do, despite the rupture) can be the initiator of it. The Biblical account is not a judgement against science and progress *but against what they signify for man in his situation of rupture with God.*

To say, as the "new" theologians say: "science has permitted man to come of age; he therefore no longer needs to take recourse to this primitive divinity to whom he formerly appealed as a Father in order to obtain such-and-such advantage. Now, man is starting his own history, etc. . . ." is precisely to say that Cain has reached his summit. *As a consequence of this progress*, it is only a pretence to formulate a theology the very thing Scripture shows us to have been Cain's "theological formulation" from the very beginning, and *from which just this sort of progress resulted.* In refusing his situation, the condition made for him by God, in refusing God's beginning, and finally in refusing the grace and protection of God, it is Cain who initiates the history of humanity. But Cain thinks that he can lead history positively, for he pretends to be able to assure by his own means what God proposes. In fact, Cain succeeds. Lemach, Cain's descendent, in the "Song of the Sword," shows us that if God promised to avenge Cain seven times if he is attacked, Lemach succeeded in avenging himself seventy-seven times. His vengeance is much better, much more efficacious and much more successful than God's. And here we are in the middle of the theology of the efficacy of the human enterprise, the theology of culture and historical positivism. This always turns the argument around! For what use is it to appeal to God in a society where man is completely successful without God? And to go further: under these conditions, what place can God still have in the heart of this kind of man? most assuredly, one does not need very many theological treatises to reply: the fourth chapter of Genesis replies from the beginning: *absolutely none!* And to go still further: under these conditions, does *that* God really exist? Or does He have a reason to exist? There again one does not have to look very far. Our text replies from the beginning: for *that* man, God indeed no longer exists. The only difference is one of emphasis: man asks himself about *that* God; God questions us about *that* man. At any rate we see to what great an extent Cain is a model theologian.

Others have already become aware of this. In fact, it is surprising that among our theologians who now glorify the fall of Adam by saying that the Fall is entirely positive, that thanks to it man has won his freedom and his initiative, no one has undertaken to

glorify Cain. But since these theologians simply reproduce the old heresies, we can be assured that this one will also soon reappear.

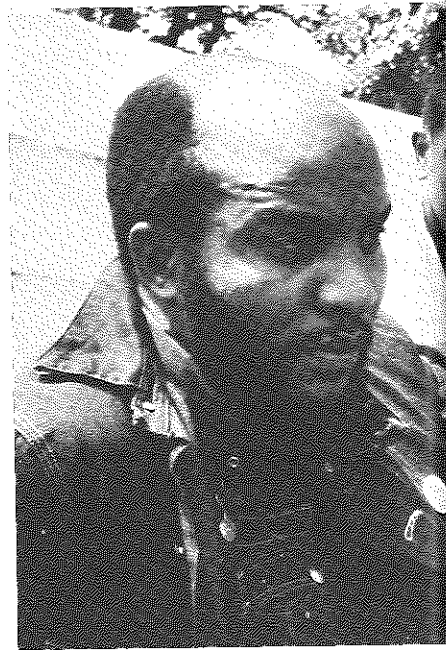
We know that in the second century there existed the sect of the Cainites, "because Cain made the race of the strong, Sodom terrified the world with its punishments and it is by means of Judas that God will save the world." Therefore, glory be to Cain and Judas! Cain was right to stand up to this demiurge God, who was a malevolent spirit imposing an incoherent law on man. This God must be scorned and resisted. Cain, creator of the arts and sciences, was the true emanation of wisdom and the higher principle that God, the vile pseudo-creator, wanted to upset. With other motivations and with other formulations, this is where we are today — near, very near, to this old gnostic proclamation. The Cainites had more courage and coherence than our theologians. But they acted with the same clarity — they had made their choice, a choice as false as the one which is presented to us today, because it is not between Abel and Cain, or even between Elohim and Cain. The choice is between Jesus Christ and Cain. Like the Cainites, our theologians claim to show that conciliation between the two is possible. But it is still the same error: in order to save man as he is, man with his eminent works, then only the sacrificed one, the redeemer Jesus, should be retained. All the while, an abstraction is made of the relationship between Jesus and His

Father on the one hand; on the other, the Old Testament is rejected, for the Cainites considered it to be a lying revelation of the false God, while our contemporary theologian considers it to be a collection of myths from which a reality in accord with contemporary man, can be extracted. Such a procedure, of course, allows them to ignore the little story of Cain, and to dismiss it as a myth, perhaps simply an aetiological myth of the tribe of the Kenites. Therefore, our new theologians can avoid being challenged by it.

This places us in a very comfortable situation. We can forget the Cainites and cast Cain into the aurora borealis of myth. We can ecstatically proclaim that we are in a radically new situation; that it is necessary to seek a coherent response to that situation; that modernity, secularism, rationality, science, etc., is a situation that has nothing in common with the worldview of the Bible. Therefore, we can say that it is necessary for us to extricate ourselves from all the old formulations and old theologies in order to be able at last to communicate with this man who, for the first time in history, is adult, has come of age. But it is precisely with regard to this pretension that Ecclesiastes, designating this modern adult to us as the theologian, and this modern theologian as no one but Cain, replies, "Vanity of vanities . . . there is nothing new under the sun."

Translated by George Haskell Vernard who is on the faculty at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.

James Bevel



Caught Not Praying

Some time ago I began to get uneasy about the way we understand justice in this country, especially we Christians, people, ministers, and movement people. I began to think about it especially in connection with the things that were happening because of the murder of Martin Luther King. It seemed to me that we couldn't wait any longer to open up the whole question of what Martin was about, just because of what we were doing about his death. Martin Luther King was a man who constantly spoke about justice. He admonished the nation and the people to justice. So I began to think, how negligent we are now, sitting around relaxing, and waiting for the State to have a lynching party - and all that while it was supposed to be for Martin who talked about *doing* justice.

Now, there are really two levels of this problem: whether Christians are *doing* justice by getting behind

the State to kill James Earl Ray to atone for the murder of Martin. That is one level, and that is the level I am most interested in. But there is another level, the level of whether or not James Earl Ray is guilty, whether he can get the justice from the State he ought to get, whether his constitutional rights are being violated. I am interested in that, also. But the most important thing is the first level, since it is absolutely ridiculous for us to wait for the State to take over Martin's concern for justice and have a lynching party for the man accused of killing him. If people get convinced that killing James Earl Ray is doing justice, then they will stop demanding *real* justice from the power structure. Justice is a living program, not a killing program. That is why it seemed to me important that we get black people (and white people, too, for that matter) out of a state of revenge, and back on the question of *doing* justice. We have got to stop this talk about "all of America is guilty!" for Martin's murder. What that does is to make people sit around and condemn themselves, repressing even more their real love and joy, and wait for the State to atone for the murder of Martin with the murder of James Earl.

This concerns me very deeply. It has to do with the attitude of the American people, and especially the people in the churches. What bothers me is to go into Memphis and talk with some of the black people who live there, and hear them say to me, literally, "let the white son of a bitch burn." I began to talk to them about this kind of attitude, about how wrong it was to think that killing folks had anything to do with the justice Martin was talking about. I said that if it did, then we were in some sort of pre-Christian stage - the "eye-for-an-eye" stage - rather than the stage that Jesus talked about. If a man is mentally ill, or emotionally disturbed, then we ought to get him to a doctor or in some kind of therapy, not kill him. To talk about killing having a relationship

to justice is "pre-Christian." Moreover, I reminded some in the black community about what they were saying about Dr. King's murder before James Earl Ray was arrested - about some of the people we had heard were involved, and about how Attorney General Ramsey Clark had cut off the black community giving that kind of information to the authorities when he said there was "absolutely no conspiracy."

So I did a lot of talking to people in Memphis and elsewhere, to black and white people, to cab drivers and working people. Most of them were saying, "Well, if he's guilty he ought to die." Just when I was thinking that most people still thought there was a relationship between killing folks and doing justice, some of them came to me and said, "You know, you're right. We was just caught not praying. You are absolutely right. Maybe you been somewhere talking to God, and we haven't. You are right. We simply cannot stand by and watch this kind of thing." I talked to a lot of students, and their attitude was, "You're absolutely right. But we've been afraid to say that. We don't believe Ray did this. But what could we do? What could we say?"

So it seemed to me that these two concerns for justice came together in what was happening to James Earl Ray. Immediately after Dr. King was murdered, there was a lot of talk around Memphis about what led up to that terrible event, talk which implicated a lot of people. Then, the Attorney General of the United States said there was "absolutely no conspiracy." All over the country, after James Earl Ray was arrested, everybody judged and condemned him. Then it became simply a question of getting him killed. Black people wanted him killed - if you committed a heinous crime like that, they said, you should be killed. The country had really judged the man without knowing him, and without trying to find out how carefully he had been investigated before he was arrested. So, given all of the factors

involved - the talk the black people made in Memphis, me trying to reconstruct the situation at the Lorraine Motel that night in Memphis, I am even more convinced that it was impossible for Ray to have committed that kind of crime alone. Martin's life had been threatened even in Atlanta - airplane schedules had been held up because of those threats. I decided to write James Earl Ray and tell him I'd like to take his case, that I had testimony that made me think that he couldn't have done it, and I had had plenty of courtroom experience in the civil rights days. I offered to take the case, for I thought that since Ray had a white lawyer from Texas, black people in Memphis would not talk to either one of them.

What followed was amazing. I got a letter from his attorney, Percy Foreman. I then went down and talked with Mr. Foreman for almost eight hours, and found out that he was not what I had presupposed - a Texas cracker - but a very wise and active man. He was a lawyer for the NAACP in the 1920's, a time when that was a strong stand, and he had defended more men accused of murder than anyone in the country.

So I've put together a lot of things about Ray's case, and I'm waiting on some other things now from several parts of the country which I think can show that Ray did not kill Dr. King. After seeing and talking to Ray personally, I am convinced that he could not have committed a crime such as that. His capacity to conceptualize such an affair, and his poor motor dexterity make him, in my judgement, incapable of having done it.

I think I can prove in a court that Ray did not kill Martin King. But even if Ray did it, we are still going the wrong way. How can we Christians think that we are *doing* justice by killing another man? Why should we spend money and time in plotting and arguing over how to kill him? We are simply dissipating our energies and fooling ourselves into thinking that

justice can have anything to do with killing. This is why, it seems to me, we have got to come to grips with the whole question of violence. I believe that we are right in our stated position, clearly and unequivocally: *murder has no relationship to justice*, and that we are not interested in the murder of one man for the murder of another. We are interested in everyone in Memphis and everywhere else *doing* justice. We have got to say, clearly and unequivocally: murdering James Earl Ray has no relationship to *doing* justice.

This was summed up by Dr. King's successor when he said: "... it is not who killed Dr. King but what killed him. One man should not be made the scapegoat for this monstrous crime."

That is why I believe that the non-violent movement has a great opportunity here to respond to what is happening to James Earl Ray. It has an opportunity to educate people in the philosophy of non-violence, and to make non-violence a more acceptable way of life. It has an opportunity to make people begin responding to non-violence more readily than to these negative arguments that we have heard lately, which make allusions to race and to skin color. I am convinced that the case of James Earl Ray gives the non-violent movement an extraordinary opportunity to bear witness to love, and to truth, and to mercy. That is the position I am going to take on this matter from here on out, and if need be, we will go back into the streets about this.

I must also say that I am particularly disturbed by what some Christians and the National Council of Churches are doing in this matter. There they were in Memphis, parading down the street in what they called a "memorial service" to Martin, but really they were waiting, very quietly, on a lynching. In fact, their marching and their participation in those events in Memphis a few weeks ago said to the city, "Go ahead and kill James Earl Ray." I talked with some of the clergymen and

others who were at that meeting of the National Council of Churches, and some of them said, "well, in a way, it is true, that is what we are doing." I admit that it is hard to get people to talk about this sort of thing. I admit that it is embarrassing. But I still maintain, they were quietly saying to Memphis, "Go ahead and kill James Earl Ray."

Here, once again, you had these people from the National Council moaning over a dead man, when Jesus himself said very plainly to us: "Let the dead bury the dead!" There was a man, very much alive and very much in trouble, sitting right there in that jail in Memphis, and *not one of them asked to go visit him*.

I wanted to speak to the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches, but they would not permit me to do so. (When they refused me, I didn't ask them why: I assumed it was because they were "very busy" considering their "very serious" affairs.) But I did speak to some others who were at the Memphis meeting of the National Council, and I spoke to them on the theme of doing justice. I tried to explain to them that justice is not something that you legislate, it is something you do, it is a style of life. I tried to tell them that *doing* justice is a style of life that comes out of loving brothers, of really showing mercy, of being prepared to go to anybody who is in trouble - whether that person is James Earl Ray, or some black kids in the ghetto or those people in Vietnam. I tried to tell them that it didn't make any difference who the people were. *Doing* justice is a style of life. To let the State - especially today's military state - impose on us a false definition of justice about killing people is really to mislead people. Justice is a *doing* thing. It is not a court situation. So I told them that if they wanted to *do* justice, they would have to go out and be for the things that Martin was for, and be against the killing of people in the name of justice.

I tried to give the brothers at the National Council an illustration of what I was talking about: there are two brothers, living in the same house. One brother was a threat to the other one, so the fearful brother killed the brother who threatened him. Now the brother who was murdered was a man who had been speaking and fighting for justice and mercy. That's exactly what poses the question for those of us who are the witnesses to this event: should we stop and take time and energy and make plans to kill the brother who himself had killed? Or should we carry on the work of the dead man, the man who spoke for justice and love? For, you see, whether we like or not, whether we know it or not, Martin was a brother to whoever (and we don't *know* who) killed him. That is a fact of life. Now, Martin was our brother. And the man who killed him was also our brother. Those are the facts of life. So the question is not who is our brother, but whether we are going to get caught up in the very same fear that the brother who shot Martin got caught up in. Or, whether we are going to carry on the work of our brother who is dead.

I told the brothers at the National Council of Churches in Memphis that we were really letting ourselves down, and our people down, and the nation down and the world down when we let ourselves get caught up in the killing and counter-killing program. I told them that we have to be firm *that*. I told them that if we do not like to see the State killing people for no reason at all (as in Vietnam), then we must lead the way by not getting ourselves caught up in this business of killing and counter-killing. I told the brothers that we should get involved in the business of *doing* justice, seeing that justice is being done, and that the only way we could do that was to be redemptive in our everyday activity and conduct.

Some of the brothers of the National Council got disturbed about what I said. Some of them got

offended that they walked out. I didn't mean to offend any of them, but I did wonder if the Holy Spirit was in that gathering in Memphis. For I pointed out to them that here you are, marching in a "memorial service" for Martin, when in his life you never did march with him. I pointed out that if you had really been responsive to Martin, he wouldn't have had to spend so much time raising money, for you have plenty of money, and if you believed in him, you should have given his cause - which you profess to support - some of your wealth. I told them, here you are, after Martin is dead: you come back when it is safe, to where it is safe, and you march in parades, and you pass out candles, you pat each other on the back, and you tell each other how brave and great you are, and how you loved Martin. And all the while you are doing this, the very people Martin was fighting for, the poor black and white people, had one of their number locked up in jail and you are just waiting for him to be killed.

I told them that if you wanted to march and hold lighted candles, you ought to march and hold candles in support of James Earl Ray, and help him to have a just trial.

So this is how we stand. We're *not* caught not praying now. James Earl Ray has asked me to be a defense attorney. But the bar association and others which set up all these little rules and regulations not to protect the justice of the accused, but to protect incompetent lawyers and their economic interests, they tell me that I am not competent to defend James Earl Ray. Mr. Percy Foreman says that I have the best evidence so far, and he has asked Judge Battle to let me join him as a co-defense attorney. Judge Battle has not ruled on this, but he says that the laws of Tennessee read that I do not have a license to practice law. And I say, such law as that has *nothing* to do with justice, if James Earl Ray wants me to be a part of his defense. I believe that if I cannot be a part of his defense then his constitutional rights are being violated, and

that what we will have is a public lynching, sprinkling on a little legal license to appease everyone. In fact, we will be trying to atone for the death of one brother by the killing of another.

I am hoping that the clergymen will see this point, and demand that we *do* justice in this country, and not think we have justice if James Earl Ray is killed by the State. I am hoping that the clergy in this country will see that justice is a living program, not a killing program.

Judge Battle has made *his* statement. But now, the power is no longer in his hands. The Old Man who runs this movement now is the same One who opened up the Red Sea, and raised up Elijah, and John the Baptist, and Jesus. The Holy Spirit's in charge now. *He's* taking over the case. And according to the record I heard from Reverend Jones, in Itta Bena, Mississippi, *He* never lost a case yet. *He's* not going to lose this one, and *He's* the One we're going to turn this case over to. Right now.

John E. Fry



It Means Bullhorns

We must not forget so soon after the inauguration that there was an election, and how during that election the three candidates negotiated the issue of crime in the streets or how cynically they summoned visions of apocalypse in the heads of all those people. Mr. Nixon named, "the forgotten American." Why? The forgotten American was worked up. What was he worked up about? A drift toward favoritism and racialism. According to Mr. Forgotten American the country really hadn't been any trouble in America before 1954. The year of Brown versus Board of Education. Not real trouble. Not trouble he was aware of. But since 1954 it has been one bloody thing after another: sit-ins; wade-ins; pray-ins; swim-ins; voter registration drives; freedom rides; open occupancy legislative freedom marches; poor people's campaigns; a war on poverty. All of a sudden that was almost all he could read about in his papers and magazines; all he could see on television; all he could hear at cocktail parties even at "Church." Which was all right. Until the riots. The riots were something else. They were in the

streets, staggering events but what blew Mr. F. American's mind was the aftermath of the riots. He discovered the amazing theory that every riot had been started by provocative police activity and sustained by police brutality. Witness, for instance, the findings of the Kerner Commission Report. That theory was too much. Here are the coloreds burning property that does not belong to them, shooting at firemen who attempted to put out the fires, stealing in open sight of God, the police, and television, stealing goods of substantial value, in general messing up the place, with all kinds of innocent people killed, wounded, and inconvenienced. Who is to blame? The coloreds? No. The police! Mr. F. American never has recovered. But he may. His candidate won and is now president.

We must address ourselves to youth in the ghetto now, after the election and inauguration in terms of the engines of repression being prepared for youth in the ghetto. The country is not now preparing serious job training programs or radically new educational models. The country is not envisioning adequate and safe living spaces or submitting the recalcitrant problem of police violence at least to psychoanalysis. To be sure Mr. Nixon has promised to unleash the private sector (which may have about the same effect as legalizing piracy). He also has said — modestly — that he can provide the reconciliation so badly needed because he understands the problem. The problem is the problem of the individual. Otherwise his new administration has been mandated by American voters to make the streets safe once more for little old ladies carrying their money to the bank.

What does that mean? It means bullhorns — 110 million bullhorns programmed to amplify the refrain: "Up against the wall." It means the programming of 666 million policemen to repeat into the bullhorns: "Up against the wall." It means the purchase of one Stoner gun for every American, regardless of color, creed, or national origin, who is not a ghetto youth. It means the production of mace in tank car quantities. Tear gas. Bazookas. Tanks. Rockets. Do-it-yourself- napalm kits. M-16's. Magnum pistols. Mortars. Machine guns. The country is getting around to handling the problem of crime in the streets, which is to say, the problem of ghetto youth.

A part of the problem area is being occupied by youth who are not from the ghetto, but who act that way. They go around protesting the war in Vietnam when they should be protesting a really immoral war: the war on poverty. These non-ghetto youth are ratty. They love VC. They split their fingers, throw obscene missiles at police, and call them pigs. These hippy-yippy are contributing part of the problem of crime in the streets, therefore, are ghetto youth for crime

fighting purposes. They, too, are grass roots people. Since, as Norman Mailer has taught us to believe, all fuzz are at heart narc-fuzz, grass root people, movements, organizations are super-eligible for crime fighting.

All right. What America is getting ready to do coincides exactly with what ghetto youth have all along expected that America would sometime get around to doing. Let us pick out such a youth and assign him an age, like seventeen, and a ghetto like Harlem or Woodlawn, or Canfield, or Hough, or Midtown, or on the block somewhere in Oakland. As he looks out across the horizon of his opportunities he sees: number one. He will be dead before he makes twenty-five, one way or another, killed in a fight, killed in Vietnam, or some war, killed by a policeman, killed by heroin or wine. Avoiding number one he sees number two: He will be living in the penitentiary rather permanently as a result of something or other someone said he did, which he might or might not actually have done. Yes. He will be walking down the street. He will hear the words of the national anthem bleated out: "Up against the wall." He will be taken to a police station, charged with some tremendous crime, then listen in astonishment as policemen, policemen-associated witnesses testify on a Bible what he did, then hear a judge or jury — what difference does it make, a whole bunch of white folks say, "Yes, ghetto youth, you are guilty of this tremendous crime no matter how much you tell us you were in another part of town and only have other ghetto youth to back up such a flimsy story; you are guilty, ghetto youth. Go to the penitentiary and do your punishment." Avoiding numbers one and two by some miracle of luck he sees number three and number four lurching toward him. Number three is the opportunity to become a junkie, an opportunity regularly held out to him in the form of heroin with all its addictive splendors. Number four is the opportunity to become a winehead by consuming gallons, of any wine with twenty per cent alcohol content, available, always, at ridiculously low prices and in half-pint quantities. And that is it.

Where is number five which says that he can get a job, get married, have children, buy a Bonneville, and live happily ever after? Well, there doesn't happen to be any number five. It has not been provided. He may manufacture number five for himself. Many ghetto youth have, at an expense of great effort and with great luck in deflecting numbers one through four. As soon as he was born jailers started getting the solitary confinement cell strengthened the better to contain him; criminologists started warming up, alternately their electroshock machines and their elec-

JOHN FRY is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago. A Marine Corps veteran, he was formerly News Editor of Presbyterian Life Magazine. Last year he was brought before the Permanent Senate Investigating Committee regarding his ministry in a Chicago ghetto.

tric chairs; sociologists began sharpening their pencils; educators began filling in the forms for moving him out of school; employers began practicing how to say, "No-never-your-address-tells-me-everything." getting ready for him. He has been bad news since he was born. America has gone out of its way to prepare these four and only four opportunities for him.

This seventeen year old black man-child is automatically and ontologically perceived as a criminal. If not an actual performing criminal then a proto-criminal, a soon-to-be criminal. Why would anyone be surprised? The energies and resources of the country have been devising criminality for him since birth. It will perhaps go easier for him if he maintains himself aloof from his fellow criminals. But not much easier. Alone, he saves himself from certain ranges of possibility, joined-up protects himself from certain other ranges of violent assault, but simultaneously makes himself a nominee for disaster-by-association. If he joins an organization, The Black Panthers, the Black Stone Rangers, then he has somehow asserted immediate criminality which any judge and jury in the country would be sure to believe.

This is a fancy way of saying that as America prepares to handle finally the problem of crime in the streets it is fondling models of genocide. The ghetto youth who are the criminals and hence, the victim-designates, can no more alter their color, place of residence, or age that Jews could thirty-five years ago suddenly become bloody, blue-eyed Nazis. Probably the models now available for genocide-reaching ends will not work efficiently because they have been improperly prepared. They have not really considered the victim-designates at close range. In fact, Mr. F. American, including his President, have gone to some lengths not to come up to eyeball to eyeball contact with ghetto youth, and do not consequently have even a vague idea of who or where he is. Wasn't the country surprised (and enraged) when John Carlos and Tommie Smith put on the black gloves in a very black way at Mexico City? If the country was surprised at *that* well, it is demonstrably as far away from ghetto youth as it is from the youth of Mars, or Venus, or another galaxy altogether. How, who, and where ghetto youth are is a state hidden even from those eyes which want to see, whether for the purposes of approving or for the purposes of having trouble-free genocide.

II

Let us therefore begin to endure the agony we have fashioned. The agony is that no one knows. Simplism would teach us that the country is divided

into haves and have nots. Racism has devised a separation according to color. But we do not know the effective, existentially actualizing line on both sides which forces are beginning to accumulate in readiness for war. That is the agony to which must be annexed the knowledge that it has been fashionably corporately in such a way that all have had a hand in it, yet no one has.

Ghetto youth are black. Their experience is black. It is in a continuum with the experience of slaves, marked so irrevocably by slavery that slavery is to this day its principal content and leading characteristic. When a ghetto youth is shot then kicked to death by an off-duty policeman while on-duty policemen stand by and watch, without arresting this off-duty comrade, it is doubtful even that all other black people participate knowingly in the experience. Surely no white person can. No empathy in the world can provide a white person black experience. No intellectual brilliance, no esthetic-moral creativity can make a white man black. What a white man experiences is his being outside black experience. He is removed from it. Were the bullet to enter him, and the boot to fall on his head, he would nonetheless have drawn a millimeter nearer being a ghetto youth. He is removed by a million years of being white from a million years of being black and spectacularly, by the last 300 years of American history, yes. Black people cannot experience the white experience of being blessed, on top, superior, intelligent, gifted, unharassed, benighted, paternalistically charitable, or sadistically vicious. They are removed from white experience, cannot experience it because of the removal. They have never known what it is to have a president. Decisively, white people cannot experience the black experience of being lower, darker, dumber, lazier, uglier, more rhythmic naturally, sexier naturally, poorer, and more hopeless than white people. They are removed from the black experience of ghetto youth, which is largely the experience of slavery.

White people see nothing when they look at incidents of crime in ghetto areas. They see nothing when they see ghetto youth lounging on a stoop or a pool hall, or entering a bus, or sitting-in a high school. They can go listen to Jimi Hendrix every night; they can buy chartreuse trousers. They can pick up the peculiar language. But they see nothing. For they are removed. What they experience is certainly not the black experience of ghetto youth but being outside that experience. Structurally outside, essentially outside.

The agony we must now endure has composed itself around this mutually operative removal. At the removal does not disclose itself except when go-

hearted people attempt to enter a foreign racial experience. This is an exceptional attempt. America — white, true, real America — does not characteristically make such an attempt and in fact has genocide on its mind when it thinks about ghetto youth because ghetto youth have been lumped by misperception into a great mass of dangerous criminality. The overwhelming majority of American people have probably never once thought to themselves that they do not and cannot know what is going on on yonder side of an unseen removal, therefore, label any eruption of ghetto youth from their slave huts into full public view as insufferable arrogance (Carlos and Williams, for instance). The overwhelming majority of American people thereby announce their racism in an up-to-date form, and their stupidity.

There are of course all sorts of experts who are quick to tell us what is happening on yonder side of the removal, as though there were no removal at all. These experts certify themselves because of what they say. "These are juvenile delinquents who are acting out their inner rage and identity confusion," the experts drone. America is satisfied that it has gotten the latest word. "These ghetto youths are hoodlums who, if not stopped now, will one day become a black Mafia," police experts warn. America is satisfied that it now knows about crime in the ghetto by organized black gangsters. "These ghetto youth are fatherless and have adopted masculine ideal figures from their peer groups rather than the adult ideal figures," pontificate other experts. America breathes a sigh of understanding.

Quite another range of experts has a different message. "These are angry kids who are about to burn the place down," "These kids are organized and they have guns and they just might start shooting," "These ghetto youth have nothing to lose and are willing to lose it — at any time," "These kids are dangerous and revolutionary so you had better start getting ready for all-out war." America is better satisfied with this message. Just as Israel was satisfied when one of its airplanes was assaulted in Athens, because it could then go do in a whole enemy airfield.

May I suggest that expert messages do not relieve the situation of total ignorance of all. America still does not *know* anything. White experts or white talking black experts cannot magically penetrate a 300 year thick barrier and come back with an authentic report. At best they can authentically report only on the massive presence of the barrier thus contribute not relieve the agony. Thus the components of the agony began to emerge. America has sequestered and brutalized its slaves, whether emancipated or not, and seems prepared to murder them if attempts are made

by the slaves to break up the chains. America does not know whether or not such attempts are being thought about seriously, but thinks that it knows and thinks that these attempts are being seriously considered, therefore is getting ready for genocide, just in case. While the victim-designates are actually removed from sight and knowing. I have called this present situation an agony because so many people have been nominated for needless and senseless death.

III

Lo, I tell you a truism. The sophistication of theology varies in inverse proportion to the simplicity of public issues. Accordingly, we should not be surprised at the incomprehensibly simple analysis both hawk and dove theologies conduct in response to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Or at the new complicated rhetoric which is being used to deal with such a simple matter as slavery. On the one hand there appears an unwillingness to deal with the truly complicated in a correspondingly complicated manner. On the other hand there appears an unwillingness to deal with the blunt, clear, and univocal fact of slavery in a correspondingly simple manner. There may indeed be very complicated emotional, economic, social, surely political structures which present themselves to the *enslaving sector* when the matter of slavery is addressed. But it is not a tame little theology which is easily mesmerized by this complexity into analyzing the complexity of the enslaving sector in order eventually to say: "It can't be done"? Tame and apostate.

What is missing in the present situation of agony is a virile old theology which thunders out univocal support for freedom now, which thus foregoes the sophistication of saying how difficult freedom now is in order the better, naively, to say that one thing even louder. It is only difficult because the enslaving sector has determined not to heed the demand, claim, mandate, or timid request by black people for freedom now. Tame and agile new theologies just go right ahead and fall for the line. They argue: There is such a structured resistance to full, final, and unabridgable equality that to envision it is tantamount to envisioning the destruction of the public order. All right. Such a vision may be valid. So much the worse for the public order. Tame, sensible, super-realist theology tries to feel out the projectable agonies for so many millions of white — and black — people were freedom to escalate too quickly, provoking a backlash, a back-backlash, in general setting loose a lot of anti-freedom. Now to whose benefit, I ask you, does such super-realist talk accrue? To the benefit of the enslaving

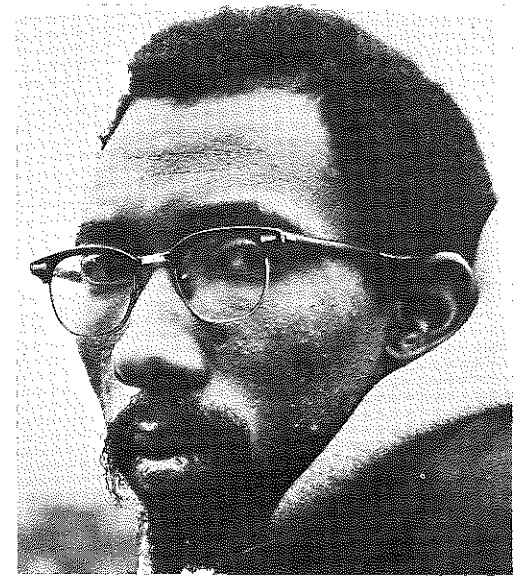
sector, naturally. And the introduction of concern for human life, including black life, is a verily, verily astonishment.

The old virile theology just got juiced up with a fury of indignation and blasted through all of the paper mache and said "Free the slaves, *now!*" Good for it. It did not care a fig for charges of naivete, or irrelevance, or simplism. It just sounded off and while it was sounding off univocally on the univocal matter of slavery, even as late as six months ago, a Christian's shame over being an American Christian was somewhat moderated. In as brief a time as six months such a theology seems to have gone on vacation, or ominously lost its voice. It is my GUESS that this famine of hearing the Word of God is related somehow to the new way America has begun to look at its preachers. For a long while preachers could flame off regularly and be lionized or at least tole-

rated. Suddenly the terrible violence. Suddenly the revulsion. Suddenly the suspicion that that old style theology was sinister, counter productive, probably outright communist, and violence-reaching. Most shockingly, the preachers shut up because they knew what is good for them. Never have so many tigers become pussy cats in so short a time.

Perhaps it is just as well. The issue is clean this way. The church completely on the side of the enslaving sector against the slaves and any demands they make for freedom now or any other time. When the slaves do win their freedom, as surely as God came among us in the poor King Jesus they will they can start from scratch and raise up some real Christian theologians for this country. And the rest of us erstwhile theologians can take up another vocation like making whips or writing articles for South African newspapers.

Julius Lester



To Be A Revolutionary

We look at them, their fat, sagging bellies, hard faces, tight lips, and we despair. It is logical in our eyes that they should support Wallace, for they are ugly and Wallace is ugly and we are beautiful and gentle and want to do nothing more than love everyone in the rising of each sun. We look at them and the conclusion is quickly reached that they will never change. They will always be filled with resentments, fears and hates. And having so concluded, we end our examination and analysis of them and prepare to wait for more propitious times.

It is difficult to be a revolutionary, for to be a revolutionary means to believe in the innate goodness of man and it is to know that man in this environment has been programmed into non-man. Our job is to change the environment so that man can be man.

It is particularly difficult to be a revolutionary at a time when man's capacity for infinite evil is being unleashed. But the job yet remains to look into those faces and to remember that they do not have control of their lives, either. They are the victims, also, and must be made to realize it. Perhaps that is not a task we can do. A well paid, well fed, well housed and clothed victim is quite often willing to accept his state as long as he is well rewarded. But even if they are as yet unable to recognize their condition, we must not forget that they too, are victims.

JULIUS LESTER is a writer, poet and musician. His books include LOOK OUT WHITEY! BLACK POWER'S GON' GET YOUR MAMA and TO BE A SLAVE, both published by Dial Press.

All too often, though, we confuse the doer with the deed and think that they are one and the same. It is the deed we must hate, not the doer of the deed. The policeman acts like a beast, but to call him a beast, a "pig," is only to negate the potential of man that is within him. We must learn that attitude which is exemplified in Cuba and North Vietnam, where any person you meet will say, "We do not hate the American people. The people are our friends. We hate the American government." The Vietnamese and Cuban people welcome Americans to their country, while the one country is fighting for its life against America and the other exists under the constant threat of annihilation. To yell "Fascist!" at a Wallace supporter is only to guarantee that that individual will be a fascist.

None of us were born revolutionaries. Therefore, if we have found within ourselves the capacity to change, we must acknowledge that everyone else has the capacity to change. Once we acknowledge this, we must then begin to live and act as if we believe it. The Cuban rebel army would attend to the wounded enemy soldiers after each battle, for Fidel recognized that the man he had just shot could be a revolutionary. And imagine the shock of the wounded soldier as he had his wounds bandaged by those whom he had just been trying to kill. What manner of men were these? They were revolutionaries. The new man.

People will be changed as much by our words as by our actions. Mao's Red Army converted many peasants to their side because this was an army that did not come into a village and steal the crops and rape the women. It paid the peasant for whatever food was taken and respected each and every peasant. The men in the Red Army were different from the men in the uniform of the Koumintang and it was because they were different that the fears of the peasant were destroyed.

Because the style of our movement has been

determined by our need to work out our own problems, we do not know how to reach those who are different from us. We have repudiated their life styles but if we are going to reach them, it may be necessary for us to adopt that style which is so repugnant to us. For us, male and female, profanity is the natural punctuation in a sentence. For them, profanity is used in certain social settings and never in front of women. For us a church is a building that people go to on Sunday because they haven't learned the value of sleeping late. For them church is an integral part of life and he who does not attend church is ostracized from the community. When SNCC was organizing in the South, there was never any doubt in the organizer's mind that he would go to church on Sunday morning. He had to if he expected the people in the community to listen to anything he had to say. Yet there were white kids who came South and wanted to argue the existence of God with the local people.

Perhaps it is time for some of us to go back home, to remind ourselves that everything there was not bad. One of the basic problems which has faced many white activists is the fact that they hate the white community. Undoubtedly, the feeling is to some degree justified. Yet there is work to be done there. It won't be as easy as lying around somebody's apartment in a big city, smoking pot and thinking up slogans for the next demonstration. In fact, it's a lifetime job requiring total commitment. But if that revolution is going to be born, the work must begin.

Yes, they are ugly. Their faces are filled with spite and hate. But did they deliberately sit in front of the mirror and create those faces? Or were they forced to live lives which tightened the flesh of their faces into a perverted contortion of humanity?

"One must have faith in the best in men," Jose Marti wrote, "and distrust the worst. If not, the worst prevails."

We must acquire that faith.

DANIEL BERRIGAN, S. J., is pastor, United Religious Work, Cornell University. His most recent books include LOVE, LOVE AT THE END, NIGHT FLIGHT TO HANOI, CONSEQUENCES, TRUTH AND . . . , and he is bringing together another volume of poetry. He is on bail pending appeal of convictions for destroying draft records at Catonsville, Maryland, in May 1968.



Open Sesame: My Life and Good Times

I have been asked to reflect upon the Church and the growth of my beliefs that led to the Cantonsville action. I shall try to be mercifully brief.

My brother and I were two of six brothers. We were depression babies, all of us. My father used to say in the thirties that he had lost everything but his shirt. If that was so, we must also recall with a certain wry humor, that he only had one or two shirts to lose.

We lived most of our lives in a sixty year old house on the top of a hill, surrounded by ten not very fruitful acres. I remember vividly that we used to house and feed a continuing number of homeless men during those dark years of loss. Even those neighbors who would not themselves feed or clothe or house the poor, would always tell them that they could find something at our place.

Our schooling was mediocre at best. But it was augmented by constant reading. My mother deserves a special eternal reward for the constant tonnage of books she brought home by streetcar from the city library.

Our life was frugal and untidy, with regular cleanups on my father's part to reassert his own iron brand of authority. But it was always something like a roundup of colts. The fact is that he was not home a great deal of the time, and we were free to be coltish.

I entered the Society of Jesus in 1939. I had known no Jesuits so it was a matter of an act of faith on both sides. Not a bad arrangement.

As any young person of 18 entering upon an entirely new form of life, the memories of my first years are particularly vivid. With regard to present convictions, I think they gave me a deep sense of the presence of God in the world, and most especially in human community. I must say that too I fell in love immediately and incurably with the Jesuit style, although prior to my entrance I had practically no knowledge of it first hand. But it appealed to me immediately as a grounding of my boundless idealism; and I found in the talents and youth and drive around me, a constant spur to make my own life count.

When I entered upon my studies it became clear that I had a great deal of ground to catch up and win.

Practically all of my classmates had graduated from Jesuit schools in the New York or Buffalo area. They were invariably far ahead of me on almost every criteria that counted for achievement in our Bruderschaft.

I passed three generally miserable years at Woodstock College studying philosophy. It was simply not my dish. So I languished like an unhappy three year freshman, trying with varying degrees of desperation and moodiness to find myself in a thicket of logic and metaphysics. I finished that period with enormous relief and with almost entire lack of distinction.

I taught high school for three years, 1946-49, in St. Peter's Preparatory School, Jersey City, New Jersey. As I recall, I taught French, Latin, English, and what was fondly called, at that time, "religion". Everything I had believed or hoped about myself, by way of a contributory creature in the real world, began to come true. I followed in every direction, like a belated flower child. And this at the hands of some three hundred rough and tough Jersey kids. It was indeed the first of many miracles.

With some misgivings, I undertook theological studies at Weston College, at Weston, Massachusetts, in the autumn of 1949. I was then 28 years old, ten years away from my initial decision to enter the order, three years awaited me until ordination, five years until the completion of even the ordinary Jesuit regime of studies. So it was as a kind of ageless elephant, that I entered upon this other phase, and began anew. There is nothing of distinction to report in those next years. The courses offered were in the main mediocre, with some exceptions in scriptural studies. I was finally and from my point of view miraculously ordained to the priesthood on June 19, 1952. Another year of theology and rustication in the same green acres. And a year later, in July of '53, I departed for a year of studies in France.

Although I did not know it for several months, my real mind was being implanted, and the future was being furiously sown. It was a tumultuous and even catastrophic year for French society and for the French church. Pius XII was bearing down heavily upon the worker priests; he finally suppressed the movement entirely in February 1954. The French were living through the dying spasms of Dien Bien Phu. The end of the Indo-Chinese colonial adventure was at hand, and the Republic was stricken at home, to the degree it had not known since the crisis of occupation and Vichy. It was a year of national humiliation and turmoil. Our house of studies near Lyon was as poor as any church mouse dwelling. But at least we had a sense of sharing in something extraordinarily painful in France at large. Many of my

compatriots were survivors of German exploitation and had worked in labor camps and factories under the occupier. Almost everything I experienced was being experienced for the first time. I felt in many cases as though I had landed upon a new planet, and was being asked to operate in an entirely new way to rebuild my senses, my very soul. It was not merely a matter of fumbling about with a new language and slowly gaining confidence in it. It was that the language offered new ways into the world of other human beings — and that these other beings, penetrated and formed by a thousand year history expressed in their humble and lucid language, were also new beings, into whose community I was invited to enter. I felt the invitation austere but irresistible.

But I can say clumsily at this point that what I discovered for the first time in my long experience of Catholic community, was so simple a thing as personal freedom. It was an invitation to become a human being by way of other human beings, immersed as we all were during that year in the tradition of our scripture, interrupting for us the experience and history of our Order.

All this was in retrospect bathed in a glow of idyllic personal creation. The actuality was somewhat more gritty. It must be confessed that in February of 1954 I sojourned into Western Germany and became a party to our vast military complex there. I served for some two months as an auxiliary chaplain thoughtlessly and with a naive sense of discovery that had nothing to do, as I look back, with the cruel realities of that land and time. I preached and heard confessions and counseled innumerable soldiers. And never once brought up or had brought up with me the question of modern war — the question of why we were in Germany at all, the question of where we were going as a nation state. I do remember writing home from Germany that the endless expenditures and installations, including the first nuclear installation in western Europe, reminded me ominously of the advance of the Roman Empire. In order to come up with such a thought, I must have entertained at the time rather serious misgivings about the whole adventure. But I cannot claim for myself an acuity of conscience that was only to come to me much later. The fact is that at the time I enjoyed those months and thought that the soldiers who crossed my path and with whom I dealt were unusual and delightful fellows. As undoubtedly they were.

More serious to what I can only call the retardation of my development, was the influence upon me of the chaplains whom I was assisting. I remember that everyone of them, without exception, was totally militarized. They wore their uniform not solely upon

their frame, but upon their soul. It was a symbol of the state of their spirit. They were as totally military men as their colleagues in the Officer's Club or in church upon Sunday. Indeed, it seemed to me even at the time that several of them made a more severe and pushy effort to project themselves as military men to the core. Especially, the head chaplain, who was a Jesuit of the New York area, fitted this mold to the very cap. He was a lieutenant colonel, a tireless worker, and had an astonishing influence over the young soldiers. He used to drive all night to a mountain retreat with groups of them and preach a retreat which many of them declared to me had had a truly integral influence of rebirth upon their lives. And would drive back with them through the night following the close of their spiritual exercise. He died later of overwork, and I have no doubt the judgement upon him is merciful. But it seems to me that he was also a total captive of the military system, and that his whole life never once raised the first question of life and the need of death.

I returned to New York in the autumn of 1954 and began to teach at Brooklyn Preparatory School. I was there for three years, I remember especially undertaking work with teams of students among the Puerto Ricans of Brooklyn, and on the lower east side of Manhattan. We also instituted an honors system of studies in the school which later won some distinction as the kids went on to university work.

In the autumn of '57 I reported for teaching at LeMoyne College in Syracuse, New York. In a sense I felt that now my adult life was beginning on an entirely fresh and exciting basis. I was teaching college classes for the first time; the college was only ten years old, and we were in a rather exciting way, making go as we went. I was assigned to teach New Testament classes.

The following six years were an intense, even incandescent continuum — between the classroom on campus and the communities in rural Mexico, between my work in Syracuse and the work of my brother Philip in New Orleans. I cannot remember when I was more hardily tested or more blessedly renewed in spirit. It was as though for six long years I was riding the crest of a wave toward a shore that continually receded and expanded, showing now its reefs, now its populated and noisy centers, now its human faces upon the shore, inviting or threatening.

I think I had the name of being a very demanding teacher. I think too that my mind was still in a kind of mind set. I know I always resented being referred to as a teacher of "dogmatic" theology. But the fact was that I was still in many aspects, quite

dogmatic. And that is the one regret that I have for those years. For the rest, I continued to grow almost as much as was possible for one to grow who was still in his own nest, with all the possibilities both of befouling and of building.

In 1957 I won the Lamont prize for my first book of poetry. This was an enormous stimulus upon work that up to then had been wrought mainly in darkness. But with the publication of my first book, my mind exploded. That little book went into three printings and established me in the publishing world. They would now take almost anything I choose to compile, and the question of quality was largely in my own hands and my own sense of things.

Of interest, with respect to the tumultuous years that were to follow, is the fact David Miller was one of my students. Of course I had at least one thousand students pass through my classes in those six years. But it is not to be wondered at that I remember David quite vividly. The question of war had conscience. David however was part of whatever social action was going on off-campus, and being planned on-campus.

He was from a poor family and as far as I can recall the father was separated from his mother. They lived in public housing and David eked out his college career with state loans. My name has been associated with him in the years that followed, and I am indeed proud of whatever that may be construed to imply, even guilt by association. The fact is that we never discussed war and peace, but we often discussed civil rights and tried to do something about the horrendous ghetto conditions of downtown Syracuse. I can only reflect upon the mystery which has since become a little more apparent. That is to say David's life was that fertile soil upon which the good seed fell and flourished.

Toward a new year of 1956 I was granted a go ahead with a project of living off campus with about fifteen carefully chosen students who would prepare themselves for Peace Corps type work in rural areas of Mexico. We got the house off to a flying start, built a simple chapel in the basement, and settled into the chancy business of making ourselves into a community. It went well. By the time I departed LeMoyne for Europe in the summer of 1963, things were off to a good start, and the first team had already gone south.

I come now to the discussion of another watershed in my life. According to all plans I was to lead a rather stereotyped year abroad; in a Jesuit house, reportedly finishing a book and undertaking another. The well laid plans!

After some two weeks of searching for housing, I finally was able to find a student hostel and a job as chaplain.

By Christmas time I had decided that Western Europe was no longer my cup of tea, and if I was to get anything out of the year I had better launch southward and eastward. And so I did. At Christmas time I visited Czechoslovakia and Hungary for a period of about one week each. It was my baptism in Marxist society. I was particularly moved by the evidence that the churches in those countries, especially the Protestant communities, were finding ways of survival in most difficult circumstances. I returned to Paris by way of Rome, in order to report to the Vatican what I had discovered in Eastern Europe. It amounted to a very strong recommendation on the part of the Protestant communities, that the Vatican would begin to take a more practical interest in the religious and social situation of Marxist Central Europe. I reported to Cardinal Bea's first assistant, a man who later became a bishop. He gave me a sympathetic hearing. I was trying to interest the church officials in the idea I would be appointed a Vatican observer at the All Christian Peace Conference to be held in Prague in the summer of 1964. Alas for those great hopes.

However I did get to the conference in Prague in June of '64, and proceeded with a group of American theologians into Russia, by invitation of the Orthodox and Baptist communities there. The impact of all of this was ineradicable upon my spirit. I was discovering for the first time, and at first hand, the radically different social forms by which other decent men and women were living. I was discovering peaceable communities of faith, surviving and even thriving in most difficult and trying circumstances. I was seeing first hand the damage wrought to the human spirit across the west as a result of the Cold War.

At Prague, meeting with Christians from both Marxist and Western societies, I gained at least an inkling of the role that the churches could play in the on-going struggle for human peace and survival. I also, along with my American companions, was exposed to the full glare of world Christian opinion with regard to our part in the Vietnam war. From Japan to Cuba, Christians were assailing us, embittered extremely by the course that even then seemed to be written in our stars.

At the conclusion of that trip, I went down into Africa; the second extended trip I had made during the year. This time it was western Africa into Nigeria. Toward Easter time in the previous spring, I had gone along the coast of eastern Africa down to the Republic of South Africa, by the invitation of an archbishop there.

I returned to the United States in the autumn of 1964 convinced as I now recall of one simple thing. The war in Vietnam could only grow worse. The course we had been set upon, proximately by Kennedy, and remotely by Dulles brinkmanship and the nuclear methodology of Truman — all of that was about to turn its mortal threat in the direction of a war which we were in no mood to limit or abandon. From one point of view, it struck me with anguish that we were going to repeat the already bankrupt experience of the French, with a new provocation and a new rhetoric. From another point of view, we were altogether masters of our own method. We had nothing like the colonial interests that France had had in Southeast Asia. But we did have a determination that was justified by the very course and momentum of the war itself, to prove our manhood and to put to the test our formidable military machine. It is extraordinary difficult, even four years after, to attempt to unravel the tortuous symptoms and motivations which led us even deeper into the remote morass. But the unraveling of that tangled and tightened skein is not to my purpose here.

I am attempting merely to record that for the course of my life was made plain by everything I had experienced in Europe and throughout other continents. That is to say I would begin in the autumn of 1964 as loudly as I could, to say No to this war. It is always of course an extremely difficult and risky business to try to relive one's life, from the point of view of spirit, once it has been lived and lived through. But I am still near enough to those decisions and still enduring their consequence, to have a realistic hope that I am conveying my state of soul with reasonable accuracy. I remember from one point of view being afflicted with a sense that now my life was being truly launched — for the first time upon moral and moral seas that might indeed overwhelm me, the tidal violence of world events churned them into an even greater threat. And I had even in those early years, when we were speaking hypocritically "military advisers to the Vietnamese" I had a sense that the war could not but get worse. If I was accurately to take the pulse of my own society, I felt that we were even then launched upon a suicidal course, that we were spoiling for a fight, that we were not about to yield before a poor and despised people whose depravation and ethnic difference gave us every reason to despise and to over ride them. I felt, and believe I shared this conviction with my brother Philip even at this early stage of things, that this would be the making or the breaking of both of us. There would be simply no turning back upon our initial serious moves that both of us were making

that time.

I was even then signing statements of complicity, and opening myself to the kind of prosecution which Spock and Coffin were later to undergo.

Within a year's time, I had taken part in the forging of those methods of protest against the war which from our present vantage point we perhaps are justified in calling conventional. We fasted, marched, picketed, sat-in, followed every step of escalation, as well as we could, with our halting methods and means, by at least dogging the iron heel of Mars. We never succeeded, and we never quite gave up. That is the best that can be said for us. We must be content if it is to be our obituary.

Of course the ground was shifting under my feet. I was having my conception of history and of moral action altered, even as I tried to act. The old, tidy, well arranged box of the universe was flying open, and the seven plagues were loosened upon the world. There would be no closing that box again. There could only be an attempt to follow the course of evil and the death with the trail that mercy and compassion must blaze.

Nor would it convey the electric and terrifying quality of the times merely to say that my relationship to my church and my order were being profoundly reordered. The fact is, two cents plain, that we were helping to create a new church, and a new order. American Catholics had never before, in the history of American Wars, been found wanting. They were doubly patriotic because they were Catholic, and had been commonly considered as somewhat less than American. The epitome of this older Martian spirit was of course the cardinal archbishop of New York then alive and flourishing. It was entirely predictable that he and I, coming from vastly different backgrounds, he exercising enormous authority in the same area in which I was trying to say no to the war, that we should come into conflict. The fact that the conflict would be scaled down to my size, in no way put off the conflict. My No was being heard even within the sound of his immensely more powerful and permeating Yes. So it came to pass, that only one year after my return to New York, I found myself faced with the most severe crisis of my life up to that time. It is almost impossible even at this date, to unravel the many threads which were weaving themselves into my shroud. The suffocating descent of that shroud about my head and body came about I think as a result of many of the activities I had launched upon. Together with friends, I had founded the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, in the previous summer.

Then there was the mysterious affair of the death

of Roger LaPorte. He was a boy whose face I remember remotely around the edges of the crowd of young people who were resisting the war on the lower eastside. He had recently left a monastery upstate, and was seeking his own soul among the young Catholic workers. He had said to someone, as I recall, that he wished to get to know me better. But we had scarcely even spoken, apart from greeting one another on occasion. Then he immolated himself, in early November, before the United Nations, early one morning. He lived for about three days. Within a week or two, the most atrocious rumors were linking his death to his friendship with me. It was not to be wondered at that time in a time of growing national madness, we should also be infected with local madness.

In any case, about a week before Thanksgiving, I was ordered out of New York and within a week was aboard a jet for Mexico City, bound for indefinite exile.

I spent about five months in Latin America. Meantime the course of opinion in the Catholic Community had become so unified and impressive, that my superiors were forced to recall me. An ad appeared in the *New York Times* challenging the archdiocese of New York and the Jesuit community, as to their reasons for my hasty exit. Indeed, that opinion was so effective, that I was able to return, hold a large press conference on the occasion of the publication of two new books, and announce that I would continue with my peace work as usual.

Which I did. The war by now had enormously worsened. My brother had been evicted from the seminary where he was teaching in Newburgh, New York. He had published his first book, which had been quite well received, and we had marched in Selma, heard the President announce on television that "We shall overcome" and returned to the work of building a community of alternatives in New York and throughout the country. The eclat surrounding my exile had brought in an enormous number of invitations to address campus groups throughout the country, and I responded as well as I could. I was writing and publishing, finding that a great deal of undiscovered space in my psyche had been released through the dark experience of the previous year. It was all in all a time of great anguish and great exhilaration.

In the summer of 1967, I went to Pueblo, Colorado, to teach in the Upward Bound program. I had been associated with poverty programs at the national level before this, but I wished to gain the experience of grounding myself in immediate work with a small number of young people. I had had the experience of traveling throughout California and meeting with per-

haps ten or twelve examples of diverse communities which the national poverty office was trying to help. If I bring in this aspect of my experience, it is only to underscore the growing disillusionment with national programs to "help the poor". Also my growing sense, expressed to Mr. Sargent Shriver on many occasions, that his program would get nowhere as long as the war was on. It seemed to me spiritually absurd and suicidal to be pretending to help the poor at home while we were bombing the poor abroad. This seemed to me the deepest reason for the forewritten doom of the O.E.O.

In any case, uncertain as to what the next year would bring, I lived and taught about fourteen young Mexican Americans from a poverty area of the town. My success was at best mixed. I at least gained additional fuel for my conviction that serious involvement in the poverty program was simply an inevitable source of alienation for the poor themselves, as well as being a money and land grab for the bureaucrats. Neither in Pueblo nor anywhere else in the country had I ever seen, moreover, an entrance into the structure of the poverty program that was anything but alienating on the part of the poor themselves. Once they began to draw a federal salary for assuming responsibility for poverty programs, they inevitably cut themselves off from the best of their own community, and appeared to them, at least to the radicals and activists among them, as simply cop-outs. There must be another way, and we must find it.

I finally was invited by Cornell University to come in the autumn of 1967, the first Catholic priest in the history of the University to be hired in the United Religious Work. I left New York with great trepidation and many second thoughts. It appeared to me a choice of the utmost seriousness, to decide to leave the peace community which was in such need. But I decided to come, because Cornell was a radically new scene, and because it had itself changed so rapidly and so radically in the previous two years. I must say that I have never had the least moment of regret for the choice I had made.

But the war was going from horrendous to intolerable; that is very nearly the total story of our lives, as events formed and now form us.

My brother Philip was working in the inner city of Baltimore; a community man, he drew community around him like a magnet. He himself was seeing in his prophetic bones, that for us merely to stay with student resisters was a game the government would tolerate indefinitely. So in November 1967 he and three friends decided to take their peaceable war into the enemy camp. As is by now well known, they poured blood into draft files in Baltimore.

I was at the time very far from their understanding of where we were at. So when they approached me in early May, with a similar action into which I was urgently invited, my immediate reaction was again to say no. But I of course was shaken with the evidence of such intransigent courage on the part of those who were already in legal trouble up to the very necks. Imagine a man already under threat of several years in prison, calmly going out and repeating the same action which had brought him in jeopardy!

Like a shipwreck or a man sucked into quicksand, or a drowning man, where almost every resource of friendship and ingenuity is lacking, and yet when one emerges alive, I say simply that I was saved at the last moment.

In speaking analogically, I mean to speak no less rigorously. I was saved at the last moment. My brother and a couple of friends who were planning a new assault upon a new draft center, visited me toward the middle of May in 1968. There, over a long evening of eating and drinking and discussing, they made the proposal once more. I was still caught in the idea that in standing with the resisting students I was doing all that was possible, or indeed helpful. But after the others had left, Philip opened before me the facts of the case, which he had tried so often to outline in correspondence with me. That is to say, it must be evident by now that the government would allow me like myself to do what we were doing almost indefinitely. Even if they did pick us up, it was they who were picking the victim and the time and the place of prosecution. The initiative was entirely in their hands. But in the plan under discussion, the situation was entirely reversed. A few men were declaring that the initiative of action and passion in human history belonged to the peaceable and the resisting.

Toward dawn, I can remember seeing the light. I told Philip that I was with them, that they should allow me some twenty-four hours to subject my decision to possible change of mood. But that if they had not heard from me within that period they should assume that I would be a member of the Catonsville group. And so, as the book of Genesis says laconically, it was done.

We nine invaded the draft office, took out six hundred 1A files and burned them with homemade napalm in a macadam parking lot nearby. I remember so well the heat and fury of that afternoon, and the sense of almost crushing relief with which we faced one another after it was done.

I remember also, when we had been apprehended and put in temporary custody, the expressions on the faces of the F.B.I. men as they entered and saw the

familiar faces of those who had previously been apprehended in a like cause. How their jaws dropped! One of them turned in disgust to a companion and exclaimed, "I'm going to change my religion." Which was, I would think entirely to our point; we having invited men to a change of heart, so that in the case of this one officer to have changed from a conventional Catholic to a Christian, might portend the first success attending our efforts.

We spent eight days in Baltimore County jail in Towson, Maryland. We fasted from all but coffee and juices during those days.

I remember with especial gratitude the warden, Stephen Foster. He was consistently good to us, puzzled as he was by our action, and of a curious integrity which drove him to question and discuss with us the reasons why we had placed our lives in the breach.

I remember also that on the final day we decided to break our fast with a Eucharist. Someone had brought us in a loaf of freshly baked bread. We asked the warden if we might have a bottle of wine. He acceded on condition that he himself might assist our Eucharist. Of course he might. Whereupon around that board table began one of the simplest and most moving of communal actions. "Do this in memory of me." Which is to say in remembering Me, remember yourselves. Put your lives and your souls together again.

The unpredictable savagery of the marshalls is also vividly in my mind. One day, as we were being taken handcuffed from the jail for a court appearance, a young nun who was a dear friend, reached out her right hand to my left in solidarity, as we issued from the jail. One of the marshalls came forward in a swift reptilian move. He crashed down between our hands with a karate blow. "Don't touch!" It was the epitome of the system; he had said it all.

Don't touch — make war. Don't touch — be abstract, about God and Death and Life and Love. Don't touch — make war at a distance. Don't touch your enemy, except to destroy him. Don't touch because in the touch of hand to hand is Michelangelo's electric moment of creation. Don't touch, because law and order have so decreed, limiting the touch of man to man to the touch of night sticks upon flesh.

It must be evident by now that the most powerful and immediate influence upon my life has been that of my brother Philip. Indeed his life he's lived so closely in my own skin, that the idea of his incarceration has placed my own spirit in bondage, and it was many weeks before I could realize that being free was also a way of allowing a larger freedom for him. But I must say also that upon this single relationship had

been built every other meaningful one as primary analogate to secondary, and so on.

But another influence upon the decision that brings me to this hour, has surely been my voyage to Hanoi in February 1968, to bring back the first of the American flyers freed by the North Vietnamese. I will not linger over particulars here; they are told in some detail in my new book just published by MacMillan, "Night Flight to Hanoi."

I have referred elsewhere to a third event which shook my existence in these recent months. It was the self emulation of a sixteen year old boy in front of the Syracuse Cathedral in the spring of 1968. I visited that boy as he lay dying in St. Joseph's Hospital. And I smelled, for the first time, and yet again not for the first time, the odor of burning flesh, was evidence I had seen so often in North Vietnam. The boy died, but not before he had brought something to birth in me. Perhaps it is just that resolve of May whose consequences I am still undergoing and undoubtedly shall for years to come.

And so my life enters upon its middle course. These many beautiful years cannot be lived again. But they are compound in my own flesh and spirit and I take them in a true measure with me to whatever lies ahead.

I have by now published ten books on a variety of subjects, have written numerous articles and poems and plays, have enjoyed all the fruits which America is able to offer those fortunate enough to make it within her system. If I mourn for the death of that system, it is as one who has enjoyed its cup to the depths. If that same vintage has now turned bitter as gall in my mouth, it is because I have seen the society which might have been great according to its own rhetoric, turn murderously against those very men throughout the world to whom it had once offered fair hope. I could no longer drink the fruit of those grapes which had turned to grapes of wrath against the majority of men; which were even now tipping their murderous vessel of death upon the victims in North Vietnam, and which were ready elsewhere to deal the same death to others, whose hopes were too revolutionary or too untimely to be borne with.

If then I must go to prison (and go I undoubtedly must) my hope is that it will be in a spirit neither of alienation nor of bitterness nor of despair. But simply in the hope which has sustained me in better and worse days up to now. May our offering to history open alternatives to official and sanctioned murder as a method of bringing social change. May men of power come to a change of heart, confronting the evidence and quality of the lives we are able to offer for our brothers.

Philip Berrigan



The Last Sunday after Pentecost

Without desiring one, we have a mutual admiration society going with two priests and several seminarians from St. Mary's Roland Park, the Sulpician Theological Center near here. The Warden brings them in to offer the Eucharist every Sunday, which they do with imagination and warmth. For our part, we try to play the role of the bloody but unbowed, fulfilling thereby, some indefinable yet basic need in our friends. One young theologian, his Irish face suffused with feeling, told me raptuously, "You guys are where all of us belong. Whereupon, Tom Lewis gives me the elbow and spectacles, "We might get us a radical from this bunch yet."

The celebrant today, Fr. Jim Finley from Brooklyn, asked me to share a dialog homily with himself and several others. The Gospel was Matthew's eschatology from the 24th chapter, and its theme was hope. Everyone had something to say about hope with Advent beginning next Sunday. And everyone tried to understand what we know to be true that

Jesus Christ is the hope of mankind, these times and this nation.

I said something about Bishop Pike (the following is a lengthy paraphrase), and how it took his son's suicide to help him regain his faith and hope, or substantial portions of them. Now, I would be unfair to Pike if I said that he had lost belief in the hereafter. Rather, he took the position that Christians cannot be sure — there is no evidence for life after death. At any rate, after his suicide in New York City, young Pike supplied evidence by manipulating certain signs of his presence in their English apartment, signs discovered and recognized by his father upon return there. The Bishop responded by contacting a medium, who arranged communication with his son. Or so now, Pike believes in a hereafter.

Few will find fault with Pike's hope in man — he has stood for a questioning and socially relevant Christianity for years. Now his hope in God, and a future with God, has been strengthened by a son not only dead, but against all expectations, an instrument of hope for his father. In a word, the young man accomplished what the commonly accepted authority of Scripture could not: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11, 25-27)

In contrast to Pike's quality of hope, there are examples like Gandhi and Hammarskjöld. Neither were formal believers as Pike is; both were prepared to go beyond him in sacrifice for man. For Gandhi, the rationale was simple — self-realization, the hope of seeing God "face-to face". And Hammarskjöld, revered as a martyr by his colleagues in the U.N., wrote in 1960, 10 months before his death in the Congo; "For him who looks towards the future, the Manger is situated on Golgotha, and the Cross has already been raised in Bethlehem. 'Strive, the pains of death endure, peace eternal to secure.'"

Pike tended to rationalism in his hope; while most Christians tend to superstition in theirs. One is a humanist failing; the other deistic. Both tend to be unfaithful to Christ, who would speak of the last things only in a context dominated by the judgement scene; "for I was hungry and you gave me to eat." (Mt. 25) Our Lord, it would seem, wished to emphasize that hope must correspond both to divine sonship, and to human brotherhood. To center one's hope in man is to compromise the main expressions of hope — optimism, sacrifice, and death. And to center one's hope in God is to risk egotism, withdrawal and despair.

Paradoxically, as purely human reasons for hope decrease around the world, Christian reasons increase. Therefore, Christians ought to be outstanding for their

hope. For those of us who are American, this constitutes a painfully priceless lesson. For America's hope is in its power, power whose definition is the imperial nation-state, whose spirit is capitalist aggrandizement, and whose force is technology. And power whose enormity is, in fact, equalled only by its impotence.

Such power tends to destroy, since it cannot remain powerful unless it subdues the will of others to resist. Less and less is this possible, as Vietnam strikingly shows — and so failure to subdue resistance fosters the tendency to crush resisters. Which invites the threat of having no one left to exploit. Hence, stalemate and a Paris negotiating table.

Pope Paul says that peace is development. It certainly is, depending on one's understanding of development. But of this I am sure — hope is non-violent resistance, rebellion and revolution. It has always been so, but never has the lesson been so forcefully taught. And this is hopeful.

Another situation report to clarify our plight or good fortune, whatever people might decide to call it. We have been literally *here* in Baltimore County Jail since September 4th — no outside exercise, no chance to enjoy the fine, Fall weather. Jail facilities do not allow these extravagances, and we do not crave privileges that other inmates cannot enjoy. But these are facts of existence that do not depress us — we chose them when we chose civil disobedience.

This cellblock is home, at least for the present. Three times a day we leave it for meals that are barely sufficient, yet relished with appetite and humor. We keep strong by daily calisthenics, and keep alive in spirit by prayer, reading and writing. As far as I know, we have grown neither stale nor soft in prison.

We wait for a bail hearing, set sometime within the next two weeks. Denied bail four times already (granted almost automatically with a conviction under appeal), prospects appear slightly better now. And we have decided to accept it, given the opportunity.

As one gets deeper into non-violent dissent, decisions tend to become more intricate, and more difficult. Acceptance or rejection of bail; — a case in point. Who has ever rejected bail? There is no precedent, and when one talks about setting one, most people are tempted to tap their foreheads. Public and legal opinion, plus the outrage of defendants, limit exceptions to virtual non-existence.

We have no interest in setting a precedent, a deeper rationality occupies us. How does one truly identify with those enslaved by tyranny or greed? How does one truly aid the powerless except by choosing powerlessness? And the most urgent question — how does one free the Holy Spirit for his

PHILIP BERRIGAN, S. S. J., the author of *NO MORE STRANGERS*, has served parishes in New Orleans, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, taught at Epiphany College, New York, is a member of the Committee of Southern Churchmen. He is on bail pending appeal of convictions for destroying draft records at Baltimore and Catonsville, Maryland in October 1967 and May 1968. He is completing books on Christianity, racism and war and about his recent prison experiences,

work of reconciliation and peace? In jail or out? Some answers might come from staying in. At the very least, we could illustrate the injustice of our punishment this way; we could illustrate our right to bail by first securing it, and then refusing it.

At the point of final decision however, our friends intervened. They wanted us out. They wanted us out because they suffer over separation more than we do, a gift embarrassing to us and commendable to them. We have to listen to them, owing them what we do. Some of them had influenced us to civil disobedience; others had supported us by choosing it themselves. Therefore, if the government offers bail, a community will accept it.

Meanwhile, the State of Maryland resolutely follows its plan for us. Sometime in the New Year, it will charge us with conspiracy, sabotage, destruction of property, assault upon persons, etc. The charges expand or contract from time to time, depending on imponderables like public opinion, letters to the editor, and firm or slack bowels in the D.A.'s office. As it stands now, all preliminary motions must be filed by January 2nd. Following them, we will probably go to trial before the end of March.

The contempt we feel for such vicious nonsense defies explanation — yet, we strive to keep it studied. The officials most responsible for our indictment are dangerous “little men”, but they have the grandeur of the law behind them, and solid, public opinion. We have no choice but to take them seriously.

Double jeopardy? Certainly, a second trial for the same “crimes”. Will we be convicted? Probably, people often receive a second conviction in similar circumstances. In cases of “immediate danger” — which government arbitrarily decides — federal law enforcement will team up with the state, or the state with the city, to convict with double penalties. So frequently, a man will serve one prison sentence, to be jailed again upon release. For the same crime. And yet, our government prides itself on being one of laws, and not of men.

One of our lawyers is anxious to go to court, convinced that we can win. Winning or losing is not important to us, any more than it was in federal court. More important are the reasons why the law becomes a deterrent weapon in the hands of power — like a fist in a velvet glove, or the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. We suspect that we know why, and we intend to talk about our suspicions at the trial.

A new friend arrives to stay with us, until the federal marshals take him to a federal penitentiary. He is twenty-two, a draft resister — all hair, eyes and spirit. He talks to us like old and trusted friends, conveying the peace and simplicity of a child.

A drop-out from a Midwestern state university, he has followed the road for two years, a pilgrim and I'm sure, an apostle. “I'm not for organizations much — they seem to run people more than people run them. “My thing” is talking to people, but I usually end up listening. Maybe that's more important. Yet what surprises me is the fact that I often get people very mad. I guess my looks makes them afraid, and when I talk, they get more and more uptight.

“A Klansman wanted to kill me in Florida. I was hitchhiking north from Gainesville, and he picked me up. We got to talking, and like Southerners do, I got onto black people. I said a few things and that made him mad. He started to rave about killing “niggers”, and he'd kill me too if he thought he could get away with it. Told me to look in the back seat and sure enough, there was a heavy rifle and a shotgun.

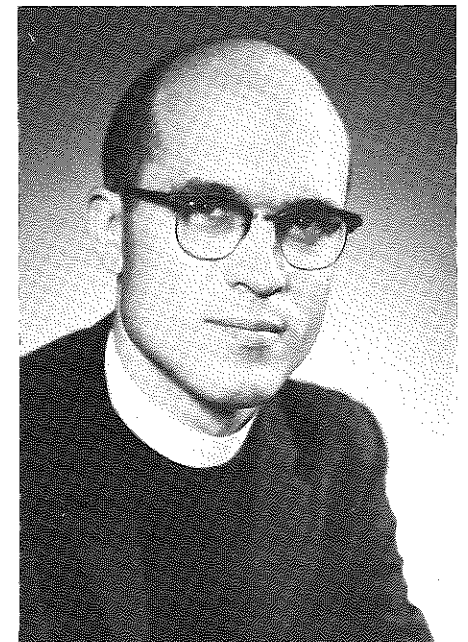
Then a woman passed him fast and cut in to miss a truck coming. He got madder yet and started tailgate her, actually hitting her car in the rear several times. At 80 miles an hour — that poor woman! Then he stopped for gas and kicked me out. Later, I was hitchhiking down the road, and he roared by giving me the finger.”

He refused induction by failing to show up. Then, with no lawyer, he defended himself under the 13th Amendment — involuntary servitude. When they found him guilty and jailed him, he began to fast, refusing both food and water. “It wasn't just my sentence (4½ years), it was that city jail they took me to. It was bedlam, dig? I'm against jails see, but there are jails and there are jails. This one was a gasser. Anyway, after four days, I couldn't get up without going into a spin and falling. My mouth got so dry, I was afraid to swallow, afraid of strangling. They got shocked and asked me where I wanted to go. I said here, so they took me out on a stretcher.”

The evening he arrived, he celebrated his victory with a little water and went to bed. He looked supremely contented as he slept soundly in the light and noise. In the morning, he ate with concentrated purpose and joy. But after two days of us and TV, he asked for isolation. As he left he told me, “I love people, but essentially, I'm a loner. I have to have silence for meditation every now and then. See you guys.”

One of our veteran cons, who had seen more of State prison “holes” than any man I know, paid him this tribute, “He's a born protestor!”

Duncan M. Gray, Jr.



In Defense of the Steeple

The parish church has taken lots of abuse in recent years and is, in large measure, an object of contempt for many within the Church as well as outside it. It is considered obsolete and outmoded; indeed, *dead*, in a sociological sense, as well as in a spiritual sense. Many clergy, frustrated by the forces of conservatism, tradition, and “respectability”, are leaving the parish ministry; and many seminarians hope for some other channel through which to give themselves to their Lord and their Church. (A recent survey in my own communion indicated that only 45% of the men in seminary today want to exercise their ministry in a parish situation!)

In no area of concern is the criticism more pointed — or more justified — than in the area of race relations. Here the failure of the parish church in the white community is most evident, and to try to document this failure would simply be a matter of proclaiming the obvious. The average parish church remains one of the last strongholds of segregation, and significant leadership in this area has been sadly lacking.

DUNCAN GRAY, JR., is Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Meridian, Mississippi, and president of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations.

While not unmindful of the weaknesses and failures of the parish, and sensitive, I trust, to the validity of so much of the criticism leveled against it, I am not yet ready to throw up my hands in despair over the local church. To be sure, other vehicles of ministry and mission are needed badly; but I see these growing up and bearing fruit alongside of and in addition to the parish church, rather than replacing it. Indeed, this is already happening on a significant scale, for which we can give thanks to God. But in our passion for new and more effective forms of ministry, let us not relegate every St. John's by-the-fire-station to the junk heap. There are yet many resources to be tapped in the parish church for witnessing to and making effective the reconciliation of men to God and men to men. More to the point, the parish church may be the one place where this can be done in any final or meaningful way.

Let us confess, first of all, that the parish church as an institution is not a very effective instrument of social change, much less of social revolution. Being a family-oriented institution, it is inevitably conservative in nature and make-up. We won't find many local congregations, *as congregations*, "manning the barricades", marching in the streets, or sitting-in at the Congress, either now or in the future. The involvement of Christians in this kind of activity will be as individuals or as part of some specialized vehicle of ministry and mission. All of which may be quite proper and necessary.

But two things must be remembered about this form of witness. First, under even the best of circumstances, it will involve relatively few people; and, secondly, as essential as it may be, this in itself is not going to bring in the millenium or anything approximating the kingdom of God. We have enough laws, court decisions, and executive orders in effect already to bring about reconciliation between white and black, *if* such could be accomplished by these alone. And yet the degree of separation and alienation seems to be greater than ever before. As important as legal action may be, it still does not get to the heart of the matter: the matter of the human heart.

I am well aware that changing institutions can change people — to a degree. We see many a white Mississippian who only a few short years ago was vowing that "blood would run in the streets" before one Negro child would enter one white school in his community, now taking in stride the black classmates with whom his sons and daughters associate every day and even cheering lustily for them on the football field and elsewhere. But the man himself has changed little. Psychologically, he is as estranged as ever from his black brethren. He has gained a measure of tolerance

in certain areas — which is all to the good — but he is still not ready to accept the Negro as his equal and his brother. Things keep on changing, but somehow they still remain the same.

The Kerner Report says that after all our legislating, politicking, and moralizing of recent years, we still find in America the evil of "white racism" at the heart of our disorder, violence, and alienation. (And this, of course, has produced a "black racism" which only intensifies the problem.) And we know that this is the racism, not just of the Ku Kluxer, but of nearly all of us, even including many who have worked and voted for the laws that were supposed to deliver us. Where do we go to solve *this* problem? What resources do we have to deal with it, when the resources of law and politics are being exhausted so rapidly?

First of all, we go *where the people are*. And in Bible-Belt Mississippi, at least, this means we go to the parish church. The parish church in the white community was hardly the scene of much action during the hey-day of the Civil Rights Movement. Nor is it the scene of much action today in the area of politics and law. But in terms of the basic illness afflicting our nation — in terms of the real root of our problem — I would submit that the parish church is *where the action is* — or ought to be — if we are ever going to cure this illness or solve this problem. For this is where the people are. This is where we deal with human beings, not abstractions of law and politics. This is where human beings are either lost or saved, damned or redeemed; and this is where the real issue will either be won or be lost.

It is understandable that many an "activist" Christian — and I include myself in this category emotionally, if not effectively — is often tempted to write off or close up the thousands of "First Churches" up and down this land of ours because of their seeming irrelevance and impotence. But to do so would be not only to reject these millions whom our Lord loves every bit as much as He does the activist, but also to make a strategic and tactical error of the first magnitude. For it is in these thousands of local congregations across the land that the struggle for the reconciliation of man to God and man to man is going to be won or lost.

In the arena of politics, as in the Western movie, the line is inevitably drawn between the "good guys" and the "bad guys", and the distinctions are relatively easy to make. Furthermore, since there is so little real communication between the two, the image of each remains rather rigidly fixed in the minds of both. But when we deal with real people, caught up in the common perplexities, joys, and sorrows of this life, the distinctions begin to blur, and we tend to see different

degrees of *need*, rather than different degrees of evil. I have seen many a "red-neck" racist in my day, and, with the exception of a few psychotics, I know of none whose basic affliction could not be cured by the same things that I require for my own soul's health: love and acceptance, mercy and forgiveness, compassion and grace.

The Church is in business to mediate these things to the children of men; and most of these children are going to be reached, if at all, through the parish church. Not because the parish church is the only instrument for this work, and not because it is necessarily the best — but simply because this is where most of the children *are*!

This doesn't mean that the parish church can go on being just what it has been all these years — especially the *white* parish church. God forbid! Changes, already long overdue, have to be made: and, by God's grace, they *can* be made, *if* we don't give up on the people and treat them with condescension and contempt. And whatever specific forms these changes take, three underlying principles are essential.

First, there must be regular and meaningful *confrontation* with the issues at stake. Put another way, I suppose this means that we must constantly hear and proclaim God's word of judgement upon our society and ourselves. Obviously, there has been all too little of this in our local congregations. Indeed, we have become masters of the art of evasion and distraction. We have wasted our time, energy, and resources in building programs, bazaars, and banalities. And all too often when God's word of judgement *has* been spoken, it has been in harsh, self-righteous terms that make too neat a distinction between the "good guy" (me) and the "bad guy" (you), when in reality it is "we" who are in this thing together.

The average white church member confronts the issue of race time and time again outside the church; but there he can deal with it in terms of law, economics, and custom, if he is so disposed. But within the parish church he must wrestle with it on the level of conscience, morality, and religion; and he is done a grave injustice if he is not regularly given the opportunity to do so. His mind and heart may not change, but he must have the opportunity to wrestle and to struggle with the real issue for the sake of his own soul.

Secondly, there must be provided by the parish opportunities for experience and channels for service that relate to this basic problem that we face. And here we must be concerned both with the congregation as a whole and with individual members of that

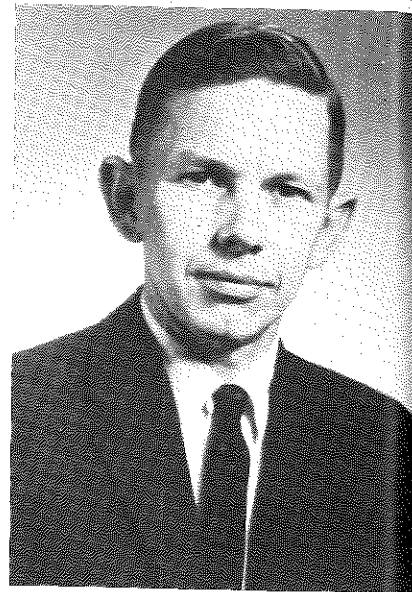
congregation, realizing that the congregation as a whole will never move or grow as fast as some of its members. For example, one white Mississippi parish that I know wrestled long and hard with the matter of housing a headstart center in its parish house, coming up in the end with an answer in the negative. But some two dozen members of that same parish were moved to launch a year-round program of volunteer service in the existing headstart centers so that they as individuals could express their concern. At the same time, the parish itself did undertake the construction and maintenance of a low-rent housing project for poverty level families — a project which would involve all members of the congregation. The parish as a whole could move on one level, while individuals could participate on another, but all received the stimulus from the local church.

In view of the crisis we face today, such an example may seem like pouring cups of water on a forest fire. But we must remember that growth, understanding, and a measure of reconciliation do come from such personal experience and contact, and, also, that these people belong to the overwhelming majority who will never be marching in the streets, but who are, in the final analysis, the real key to the ultimate resolution of our problems.

Finally, though, the parish church must somehow communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And I mean the *real* Gospel; the good news that God loves me, accepts me, and forgives me, where I am and as I am — and that He does this for everyone else also! The good news that He has made me a member of a family the whole world big and that my human brothers and sisters and I are already *one* in Jesus Christ; that God has reconciled us to Himself and to the rest of this family in Jesus Christ, and that we are *already* members one of another. When I can once get this through my thick skull and into my anxious heart, I can stop worrying about human differences; I can stop worrying about status, position, and power, and start worrying about what I am doing to my fellow man by failing to *act* like one whom God has reconciled to Himself.

A few folks seem to have gotten the message, God bless 'em; but the rest of us still have a long way to go. The only real point I would make in this brief sketch is that most of "the rest of us" are to be found *in the parish church*; and if we are ever going to be reached, it's going to be there. That's where the action is — or where it should be — because that's where the people are!

Lucius B. DuBose



And Now The Hemlock

"May you come in?" Of course, of course. Could I really prevent you? In this place coming in is easy; it's going out that's the problem. But only for some of us."

"No, have no fear on that point. I have no privacy here for your intrusion to violate. Come in. I'm rather glad to see a face."

"I am sorry I cannot offer you a chair, the best will have to do. What they think I might do with a chair more ominous than sitting on it I can't imagine; but, then, ordinary logic doesn't seem to apply in this place. What is it you wish from me? A story, no doubt. Correct?"

"Ah, my first estimate of you was accurate. You are another of those earnest young men who feel their calling to unravel the complexities of human behavior and lay out the threads before the public so that the simplest mind may comprehend. You wish people to understand people like me. So you poke around in the personal and public effects of our lives

looking for causes. And when you find one small enough or large enough or obvious enough for the populace to digest, you write your little article. And they understand well enough; only what they understand is not the truth. In the name of human understanding you rob us of the mystery that makes us human."

"But forgive me that outburst. I know you mean no harm. One only grows weary of being classified and impaled for exhibition on writers' ball point pens."

"Now, what do you wish me to say? That I am guilty? Or not guilty? Does it really matter what admissions or protestations I make, or if I make one or the other, or any at all? No, my case is already decided, is it not? In a hundred, a thousand, five thousand different minds the verdict has been handed down already — a hundred, a thousand, five thousand different variations of guilty or innocence, according to the mind-set of a hundred, a thousand, five thousand different persons, whatever the number of those who care a whit about what has happened. So, what difference will it make what I say? There is no need to argue the case any further; all that remains is to count the ballots."

"But you insist. You wish to hear my side of the story. Surely there is no need. But, as you wish."

"Yes, I am guilty. That surprises you, that a person such as I should so readily submit to their accusations? But hear me out. I am guilty. At least they are quite sure that I am, and according to their understanding of what has happened, most assuredly it is as they say. I make no bones about it; indeed, I am eager to acknowledge that I did and said exactly what they accuse me of doing and saying. That much, at least, is the truth. But, of course, the way they tell it is something else. They start with the facts, you know, and they build upon them, embellish them with certain decorations, color them just a shade to suit their mood. But, if one can overlook the exaggerations that intense emotion and hostility inevitably evoke, then, I must confess it, I am guilty just as they claim."

"That is, I did certain things, committed certain acts, and made certain protests. However, that what I did and said should rightly be looked upon by them as unlawful and should cause in me recriminations is another matter altogether. Obviously, I look upon the whole affair from an entirely different slant, else I could not speak with you now in the calm manner that I do, or maintain my peace of mind under these singularly threatening circumstances."

"You wish to hear my version of the story. Do

you really? Are you sure you'd rather not join them in the banquet of hate that has been set in my honor and glut yourself along with the others on my reputation, my dignity, my prestige? It is all served up for the coarse public to chew upon, you know — all tossed together like a fancy green salad, served on a huge platter with my head as the center-piece. Ah, it is really funny — if one can allow himself a lapse of cynicism (and I certainly think I am entitled to that luxury) — one is a figure in the community, one is respected, one is known. As he walks down the street he is spoken to with pride by persons he has never seen before, even children. And then . . . well, then one refuses to pronounce the proper shibboleths and to hold the proper viewpoints. One kicks out of his path one day some oh, so sacred cow — just an impious nudge with the toe — and that nudge stirs to life the hidden memories of old fears and guilts. Love and affection turn to hate, a more sudden and complete transformation than any fairy godmother with her magic wand ever affected on any Cinderella. The black bile of generations of repressions vomits all over him, and he becomes the enemy."

"It was the truth, you see, that they couldn't stand — the truth about themselves. They couldn't stand the loss of their tyrannies. They could not stand one not repeating their formulas, or questioning their time-worn viewpoints, or testing the resiliency of their idols."

"But it was for their own good. For years they had been drifting, almost imperceptibly — as one slides through all the overlapping degrees of drowsiness into sleep — into the narcosis of a comfortable system of ideas and attitudes and loyalties which provided them a sense of order and the peace of familiarity. They had grown complacently familiar with their certain pattern of life; they knew what was expected of them; they had come to terms with their intellectual slavery. In old age the tyrannies that constricted spiritual expansion and eroded their capacity to envision the human good in any other terms than their own appeared to them as tame, domesticated pets. But they were not as they appeared. Their sacred cows were not the docile, convenient beasts they seemed; they were quiet, smiling monsters that had attached themselves to the breasts of their souls. They did not give milk; they took it — the precious milk of the human spirit. Oh, yes, souls have breasts, too; and most of the time they are dangerously exposed to the lechers who sell peace for soul's milk."

"And I saw it. Oh, it was not easy. Many times in those years my eyelids slowly closed and I would have to force them open. And on occasions I blinked. Do you know how hard it is not to blink? One's tear

MR. DUBOSE refers to the following reflections as his attempt at "a literary solution" of his dismissal from a parish in South Carolina in 1963. The sermon precipitating his dismissal, "My Home Town," on the death of four black children by bombing as they worshipped at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is printed in *THE UNSILENT SOUTH* (John Knox Press). Mr. DuBose is Assistant Pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

ducts run and the eyeballs smart and become blood-shot from particles of dirt. Somehow I kept them open and suffered the foreign particles. The tears washed away the preferred illusions and I saw things as they were. I saw the inward compromises, the hollow places in their souls from which the juice of livingness had been drained. I saw behind their stock smiles and accustomed politeness a void without love. I saw the lies required to keep their loyalties intact and the crippling contortions that conformity demanded. And I saw the hurt . . . oh, the piercing hurt of it all.

"If only I could have slept, that precious soul-sleep of the satisfied. I wanted to, and I . . . and, no, I did not want to. However, sight as well as sleep becomes a habit, and having once seen and known what one sees, one must see more. And the more one sees, one must see more. And the more one sees the more difficult it is to remain silent about what one knows he sees. Speech is to seeing as silence is to sleep. My fate was sealed by unsealed eyes. I was chosen, it seemed — a sort of negative vocation to which I was called by the accident of indiscriminate seeing — not to conceal what I knew to be the truth. So, in the end, I spoke out, I revealed, I protested.

"Now do you see? It was not as they say. I am not their enemy? I am their only friend. Isn't that so? Does not a real friend speak the truth, though it hurt? Does not real love demand just that, the slicing surgery of truth? Then, can you not believe me when I say that the end I sought was their own good?

"You are not convinced. What can I say?

"You ask why I betrayed their confidence in me by waiting so long to speak out. Is that a fair assessment? Was it not I who was betrayed? Yes, betrayed by their confidence in me. They trusted me, they took me in, they loved me. That is, they loved what they thought was me. They admired an image they thought was me. They pointed me out to their children and implied they should emulate me. I was idolized; but it was an idol of their own making they worshipped, it was not me. And I came to hate that idol. I hated their image of me. Yes, I hated them for not allowing me to be what I was, to be myself."

"Why did I not put my cards on the table to begin with? Why did I let them go on believing in their false image? Why did I not say, 'Look, you've got it all wrong, I'm not what you think I am.'? Why, indeed? I guess at first I didn't see what was happening. Why didn't I see it? I suppose . . . yes, it is true, I like it. Yes, yes, I liked it. Is that so wrong? To

like being loved and respected? Is it not the natural human response? One does not stop at first to question motives when one is elevated by the crowd to position of respect and prestige. One wants to believe that it is deserved, and he does believe it. It is only later . . . it was only later that I saw how I was being used.

"And when I did see it, finally, I was . . . afraid. Not of them. Not of what they would do to me if rejected their mold. I was afraid . . . of losing what I had gained: *my* comfort, *my* prestige, *my* place. And now it comes out. Yes, I had offered my breasts also to the lechers. I too was selling soul's milk for security. And I saw that, too. I saw my weakness and hated it. It was not their dishonesty I despised; it was my own. I struck out at them because I saw in them what I was becoming. I wanted to destroy it. To kill it. It was not to save that I spoke out, it was to destroy. It was not for love that I acted, it was for hate. It was not to heal, it was to kill.

"Oh, the hurt of it. I see it now . . . the hurt of it. And they are right, I am the enemy. I hated; I did not love . . . Oh, God, the hurt of it.

"But what is done is done. And I am judged guilty. By them. . . and, yes, by me, I am guilty. But what will you decide? What will history decide? How will God in heaven judge what has happened in my case? Who knows? A tyranny was exposed, for whatever motives. A truth was spoken, however qualified by complexity of my own neurosis. Can anyone in such circumstance claim purity of heart? Some saint, a Joan or a Becket, perhaps. But I am not made of the stuff of martyrs; I know that now. When I go to the stake it will be with no hymn on my lips to resound above the crackling tinder. I will burn knowing that the fire was deserved.

"But, I ask you, what does that prove? Can you now say with assurance that you know what happened, having heard the story? I am not even confident of that, and I am the story. And what if history should decide that what I did was only the last, desperate cry of a drowning man interested only in saving his own soul? Is that the only question? Is it not also relevant to ask what other souls were saved by having heard that cry?

"Well, there is nothing more to say. You have heard my side of the story, and more. You have forced me to my knees in confession. Not that I hold it against you. The truth will out, as they say. Only spare me your judgements; I've enough of my own.

"And now . . ."

AL ULMER is a knowledgeable nondescript who lives on a section of the Love place in Vilas, North Carolina.

Al Ulmer



Pro Patria, Pro Eccleasia, Applachian Style

.....and this granite pedestal, bearing the words, "Pro Patria", What do they mean, anyway?

(from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters)

In April of 1967 my wife and I, after two years teaching in West Africa with the Peace Corps and three years working in the civil rights movement in the South, quit our jobs and moved to a mountain top in northeastern Tennessee. Late one warm spring evening in Atlanta, we piled our belongings into and all over an old Jeep pick-up truck and set out for the Applachian Mountains. For six months we lived in a used tent while building our log and stone house on

the highest point designated in "the old Love place" deed.

It was a wonderful six months. We watched the maples rush foolishly into spring and lose their red buds to a late freeze. We saw the hickories flaunt their wild-looking orange blossoms. Whole hillsides soon were covered with pink and white dogwoods. We walked quietly in the woods careful not to step on the bright red and green tea-berry plants. Later our mountain showed off the laural and rhododendron. We worked hard, slept deeply as a reward, drank the cool water of a spring running out beneath two huge evergreens, and waited anxiously for our first garden seeds to sprout.

For two people tired of cities, racism, and war news, the beauty of the mountains offered a special refreshment. It was so very good to get away from it

all — the daily barrage of statistics detailing the wheres and hows of death but never the whys, and the withering effect race hatred has on everything it touches, especially love and reason.

But one doesn't escape from such things easily. A farmer from down the mountain came with his team of horses to plow up an area for our garden. He urged me to try to run a straight furrow and laughed gently at my problems coordinating horses, lines, plow and ground. Two weeks later his son came home from Vietnam in a plastic bag, less than one month before his discharge. The couple brought us the news, an old one-eyed lumberman and his wife, began to cry as they told us of their neighbor's loss. They apologized, saying it reminded them of the two sons they had "signed for" who also had not come home.

A month later I helped a local farmer cut and haul some poplar logs to be used as rafters for our house. A young man, a school drop-out, was handling the team of horses in order to work off a loan. It was a fine day, the woods smelled fresh after a light rain. We worked hard cutting only the straightest of the trees, then hauling them down the mountain to the truck. We carried a load up the mountain to our building site. When we passed the house where the young man lived his aunt was on the porch waving a letter and called for us to stop. It was the young man's induction notice.

In a recent article in the *New York Review of Books*, Andrew Kopkind stated that the time for reflection and meditation is past and men should instead be out talking to other men. Basically I am in agreement with this, but I confess to not knowing what to say to a man who left school in the fourth grade (jumped out the window, he says, when the teacher tried to make him read) when he tells me he has lost his son in a war I think to be unjust, illegal and immoral.

We do talk with our neighbors, however, and our conversations range over quite a variety of topics though they usually begin and end with the weather. Somewhere in between the war works its way in, for although the news of the war is not as full here in the mountains, the effects of it are. There is hardly a family without a son in the small community of which we are somewhat a part. Often the son has failed to complete high school, rarely has one attended college. So for the sons of our neighbors the Army is inevitable. It is often the first time a young man has left the mountains. On occasion it is also the last.

Harley Nixon is a worn out man in his fifties.

He farms a small patch of tobacco, collects herbs and hires out to make ends meet. Harley's been known to stretch a story. Not long ago he told my wife and me that when he went in the Army at the start of WWII he was placed in a "country" company and given WWI food rations to eat. "That's right," says Harley emphatically, "1917 stamped on the bottom of every can. It was a good while 'til we got them new kind of 'K' rations. We ate 'C' rations."

I mentioned Nixon's story to a man who lives down the other side of the mountain, Presley Trivette. Presley has a way of always hooking his WWII experiences into a conversation. I thought he might be someone who would have an opinion as to the truth of the "C" ration's story.

"That's right!," said Presley after hearing the tale. "Old Nixon's right. Why I remember when we shipped out. I was on the first troop ship to leave the country. Didn't know where we was going 'til we got where it was. . . I was a cook on the ship and first morning out they told us to fix up an omelette for the men, and when I started in to cracking the eggs I danged if every one of 'em wasn't hollow as could be. Nothing but dust in 'em. Well, I looked on the crate and sure enough there stamped big as life was '1917'. Them eggs'd been in cold storage for twenty-five years or better."

We laughed and my wife offered Presley another cup of coffee.

"Good coffee, Robin," said Presley, "but you know the best cup of coffee I ever did have was on the Sandwich Islands, when we was standing guard duty. Used to have to keep a tin a sand right hand to throw on the fire when the Japs'd come over. . ."

Trivette says we should drop "the bomb" and get it over with in Vietnam. I asked him what he thought about killing all the innocent people along with those he thought guilty.

"Did it in Japan, didn't we? It got us home then didn't it?," replied Trivette.

In late fall we finished the house and left the mountain for several months. We went to New York City to work with an organization called The Committee of Returned Volunteers (CRV). CRV is made up of people who are also concerned with the United States' involvement in Vietnam and with its foreign policy generally. We once again read the daily papers we went to a rally for Dr. Spock and the "Boston Five" attended by over 4000 people; we heard David Schoenbrun, the ex-CBS correspondent, speak elo-

quently on the history of the U.S. in Vietnam; we listened to a non-profit radio station's evening summaries of the Tet offensive, the news gained mainly from French newspapers and wire services we watched Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and Ambassador Bunker, perform on Meet the Press; saw Felix Greene's movie "Inside North Vietnam", and in mid-February we came home to the mountains to begin clearing land for a crop of cabbage, bell peppers and strawberries.

In the middle of clearing a patch of woods one day my chain saw ran out of gas. We climbed into the Jeep and set out for the local country store. On the way down the mountain we stopped by J. R. Pride's house to inquire if J.R. had had the time to cut the oak flooring we had ordered a month back. J.R.'s the hardest working man I have ever met. He cuts timber so fast the story in the valley has it that half the woods is still falling when J.R.'s home washing up for supper. He has several acres of tobacco, he plows for most of the county, hays for ten or more farmers, and just manages to stay on the farm.

"J.R.'s out cutting a new boundry of timber he's got," his wife told us. "He says it oughta get cut for the sap gets up so as it won't hurt the ground for the next tree plantin'. You all come on in by the fire for a minute."

We asked her to tell J.R. we'd stopped by about the lumber and after discussing her new wood burning stove at some length were about to leave when Mrs. Pride said, "I know J.R.'ll try to get that lumber for ya. He's right good about doin' what he says he'll do. But ya know he's about covered up with the work. Our oldest boy's helping him with the timber over to Big Fork, but ya know he passed his physical test yesterday and I guess that means the Army's going to get him for the summer's out. Lord, I wish they'd let him stay through the summer to help J.R. He's got so much work needs doin' . . . I tell J.R. he oughta talk to the draft board and tell 'em he needs that boy through the summer. It wouldn't hurt none to ask, would it?"

We mumbled something about that sure was a shame and shook our heads. We were moving towards the door not saying anything when Mrs. Pride said, "Lord, that war over there is bad. I just don't know what's gonna happen. I reckon it's just gonna get worse. Lord, it's bad."

I said I thought it was a terrible war and . . . but Mrs. Pride cut in, "I don't know what's gonna happen do ya all? Harold (her next oldest son), he's more a nervous type than George. Maybe they won't take him. Guess ya gotta have a crooked spine or a busted up leg or something, though, for them not to want ya."

I guess they get 'bout everybody 'round here." Mrs. Pride continued saying, "Ya know, I don't know what to think. Them Cubans grabbed another plane the other day. I tell ya what I think, we gonna get everybody sent over there and them Russians gonna just step right in and take over right here. That's what they're wantin'. Anyhow, that's how I see it in my little mind."

Mrs. Pride said the last bit with a smile, a smile half hidden by her hand as we had surprised her without her teeth in and she was somewhat embarrassed. She lost most of her teeth after her eighth child was born a couple of years ago. She's not forty years old yet.

In the Jeep headed for the store we laughed about the similarity between Mrs. Pride's comments and a statement by Harry Caudill, the Kentucky lawyer and author, in a recent article in *The Saturday Review*. Caudill, referring to a county grand jury's indictment of a Vista Volunteer and two other poverty workers, on charges of "promoting and spreading communistic theory of the violent and forceful overthrow of the government of Pike County," had said the grand jury "was certain that the revolution was about to begin in Pike County, and that the neighboring counties, in domino fashion, would fall to the enemy." It appeared that "the Russians were coming" to northeast Tennessee just in case the domino theory didn't prove itself true.

On the way back up the mountain after buying the gasoline three men were cutting and splitting oak rails by the side of the road. One of the men was Harley Nixon of "C" ration's fame. We stopped the Jeep to say hello and my wife asked Nixon what the split logs were for.

"Sellin' 'em over to Boone," said Nixon. "My boy there's countin' 'em now. We trying to get a hundred to make a load. They sell 'em to big shots to make fences around their houses. You know, them morticed kind a fence big shots have got."

Nixon asked me if I had anything to do with the local poverty program, a four-county organization with headquarters in Boone, N.C. I had mentioned to him once that I had been a member of a review team for a part of their program. I said I hadn't since the past summer, after which Nixon said, "Ya know, I wouldn't mind working for 'em, but ya know they tell me they got a bunch of communists in that thing now. (Shades of Pike County — they are everywhere.) My sister she went down to a big meetin' they had the other month and they had some preacher fella there talkin', saying they oughta get rid a all these here little local churches 'cause their preachers wasn't trained up right to preach God's word and have one

big church in Boone for everybody to go to. Well, my sister wasn't havin' none a that. . . Anyhow, they don't pay nobody like me nothin' over there."

I said it had been my experience that whenever a few poor people started to get anything somebody always says the communists are taking over because it's such a nice way to get most people to act without thinking.

Nixon didn't reply to what I'd said but pointed to the Jeep and asked, "Ya get your truck fixed up yet?"

"No," I said. "It still needs the brakes worked on pretty bad."

"Well, I ain't saying this 'cause he's my cousin but Allan'll fix it so where it'll stay fixed. You take it to him. He's pretty covered up right now though, what with the Army taking that boy of his'n."

Our neighbors are very attached to the "little local churches" Nixon was talking about. "Local" is a good word to use to describe the church's influence in the community. It is as if the mountains are barriers over which "love ye one another" can't quite climb. Within the valley the church is best described as a social function, one at which attendance is required, and which also serves, as in most churches in America, as a weekly demonstration of one's faith and goodness to one's neighbor.

The church is needed socially. It is almost the last thing holding together what is left of community consciousness. The post office is gone, a place where you often saw your neighbors and had time for casual conversation. In its place is a rural mail carrier one never sees, and a number. The local school "was taken away from us", as one man explained it to me, and now a school bus belongs to the community in place of a school. A number of people have spoken of their dissatisfaction with the consolidated school. Some are concerned with the 6:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. day it makes for their children, others see it as "the government" making their kids "go to school with the niggers", presumably nullifying whatever gains made in educational quality they all agree the program provides. Vacant buildings in varying degrees of decay signal where local general stores found improved roads with supermarkets at their ends to much with which to compete. Another meeting place done away with.

So the church is all that's left and Sundays and Wednesday evenings is get together time and a chance to see who didn't come to church and hopefully to find out why for later distribution. And it is also a time to worship the Lord and to study Scripture. In a way the church is a fancy general store where everyone gets together but where the subject is rarely ever

relevant to what's happening in the ghettos, in Vietnam, or in the 2/3's of the world where people are hungry (topics that are discussed in the few remaining general stores, but *without* any reference to how Christ might have felt about them), and where only one guy gets to talk.

One of the subjects talked about at great length is drinking. An inquiring Pharisee might learn that "the great commandment" is THOU SHALT NOT DRINK! So strictly enforced is this commandment that the one-eyed wood-cutter and his wife were publicly expelled from the church for breaking it. Of course, almost all the Christians who had the pleasure of judging their neighbors drink also, but they go to unbelievable lengths to conceal it. The wood-cutter doesn't and so consequently had to be punished. The hypocrisy of it all may be discouraging but unlike the Senate of the United States provides at times a good laugh. A father and son team run a mountain farm not far from here. Both take an occasional drink but neither of them know of the other's sinful ways. Imagine the plight of a man with a moderate capacity who is helping with the haying. Dad has his bottle in the barn and is sharing freely with his friend, frequently cautioning, "Now mind you, Jim don't know nothin' about my drinking, so don't you ever let on. . . ." — Jim has his bottle down in the shed, and is also sharing it freely, occasionally reminding his drinking buddy, "Wouldn't want Dad to know 'bout my drinking ya know". A man staying both solemn and sober in such a devilish cross-fire should be forgiven if the blasphemous thought "and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son. . ." sneaks up on him.

Beyond local morals it is difficult to see where the church is helping its members gain a better understanding of God's work on the other side of the mountains. There probably is not a person in the community who would not meet Jesus' test of neighborliness, or who would not invite any hungry man to eat at his table, black or white, *as long* as the event takes place in the mountains. With such a decent base from which to build a better understanding of race, war, over-population, and desperate poverty (the matter that should surely be the real concern of the Gospel and reconciliation), it is doubly disappointing that the church has failed so miserably.

In a word, the church in Appalachia is the Church in America. Except that it performs its social function more effectively because it performs it openly and genuinely — that, and that it just might be the last and the best resource in the mountains for making real the brotherhood of all men.

Not long ago, a farmer offered me a load of cow

manure for our garden if I would clean out his shed. I agreed and took the truck down the mountain early in the morning. As I passed Compton Pruitt's house with the Jeep heaped high with cow dung, I saw Compton in the yard. For several days I had been hoping to talk with him about buying one of his horses, so I stopped. Compton and his wife, Charlotte, and Clarence — a young fellow who lives with them, gathered up on the porch and we sat and talked awhile.

"See ya got a load a 'sugar'," Charlotte said.

"Yeah, Dean gave it to me," I answered.

"Boy, that'll be good on you'un's garden," said Compton.

We sat a bit longer, nobody saying anything, then Clarence said, "Guess everybody they draft from now on'll be going in the Marines."

"That's what we seen on television last night, they gonna take everybody from 18 to 45. Need 'em to take care a all them niggers carrying on like they been a doin'," said Charlotte. "My sister's boy, he lives up in Illinois and he told her it's a sight what they doin' up there, burning everything and all. They killed 'em a little one-half year old baby the other night, what he told her.

Silence.

"You ever been in the service?" Charlotte asked me.

"No, I'm a conscientious objector to war," I answered. "My wife and I served two years in the Peace Corps."

We talked about the weather and the coming thunder storm and my straw hat. Charlotte asked if Robin and I would go to Sunday School Easter Sunday as guests of her son, Jimmy. The church was having a contest to see which child could bring the most new people to church on Easter. There was a prize for the winner and Jimmy just knew we'd go to help him win.

"Why the first thing the preacher said about that contest Jimmy asked me right thar in church if he couldn't ask Al and Robin to go with him," said Charlotte.

I said I didn't think we'd be able to go this coming Sunday but thanked them for asking us.

"Was you glad or was you sorry when you heard Martin Luther King a gettin' killed?", asked Charlotte. She has a way of looking right through your eyes when she talks to you. You can meet her eyes but they aren't there and you end up looking right through her when you answer.

"It made me real sad," I said. "I thought he was a great man. To me it was a national tragedy, and a personal one, too."

"Oh," said Charlotte.

"What did you think about it when you heard?" I asked.

"Well, you know, I hate to see anybody get killed, but. . ."

Compton interrupted, "Ya know he was a askin' for it, but a fella couldn't help but being for some of the things he was for. I didn't agree with everything he was for though. Now if it'd been one a them other two race leaders, what's their names, what's always talkin' 'bout violence, well then that'd been somethin' different."

"Seems to me men just have got to learn to settle their differences without using violence," I said. "I believe in what Dr. King believed in, the use of non-violence. You know Negroes have got fair complaints and King was doing his best to try and get things changed peacefully. I don't think Negroes have ever got a fair chance in this country."

Silence.

Finally Compton said slowly, "Ya know, I think old Abraham Lincoln had something different in mind for the niggers than what they got but he got assassinated a 'fore he could let it get known."

Compton didn't expand upon his statement, although we all waited a bit to see if he had an idea of what it was Lincoln had had in mind.

"He was a man ahead of his times," said Clarence, "that's what they been sayin', that he was a man ahead of his times." He didn't say whether he was talking about Lincoln or King.

The talk went to a description of how Dr. King had been shot. "They showed it on T.V.," said Charlotte. "Said somebody called to him to come out on the balcony and he was alookin' down talking to somebody on the ground when he got shot."

"They gonna have 'em a time catching that fella," said Compton, "if it was just one of 'em that done it, that is."

Compton, it turned out had changed his mind about selling his horse. He said he would ask over in North Carolina where his father was from and see if there was one for sale over there and let me know before the end of the week if he could.

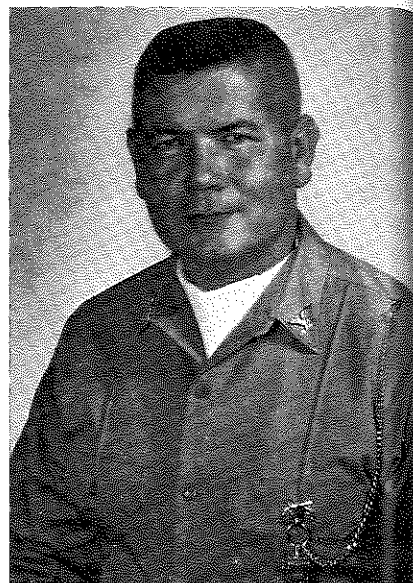
"Fine," I said. "Come up and see us, you hear?"

"We been layin' off to do that for a couple of days, Al. We'll be up directly. You stay with us now."

"No thanks, I better get on up the mountain and spread that manure before the rain gets here."

I wound my way up the mountain, shifting into low gear the last part of the way. The maples were budding hopefully and here and there you could see a hickory branch with swellings on it. Spring was coming once again to the mountains.

Raymond E. Cranford



Letter from North Carolina Quaker to Quaker

Raymond Cranford
Route 1 - Box 404-C
Ayden, North Carolina

20 November 1968

Honorable Richard M. Nixon
President-elect
Hotel Pierre
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

I am a tobacco farmer in eastern North Carolina. My county (Greene), with my help, went kind of strongly for Gov. Wallace. But you were elected; you are our President. We will have to live with you; and you will have to live with us.

But we really don't think we "lost" this past election. We got almost 10 million folks to go behind the curtain and cast a real tough vote. So two months from now, you'll take the oath and be our new President. And my question, Sir, is what kind of leader you will be?

Down here, we remember President Johnson getting on the television the morning after Mrs. Liuzzo was murdered, and the President told us: "Return to decent society, before it's too late." That was his message to the white ghetto, and it made us mad as hell. We couldn't remember a President saying anything threatening like that to a whole group of people, like say the Mafia, or the Black Panthers, or the Communist Party. Then, a couple of months later, President Johnson was back on the television, talking to a joint session of Congress, and he had a much different message for the black ghetto: "We shall overcome."

Well, we have our problems here in the white ghetto. See the report of the President's Commission on Rural Poverty, "The People Left Behind." We have bad schools and bad housing, low income, high unemployment, poor medical services, etc. The black ghetto got billions of dollars worth of programs (which didn't do those folks much good, incidentally). The white ghetto got the FBI and tapped phones and Presidential threats, and that did even less good. Well, we're not angels down here in the white ghetto, but at least we haven't yet burned any cities to the ground. Maybe we should have; maybe then somebody would notice that people other than black folks have some real problems in this country. They say it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease; maybe we should "squeak" a little louder.

My family has been kind of lucky in recent years. Some money came into the family, so technically speaking I'm not a "po' white" any more. But I can remember how it felt when I was. And that's the way it still is for most of the white folks in Greene County.

Like you, Sir, I was raised in a Quaker family. And like you, I chose to go into military service during World War II.

As you go into the Presidency, I know that you will be tested. The Russians will test you. The Chinese will test you. Black people will test you. We will test you. There's a guy here in North Carolina, with whom I've had something of a falling out in recent years, but he has a good line about all of us. He says, "Without our robes on, we look just like people." I think maybe our test of you will determine whether or not you are able to deal with us and treat us like people, or (as President Johnson did) like some sort of collection of weird monsters from the zoo.

I surely do hope that you can find it in your heart, Sir, to remember the white ghetto. Because if you do not, we are capable of far more serious explosions than any that have yet occurred in the black ghetto. I shall pray for you and for the country, but most of all I will continue to pray for my own people. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Raymond E. Cranford". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

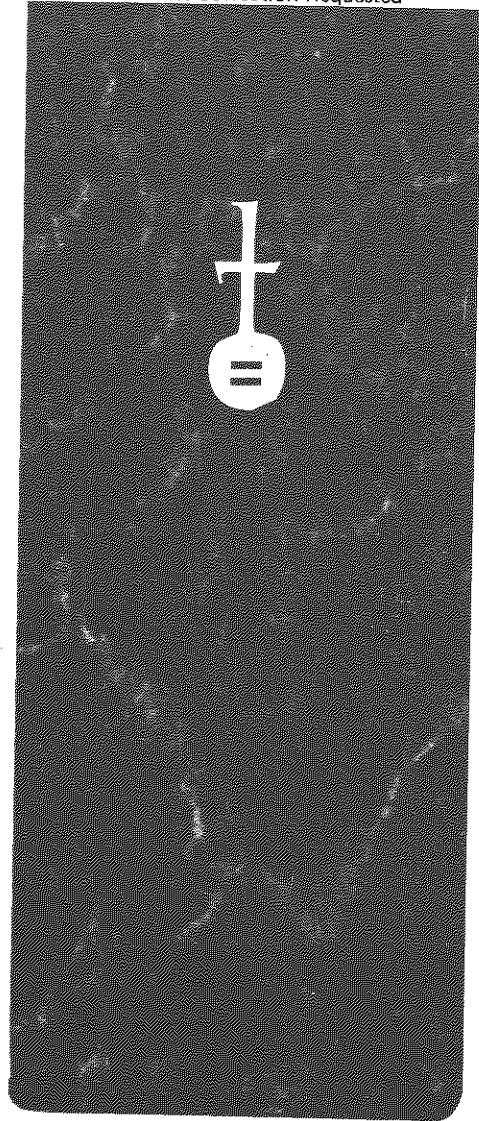
RAYMOND E. CRANFORD

RAYMOND CRANFORD is a North Carolina tobacco farmer, business man, and a long time leader in a segment of the North Carolina Klan, who served for years in the combat Marines in World War II and Korea. At press time he had not had a response to his letter.

THE COMMITTEE OF SOUTHERN CHURCHMEN

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