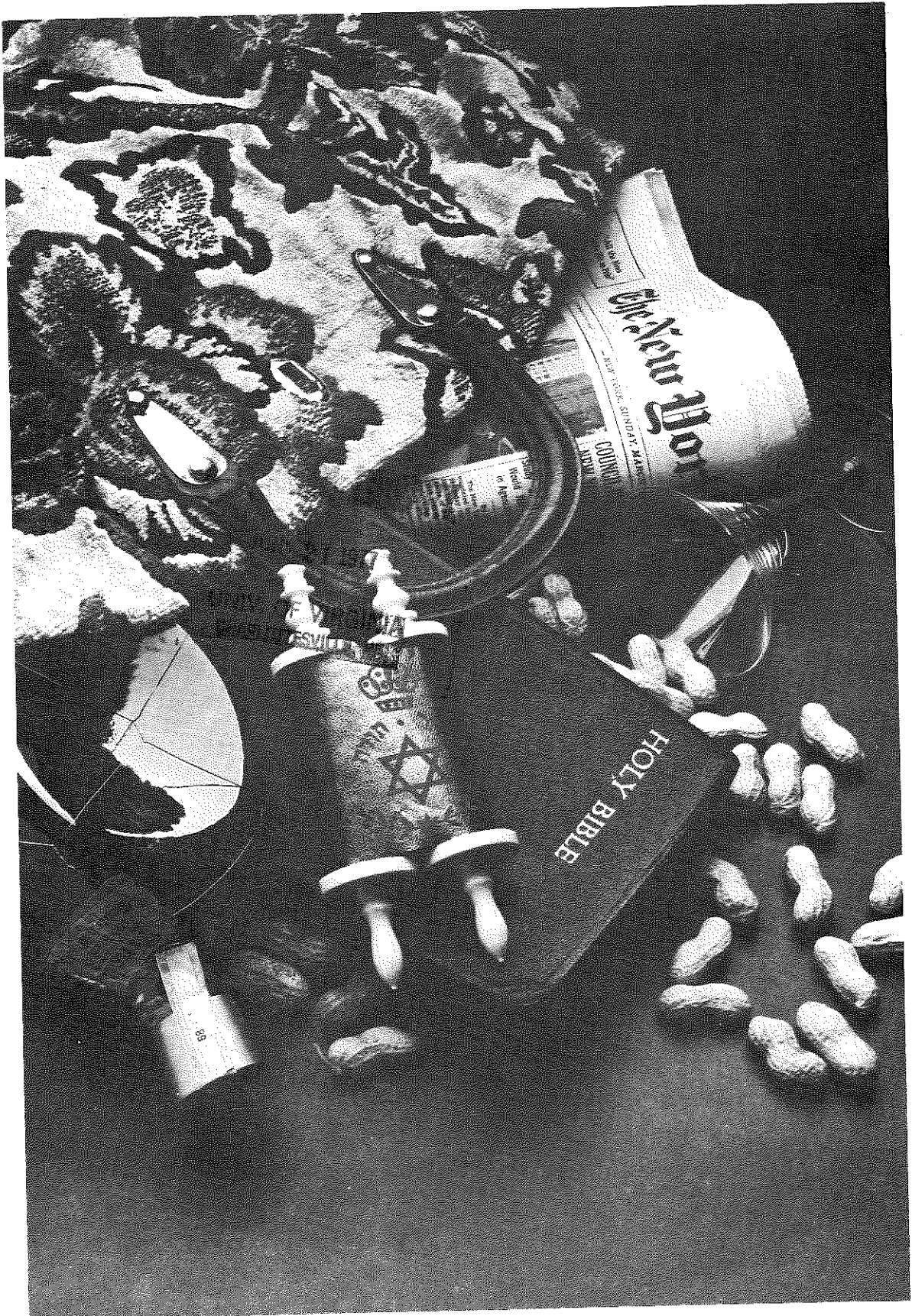


KATALLAGETE BE RECONCILED

Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen

SPRING 1977



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K37

FANNIE LOU HAMER
1917 - 1977

"So we are faced with a problem that is not flesh and blood, but we are facing principalities, and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places: That's what St. Paul told us."

BUELL KAZEE
1900 - 1976

"... Were you considered to be a fiery preacher?"

"No. Not much. I teach a lot, and then I drive the thing in."

FROM VINE DELORIA, JR.



Dear KAT subscriber:

Some years ago, Jim Holloway invited me to write an article for Katallagete. I did, although with some hesitancy.

The response to my piece was astounding because I never knew so many people of varying interests and beliefs read the magazine.

More than that. Being a post-Christian, I was pleasantly surprised at the degree of sophistication represented by the readers and their refusal to accept ideological orthodoxy as the price of publication.

KAT, it seemed to me, was one of the few magazines willing to explore ideas, gently chide minds, and move boats rather than simply rock them. It fulfilled, in my mind the prophetic function to plant new ideas after one had rooted out misconceptions.

That kind of intellectual freedom is priceless as a spiritual treasure - but it costs money in a material sense.

KAT must be kept alive and healthy. There is no reason that we can't get together and make one of the important forces of new ideas in American society far beyond its present considerable span of influence.

So I have two requests.

FIRST, KAT is tax-exempt and we could all drop \$25-\$50 in the mail for it with the assurance that next tax season we would not be pressed to scour the receipts for possible deductions.

SECOND, we could all get three friends to subscribe to KAT in the coming year. That would mean a subscription every other month for the rest of the year - not a difficult task but certainly one with a profound cumulative effect for KAT.

We operate, as you know, with a minimum overhead and we lack the finances to put on a sophisticated subscription drive. Moreover, we avoid large organizational structures which consume funds that could better be spent on the magazine itself.

Forms are available in the back of this issue of the journal. Please note the change of address.

And remember - no one can build anything for us - we must do it ourselves if it is to have any meaning - so let's pitch in and make KAT the most important publication in America.

KATALLAGETE BE RECONCILED

Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen

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Box 936 — College Station
Berea, Kentucky 40404

IN PLACE OF

"ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . ."

*For Fannie Lou Hamer and Buell Kazee
(the reasons obvious)*

Who will say "No" and mean *No!*, "Yes" and means *Yes!* ... and accept the consequences. Today? Whenever?

Words today — in religion and politics are the most obvious examples — resemble nothing so much as the doings of the children of Israel in the time of King Ahab and Elijah. Thus spoke Elijah: "*How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Ba'al, follow him.*" The text proceeds without interruption: "*And the people did not answer him a word.*" And that is that. What more do we need to describe Christianity in our society and politics? "*And the people did not answer him a word.*" Talk about biblical authority! Throw those passages up against "contemporary theology," or the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Sociology* or the endeavors of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

To calculate words to mean everything and therefore nothing is to hide from and reject the truth. Confronted with Elijah's question about the truth, we do "*not answer him a word,*" despite the many and subtle words

we employ to mean everything and therefore nothing. But there is another way. Consider the Reverend Buell Kazee. Asked about trends the current jargon describes as "strategies to insure the relevance of religion in a 'world come of age,'" the Reverend Kazee nailed it down this way. "Sophistication is what it is. But the old truth, the truth that we know as 'Amazing Grace'! is *back there!* 'Amazing Grace' isn't a new thing. You can read it back there in Jeremiah (6:16) at the time he was saying, 'Come back to the old paths, come back to the old paths!'"

It is "the difference between a genius and an apostle" all over again. Passion for "relevance" is self-indulgence: it permits us to be everything, to do anything. Peace-is-war and violence-is-liberation. Love-is-hatred and torture-is-compassion. Freedom-is-domination and slavery-is-service.

To equivocate truth with words ... is to lie. To identify the Gospel's gift of freedom, willy-nilly, with this or another social and political gimmick is to lie about the confession, Immanuel, God-with-us as He is *with us* in Jesus. It is to place burnt offerings in Christ's name on the altar of Politics as Messiah. It makes Politics god, in the name of Christ. It is blasphemy.

So "politics" remains *politics*, "culture" goes on as *culture* and "religion" flourishes as *religion*. So in the age between Christ's coming and His coming again, some exegetical effort should be devoted to those notorious "unpardonable sin" passages of Matthew 12:31; Mark 4: 28-29 and Luke 12:10. And so Mrs. Hamer's warning, taken from Ephesians, that "*our fight* is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens" ... that warning deserves at least to be Considered Well!

The last issue of *Katallagete* tried to consider the bankruptcy of theological language. Dostoevsky's

Grand Inquisitor hovered over our pages as the spectre haunting religious and political words today. That is, that inquisitorial turn of mind which knows too well the profundity and power of "relevance" speaking to "a world come of age," that apostle-as-genius thinking, that both/and syndrome which turns love into abuse, friendship into manipulation, work into prostitution.

We come again, by necessity perhaps, to the Grand Inquisitor. The author of the passages which follow — himself, take my word for it, no puny dialectician — examines what *No!* means, what *Yes!* means, what *falsehood* is, what is *the true and succulent lie*. □

JYH

THE FALSEHOOD OF MAN

The falsehood of man does not interest the Christian as a moral phenomenon, but essentially as a spiritual problem. Falsehood is the disguise assumed by the man of sin when he is confronted by Jesus Christ, the true Witness, and is torn off again by this encounter.

All the wickedness and folly of man in this time of ours — this age of the Holy Spirit between the first and final coming again of Jesus Christ — find their climax in this phenomenon and problem, the falsehood of man. Falsehood is the concrete form of untruth which, impotently yet insistently, opposes the truth of reconciliation, the covenant, the justifying and sanctifying grace of God. The falsehood of man is the untruth of man in relation to the truth of Jesus Christ encountering him.

An initial and provisional affirmation is obvious. The falsehood of man consists in a movement of evasion.

Falsehood presupposes man's distinct or close encounter with Jesus Christ and His truth. Falsehood cannot take form in a vacuum, or in general, but only in relation to Him. As the knowledge of faith and love and hope is possible and actual only in relation to Him, it is only in that same relation, as tares in the same field as the wheat, that falsehood arises. It is the specifically Christian form of sin.

The falsehood of man is the form of sin which is possible and powerful only in this age between Christ's resurrection and his final appearance. It takes place as man desires and attempts to avoid Jesus Christ as the true Witness encountering him. Man would rather escape this encounter. He fears the One who encounters him and the implications of the encounter. He resists what it means not to be his own self, but to belong to this Saviour and Lord, to be a man reconciled to God, to live in covenant with Him, to be justified and sanctified only, *but very really*, by the grace of God. He fears the upshot of all this. And so he thinks that he can and should evade the One who attests it all to him.

The movement of evasion which man executes is remarkable and artful and yet also above all, practical and relevant. Strictly speaking, the man of falsehood only attempts to execute it. Evasion means trying to find another place where the truth can no longer reach or affect him, where he is secure from the invading hand of truth's knowledge, and from its implications. But he obviously knows — and this is the further witness he must involuntarily give to the truth even as the liar he is and the doer of untruth — that he cannot really escape it, that there is no such place. He must obviously be prepared for the fact that the true Witness is also superior to falsehood to the extent that, He will follow him to any new place and there set him in another but the same dilemma. The falsehood of man would be almost innocent in its gullibility and dilettantism, and would certainly not be the true and mature falsehood which anticipates real success, if man attempted to evade the encounter with that Witness and His testimony merely by pretending that nothing had happened and occupied himself with other interests and concerns. The serious and tenacious evader lurking in us all knows quite well that he must face the truth, that untruth can do its work only in face of the truth.

But how can it pretend both to face the truth and to evade it? To discover and undertake evasion even in face of the truth is the real masterpiece and artistic triumph of falsehood.

The man of sin who thinks realistically and perspicaciously asks himself, why he should not try to employ the truth itself, and the knowledge of the truth, in the evasion of its attack and seizure of control? If truth cannot be overcome, if it cannot be effectively resisted, if its knowledge cannot be arrested, and if there is no place in which to be rid of it then the solution might well be to canalize and transform its power. He will not negate the truth. On the contrary, the falsehood of man will confirm it emphatically. But he will confirm it only in the sense in which he can regard it as tolerable and useful. He will understand and approve and grasp and champion it.

This is how falsehood speaks. This is the view of the man of sin. He does not question the truth. He does not persecute it. Nor does he ignore it. These are innocuous and irrelevant preparatory stages or accompanying phenomena of his real enterprise, or violent later reactions when it fails. In his real enterprise he kisses his

Master as Judas did in Gethsemane. He is not against the truth, but with it and for it, appealing to it with sincerity and profundity and enthusiasm, casting himself as its diligent pupil and strict teacher, making his business to defend and propagate and magnify it. He sets up a theoretical and practical system of truth. He forms parties in favor of truth. He establishes fronts on behalf of truth. He founds schools and academies of truth. He celebrates days and even whole weeks of truth. He organizes formal campaigns for truth. He is so active in the cause of truth that compared with him Jesus Christ, the true Witness, seems to be only a waif and bungler who must surely be glad that He has found a patron and advocate to support Him so skillfully and powerfully.

If falsehood executes his movement of evasion well, he can do it only in this way, with and for the truth, and as its opposite, as un-truth. This is the best he can do. That this is so is another indication of how feeble, inferior and unoriginal the falsehood of man is in relation to the prophecy of Jesus Christ, and how far ahead of him this prophecy is. The prophecy of Jesus Christ obviously prescribes and enforces the law of his movement of evasion. He can live only by this prophecy, only by opposing it, and only by doing so boldly, relevantly and with prospect of success. He can thrive only as the Grand Inquisitor, only as the Antichrist who would like to be an opposing Christ but as such can act only as a substitute Christ. Even at the height of his inventiveness and power, the man of sin can never achieve more than this sleight of hand.

If he is not to be taken seriously in relation to Jesus Christ, he *is* to be taken very seriously indeed in relation to us, and especially in relation to Christians of this age. Nothing is more dangerous than the falsehood which tries to manage to use the truth to silence the truth and the true Witness, by finding for Him a place, by championing Him, by making Him Hero, Example and Symbol, yet all the time patronizing, interpreting, domesticating, acclimatizing, accommodating, and gently but very definitely and significantly correcting Him.

Rebus sic stantibus, we must thus be prepared to see the falsehood of man appear in a very earnest, respectable, devout and Christian form. Conversely, we must be prepared to have dealings with the falsehood of man where earnestness, respectability, devoutness and Christianity are seen with particular weight and impressive-

ness. It must be remembered that as un-truth it has taken and swallowed and so far as possible digested and assimilated the truth. Falsehood thus has truth within itself. To be sure, it perverts it. And since the truth necessarily resists its perversion, falsehood has truth to its own judgment and final destruction. But it has it, and therefore falsehood cannot fail to have the power of a certain faded lustre.

The true and succulent lie always has something of the scent of the truth. In some manifestations of falsehood it is heavy with truth in the form of truisms, so that if we think we know and should describe it as falsehood we are bound to look like iconoclasts and must anxiously ask ourselves whether we are not the ones who are the liars, blaspheming holy things and holy people. Its appearance is in no sense an ugly mask by which we are warned easily and immediately of its dangerous and dreadful character and the eternal destruction which lurks behind it. If it betrays itself by such an appearance, it is still, or again, a primitive and sorry affair.

The true and succulent lie has a radiant aspect of righteousness and holiness, of wisdom, excellence and prudence, of zeal, austerity and energy, yet also of patience and love for God and man. The instructed Grand Inquisitor or Antichrist who can commend his evil cause, and therefore is the man of sin in the full power of his work, is a sympathetic and a seriously illuminating and convincing figure. The Grand Inquisitor is not to be confused with such unsympathetic associates as Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin, and is able to count upon finding many well-disposed people to applaud and follow him. It is his perverse relationship to the truth, his marching out in armor apparently very similar to the armor of God in Ephesians 6:11ff., which makes him so sympathetic, illuminating and convincing. There are thus good reasons why his sleight of hand is so successful, why it seems to be even more successful than the prophecy of Jesus Christ which it imitates, in order to free itself the more securely from it. If it lacks substance, the fact that falsehood is so light means that it can cover a good deal of ground. How, then, are we to differentiate it from the truth? Who is to make the differentiation?

Naturally, falsehood does not differentiate itself. It will take good care not to characterize itself as falsehood. Its whole concern is to conceal its true nature, to mask its true purpose. And if any think that we ourselves, who at

very best are all men of sin, can of ourselves differentiate it from the truth, we must see to it that we do not go astray and simply publish and proclaim and represent as the truth what is perhaps only another form of falsehood. No one, not even or least of all the Christian, is proof against this mistake of trying of himself, and in his own power, to differentiate it from the truth. That is why the falsehood of man, of which we are all the victims and perpetrators, must be taken with such great seriousness.

Yet the truth itself, Jesus Christ as the true Witness, infallibly differentiates falsehood from the truth. At the very point where it arises, where it begins its sleight of hand, and therefore where falsehood in the man of sin is confronted by Jesus Christ, it is seen to be falsehood, to be a perversion of the truth. There is thus unmasked and exposed the dreadful nature of what the man of sin attempts as his supreme achievement, as well as the impotence of this attempt.

Whatever the man of sin may make of us, Jesus Christ does not allow Himself to be mastered or dominated by him. The falsehood of man cannot make Him into what it would like to think and proclaim and celebrate and employ and use, i.e., the One who is accepted and interpretatively adjusted by man the liar, the Grand Inquisitor, the Antichrist, the occupant of the throne of grace erected and adorned for Antichrist. In the face of this whole enterprise, He does not cease to be Himself, to do His own work, to speak His own Word.

Among and in relation to us, falsehood may provisionally accomplish a great deal. But in relation to Jesus Christ as the Lord of our time, it does not have the substance even for provisional success. Because He — and therefore the truth — is independent in respect of falsehood, He has and exercises the power to differentiate Himself from falsehood and falsehood from Himself, to divest it therefore of the attractive guise which it has assumed. He alone has the power to characterize falsehood as the true and full-grown lie that it is, to condemn it as such, and also to reveal the limit of its validity and power and therefore of its perniciousness.

We do not unmask the lie. It is He who does it. And as He does it, He does not cease to speak for Himself and thus to designate and characterize falsehood according to its true nature. So all that remains for us to do is to hear His voice and Word. We are thereby placed by him at the point where falsehood arises (and is judged as such). But we are also placed where faith, love and hope have their source as well, that we may there perceive its true nature

and character, that we may see falsehood in all its distinction from the truth, in all its infamy and menace, but also in its impotence, and that we may thus be liberated from the necessity of having to be its victims and perpetrators of falsehood.

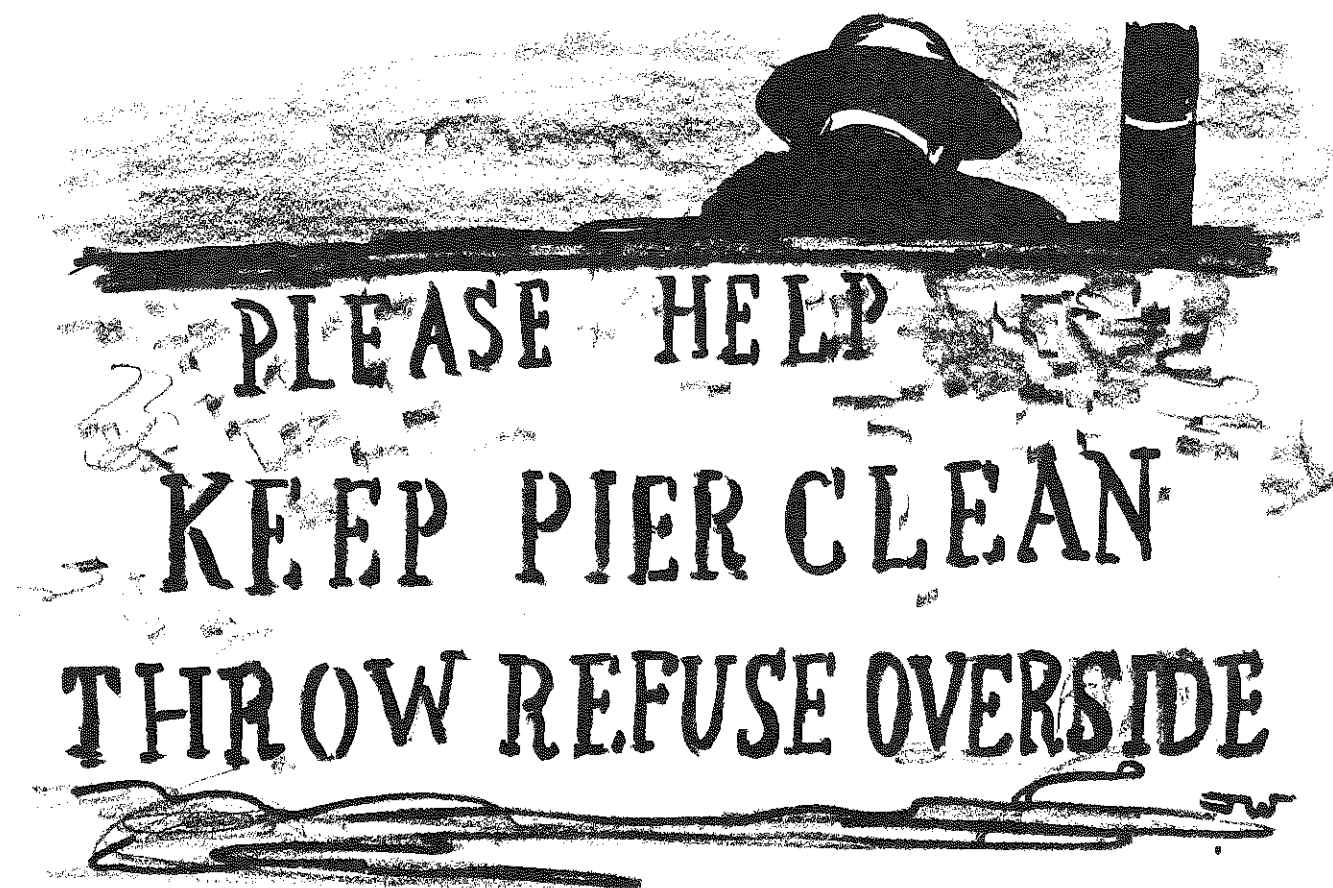
If falsehood is not taken seriously by Him, it need not be taken seriously by us. We neither fear it nor love it. If we do have to take it seriously, it need only be in our withholding of all fear and love from it.

Certain provisional discoveries are provided by the great and critical moments in the history of Jesus

Christ. Others are provided as well in the history of man in this time of the Holy Spirit. These discoveries — uncovered not by the perspicacity or profundity of man — include the glorious, unsettling, yet deep, consoling fact that even in its supreme form, falsehood is only falsehood, and that its deceptive appearance of truth is a very far way from speaking the truth.

The community of Jesus Christ and the individual Christian are constantly asked whether such moments are imminent, or have already occurred. □

—Karl Barth, 1959



JAIL NOTES FROM THE DISTRICT "FACILITY"

Phillip Berrigan

Wednesday, January 21, 1976

After our treatment by Judge Neilson on Monday, we rebounded to positive thinking — what a good way to begin the bicentennial year! What better way to greet the vast bombast, duplicity and violence of the 200th anniversary than to sweat a bit in jail! In the Imperial City, no less!

By now, we have attacked the worst crud in our tiny, lousy (literally) cell, have torn down the Penthouse slaves from the wall (the roaches tend to breed behind them), have numbed ourselves to the incessant blare of several boob tubes (the main narcotic here), to settle for a loose routine of Scripture, conversation and writing.

I feel nothing but gratitude for this lockup — to God, to sisters and brothers with me, to Liz and Jonah House, to the blacks who are virtually the whole fraternity here. All have offered the "right place," where every Christian belongs temporarily or permanently; offered me the grace that faithfully accompanies every jail bit; the

Phillip Berrigan is a member of the Jonah House Community in Baltimore, Maryland. His books include *Prison Journals of a Priest Revolutionary* and *Open Wide the Gate*. With his wife, Elizabeth, and brother, Daniel, he recently served time in the Alexandria City Jail, Alexandria, Virginia, for the December 28, 1976 protests at the Pentagon. He is a member of the Committee of Southern Churchmen.

leisure to "think and pray" for perspective and rootedness; the opportunity to be with Dan and to profit from that extraordinary mind and spirit.

We discuss John's 15th Chapter: "If the world hates you, you must remember that it has hated me first." What's the world? The reign of the "Prince of this world," I suppose: Satan's vocation to death; of lies and connivings, of petty and grandiose false gods. As far as this country is concerned — "the world" is "American First"; the BOMB as cornerstone of foreign policy; possessions over lives ("the love of possessions is a disease with them" — Sitting Bull); the poor, expendable as plastic junk — "rats bit a guy upstairs last night"; women reduced to habitual inferiors or playthings; possession by fear and cowardice.

The "world" hounded Christ to his death. The "world" harries us and locks us up when we point to corruption and rapacity. But in fact, the world hates us by ignoring us, by insulating itself from us by a consummate indifference. Most Americans don't give a damn, or extend us a vague sympathy, sidestep the nuclear derangement to make our imprisonment the issue: "do they have to go through that again?"

Even from an informed standard, and certainly under the Gospel's scrutiny, the United States infests virtually everybody with the "world." If nations everywhere arm themselves furiously, then the U.S. as armed paradigm and arms huckster bears heaviest responsibility. If people blaspheme everywhere by looking to the BOMB for peace, then the U.S. developed it, used it on Japan, terrorizing the shaky international order with Counter-

force diplomacy. If international racism exacerbates poor-rich divisions, American racism has few national equals. (Would South African apartheid totter without moral and economic support from the U.S.?) If, as feminists claim, the West is a male adventure and put-down, no society has so commercialized (bought and sold) women. Indeed, the U.S. infests the world with the "world."

Thursday

A setting like this again proves to me how flabby are my powers when it comes to writing. Nothing so reveals my indiscipline and ungenerosity.

Dan and I begin John's Book of Revelation — "the Gospel of the Risen Christ," as it has been called. It is a first experience for me, in any systematic way, and a sterling opportunity. "I am the First and the Last, I am the living One! I was dead, but look, I am alive forever and ever. I have authority over death and the world of the dead." (I: 17, 18)

We review the message to the seven churches — commendations, warnings, promises. What would be the message today, we ask, to the Church in the U.S., or in Canada, or in Latin America, France, Russia? Certainly, less praise, more indictments and warnings.

Dan has taught the Book of Revelation at least three times, and currently compares it with Herman Kahn's Apocalypse. Which comes first? Kahn's probable or Revelation's certain Apocalypse? I wonder how the vision of John — The Dragon's triumph and defeat — squares with our lockstep toward nuclear extinction? It strikes me that the seven bowls of God's wrath and the Fall of Babylon could very well be self-induced, given our propensities for mass suicide. This much, however, is clear — Christ will reign and will establish his New Jerusalem.

All seven of us still remain in twenty-four hour Deadlock, though we have suggested a change of cell block to various functionaries. We don't find the noise pollution — whether from boob tubes or prisoners — that crippling, or glaring variations of heat and cold, or the vermin which persist despite our scrubbing. But we are irked that we cannot study, pray and conspire — cannot in fact, get on with the work of peace.

Wednesday

In characteristic compromise, I have neglected this little account. Dan left on Monday — we agreed that risking his arthritic back to further complications was to court trouble. That decision was most difficult and humiliating to him. It involved a retreat from principle (refusal to pay a government fine) and leaving me alone in jail. Both were gall and wormwood to a spirit as noble as his.

Lee Griffith, Bob Smith, Brian Wideleitz, Jim McNeil and Mike Dunham left this morning, their ten days complete. I reflect that if they could endure this miserable hell with balance and humor, they could endure most of the Beast's punishments.

I need to settle down to a firm schedule of prayer, writing and exercise. I need to confront fears, chauvinisms and irascibilities more directly, having temporized and played the fool with them too long. I need to connect with prisoners everywhere — with Eddie Sanchez in Atlanta Penitentiary, with David Rice in Omaha, Bob Canney in Florida, John Bach in Lewisburg, with the Indonesians rounded up by Suharto, the Iranians by the Shah, the South Koreans, Chileans and Ukrainians in the Soviet Union.

At a time when human life becomes the cheapest of commodities, political prisoners proliferate. So does torture and execution. In this obscene area also, the U.S., with a perverted excellence, threatens to lead. This is not to offer credit to the Soviets, whose state capitalism is less ambitious and expansive than our corporate type — tending therefore, to generate domestic dissent (and political prisoners) rather than foreign resistance (and political prisoners) as we do. It is merely to stress that wherever our imperial economics prevail, there stands a nasty, vicious, puppet regime, with its native liars, Prussian swaggering, political police and torture chambers. Let the reader recall that under Thieu in South Vietnam, the U.S. had imprisoned 47% of the world's political prisoners.

I need also to plead for God's mercy — upon all people everywhere. The middle chapters of John's Revelation specify God's wrath — demonically and egotistically induced — in graphically terrible language. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse — war, famine, pestilence, death — will ride, or already ride. Pale Horse, Pale Rider. For this, we — not God — bear responsibility. "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life then, that you and your descendents

might live" (Deut. XXX, 19).

God, not I, knows what His mercy entails. But I suppose it would entail blindness to our crimes and deafness to our blasphemies. It might entail freeing His Spirit, the Spirit of His Son. It might entail persecution of His Church, to recall us to fidelity and public witness. It might entail more time, as we blindly fashion our own apocalypse.

This madhouse erupts momentarily. Prisoners begin to burn trash, and perhaps mattresses, on the upper tiers. This jail is like the society — a gunpowder keg about which neurotic, pitiable children disport themselves. Black orderlies clamber like monkeys opening windows as inmates choke and storm above. God have mercy on us.

Thursday

Dan has another trial today, presumably before the same judge that we encountered on January 19th, stemming from his March 1st arrest at the Blight House and subsequent failure to appear. If such be the reality, Dan will probably be fined, or given further accommodations here. With his back needing regular professional attention, Dan can do little but pay the fine.

I must pray for this "unjust" Judge, so typical of the judges appearing in Scripture. His ignorance is both remarkable and bland, in a time of remarkable ignorance. He lived through 29 years of war in Indochina — one could never suspect it; through several nuclear "eyeballings" with the Soviet Union — Berlin, Cuba, Middle East 1973. Neither Christ nor we could convince him of his guilt, or that of the political and corporate henchmen whom his court protects.

Before sentencing us to this Great Society Spa, he revived the old canards about the law — "However admirable your motives, you cannot take the law into your hands. There are other avenues for First Amendment speech. Without law, a free society like ours falls into anarchy."

If people commonly took the law into their own hands (it's their law), then the mandarin monopoly on legalized terror — Arms Race, Indochina, Arms Sales, Dominican Republic, Chile, etc., etc., would suffer some check, and the law would begin again to resemble a human

instrument to protect life, a civilizing tool.

We had to grin at his use of "anarchy." Like most of the power brokers, he prostituted the word, oblivious to the irony of lawlessness at the top, the very factor which breeds lawlessness at the bottom. Oblivious, too, that our protest at the White House was true anarchy against his "anarchy," which might be aptly termed the lawlessness of privilege. Nothing new here: Thoreau wrote that government (and judges) seldom recognized their true friends.

Two black orderlies came to me yesterday — as they say in the vernacular, thoroughly pissed off. One asked me, "Didja see today's paper, man?" I allowed, *no*. "Waal, them people with yew told reporters we beatin' on inmates. They suppose tew he'p us, but they laid it all on us." One brought back the *Washington Star* and I quickly read the account.

Two things deserve mention. First, the press, as it invariably does in reporting on prison conditions, sniffed out the gory (saleable) item — in this case, beatings of prisoners by prisoners. Secondly, our friends — Jim McNeil and Lee Griffith mainly, in their eagerness to disclose the barbarisms of District Jail, cooperated unknowingly. Once mentioned, "corrections" by prisoners became the focus, and the story appeared under the bias of "beatings of prisoners by prisoners."

Understandably, the orderlies were outraged. They alone on our cell block were not on twenty-four hour lockup; they had free access to all tiers of cells, to feed men, get them clean laundry, writing paper, etc. They prized their liberty and privilege. One reported wildly that guards had threatened them with "charges" (no names had been given in the account) against "us." And then he blustered, "If'n yer frens come thru again, they'll get an ass whippin'!"

Last night, I collared their leader — an enigmatic, veteran con of about 35. He came right to the difficulty. The story blamed prisoners for conditions in this snake pit, and prisoners weren't guilty. He was right. The blame started with public phobias about "criminals." The phobias were laid on politicians, courts and cops, then shifted to the penal bureaucracy from the desks downtown, then to warden and guards here.

I agreed. Prisoners lash out against the brutalities of any given lockup, mostly against one another, infrequently against guards or administrators. Prisoners *know* they don't belong there, and they *know* the treatment given them is worse than given to animals. When trouble comes, it comes because prisoners know.

Nonetheless, I questioned him closely — "Are guys

beaten up upstairs?" "Yes," he answered. "Do prisoners beat them up?" "No, the guards do it. They've got a goon squad on the night shift." "So no prisoners upstairs are let out of their cells to go into others' cells and whip ass?" "No," he said, "we're the only ones on the deetail!"

Two conclusions strike me: Jim and Lee weren't sufficiently alive to media mousetraps — an unscrupulous reporter used them. Refusing to name names, bureaucratic shuffle buried the issue in its maze. And nothing happened to relieve the abominations here. Moreover, beatings of prisoners certainly took place. Mr. Leader lied to me. Either the orderlies did it, or he was protecting other prisoners responsible. This much appears clear.

Yet, whatever the case, blame for this miserable kennel does not lie mainly with prisoners. It rests mainly upon the staff, upon higher authority and upon the public. I intend to say this when released.

Saturday

I leave the cellblock for a visit in the Rotunda, a vast, lofty room where men meet their families. (Rotunda visits, restricted to lawyers and clergymen, are not computed against a limit of four visits.)

I sit down to talk with a priest friend from Indiana, surprised at sight of him, having no notice of his coming and no answer to a year's correspondence.

The priest heads a retreat team in Hartford City, and as such efforts go, it is an exceptionally open and friendly attempt. As for himself, he is intense, warm, bright and spontaneous — an unusual priest and human being.

He questions me closely about life in the D.C. Jail, and I try to answer fairly. He listens sympathetically, but with a characteristic insulation that I noticed in him before. Our conversation is an event to share with others on his retreats. Nuclear weapons and their probable use, resistance at the Blight House and War Department, this haven of Satan, become issues 2901, 2 and 3, as though Christianity allowed one to trot to the grab-bag of public delinquencies and to take one's pick. "Do your thing, and I'll do mine!" His attitude suggested that nothing about me touched down, nothing hit home, nothing impelled him to question, "What about my life?"

He reminds me of academics who invite one to address a class or two, and who later say to wife or cocktail

circle, "Had a bizarre man in my class today — really screamed at those damn kids. Wow! anything to get these kids off their asses!" Which act belabors the assumption — *I'm* not in class to learn; *the kids* are! You're not speaking to me. *I* don't need to get off my ass."

People obviously have an infinite capacity for rationalization, they can weasel their way out of life with fantastic suppleness. But that factor in individuals is further entrenched by its institutional version in school, church and media. That academic will never dare to learn with his class (too threatening); my friend from Indiana will never take his retreats into the streets; reporters will report the news from a favorite or a chain bias, but will rarely live in response to the news.

Everything is abstracted except the immediacies of appetite or pleasure — what one needs or would like. The substance of life — purpose, spirit, means, meaning, sacrifice — is kept afar off, remote; the more distressing and painful, the further. Education both bandies the truth about, and rejects its application; religion, by example and message, encourages a personal rather than a corporate piety; the media insulate audiences from events, by abstracting news and by overwhelming exposure to advertising.

And so, the dire threat of nuclear burnout doesn't affect priest or academic, nor do the concrete urgencies of the Scripture or of truth. "No. It (the command to love God and neighbor) is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts! You have only to carry it out" (Deut. XXX, 14).

Under sway of such decisions, peace criminals become museum pieces out of the Sixties, boring aberrations, ineffectuals with prophetic fixations. The ultimate in comprehension that one can expect is the liberal reaction: "Do your thing, let us do ours, and wish one another luck."

My friend wishes to visit us in Baltimore because back in Indiana "we're trying to offer something good on intentional community." An academic in peace studies recently approached me because "we need to know more about this nuclear weaponry mess." Both are addicted to the assumption that *knowing* more about intentional community and the nuclear mess, will cause something to happen.

Sunday

Well, a new month begins, and very properly, on Sunday. I have seen many a new beginning begin in a prison cell.

Yesterday I finished reading Sidney Lens' "Doomsday Strategy" (Progressive, February, 1976). I felt depression grow in me as Lens relentlessly outlined 30 years of Terror, from Leo Szilard's letter to Roosevelt in 1939 (signed by Albert Einstein) pointing to chain reaction in uranium that might make "extremely powerful bombs." I should have fallen on my knees to admit, "You alone, O God, can save us!"

Some few months ago, everyone at Jonah House carefully digested Eqbal Ahmad's chapter on the same subject, from a forthcoming book on Kissinger (still without a publisher). His chapter was a cool and balanced analysis, far more restrained than that of Lens, who editorializes forcefully throughout. For example, he agrees with other students of the madness that, given present onrush, nuclear catastrophe will strike us before the next century.

Lens agrees with Ellsberg that FTO (Flexible and Selective Targeting Options) has always occupied a primary position in U.S. strategy. Eqbal says, No, FTO is an essentially new development. He admits, nonetheless, that Kissinger — the main draftsman of our lunacy — has always insisted that political advantage be drawn from our nuclear superiority. In effect, the disagreement is academic.

Finally, Lens does a great service by stressing repeatedly the "win" character of American policy, fed by technological innovation and crusading Anti-Communism. The warmakers have never accepted nuclear stalemate, never have rested content with MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction), from the post WWII era, when they seriously considered atomizing the Russians to liberate Eastern Europe ("getting it over with once and for all") up until now. The Russians have in response treaded softly and circumspectly, for the most part, knowing full well our volatility — a characteristic supposedly necessary for "more options" and "more political mileage."

Lens closes a fine essay disappointingly, and to me, hopelessly. He quotes Einstein, "The splitting of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." And then, abandoning the people — realistically the only hope — Lens appeals to the Superpowers to internationalize the atom, dismantle their bombs, etc. It is an

absolutely futile line, addressed to Leaderships which gave us Doomsday Strategy, Indochina, Hungary, etc. What Lens does not seem to understand is the deterministic quality of Super-State power (violence), on the scale witnessed by the last thirty years. The Superpowers, their ruthlessly mediocre leaders, don't know how to change, don't want to change, can't change. They will resist disarmament and peace with all of the deranged resources at their command.

On the other hand, if the people grasp that there is no conceivable alternative to peace, they will sacrifice for it. If they don't, they won't survive. "Either we build a new society, or we die in the old."

Monday

Snow struck the District last night, that and cold weather. My cell in Deadlock is on the first floor, and available heat rises to the upper tiers, which tower 60-80 feet. To add to the ventilation, many windows have been knocked out and unrepaired, casualties of a whole series of prisoner uprisings. Consequently, it is 50-55 degrees in my cell and the light prison clothing helps little with the chill. One must huddle in a blanket, or go back to bed.

Which invites this realization — the material lot of prisoners in affluent nations like the U.S. is better than that of the destitute — here or abroad. Food, clothing, medical care, bedding and sanitation — all better. Will the State do for "correction" what it refuses to do to make "correction" unnecessary? Most assuredly. The other side of its war psychosis is its malign neglect of the destitute. Both point to its viciousness, and its failure.

Tuesday

Bill Davis, a Jesuit friend of ours, sent in to us a science fiction yarn called *Dune* by Frank Herbert. I found it astonishingly creative and compelling. At first, I tried to ration myself in reading it, only to succumb, at expense of serious study and writing. Now, with *Dune* read, I've plunged into Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, a classic of the psychological genre.

Since release from prison in December 1972, I've had

little time — or too little discernment — to read the literature that I love so thoroughly. While growing up, we cut our literary teeth on novels, and most of us six have remained avid readers since. So, the hunger for novels is upon me. And I must struggle against it devouring the whole waking time here.

Thursday

The orderlies seem to me a curious lot, with the exception of a stout and hearty black man called Pop, sentenced to an exorbitant year for drunken driving. But the rest are, as far as I can see — one can't see much from Deadlock — wounded and treacherous, showing little of the solidarity code sometimes displayed by prisoners.

Of course, life in this pest hole has much to do with the orderlies' attitude. On the other hand, prisoners on five tiers are virtually dependent on them.

One orderly came to me last night requesting that I say nothing about D.C. Jail upon release. "Why should I keep quiet?" I asked. "Because the guards beat up a prisoner last night, dragged him down the stairs, messed him up bad. Then put it on us (blamed it on us)." Another arrived: "Them yer people had that press conference?" I nodded, "Yeah, I know them." "Waal, there's another story in tudday's paper. They're still puttin' it on us." I asked to see the piece. He promised to bring it and then never returned.

My relationship with them is a precious piece of humiliation. It goes nowhere and I am helpless to improve it. I can guess their thinking. Pop stays behind to spy on us; nobody in his right mind stays in here when gettin' out is a measly hundred bucks. He's got a pipeline goin' to them hippies, and he fills it up on visits. The papers print Pop's shit, and blame it all on us.

The orderlies feel in a squeeze — all these invisible jaws closing in on them. Whitey's defined them as loser (black). When they modestly try Whitey's game of ripoff, Whitey beats them for it and locks them up. Even in a 99% black jail, run by Whitey downtown, there's no gettin' away from Whitey. He's got Pop to blow the whistle now. You can run but you can't hide.

Friday

I return from court, short on sleep but renewed nonetheless. Renewed by old lessons (half-forgotten) taught again — legal insipidities, bullpens, penal buses, lawyer's hopes, unjust judges — the whole day so useless and enervating that one regrets leaving the cell. But so necessary — "you don't know jail until you've gone to court from jail!"

The Judge confronts a prostitute as I enter court with a marshal. A cop, posing as a John (client), had entrapped her, and then arrested her. Her lawyer pleads, "Your Honor, this is her first arrest since '69. She's a pretty girl, and you know easy money!"

The judge vents some righteousness, "Why can't she get a job? Why does she have to do *that*? Doesn't she know she'll ruin her morals and her health?" He ignores the young woman, speaking only to another male, her lawyer.

The judge sermonizes at length; the woman, sensing leniency, looks at him timidly and imploringly. "Fifty dollars fine, and she'll go to jail on the next arrest." She thanks him and scuttles off to pay the fine.

Revolting! judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, cop — a revealing slice of the chauvinist, misogynist society. And to lend it verity, the young woman's acquiescence, her silence and fear of jail, her timid acceptance of their definition.

The johns who hire her do not appear in Hizzoner's court; cops who entrap prostitutes get Hizzoner's approval and praise. The young woman, exploited by male lust and male courts, takes more than an inferior's share of guilt — all the opprobrium, fees and fines.

"If women were to seek equal work rather than equal pay — equal inputs rather than equal outputs — they would be the pivot of social reconstruction. Industrial society could not possibly resist a strong women's movement which would lead to the demand that all people without distinction, do equal work." (Ilich) Maybe then, male whores would stand in the dock alongside their female victims.

My lawyer argues for reduction of sentence. I won't bore the reader with the embellished pieties with which the judge greets me. After larding me up on my integrity and moral stature, the judge gets down to brass tacks. He

will accept my 19 days against 30 if I express sorrow for breaking the law and promise to preserve it sacred in the future. I refuse and go back to jail.

Saturday

I am ready to confess it's been a rough day. Ready to confess also that the black orderlies have become a major-minor problem. I don't know which.

As I have mentioned, this a black jail — 99% of the 1050 or so prisoners I saw listed at Control. The guards are mostly black, the penal hierarchy mostly black. But it's white to the core, nonetheless, because virtually everybody does Whitey's thing, and with infinitely less finesse. But still Whitey's thing — the bars and locks and laziness and doubletalk and guns — all to get into skulls and spirits a conviction about who the hell's callin' the shots.

If Whitey were running this dump for Whitey, the accidentals would spruce up. The warden would do better public relations and would keep façades better polished; the staff would know more excuses and lies; the prisoners would do more scrubbing and would have more goodies. But nothing would change. Blacks — staff or prisoner — don't know this. Or if they do, they don't care. They're caught! Guards and case workers need jobs; prisoners need necessities or goodies, depending on their appetites. They're caught, and Whitey doesn't hand out options, having none himself.

In Deadlock, where I am, a curious system prevails. The orderlies are more than orderlies; they are quasi-trustees as well. They keep order, and on occasion, they keep order with muscle. For that priceless service, they get goodies — better food and lots of it, better regalia, unlimited vegetation before the boob tube, good time (2 days off in 12), porn and various other sweets and crunchies. In return, they bring us food, soap, toilet paper, clean linen and envelopes. And put us down when the order comes to put us down.

When Lee, Jim and others held their press conference on January 27th, they blew some cover for the orderlies. They blew some more cover by subsequent letters, none of which I saw. Ripples appeared on the penal mill-pond. Mutterings descended from stratum to stratum — downtown leaned on the warden, the warden leaned on the captain; he leaned on lieutenants and guards; guards

leaned on orderlies. The poor orderlies couldn't lean on the white hippies. They could only lean on me.

They refused to talk to me, or if they did, broke off into disgusted curses and threats, then to stalk off. All but their fuehrer, who would, while preserving a friendly exterior, run the campaign for survival — against me. Several times, they refused to give me food, and did so only at the order of a guard. Meanwhile, the few remaining whites in Deadlock got similar, if lesser courtesies.

On Wednesday, I went to take my weekly shower. The orderlies, who double up in 3 or 4 cells near the shower, were out of their cells. An unusual quiet reigned, very bad, very ominous. Or so I thought. I finished washing and began to shave. One sidled next to me, on the pretext of using the mirror. I made room for him, happening to catch as I did, the others signalling him. They had apparently designated him to start a rhubarb — later, they would join in the feast. He faltered, indecisive. I sat down on the shower's edge to lace my boots — again, I caught the sign language. I picked up my towel and started back to my cell. The fuehrer said, "Mornin', good brother." I said, "Mornin', brother." They let me through.

The scene took some reckoning, having potential for paranoia, as well as solid thought. Apparently, the orderlies, who tend to look askance at Whitey by rule, think that I am one end of white conniving against "the brothers," particularly them. First the papers, then control, then the guards — they get it from all sides. (A week before, the fuehrer confided to me that his wife was leaving him.) All of this plus charges hanging over them, some of the charges serious. No wonder they regard me as more of Whitey's same, a threat to their vulnerable estate.

There is a valuable lesson for all of us, including the contingent which left after ten days. What was the reasoning behind further approaches to the press, after the minor disaster of that first unfortunate story? Was any thought given about me, caught alone in a limbo largely designed by well-meaning friends?

My lessons came fast. I pray over them a good deal, struggling for balance amid the din and misery. One factor I find most painful — I don't know if I would take a beating if our friends jumped me. Several times over the past week, I had to admit such a point of rage that I would have faced any, or all of them. From a non-violent view, that was the essence of trouble — outrage disintegrating into rage.

There have been, however, some positive moments.

The climate made me reflect that Christ was beaten, beaten badly. Gandhi was beaten several times; King was stabbed and beaten. All were murdered. What makes us exempt, if we stay with peacemaking? As the nuclear crunch looms, as madness gains a fiercer hold, the political police could do us in, so could a paid assassin, so could any of the poor, deluded people who walk the streets or fill the jails.

But what about me, and my willingness to take it when it comes?

Sunday

There's an axiom in Deadlock. He who shouts or screams loudest and most tenaciously gets heard. I don't quite grasp the crucial nature of getting heard, since the wisdom offered is of the substance of flyshit. Yet, Dow-Jones tells us that the national value of flyshit remains stable.

This morning, at 3 a.m., a prisoner called "Bitch," probably for feminine tendencies, began to scream for the guard. Reason? He wanted his cell light on, claiming that the guard had doused it from the tier switchboard.

He had a fishwife's shout, piercingly mad and strident. It cut through Deadlock like a siren. No one could discover why he wanted a light at 3 a.m.; no one could discover why he would wake over 100 prisoners to get it. Yet, he persisted with the mad rigidity of the lonely and friendless. And the guard, who couldn't run from him any more than we could, threw the switch and lit his cell.

(There is no word from him as I write this, at 11 a.m. He is asleep. Prisoners like him are creatures of the night. They prowl and pleasure and prey on people in the night. During the day, they recoup their vital juices in a sleep so deathlike that noise seems only to feed it.)

A "rap" goes on upstairs, just before dinner. Four or five brothers contribute, usually all at once. Their vehemence reverberates everywhere, but I can neither discern nor decipher intelligibility from the hubub. There again, the issue is that one be heard.

I have a theory. The Great Society talks and talks to blacks at every turn. The boob tube blasting at them here is symbolic of a culture that talks, but never listens. Only in their homes and neighborhoods, churches and jails can

blacks be heard. So when an opening occurs, blacks vent with a singular, pent-up energy. Again, the idea is that one get heard.

The "rap" upstairs continues interminably. Some drop out, others substitute. One brother tells of robbing an old woman — *that* shuts everybody up. Alarmed by the silence, he begins to plead, "Man, I was broke and on my ass. Unnerstan' what ahm sayin'?" Three brothers jump in. Nothing justifies robbing an old woman. One shouldn't get depressed at morals in D.C. Jail, even at 3 a.m.

Tuesday

Prisoners know boredom as a challenging problem. One would think Deadlock especially boring, given the round the clock lockup. Yet, when it is boring, it isn't so for long.

It is 8 a.m. and I am dozing after bad sleep. The night riders were into mouth combat again. Suddenly, I get a whiff of it, and an orderly races by yelling, "It's a bad one!" And all hell breaks loose.

There have been three fires since I've been here. Mattresses and trash. One bad enough to be irritating. Trash burns, but mattresses smoulder, with an astonishing volume of smoke.

Deadlock fills with smoke. One moment, it rolls in like fog. The next moment, one is engulfed. I get up, wet a towel and cover nose, mouth and eyes.

I look for the cops, but they seem off somewhere — getting coffee or "cooping." Whatever the case, no help from them appears. If anyone saves us for rehabilitation and revitalized citizenry, it is the "controversial" orderlies.

Panic spreads with the smoke, and pandemonium keeps pace. Prisoners scream for guards, slam steel bunks into steel walls, pound shoes on steel floors in the upper tiers. Everyone thinks of the windows. "Open the g.d. windows, we're smotherin'!"

The reaction is entirely natural. We're locked in and can't escape from the smoke. If it gets thick enough to become deadly, what about 100 plus helpless men? I keep some confidence, knowing that the orderlies are out of their cells and free. Others, upstairs and in the back, however, know nothing.

Mattress smoke is smoke like I've never known. Since there is very little combustion, there is proportionately

little heat. The smoke doesn't rise — it spreads and clings, depositing tremendous ash. As my eyes and lungs get engaged, I think of lying on the floor — a help with ordinary smoke. No use — I don't try it.

The orderlies save the scene. Two race by my cell, nearly at a dead run, dragging two smouldering mattresses. Still burning fragments break off and burn near my bed. Another orderly does acrobatics with the windows, clambering up 15 feet to open them. Another drags up a hose and squirts the burning pieces.

Slowly, slowly, the smoke abates. The orderlies mop up the depressing mess and wipe off the ash. The crisis has formed a certain fraternity. One orderly comes by and begins to josh me, "Get this straight, Pop. The orderlies put it out and didn't beat up anybody!" Touché — I laughed with them. "Who set the fire?" I inquired. "Ole man back there didn't get his medication." Another told me that the "ole man" got too much and fell asleep with a lit cigarette. The first story seems more likely.

I have but one question — At what point does a fire become serious enough to unlock the cells? I'll venture an opinion — when it becomes serious enough to carry people out.

Wednesday

Dan sends me his mss., *Eve and the Bible Salesman*, a new book accepted and rejected by the Maryknoll Fathers (I forget their press' name), and now up for grabs to whatever publisher (a chapter, "The Whale's Tale," is in the last issue of *Katallagete*). Which of us, writing/living/anything radical today, can make it with any businesslike publisher?

I read the mss. several hours last night, taking it slow, trying to absorb. This morning, on to finish.

I don't intend a commentary on *Eve* now, except to remark that Dan has that rare dramatist's grasp of the human stew; a poet's imagery and precision; a scholar's honesty with the Scripture — not because he has only studied them, but because he has struggled to obey. "He learned obedience from the things he suffered."

But I mention this to make a point, somewhat apart from his book. He shares that book with me, while I am here, because he was here, because he wants to be here, and cannot. Because, too, of what we've been through, what we've lived together. I have his federal mug shots

on my wall, stolen by a friend from *Record's* at Danbury. I cannot look at it without remembering how he suffered there, from the waste of life that was prison, from the colossal effrontery of penning people away, especially men like war resisters. From breaking health also, from nearly dying from a medical blunder and then having to fight his way back through the tender ministrations of prison. Fighting back when carnage in Indochina, myopia in those around him and triumphalism of Nixon and Kissinger gave heavy reasons for dying and few for living. He sends his book because we are brothers, because we are community, because we love each other.

"Whomever God loves, He scourges." Indeed He does. And I sense to my molar roots that ever lovin' Daddy ain't through with us yet. Any more than He is finished with Liz and those who remain faithful at Jonah. For the storm gathers, and the savagery we knew in the 60's and 70's collects for a greater convulsion. "Those on the roof tops must not take time to get belongings from the house. And those in the fields must not go back to get cloaks. How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant, and for mothers who have little babies" (Mt. XXIV, 17-19).

Meanwhile, his spirit asserts itself in this drab, absurd, deadly, little cell; asserts itself as strongly as when we both lived here for seven magical days, trying to ponder John's Revelation of end time. Paul wrote that nothing, and he meant *nothing!*, could separate us from the love that is in Jesus. Right! Let's carry that into the storm. It's all we have, all we could ever have. And it's more than enough. In fact, enough to reduce the storm to size, despite our shrinking flesh. To the size of a squall, a sunshower even.

Thursday

Liz has gone to Washington and California for speaking engagements, invited by Dick Carbray in Seattle; Sam Tyson in Modesto; the Catholic Worker in Los Angeles. She has Frida along as companion. Given the interest in those areas, a grueling schedule results, even without a 22 month-old to tend.

We seldom speak or write of our marriage, our friendship, even to those closest to us. Not because we have privatized it, so to speak, but because God has

normalized it by His grace. Why thump the drum for the normal? (We realize such an explanation might not be helpful to others).

Maybe we assume too much in a time when the "soft" institutions (Robert Bellah) like Church, family and school are enduring a piecemeal destruction. That is why I laboriously write this little tribute.

I still wonder at the resources allowing Liz to survive 32 months of prison separation, including the Harrisburg indictment. Or the tent-like existence of Jonah community with its simplicity of life far eclipsing that of our respective religious communities. Or resistance — action after action — arrests, courts and jails — all accepted uncompromisingly for ourselves and our children? I wonder at her selflessness — with interminable and endlessly repeated meetings, with cleaning and cooking, with correspondence, with study and lecture preparation, with the bewildering human and physical needs of children and community? I wonder that she views this as natural and normal — this hand-to-mouth struggle, this unpredictable skirmishing with Mother State. She is very nearly unique, like Ruth and Esther and Mary, that rarity that God places among us as a sign. I recall David Eberhardt's modest compliment, when she ran herself ragged for us while we were underground, "That Liz! She is so amazing."

We understand, I think, even as evidence deepens understanding, that a marriage lived for others will engulf the married with its blessings. By standards of indulgence, we have nothing. By and large, the society views us with contempt and fear. But we have everything. As Tolstoy's angel says in *What Men Live By*: "It is not given to man to know his own needs. . . . I understood that God does not wish men to live apart, and therefore, he does not reveal to them what each one needs for himself/herself; but he wishes them to live united, and therefore reveals to each of them what is necessary for all."

Liz comprehends that elusive/self-evident truth. She learned it from the Gospel, the Eucharist, the Church. She loves Christ and holds herself in constant tension with His summons and His Life. I recall the many times we pondered His reminder of the last Journey to Jerusalem. "Listen," He told the disciples, "we are going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law" (Mt. XX, 17, 18). The question is, what is the Last Journey for us? That is obscure, of course, but it has something precisely to do with resistance to the Pharaohs. Even as it did for Him.

I have never seen a person with less insulation between Gospel and life. It almost seems, that in her case, belief

in the Word attacks insulation, overwhelms it, throws it into retreat. That preserves her clarity; saves her from psychologizing; frees her for humor, movement, life. So she works like a slave, but effortlessly, in cheerfulness and balance. She stays alive. She has no time for anything smacking of death — complaining, indulgence, self-pity, negativism, irritability. There is service to offer, resistance to be planned, peace to make, life to live. So I revere her, love her, remain in no little awe of her. The *digitum Dei* is on her; the Lamb's mark on her forehead. She is a Christian, one of the holiest (wholest) of the handful I know.

Friday

A few scattered experiences from this human sump.

1. I have conquered the crud (flu, pneumonia, bad cold, who knows?) by virtue of grace, exercise, gulping gallons of water and every scrap in sight. Monday and Tuesday the crud had me reeling, on the ropes. I thought with a tinge of desperation — what a can of worms that would be — the prison hospital on a 30 day bit? Worse still, D.C. General nearby.

I ask for penicillin, or any medication, through channels, of course. No answer, only silence. If they ignore me, I wonder, how much ignoring of others do they do, especially of those sick by definition?

2. The guards call me for a visit. In the course of it, I notice Fr. Mannie Moore at his post in the rotunda, talking with prisoner after prisoner. Predictably, given Mannie's quality, his position in the prison is precarious. I suspect that prison functionaries tolerate him for fear that prisoners would tear down this rabbit hutch if some mad decision excluded him. Whatever the case, Mannie, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, gets no salary, receives no official recognition, possesses no official friends. Therein lies his strength, that and devotion to the prisoners. In contrast to the salaried zombies, he is that rare phenomenon, a person who cares. Mannie tells me, "I give them a list daily when I come in, usually about 10-12 men. They might get 4-5 down here to see me. That's what makes this place rotten from the guts out. Nobody gives a shit about these men."

Mannie possesses that rare Christian quality — intelligence of the heart. He knows why we are here; he sees the storm gathering and growing; he agonizes over his own life. So he serves prisoners. God bless him! he

could do worse.

3. It appears that we need at least one "crazy" to keep us human. The performance last night was the second. Apparently we're in for a serial. A pitiful, mad creature, directly above me, began to howl and storm about midnight. His neuroticism (or psychosis) joins a wily and facile intelligence, by turns funny, pathetic, murderous. He arouses others by taunting them, or by force of bombast. He opens the flood and the circus begins — a deranged conductor orchestrating a torrent of cursing, laughing and raging until 4 a.m. I plug my ears with wet toilet paper, a trick Dan taught me. It avails for nothing. Now, at late afternoon, our friend sleeps, gathering his powers for the concert tonight.

Sunday

Liz arrives home today from the West Coast. Thank God! How good it will be to see her again, and the children, and the community at Jonah.

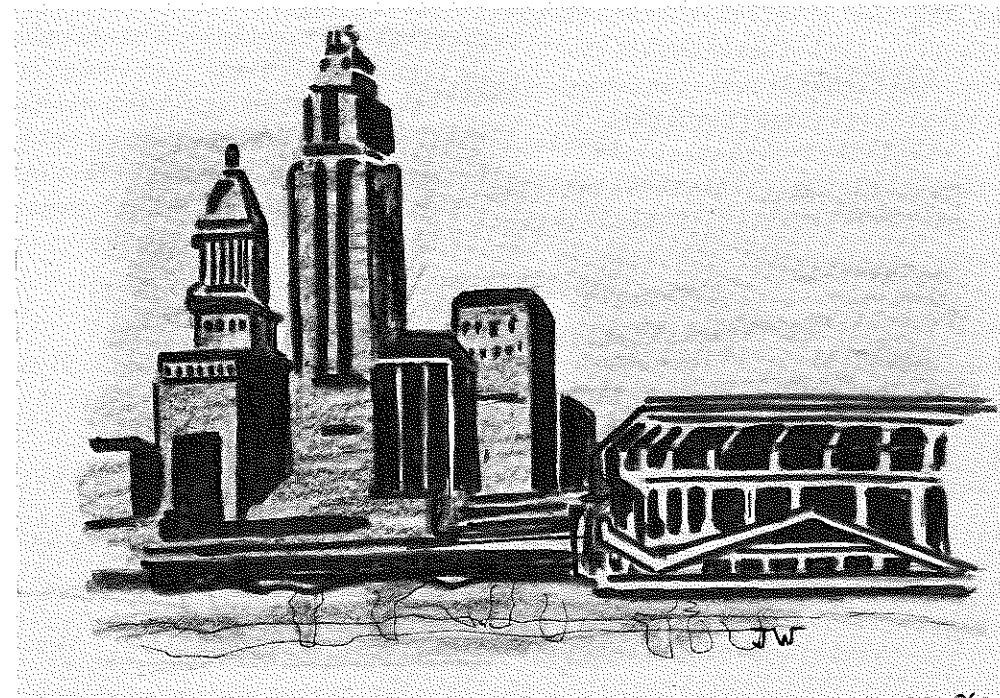
I'm on the Orderly's s. list again. When the fire happened, I thought relations had eased. That was temporary. Now I receive little but derision, contempt and periodically, mutterings about beatings. I feel utterly helpless, except for prayer and the resolve not to return in

kind. What else can one do under lockup and blacklist?

Reason? I leave on Tuesday, and the orderlies fear that recourse to the press will apply the thumb screws, even as before. One night recently, one or two orderlies threatened a particular noise maker above: "Shut yer f__ckin' mouf!" The brother addressed showed them a bit of fang and ruff, asking, "Yew comin' up here to whip mah __ss? Yew gonna bring that piece of pipe yew keep in yer cell?" Oh, he laid out those righteous peacemakers, and silenced them. Everyone overheard. As for me, I keep my counsel. That makes me unpredictable and dangerous.

I puzzle long and hard over solutions, like talking to the chaplain, a black Catholic priest. But decide against it. The chaplain has no reputation for infighting with the administration, nor for mediating prisoner-to-prisoner violence. I also consider visiting the fueher, after release on Tuesday. But that would exploit his weakness — him in and me out.

Presently, however, I must accept this. I have nothing but prayer and silence to offer the impasse. Which may indicate that direct non-violence is no *immediate* panacea to some conflicts. Or, it may merely highlight my own weakness. □



THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

an interpretation

Vernard Eller

I have had very ambiguous feelings about "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" for a long time. That fact, of course, offers nothing of interest or significance in itself; but perhaps my wrestling with those feelings can. For me, it has been a very real love/hate relationship.

The music, in and of itself, I find very moving. When done in a good arrangement by a good choir or orchestra, it almost brings tears. At least, what I *thought* I was appreciating was great music until I learned something through my researches. I learned that the author, Julia Ward Howe, wrote the Hymn after she had heard Union troops singing "John Brown's body lies a moulderin' in the grave" and decided that she wanted to try her hand at providing new lyrics for that tune. Yet, if the tune of the Battle Hymn is that of "John Brown's Body," it is also that of "Little Peter Rabbit Had a Fly Upon His Nose," for those two are the same tune. Here, I have known all three songs practically all my life and never realized that they were one melody. And I certainly never considered either "John Brown's Body" or "Little Peter Rabbit" to be great music.

Actually, the tune originally was composed by one William Steffe, a Southerner (of all things!). It was used in revivalist camp meetings to the words, "Say, brothers (read 'persons'), will you meet us on Canaan's happy shore?" From there, it was taken over as the war song, "John Brown's Body" — until Mrs. Howe deliberately picked it up for the Battle Hymn. When and how Little Peter Rabbit got in on things, I do not know. But perhaps the words of the Battle Hymn had more to do with my

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impression of it than I was aware.

Truly, the words themselves (if one does not give particular attention to their meaning) are beautiful. There are few hymns more biblical in their language. The cadences of the King James Bible come through clearly and authentically.

This much about the Hymn, then, I have always found attractive. But when one listens to what is being said: glorification of war; identifying particular armies as revelators of God's truth; placing Christ himself on the battlefield; comparing what soldiers do in war to what Christ did on the cross — well, as a committed member of one of the historic peace churches — but beyond that, simply as a Bible-reading believer — I have found these sentiments very repulsive, if not blasphemous. The Battle Hymn has been my "unfavorite" hymn.

Then I got to thinking whether the Hymn might not be redeemable, whether there might not be some genuine biblical truth to be extracted from it. And this is what I now propose to attempt: the theological redemption of the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

What I have learned about the Hymn's author adds legitimacy to our effort. Julia Ward Howe was probably the best-known American woman of her day. An eminent writer and lecturer, she is the one who originated the idea of Mother's Day. And it was in 1861, near the beginning of the Civil War, that she was invited by President Lincoln to tour several of the military encampments near Washington, D.C. Whether the President actually accompanied her, I have not been able to discover.

At any rate, it was on this tour she heard the boys singing "John Brown's Body." The tune stuck in her mind. She determined to do something more profound with it and so went home and wrote the Battle Hymn. For our purposes it is important to know that the title, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, was not Mrs. Howe's doing. That was appended by James Russell Lowell, then editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, in which magazine the Hymn first was published and from where it took off to become the Union's most popular war song.

After the war, Mrs. Howe became a very active promoter of social reform. She was the first president of the New England Woman Suffrage Association. And (catch this) she was interested in world peace, leader of the American section of the Woman's International Peace Association.

I am not even trying to claim that my redeemed interpretation of the Hymn is precisely what Mrs. Howe had in mind when she wrote. Try our best, we still will encounter stubborn difficulties. At one point I will even have to suggest that we change her wording. Nevertheless, it is very possible that Mrs. Howe's original thought was closer to my redeemed interpretation than to the popular interpretation that has carried the day from her time until now.

If the Hymn is redeemable, I would suggest that it is so because of two factors involved in its origin. In the first place, Abraham Lincoln was President; and he, I suggest, is the most truly "biblical" president we have had. If I cannot prove that what follows is what Mrs. Howe had in mind, I could go a long way in documenting that Lincoln interpreted the War Between the States just as I propose to interpret the Hymn. Lincoln, I would guess, is present in the Hymn; I know he is present in my interpretation of it.

In the second place, the Civil War was unique in such a way that only it — out of all the wars of our history — so clearly reveals the idea that lies at the heart of my interpretation. The tendency in every war, of course, is to see one side (*our* side) as representing godliness and righteousness and the other side as representing the evil on which God's wrath is to be wreaked. This was true even of the recent Vietnam conflict — although many Americans balked at recognizing their cause as just. Yet

many of these people simply reversed the customary alignment and hailed the North Vietnamese as being liberators and instruments of justice. However, in the Civil War, when it was American against American, with many families having cousins, if not brothers, fighting on both sides, it was not quite so easy to apply the usual "saints vs. demons" labels. Perhaps it is this Hymn out of that war that can help us to rise above such stereotyped thinking.

It is especially important to notice that Mrs. Howe's is unique among patriotic songs in that (apart from James Russell Lowell's title) there is nothing in it to identify what nation, what war, what combatant, we might be talking about. The problem here certainly is not that of some other pieces, namely, the glorifying of America to the point of making it an idol, raising it to a status that competes with God's. Indeed, there is nothing in the Hymn that would confine its application solely to one or the other causes in a conflict.

If this "generalization" — this "non-specificity" — is deliberate on Mrs. Howe's part, it gives her lyrics an entirely different significance than they customarily carry. If it was her intention that this Hymn could as rightfully be sung in the South as in the North, sung in any war by any party or by all parties together, that gives the Hymn an entirely new complexion. If she would have been inspired to her vision as much by visiting Confederate camps as Union ones, her words become true and powerful. The key to our redeeming the Hymn lies precisely in maintaining its generality.

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the
coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where
the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of
his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.*

First question: Is it proper for Mrs. Howe to see carnal warfare as being a "coming of the Lord"? Answer: Yes, the thought is entirely biblical — as long as she does not make that coming a vindication of one combatant over the other, make it God's blessing of the Union in its effort to visit his righteous wrath against the Confederate transgressors.

Now the wording makes it clear that this is a coming of

God in judgment, a condemnation of the sinfulness of mankind. The stanza includes no hint of approval, merit, blessing, or absolution for anyone. If that "terrible swift sword" were meant as a reference to the sword that the North is wielding against the South and attributing it to God, Mrs. Howe would have it all wrong. But she does not say that. Let us, then, understand that sword as representing *warfare itself*. *The carnage of warfare is, in and of itself, a revelation of God's judgment against war-making, against the activity of war-makers on both sides, against all the sinful attitudes and behavior that created the situation for war in the first place.* In every instance, regarding everyone involved, the carnage of war is God's built-in judgment and wrath against the human sinfulness that leads to war.

The final line of the stanza — "His truth is marching on" — points to the heart of the matter. I see it as related to Jesus' observation in Luke 20:17-18:

But Jesus looked straight at them and said, "Then what does this text of Scripture mean: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the main corner-stone'? Any man who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; and if it falls on a man he will be crushed by it."

By the very nature of the act, going to war always signifies man's rejecting of the stone of God's truth. But God's truth will not simply let itself be rejected. That rejection inevitably carries consequences, because — rejected or not — God's truth *goes marching on*; and this march of God's truth is itself his judgment.

Thus, the coming of God in judgment is not (as we are inclined to think of it) His coming looking for somebody, not his cruel intention to make someone pay. It is simply His truth *marching on* — with the judgment taking place, the sinners bringing it upon themselves, as it were. Whoever falls upon that stone (with the intent of pushing it off its course) finds himself dashed to pieces. Whoever that stone rolls upon (when he would try to block its progress) finds himself crushed by it.

Mrs. Howe has it right: in every war, God's truth is *marching on*. Not the truth, of course, that the South cannot be allowed to *secede* from the Union, or that slavery must be outlawed, or that Communism must be stopped. Those all, at best, are human truths pursued by humans in their human, sinful ways. No, the truth of God that *marches on* in war and is revealed by war is the truth that the wages of sin is death, that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword, that a poor tree bears

bad fruit and will be cut down and burnt, that social injustice and unrighteousness cannot but eventuate in social calamity. For those who have eyes to see, every war (*any* war) is a visible demonstration of God's truth *marching on*.

The second major question raised by this first stanza of the hymn is whether the vision of God perceived in his function of judgment should be characterized as "the glory of his coming." But we will hold that question for a bit, until we get to the chorus.

*I have seen him in the watchfires of
a hundred circling camps;
They have builded him an altar in
the evening dews and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence by
the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.*

Here we meet The Christ of the Battlefield. (It seems evident that Mrs. Howe follows the lead of Scripture itself and lets the term "the Lord" apply either to God or Christ.) He is certainly not a new figure in Christian thought; yet her picture is not quite what we have been used to — or at least hers will bear a different interpretation.

Hers is not the picture of King Jesus on a white horse leading the army of saints (the North) against the forces of darkness (the South). That idea is not biblical; and when the picture is drawn in the Book of Revelation, it clearly is not a case of Christ taking sides in any literal, earthly conflict.

Neither is Mrs. Howe's the popular picture of The Christ of the Foxhole in which a soldier, threatened and terrified, calls upon Jesus to preserve his life and take the enemy's — in return for which favor the soldier promises to be a good Christian and go to church every Sunday. That picture isn't biblical either.

No, Mrs. Howe's is a picture that centers upon the "altar" of the second line and "God's righteous sentence" of the third. It is hard to believe that her reference to building an altar means that the making of war is itself a form of worship well-pleasing to God. That idea is not biblical — and Abraham Lincoln would not have bought

it for a moment.

Let's try another possibility, then. Perhaps God's righteous sentence is: "Man's sin, in his war-making and all, is such as to necessitate the decree that only the blood of Jesus will serve as atonement." In such case, it is very true that all war-makers (all of *us as war-makers*) have builded the bloody altar to which the Lamb of God must go to spill out his blood as the Sacrifice for the world. The true, biblical picture of The Christ of the Battlefield, I am suggesting, is that of Christ, the Eternal Victim.

Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." I know that he applied those words in a positive sense: that the good deed done to a brother was done to him. But there is no way to stop the words from reading negatively as well: when, in war, you take it upon yourself to slay his brethren, you are crucifying him, building the altar that calls forth the righteous sentence that the atoning Sacrifice must be made.

This stanza also would allow a variant interpretation that is equally true and biblical. Now it would read: "They (i.e., the war-makers of all sides and parties) have builded an altar upon which the sons and young men of the nation will be given up as a sin-offering, because God's righteous sentence stands: 'Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword.'"

The third stanza of the Battle Hymn is rarely printed and almost never sung (perhaps with good reason).

*I have read a fiery gospel writ
in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so
with you my grace shall deal;"
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush
the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on.*

In the first line, is "fiery gospel" a contradiction in terms? "Fiery," obviously, denotes the aspect we have been treating as God's *judgment*; but "gospel" means "good news." Can the terrible, judging work of God be considered as part of the *gospel*? It can; and the Bible regularly treats the matter so. If God were not a God of justice, he could not be a God of love. If he did not speak the word of judgment, he could not speak the word of

grace. If he allowed sinful men to reject the cornerstone and push his truth off its march without their getting themselves hurt in the process, they would never have any reason to repent; and without repentance, his word of forgiveness and grace would be meaningless and without effect.

The "fiery" gospel, of course, is not the whole gospel. The "fiery" word can't be the gospel's only word or even its last word. That last word is forgiveness and redemption. Nevertheless, that last word cannot be sounded until the first, *fiery* word has been heard. Mrs. Howe is correct and helpful in speaking of "a fiery gospel," the good news that includes judgment even (and particularly) upon oneself.

This stanza of the fiery gospel is built upon two scripture references. If Mrs. Howe means them to say the same thing the scriptures say, she is on solid ground; if not, she is in trouble. Thus, in the first instance, regarding the quotation of the second line, does she intend the correlation to apply directly or inversely? Inversely, it would mean: "The *less* mercy you show to the enemy, the *more* mercy God will show to you." And that, if I may say so, simply is not Christianity. Then, too, does it follow that the South as a whole is constituted of God's "contemners," i.e., those who hold God in contempt? Could Mrs. Howe have written this, when she must have known that, statistically, the South included just as high if not a higher percentage of Christians than the North?

On the other hand, if the correlation is read directly (as the language itself just as legitimately allows), it becomes a truly gospel expression of Matthew 6:14, "If you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" — i.e., the *more* you forgive, the *more* you will be forgiven. Yet, if this is what Mrs. Howe had in mind, how could she call it a "fiery" gospel?

The occurrence of the rare word "contemners" suggests to me that Mrs. Howe actually was thinking of Psalm 10, of which verses 13-15 are the pertinent ones:

Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

Here we do have a "fiery" gospel — in that the Psalm does call for *God's* judgment to fall upon the wicked man and includes a prayer for God to help the righteous. Yet, note well, it adheres strictly to the principle that "Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay," says the Lord." There is not one word here about man (through warfare or otherwise) taking it upon himself to administer that judgment and break the arm of the evil person. As we said, if Mrs. Howe is using Scripture Scripturally, she is all right; if not, she's in trouble.

The third line of the stanza, of course, is almost a direct quotation from God's promise to Eve in Genesis 3. Christian thought regularly has applied it — as Mrs. Howe obviously does — as a reference to Jesus Christ. Christian thought, also, regularly has located that victory over the serpent in the Cross of Calvary — as Mrs. Howe must well have known. Is it conceivable, then, that her purpose is to move that cosmic victory over evil from Calvary to Gettysburg, burned-out Atlanta, and all such loveless loci of damnation? change its method from that of voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary suffering to the direct opposite, namely, the infliction of the most terrible sort of suffering onto others?

It is the very use of Scripture that makes this stanza problematic; at every point it can be read in either of two ways. If Mrs. Howe means her citations biblically, the stanza is true and profound. If she is standing Scripture on its head, her hymn is heretical.

The fourth stanza is the crucial one. Because it is free of ambiguity, it can perhaps be taken as the key for resolving the ambiguities of the rest of the hymn.

*He has sounded forth the trumpet that
shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men
before his judgment seat.
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him!
Be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.*

Here we are told, very truly, that the one appropriate response to God's judgment is *repentance*, an answering to Him. Here it becomes abundantly clear that Mrs.

Howe cannot be thinking of a judgment falling upon one people but not another, of a guilty army and an innocent one. It is "the hearts of men" (a completely *inclusive* category) that are being sifted. The Hymn, at this point, has become a call to repentance; we have only to remember that it was written to be sung *in the North*, by the North. God's judgment is taking place there, against those people, and not only in the South, against Southerners.

It follows, then, that "being swift to answer him" simply cannot mean, "Run down to the nearest recruiting office and sign up to blast away at evil Southerners." By no stretch of the imagination could that qualify as either a facing up to and being sifted by judgment or as an act of repentance. And although "jubilant" may not quite be the best word there in the third line of the stanza, there *should* be a certain happiness in going to repentance. It will not be a fun time, obviously; but even in repentance there is the joy of knowing that one is finally turned in the right direction.

In the final stanza, only one word is problematic; but it is the toughest nut of all.

*In the beauty of the lilies Christ
was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that
transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let
us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.*

I must admit that I can find no interpretation to redeem that third line. In the first place, it cannot be accepted that any sort of human dying, no matter how noble, is in any way worthy of comparison with the quality of atonement accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ. The very suggestion comes perilously close to blasphemy.

But just as serious, the words completely misrepresent the significance of battlefield deaths. Jesus Christ went to the Cross with the express purpose of dying, giving his life for the sake of mankind. But that is never the purpose of a soldier's going to the battlefield. His purpose — his end and goal — is to *kill*. And if it happens that, in the process, he himself must die, this actually is an accident, an aborting of his purpose and not the fulfillment of it. If Mrs. Howe's line were to be honest, it would have to read: "Let us kill to make men free." But that, of course, would ruin the hymn and show up its perversion. There is

nothing in the Christian gospel to suggest that anything like true freedom ever can be gained by killing other people. Quite the contrary, freedom in Christ is to be found only by following him ... to the Cross.

However, a number of singers have found that that line can be redeemed by changing one word and making it read: "As he died to make men holy, let us *live* to make men free." This is a good, biblical reading; because, plainly, we *are* called to live in such a way and can, by God, be enabled to live such a life of service and witness that others are led to find true Christian freedom. As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free ... in the freedom of Christ which cannot be compared to the transient freedoms very questionably defended by causing other men to die.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.*

The chorus of the Battle Hymn brings us back to the question raised by the first line of the first stanza: Given our interpretation of the Hymn, that carnal warfare always is to be seen as a coming of the Lord in judgment upon the sin of all the people involved, is it proper for us to call this vision of God's *glory* and greet it with the cry of "Hallelujah"? Yes, I am ready to say that this is indeed the proper response — although it is going to have to be a "Glory, hallelujah" with a difference. It cannot be any easy, exultant, three-cheers sort of exclamation.

The chorus of the Battle Hymn, let me suggest, should be sung with tears in the eyes, if not streaming down the face. Even so, through the tears and, indeed, by means of the tears, we say:

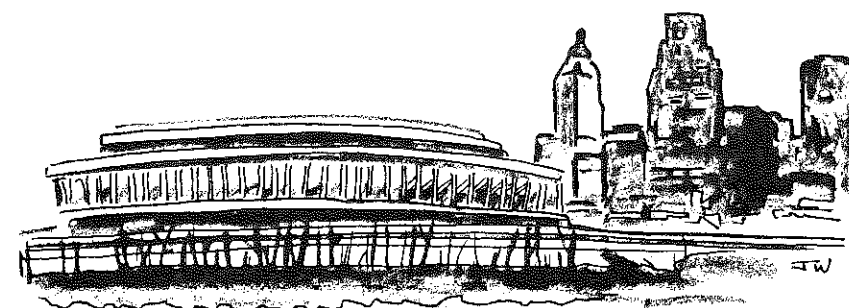
"Glory, hallelujah!"

"Lord, on the battlefields of our day, the battlefields of our making, we have seen thee coming in judgment, in judgment upon us, upon our sin of creating and tolerating situations that lead to war as well as accepting and participating in the warfare itself.

"That judgment has fallen upon us, and we have been hurt by it. We have been hurt through the loss of our soldier dead — sons, brothers, husbands, and friends. We have been hurt through the loss of brothers and sisters we never knew — noncombatant casualties beyond number. We have lost our own sensitivity to human suffering. We have lost our national integrity. We have lost the Gospel that offered us the way out of sin and death. Guilty before thee, our proud, pretentious, sinful, self-justifying "truths" have been dashed to pieces against the Stone we were trying to push aside.

"Even so, glory, hallelujah! Praise be to thee, O Lord of Judgment, for under thy righteous judgment the very destruction of *our* truth is itself the sign that *thy* Truth is marching on!"

Of course, I cannot prove that the reading of the Battle Hymn here presented is what Julia Ward Howe had in mind. But neither can I prove that the popular, war-glorifying reading is what she had in mind. It might be complained that my reading cannot be correct or the song never would have been picked up by the Union cause nor by the millions of patriots who have used it since. That is true. That is why — even though I have used it as the basis for a meditation on the theology of war — I am not about to sanction its being sung in my own church or any other. Too many singers mean by it something much too other from what the Christian Gospel will support. Yet perhaps what has been accomplished is that we now can *listen* to the Battle Hymn in a way truly speaking to us and truly proclaiming "Glory, hallelujah" for the fact that God's truth is *marching on*. □



DATELINES . . . APPALACHIA

A GOODBYE TO HILLBILLY POWERLESSNESS?

Jim Branscome

Jimmy Carter had barely lifted his hand from Miss Lillian's Bible and finished his Micah six-eight quote before the analysts began celebrating the "new spirit of reform" that would blanket the nation from the Southland. Leave aside what Carter may portend for the nation, there were clear signals in the weeks before his Inaugural about third-century politics in one of the nation's most talked about and notorious regions: Appalachia.

One can say "Appalachia" and mean, in movement-jargon, "powerlessness." In the span of a few weeks hillbilly politicians moved to control the levers of government. So we'll see what happens — and doesn't happen — as representative democracy works its way from Appalachia to Washington. Senator Howard Baker, from Huntsville, Tennessee and Watergate Hearings fame, became Senate Minority Leader. Defeated Senator William Brock, from Chattanooga, Tennessee, became National Chairman of the Republican Party. Senator Robert Byrd, from Beckley, West Virginia, became Senate Majority Leader. Cyrus Vance, from Clarksburg, West Virginia, became the Secretary of State. Representative Tom Bevill, from the coalfields of Alabama, with other representatives from the Southern mountains, moved into crucial sub-committee chairmanships that are less glamorous, but no less powerful.

And by no means least, John Davison Rockefeller IV assumed the Governorship of West Virginia, pledging to end corruption and mine deaths, and to build more roads.

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Dateline the first story: *Charleston, W. Va., January 17, 1977.*

A little background for those not familiar with Charleston, W. Va. To put the matter briefly: if John Gunther had seen Charleston before he saw Knoxville, Tennessee he would have given his award for the ugliest city inside America to that more northerly capital of West Virginia. Charleston, W. Va. is just what one would expect a capital city to look like if its people withdrew from the Confederacy and did little else afterward but mine coal, operate a chemical sewer called the Kanawha River, dabble at making glass and run an occasional "textbook strike" for the entertainment of journalists, the media and tourists, and operate a chemical sewer called the Kanawha River, (its carbon tetrachloride dumped into the Ohio River has recently made TV News because of threats to drinking water in Cincinnati and Louisville), which is to say that Charleston does not have a Hyatt Regency and is itself ill-prepared for an event, the magnitude of which is about to be described.

On this day The Establishment (and the capitals are used advisedly and deliberately) came to Charleston, W. Va., to pass the political mantle from Nelson Aldric Rockefeller, Republican, Vice-President of the United States, to "Jay" Rockefeller, Democrat, "cousin" in the family, who aims to sit in the White House in eight years or, "when Dad gets free," according to Jack Carter, Jimmy's son, who was there — as it developed

— only as a minor celebrity to footnote the meaning of "the New Appalachia."

Mixing miners with coal dust under their nails with the manicured likes of former Chief of Protocol and Ambassador to Spain Angier Biddle Duke combined with the wall-to-wall Rockefellers to make Jay's inauguration the rarest mixing of bloodlines, politics and — especially — economics in these Appalachian hills since New York's 400 finest danced with the natives inside Cudjo's Cavern at Cumberland Gap, Kentucky, in 1890. (The four hundred finest and the natives were there to dedicate a resort that soon flopped.)

While Angier Biddle Duke termed the event an excursion of the Washington "political register," and Senator Jennings Randolph proclaimed it an unprecedented affair that "puts the West Virginia star higher than it has ever been," Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller treated it as a retired backslapper who was more interested in the sub-zero weather that was making national headlines. Greeting the new Governor at a pre-inaugural brunch, the Vice-President pulled back a button on his shirt and proudly displayed "my ski underwear."

Asked if he planned to give his nephew any advice about being a good governor, the Vice President replied, "I've gotten old enough that I don't give advice." Glancing around the governor's mansion as he walked in, the Vice President asked Jay, "How does it look in here? I've been here before. You should have asked me how it looked."

The Vice President said that his participation in the inauguration of a Democrat Rockefeller did not cause him to reflect on whether he should have switched parties years ago. "I don't look behind. I'm going to catch up with the children and Happy and the family business. I'm going to become active in promoting the American enterprise system — the greatest system in the world."

A shivering Happy Rockefeller added, "I'm going to sit in the sun and get warm at St. John's [the family-owned island], but I doubt if I'll be able to keep Nelson quiet very long."

The other Rockefellers, however, seemed as excited and curious about the inauguration as the natives. "I'm very, very proud of Jay and very pleased for the people of West Virginia," John D. Rockefeller III, the Vice President's brother and Jay's father, said excitedly as he walked on his cane around the mansion, smiling as he greeted new faces. "For us it was a very new experience," chimed in Blanchette Ferry Hooker Rockefeller, the mother, who gave Jay his blue eyes and contributed to his six foot six frame.

The yet-to-be Carter administration celebrities were excitedly trying to spy the celebrities. Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State-nominee, and past chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, said that "I would not be surprised at all to see him in the Oval Office." Vance explained his presence, not because of the Rockefellers, but because "I'm a West Virginia native." He merely laughed when asked if his presence would not contribute evidence to critics fond of claiming a Rockefeller conspiracy to dominate United States foreign policy.

At the outdoor ceremonies, the celebrities shivered with the crowd of about 3500 to hear Jay's fifteen-minute appeal for West Virginians to "reach out ... for your fair share of the American dream." As he promised to place industrial development on the top of his list of priorities, the celebrities visibly shook in the cold. Lynda Johnson Robb was faceless behind a ski mask. The only warm response from the audience came when the 39-year old Jay joked, "My name is Rockefeller, but that will not pay the bills."

That quip provoked a local economics teacher to calculate quickly that the combined wealth present at the Inaugural could pay the West Virginia state budget for a year from annual interest. In addition to the wealth represented by the Rockefeller cousins, brothers, sisters and assorted kin, Cleveland industrialist Cyrus Eaton was present.

The 93-year old Eaton — known during the "cold war" years for his eccentric views about the Soviet Union — walked on a crudely carved wooden cane and depended on an aide to repeat a reporter's questions into his ear. Eaton allowed that Jay was one of the most capable of Rockefellers and one who could make the Presidency. "I knew his great grandfather, John, very well, and I've served with Jay on the board of the University of Chicago. He's marvelous."

Cyrus Eaton joined Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd's prediction that Jay would do great things for the West Virginia economy. And Arnold Miller, the President of the United Mine Workers, who frequently rails against economic concentration in the energy industry, agreed with Eaton and Byrd's assessment: "I expect him to be the best governor we ever had." Miller chose to stand at the rear of the audience at the Inaugural, rather than take a seat up front. He probably suspected that the status card system (allocated by colors) would irritate some of the audience not "up front." "It's all right back here," Miller said, when some in the audience began to grumble that only the wealthy and the influential got the coveted yellow cards allowing them to stare directly into

the Rockefellers' faces.

Jay Rockefeller and his wife Sharon, the daughter of Senator and Mrs. Charles Percy (R., Ill.), say they want to run an "open mansion" and "to never lose touch with what's on the people's minds." While admitting that their wealth creates suspicion, Jay claims that "this doesn't bother me. It's to my advantage because it keeps the attention which lets me talk about what I want to talk about." Two years of experience as a poverty worker in rural Emmons, West Virginia, a political launching-pad suggested to him in 1964 by Charles Peters, now editor of *The Washington Monthly* has, Jay explained, given him and Sharon experience in knowing how ordinary people live. Sharon has worked with a group of women artisans who make dresses from quilt patterns.

Jay Rockefeller claims wealth has many advantages and few liabilities. "Roosevelt was very wealthy. His identity was intuitive. JFK was wealthy. His sensitivity was intuitive. It has to do with sensitivity, not a bank account." He admits, however, that he is hurt by the occasional miner's taunt, turned now into fading bumper stickers, of "Remember Ludlow" — a reference to the slaughter of miners in Colorado owned by his great grandfather.

The new governor expects advice and aid from the Carter administration on ways to improve the West Virginia economy. He may also get an opportunity to give advice to the new administration in Washington. Asked if he would call on Jay — a desk officer in the State Department during the Kennedy years and fluent in Japanese — Cyrus Vance replied, "I'll call on anybody who will give advice, and Jay is very wise."

While much effort was devoted to bringing in country bands and other folksy things like "mountain crafts," it was the craft of making money that seemed to hover over the event. And while much effort was devoted to emphasizing that Jay's only ambition is to be "a good governor," it was the craft of political step-stoning that dominated the conversations at the Inaugural festivities. "I think he would make a wonderful candidate," Angier Biddle Duke said. Father-in-law Senator Percy agreed: "In doing an outstanding job here, how could he not go on to better things?"

Perhaps the celebrity list needed a Micah, son of Imlah (II Kings 22). Rockefeller's court prophets and prognosticators could not discern the conflicts and temptations. There is, for example, the problem of revenue. Thanks to its aggressive road-building program, West Virginia will face bankruptcy in a few years, when the bills come due. Its declining position as a coal mining state (now in second place to Kentucky) means that West Virginia cannot increase its coal severance tax, the most obvious source of revenue. The only other alternative is to promote more coal sales. That means opening up new mines or — as the industry prefers — speeding up operations at existing ones. That brings about a situation that can be predicted with mathematical accuracy: to speed up in the mines is to increase deaths of miners from roof falls and haulage accidents. That is the way that 90% of them die in today's mining operations. On the other hand, to encourage operators to open new mines will take needed capital for safety improvements in the existing mines. The vicious circle all over again. The question is whether the circle can be broken by one named Rockefeller. The only thing that might change is that the miners will die with a few more inflated dollars in the paycheck, suffer black lung in front of up-dated televisions, ride around in new automobiles and live in "double wide" mobile homes.

Jay Rockefeller as Governor of West Virginia will find it easier to live with unsafe mines than with a falling economy; he found it politically expedient to reverse himself in the campaign to abolish strip mining and so run as the coal operator's candidate.

Jay Rockefeller's problems are not unlike those a few miles south and west of Charleston, W. Va., that will no doubt prove in spades President Carter's naivete about making government work better by juggling around an agency's administrative structure.

Dateline this story *Knoxville, Tennessee, 1976* — where for forty-four years the United States has had its closest flirt with socialism.

It took Franklin D. Roosevelt's brain trusters 100 days to create the Tennessee Valley Authority after they hit Washington in 1933. If Jimmy Carter's new team can, in twice that time, come up with a blueprint for bringing that federal corporation into line with candidate Carter's plans for solving the energy crisis, it will be viewed in this region as a miracle, by both TVA and its critics.

S. David Freeman, a member of the Carter transition

team specializing in natural resources and a TVA employee from 1948 to 1960, admits that no detailed planning has been done on TVA and that "the Governor has authorized no one in the Carter family to speculate for him on TVA." In his first 100 days, Carter will have a vacancy to fill on the TVA board, Freeman observes, and "the staff will have appraised the President of the possible conflicts between agency policy and that of the administration."

TVA critics at the Environmental Policy Center and the United Mine Workers — both based in Washington and both having influence with Carter on energy matters — have said repeatedly they believe the Agency is a major obstacle to implementing a sound energy policy and that the Carter administration will have to deal forcefully with the Knoxville bureaucracy of TVA if it wants to make its position credible to private business in the energy field. "There's no way to consider reviving the coal industry in the east in a socially responsible fashion without attacking TVA head-on," says EPC director Joe Browder, once a high Carter transition team member, later fired.

Carter says he wants utility companies to depend on low sulfur coal from Appalachia — preferably deep-mined — to decrease oil dependence and to save the western United States from strip mining. As the head of the nation's largest utility, largest single coal consumer, and largest single purchaser of strip mined coal, TVA chairman Aubrey Wagner claims the agency has tried to buy that kind of coal in the past and found it either unavailable or priced near or above the price of oil and uranium.

Carter also says he wants to de-emphasize electricity production from nuclear plants. But unless he is willing to force TVA to cancel between \$3 and \$5 billion worth of equipment and orders, he will leave office in four (or eight) years with the agency generating more power from nuclear plants than any utility in the world. It will still have forty-three hydroelectric dams and twelve coal-fired plants on the line, but they will only produce about half the Agency's power. The remainder will come from the nuclear plants.

TVA General Manager Lynn Seeber believes that if the Agency "lost its nuclear alternative, we'd be in an even worse situation with the companies who own oil, gas, uranium and coal supplies able to demand any price they want for whichever fuel they're pushing at a particular time."

The TVA act is explicit in requiring the Agency to buy the cheapest fuel available, which leads Chairman Wagner to claim that with no significant oil burning capacity, TVA has to choose the cheaper atom over the

high-priced coal. To maintain its commitment as a "yardstick" in producing the cheapest power, Wagner explains that the Agency must rely on facilities similar to the Brown's Ferry nuclear plant in Alabama, which is now producing power at one-third the price of the \$18 a ton coal the Agency burns. Brown's ferry is the plant knocked out for eighteen months in 1975 when a worker used a candle to check for air leaks under the reactor room, causing one critic of this sort of use of nuclear energy to describe the incident as "The Day We Almost Lost Alabama."

In October 1976, TVA opened bids of a major national solicitation for low sulfur coal to bring its steam plants into line with Environmental Protection Agency and court ordered emission standards. These plants emitted the most sulfur dioxide in eight states of the South, according to EPA. The result, according to TVA Chairman Wagner, was that the Agency failed to obtain even half enough coal to meet demands. Much of that coal was priced in the bid as high as \$48 a ton — more, Wagner says, than the equivalent cost of a barrel of oil.

Wagner, who frequently criticizes coal companies for pricing "an abundant resource, coal, at the price of our depleted reserves of oil," claims the giant coal firms are holding low sulfur coal off the market until the fuel impact of the OPEC price increases are felt on the domestic economy.

Officials of Peabody Coal Company and Island Creek Coal Company, TVA's two largest suppliers, deny that they stayed away from the Agency's last bidding for that reason. "We had planned to submit a bid from a mine, but just couldn't meet the deadline," an official of Island Creek maintained. (Island Creek is a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum Corporation, and is chaired by former Tennessee Senator Albert Gore, usually listed among the most "populist" of Southern politicians.)

Carter has so far ruled out price controls, so TVA attorneys believe there is little else that can be done about coal prices unless the Administration is willing to pursue vigorously anti-trust legislation necessary to break coal companies away from conglomerate owners. TVA general counsel Herb Sanger says he has submitted evidence to the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission that TVA's coal suppliers — about 80% of which are conglomerate controlled companies — may be pricing and mixing coal in violation of anti-trust laws.

So far no action has been taken. Sanger's associates believe that even if Carter ruthlessly enforced the anti-trust laws as promised, legal action would take decades unless divestiture of coal companies from oil

companies is pushed hard by the Administration. Carter's position on divestiture is not clear.

Lewis McManus, Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates, and a frequent critic of TVA, claims the Agency could buy low sulfur coal in his state from small producers if it would negotiate loans and purchasing guarantees with them. McManus argues that "TVA, while founded to help small business and cooperatives, seems more interested in making loans to Ashland Oil subsidiaries than it is to the small producer."

General Manager Seeber of TVA concedes that the Agency guaranteed loans to an Ashland Oil subsidiary and gave financial incentives to other large firms, but only in periods of coal shortage emergencies. The TVA act prohibits such negotiations when coal stockpiles are full, as they presently are, says Seeber.

Jimmy Carter is the first President since Roosevelt with an opportunity to appoint a full three-member TVA board to serve for nine years. He could urge the new board to exercise TVA's authority to enter the coal business directly, mining the reserves it already owns. In 1974 TVA moved in that direction with a bid to buy Peabody Coal Company. This was attacked as "nationalization" by several Democratic Senators, including Kentucky's Wendell Ford. UMW President Arnold Miller also condemned the plan, claiming "TVA's past practices of buying the cheapest coal in a complete disregard for safety has shown that they clearly don't give a damn about coal miners."

Any move against TVA which would result in higher rates is certain to bring opposition from the Agency's more than two million residential consumers, including if not especially north Georgians, who enjoy low rates and consume on the average twice as much electricity as the national average. Rate protests across the seven-state TVA region have become common; last year, a novelty, anti-TVA candidate, Clifford Allen, was elected to Congress as a Democrat from Nashville, Tennessee.

Coal companies will be closely watching any Carter administration change in TVA's coal purchasing practices. Kentucky Coal Association president, Tom Duncan, in whose state TVA purchases more than 70% of its coal, disagrees that TVA pays too much for its coal: "I've seen no evidence that TVA cares if the operator makes a decent profit."

Meanwhile, TVA has brought low sulfur Western coal from Montana for testing as a possible supply for at least one of its western Kentucky steam plants. One top TVA

official predicts that "unless Carter wipes half the laws governing TVA off the books and whips half of Wall Street, he's going to find out what we know, and that is that some of his energy solutions may be a bit naive."

President Carter has promised to end coal mine deaths. Robert Barrett, the present head of the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA) could remain. Barrett, a former coal miner appointed by President Ford, has the support of the UMW. The only mark against Barrett is his ill-fated order to send eleven men into the Scotia mine in Letcher County, Kentucky, last March to shore up the roof for an inspection to determine why fifteen men had died in the mine two days earlier. The bodies of the eleven were not removed until November 19. The widows said the delay in recovery was ordered to get the mine back in business as quickly as possible. Barrett has beefed up enforcement, increased the number of inspections, and started fining companies. Nevertheless, there has been no dramatic change in the number of miners killed and maimed in Appalachia. Overworked federal judges in eastern Kentucky do not easily schedule the cases against companies for violations, a fact which lead then Attorney General Edward Levi to observe that operators are "effectively insulated" from the mine safety laws.

While Scotia was not a UMW mine, the forum of the Union, and the election of Arnold Miller on a platform of "Safety or Else" heralded a new era in miners' aggressiveness about safe mines. Miller has yet to prove a competent leader, but not even his worst critics blame him for the attitude of the surviving miners at Scotia. Last summer, when widows picketed the Scotia mine for a faster method of recovering the bodies, the Scotia miners crossed the picket line. Last fall, when Southern Labor Union leaders voted that union funds, traditionally spent on Thanksgiving hams, be diverted to build a memorial or to create a scholarship fund for the children of the dead miners, the men revolted and signed petitions to get the action reversed, and get the free hams.

Dateline this story *Oven Fork, Kentucky, November 19, 1976*, and you can wager that the barometric pressure changes that signal pending mine disasters will signal the repeat of this story several times, even unto the end of President Carter's term.

An emotional Representative Carl D. Perkins (Dem., Ky.) was at the Scotia mines, trying to console the widows and families as the zipped plastic bags containing the bodies were laid into rows on a concrete mine shop floor. Representative Perkins will be remembered as the man next only to President Lyndon Johnson most responsible for the "War on Poverty." His congressional district includes the Scotia mines.

Perkins went outside the mine shop with Basil Holbrook, the brother of dead miner J. B. Holbrook. The Kentucky congressman condemned the safety record of Scotia Coal Company, the enforcement activities of MESA (which is supervised by the House Education and Labor Committee he chairs), and the slowness of the 129-day recovery.

"This is all uncalled for," Perkins said. "It has been known for a long time that this mine was completely unsafe. It should not have been operating."

Basil Holbrook, 54, his eyes red from weeping, condemned the recovery method as "a way to get the mine ready to run coal."

Perkins promised that his Committee will convene hearings into the disaster and will push for MESA to be transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Labor — an action Perkins believes would mean more emphasis on safety.

"I've had cousins and uncles killed in the mines," Perkins said. Practically every family in eastern Kentucky has been affected by mine tragedy. It's unnecessary."

Holbrook had worked at the Scotia mine until 1969. He said he quit the mine then and went to Virginia to work for Westmorland Coal Company because the Scotia mine was unsafe. "I knew it was going to blow. I just didn't know when, so I quit."

Both Holbrook and Perkins termed it "murder" for MESA to send the eleven men into the mine to shore up the roof for an investigation of the March 9 explosion that killed 15 men.

"To send men up there with that motor that could spark and let methane build up for 60 hours ... well, they should have known it would blow."

Blue Diamond Coal Company spokesman Ralph Dye, whose company owns the Scotia mine, responded: "We really don't need Mr. Perkin's 'expert' advice." Dye explained that his company "has no intention of running coal soon. We don't know when the mine will reopen."

The Reverend Ray Collins accompanied the widow Mrs. Don Polly to the recovery site, said he was planning his Sunday funeral statement. The Old Regular Baptist preacher was disturbed that some ministers were calling the disaster "an act of God."

"God didn't cause it," he said quietly. "It's the Devil who did it. Somebody did something wrong and caused it. The Devil wants to blame everything on the Lord. The Lord said there was gas in there and if you do something wrong and don't get fresh air in there, something's going to happen. No, siree, I wouldn't blame it on the Lord."

On the same day that the Reverend Collins made this point, I checked MESA records for the other mines which operate on the same property as Scotia's. They showed that a MESA inspection blitz of those mines turned up 30 violations of federal mining regulations for which five closure orders temporarily shutting down those working sections were issued.

The inspection of the Scotia Coal Company's Upper Tygert Mine began October 7, conducted by seven inspectors from MESA. Federal records on file at MESA's Whitesburg office show the violations including allowing potentially explosive coal dust to accumulate, failure to properly place roof timbers, failure to follow approved mine ventilation plans, and failure to keep mine equipment in permissible condition.

The inspectors issued an "imminent danger" citation for the failure to properly timber the roof. The mine safety acts define "imminent danger" as the "existence of any condition or practice in a coal mine which could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm before such condition or practice can be abated." The records show the company corrected all the violations, and the inspectors allowed work to resume.

Scotia's spokesman Ralph Dye would not comment immediately on these violations, but later labeled them "frivolous violations like not having a pin in a fire extinguisher." After being reminded that MESA inspectors considered all the violations "serious," Dye amended his statement to say: "they were serious to need corrective action." The Washington MESA office says it will assess penalties for all the violations.

The records show that routine inspections in September and October uncovered other serious violations of federal regulations; MESA inspectors cited the company in late September and early October for 52 violations of federal regulations, including four violations for failure to provide proper mine ventilation — a suspected cause of the March 9 explosion at Scotia. The records indicate that the violations have now been corrected.

Since 1970, records show that Scotia has been cited for 1250 serious violations of federal mine regulations. Of 650 of these violations, MESA assessed penalties of \$78,887 — about \$121 per violation — though the law

permits as high as \$10,000 for each violation. Blue Diamond Coal Company, Scotia's parent, is a \$100 million a year operation, and has marketable securities this year of about \$59 million, according to spokesman Dye. He added that the company is debt-free.

The mine safety act, passed after the 1968 Farmington, West Virginia disaster that killed 78 men, was supposed to stop mine deaths. But 295 men have been killed in Kentucky since its passage. Thirty-eight men died in a single explosion one year to the day after the act was passed. In the past 55 years, Kentucky has averaged two mine deaths a week. In January, 1977, the rate was overtaking the statistics for 1976.

What does it all mean? John D., III, the philanthropist who made being a Rockefeller respectable again, said it was "stewardship." That may not seem a good answer at first, but if you think about it, it is accurate. Politics and economics and personal opportunism have now become acceptable stewardship. That must be why nearly everyone — the editorialists, the UMW, even former Rockefeller critics — found a common line in saying that at the least Jay was to be saluted for one thing: he was one lover who stayed in the mountains. The New Frontier and the Great Society didn't.

The fact that only one national newspaper — and no national television network — showed up to cover Jay's inaugural also means something. (The New York Times wrote a lengthy and detailed story, based on telephone reports from the Rockefeller media people, telephoned to their Washington bureau.) A few years ago, national media showed up every time Jay called a press conference when he was merely a legislator. Two national reporters who used to write by-lines from the Appalachian hollows had an excuse: they were in Provo, Utah, trying to watch the state assist Gary Gilmore in his suicide. The media is the Movement. So much for the Movement.

On the same day, the wire services were also covering

the reaction to Carter-camp promises that within three days the new President would grant "clemency" to the Vietnam war resisters. That this nation treats a "clemency" as something unusual provokes reflection: we have, as a nation, day-by-day, week-by-week, year-in-and-year-out granted without fanfare "clemency" to those in their technological remoteness responsible for the deaths of 125,000 coal miners since 1900. (Adolph Hitler had a better mine safety record when he used Jewish slaves in the mines of the Third Reich [per one million man hours worked] than this nation has had in any year since World War II.)

And what was Jimmy Carter doing about Appalachia a month into his Presidency? As I write these lines there are indications that the White House's main concern about Appalachian coal miners' deaths expresses itself in a plan to shift coal supplies from area of surplus to area of need, when the miners strike this Fall. Harry Truman learned that that foolishness did not work when John L. Lewis and his "shock troops" struck the government itself after HST seized the mines. Even Nixon-Ford abandoned such an idea because it is obvious to anyone who knows the facts in Appalachia that trains don't run when the miners strike. However it may be sugar-coated by this Administration and the media, such a plan is strikebreaking, pure and simple.

In the meantime, nothing much is being done about Scotia, about keeping up mine safety enforcement.

Maybe Gary Gilmore summed this up best about this nation's psyche when he told an interviewer that his executioners could shoot him and then talk about it over a beer.

Dostoevsky once said something about a civilization being judged by its prisons. If that were amended to include coalmines, this nation would advance one rank in another statistical measurement, and land right above South Africa. □



AN EXERCISE IN INTELLECTUAL DEVOTION

Carl Fjellman

Come now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the inner chamber of your soul, shut off everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out. Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: "I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek."

Come then, Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You. Lord, if You are not present here, where, since You are absent, shall I look for You? On the other hand, if You are everywhere why then, since you are present, do I not see You? But surely You dwell in "light inaccessible." And where is this inaccessible light, or how can I approach the inaccessible light? Or who shall lead me and take me into it that I may

see you in it? Again, by what signs, under what aspect, shall I seek You? Never have I seen You, Lord my God, I do not know Your face. What shall he do, most high Lord, what shall this exile do, far away from You as he is? What shall Your servant do, tormented by love of You and yet cast off "far from Your face"? He yearns to see You and Your countenance is too far away from him. He desires to come close to You, and Your dwelling place is inaccessible; he longs to find You and does not know where You are; he is eager to seek You out and he does not know Your countenance. Lord, You are my God and my Lord, and never have I seen You. You have created me and re-created me and You have given me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know You. In fine, I was made in order to see You, and I have not yet accomplished what I was made for.

Anselm, *Prologion I*

Lord, we inhabit a dualistic world. When we try to plumb its mysteries, we inevitably meet a duality.

We consider the worth of our actions and encounter good and bad, better and worse.

We analyse what we see and find light and shadow, brighter and darker.

We note the interrelatedness of things and ponder sameness and variety, one and many.

We choose and are struck by all we must endure that

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was not asked for: freedom and necessity.

We contemplate our knowledge and find error: true and false, right and wrong.

We consider the positions of things and speak of motion and rest.

Things happen and are done; we are struck with wonder and seek to explain with words . . . cause and effect.

We analyse our words and discover subject and object.

We think of the thinker and meet the subjective and objective.

We consider the personal subject and find him physical and mental, body and mind.

Everywhere we confront the meeting of opposites, a dialectic of this and that, *sic et non*: yes and no; male and female made You them; You did separate light from darkness, dry land from the waters; two great lights did You make, the greater to rule the day and the lesser, the night; yes, Lord, You did create the heavens and the earth, and everywhere in Your creation we encounter opposites — life and death, pleasure and pain, rational and irrational, sacred and profane. But over all, O Lord, Your Spirit still does brood.

Duality confronts us wherever we turn in Your world, O Lord. But You have revealed Yourself to be a Trinity. Is there no analogy between the Being You are and the being You have made?

Or can cloven hooves leave triune tracks and the three-toed sloth a double print?

Why, O Lord, should You, the Perfect Trinity, have made a world in which bifurcation rules? Is it to magnify the mystery of Your Being in relation to ours? This it truly does. We are bipeds in a bi-polar world, and the highest thoughts of these thinking reeds are as nothing before You.

There is no easier geometric task than to bisect — line or angle or arc. But who can trisect by geometric method? Thus are we reminded of Your indivisibility, Triune God.

Is there no mark of Three-in-one-ness in the work of Your hand? Your servant Thomas has taught us that Your gifts to us are such that we can demonstrate *that* You are but not *what* You are; we can know Your existence, but we must believe Your essence to be the Blessed Trinity.

Your servant Augustine, however, would have us seek understanding of Your Triune essence through that which we are and know. He taught us that the interlocking of knowing, willing and remembering can add understanding to faith. Through him we have been led to see that the way a man knows and is aware of himself can illumine the meaning of Your Triune nature.

It is instructive, O Lord, that Augustine was driven into himself to discover that which could in some small way mirror Your nature. We are made in Your image, and even as we can respond in faith to Your Word of Grace so what You have made us to be corresponds to that which You who made us are.

How would You have us understand the small mystery of our being in relation to the Mystery of Yours? Is it for naught that we Your creatures add a trinitarian note in Your world of duality? For surely we do.

When we exercise the minds You have given us we do so in the triad of a position arrived at by *sic et non*. The duality of our dialectic is always augmented by that affirmation which is consequent on the yes and no.

What You have added through man, O Lord, is that which makes us human. It is the essence of Your creature which makes the difference between uninterrupted duality and the fullness of trinitarian being, and this essence, O Lord, is Your gift of transcendence.

We praise You for this gift, without which all other gifts would be incomplete. You have given us life and we can know it and thus know a goodness of living which is higher than the creature life You have given. We have Your promises, O Lord, and even now can live in them. In our self-knowledge, You, whose is the dominion forever, have given us dominion, and all things are multiplied for us through transcendence. For every good we have from You can be enriched without limit through the transcending dialectic of reflection.

It takes three words to express the wonder of dialectic — *sic et non*, yes and no. We do not stumble at the meaning of "sic," simple affirmation; and we are not troubled by "non," simple negation. But it is the mystery of transcendence that empowers the "et." Lord, we praise You for the gift that allows us to bind together *sic* and *non* in an overarching consciousness. How can we not thank You for Your servant Martin Buber, who plumbed the deep meaning of I-Thou and found the greatest mystery in the hyphen, the "realm of the between"?

It is truly through transcendence that we can grasp something of the mystery of Your essence. In the thingness of creation is only duality; but You have made us but little lower than the angels, so that with man You did not only add one other species to the variety of living things but You did make possible a new order of experience.

Or *are* we our experience? Do we have existence in such a way that it is separable from what we call our experience?

We know we cannot experience an experienceless existence, but we do experience an awareness of experiences that expands our being and heightens life itself.

We sense a taste and call it good and the animal in us prompts gluttony; but the man in us savors the taste reflectively. We know good and bad but are not only caught up in the mixture of the two. We see their interrelations, ally ourselves with one or the other and affect their balance.

Light and dark not only stimulate the intricate organism of the eye but in their subtle blendings lead us to speak of beauty.

The unity of our experience of the manifoldness of things is not only a given in Your all encompassing knowledge, Lord, but is a stimulus for speculation in us who would

There are teachers who would have us believe that the duality of this world will be resolved through the merging of opposites, or the absorption of one into the other. They teach that duality is the mark of transiency in the universe of our finite existences and that salvation can only mean the ultimate succeeding of the undifferentiated, infinite One.

If we are tempted by this teaching, Lord, remind us that there were also those who taught that the mystery of Your Incarnation could be rightly understood only by sacrificing Your humanity to the dominance of Your Divinity. Not so have You revealed Yourself; but two natures, without confusion, without transmutation, without division, in one person and in one *hypostasis*.

There are other teachers who would have us reduce the rich complexity of being human to the immediacy of sentient experience. For such teachers, our goal is identification of ourselves with that experienced so that there is no distance separating our sentient selves from the object of our pleasure, our admiration, or our devotion. The more complete the identification achieved, the more fully is our potentiality realized. If aesthetes, we strive to be one with the art; if sensualists, one with the source of our gratification; if moralists, one with the good; if religious, one with God. Save us, we pray, from this which on the one hand is idolatrous and on the other blasphemy.

Such an aim is like exposing a delicate and finely wrought golden ring to the fire of a smelting furnace which reduces it to a molten mass, and then claiming something better has been gained. The creative act glorifies space with a balance of distances and relationships. The act which destroys these distances and relationships works against the good of creation. Lord, save us from the destructive heat of our possessiveness which would achieve oneness at the expense of transcendence.

The space of Your creation knows no greater distance than the dimension of transcendence which enriches

penetrate the mystery of wholeness in a world of infinite parts.

We cannot act in Your world as other than free creatures, and cannot know Your world as other than a nexus of causal necessity which includes us; and yet our total awareness encompasses both and transcends them.

We separate propositions into true and false, but in categorizing them we relate them, and their mutual impingement yield more than merely true plus false.

We know motion and rest, but neither could be known without a point of reference other than themselves.

man's relation to the world and to You. To sacrifice this distance through some sentient identification with the world is clearly idolatry; to claim that through it we can reach identification with Your transcendence is no less clearly blasphemy.

Help us, O Lord, properly to glory in Your creation.

The things You have made are worthy of praise, but it is the grandeur of their arrangement that evokes our awe. The bounty of Your hand is seen in the spaciousness of Your works. Through the gift of vast distance You have transformed masses beyond measure into a delicate, shimmering panoply of night light. The density we think we see and feel is but a mask for the inner spaciousness where distance and a balance of relationships rule.

In the world of our experience, too, You have provided for the glory of distance, the grandeur of relations that evoke our awe, orbits of ideas that move us to silence; and in the midst of our contemplation we know there is that Sun which is to all things as our transcending awareness is to that which we know and sense. We thank You for the distance whereby the Sun lights and warms but does not consume us. Grant that we may preserve such distance that the world of our experience is enlightened and not destroyed by the violation of relationships You have ordained. In such violation of relationships we know our sin to lie.

Help us to see, Lord, that it is as wrong to intellectualize our sinfulness as it is to sensualize our faith. It is not enough that we assent to the fact of sin; we must know that we are sinners. When we intellectualize our sinfulness we make mockery of the willfulness of our distortion of the relationship between us and You and claim a distance between us and this distortion which is not there; when we sensualize our faith we deny the distance between ourselves and the majesty of Your

transcendence and claim a direct experience of You which is not there.

It has been truly said that the greatest difference between any two numbers is that between one and two; but still greater is the mystery of transcendent awareness that makes it possible for us to so think about singularity and plurality.

We learn, both from Your word, Lord, and from our experience, that the dualities of the world are not to disappear by one pole absorbing the other. Pain does not triumph so there is no more pleasure; there is no evidence that good is driving evil out of existence; truth is not gaining a total victory over error. Only through transcendence is a resolution possible. For dualisms are overcome in the reflections of men exercising their gift of transcendent thought, but they are not lost. Rather, they are seen in the context of those rich relationships that

Truly, Lord, this is the inaccessible light in which You dwell. For truly there is nothing else which can penetrate through it so that it might discover You there. Truly I do not see this light since it is too much for me; and yet whatever I see I see through it, just as an eye that is weak sees what it sees by the light of the sun which it cannot look at in the sun itself. My understanding is not able [to attain] to that [light]. It shines too much and [my understanding] does not grasp it nor does the eye of my soul allow itself to be turned towards it for too long. It is dazzled by its splendour, overcome by its fullness, overwhelmed by its immensity, confused by its extent. O supreme and inaccessible light; O whole and blessed truth, how far You are from me who am so close to You! How distant You are from my sight while I am so present to Your sight! You are wholly present everywhere and I do not see You. In You I move and in You I have my

constitute the glory of Your creation, the contemplation of which marks the beatitude of us who are made in Your image.

Our death does not defeat our life; nor does our life overcome our death. Only the gift of immortality can heal the wound of life and death, and only You can give this gift. The fullness of the good life (carried as promise in the human experience of transcendence) is not realized by that which our transcendence can encompass, but by that which encompasses us. "What You have prepared for those who love You" has not entered into the heart of man — nor can it, for man is taken into it. Our transcendence is but a weak image of Yours, O Lord, and Your transcendence, than which no greater can be conceived, is also a transcendence greater than that which we can conceive.

being and I cannot come near to You. You are within me and around me and I do not have any experience of You.

Anselm, *Proslogion* XVI

I pray, O God, that I may know You and love You, so that I may rejoice in You. . . . Lord, by Your Son You . . . counsel us to ask and you promise that we shall receive so that our "joy may be complete." I ask, Lord, as You counsel. . . . May I receive what You promise through Your truth so that my "joy may be complete". . . . Until then let my mind meditate on it, let my tongue speak of it, let my heart love it, let my mouth preach it. Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it, until I enter into the "joy of the Lord," who is God, Three in One, "blessed forever. Amen."

Anselm, *Proslogion* XXVI

"An Intellectual Exercise of Devotion" was the title given, but it could just as well have been "A Devotional Exercise of the Intellect" or "An Exercise of Intellectual Devotion."

However the words are arranged, the term 'exercise' is used to indicate an activity that, if good at all, is worth repeating and perhaps only shows its true worth through repetition. The term 'devotion' is meant to make clear that a human address of God is at stake. By 'intellect' is meant man's highest form of appreciative awareness. My intent has been to use the term as Richard Hofstadter

has defined it: "Intellect . . . is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of mind. Whereas intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, re-order, adjust, intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes, imagines. Intelligence will seize the immediate meaning in a situation and evaluate it. Intellect evaluates evaluations, and looks for the meanings of situations as a whole. Intelligence can be praised as a quality in animals; intellect, being a unique manifestation of human dignity, is both praised and assailed as a quality in men" (*Anti-intellectualism in American Life*).

The title, therefore, can be expanded to say: A human address of God in terms of man's highest form of appreciative awareness given as an example of an activity worthy of cultivation.

Strangely enough, it is probably the word "exercise," as thus explicated, that would arouse the most debate. Is such a form of devotion worthy of cultivation? The general form is here derived from Anselm and has not reached the second half of the 20th century with any noticeable force. There are those who believe in acts of religious devotion and there are those who believe the intellect should be used in matters of faith; but can the devotional act itself be intellectual, or can intellectual pursuits be devotional?

The form is so foreign to our time that even the attempt may be questionable. Is the result a pseudo-pious *tour de force*? Does it tend to slip into satire, willy-nilly? At best, it may be an offering to be shared only with a few friends bound by an ancient rule of silence outside the cloistered halls.

The exercise began and ended with Anselm. The first page consists of the opening paragraphs of his *Proslogion*, which contains the famous Ontological Argument. The exercise concluded with sections from Chapters XVI and XXVI. No attempt was made to exegete these passages. They were attached fore and aft somewhat arbitrarily after the intervening pages were written. But not quite arbitrarily. The substantive points of relevance are too easily found for that. Among friends, it may be believed that a number of these struck me with some surprise when noted on a reading of the completed exercise. The decision to undertake an intellectual exercise in the form of devotion was from the beginning the influence of Anselm's *Proslogion* and the results may simply indicate that whenever the intellect is exercised devotionally the result is Anselmian!

The confluence of ideas struck me at several points. In the opening quotation, Anselm writes: "Enter into the inner chamber of your soul." This is part of the invitation to seek God: seek Him within. The notion of inner space grew stronger the longer I stayed with the analogy of transcendence.

In the next paragraph Anselm asks this question: "What shall this exile do, far away from You [God] as he is?" The figure of distance, as intimated in the phrase "far away," became a key idea in dealing with the concept of creation as against mere mass.

When Anselm writes, "You have created me and re-created me . . . and I still do not know You," he is clearly dissociating himself from those who would claim a direct experience of God. This may be still clearer — if that is possible — in Chapter XVI: "You are within me

and around me and I do not have any experience of You." Refreshing. Anselm must surely have been among those who find that nothing so stimulates the love of sinners as associating with the pious.

Chapter XVI also provides text for the exercise with the teaching that we cannot see the Transcendent Light, but we see at all only through the light of transcendence. Anselm expresses this through the figure of the Sun, at which we cannot look but without which we cannot see. Relating this to inner space, the exercise claims that only through transcendence can the raw material of experience yield meaning.

Although the notion of inner space is present in Anselm, I was aware throughout the exercise of another indebtedness to a writer for whom subjectivity and transcendence are mutually defining terms. It is in Kierkegaard more than any other writer known to me that the notions of transcendence and interior space are brought together.

From the *Journals*: "The imagination is what providence uses in order to get men into reality, into existence, to get them far enough out, or in, or down in existence. And when imagination has helped them as far out as they are meant to go — that is where reality, properly speaking, begins" (p.243).

"[Socrates] is subjectively raised to the second power, his attitude is as objective as that of a true poet to his poetic works; he is just as objective to his own subjectivity. That is an achievement. Otherwise one invariably gets one of two things, either an objective something, an objective bit of furniture which is supposed to be a man, or else a miscellaneous hodge-podge of accidents and spontaneity. But the task is to have an objective attitude to one's own subjectivity.

"The maximum which anyone achieves in this respect may serve as an infinitely weak analogy of how God is infinite subjectivity" (pp.248-9).

From *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: "The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation-process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness. The existing individual who chooses the subjective way apprehends instantly the entire dialectical difficulty involved in having to use some time, perhaps a long time, in finding God objectively; and he feels this dialectical difficulty in all its painfulness, because every moment is wasted in which he does not have God. That very instant he *has* God, not by virtue of any objective

deliberation, but by virtue of the infinite passion of inwardness" (pp.178-9).

From James Collins' *The Mind Of Kierkegaard*: "Kierkegaard's point was that transcendence is a characteristic of existence itself, and that the deepening of existence depends upon the manner and degree of transcendence" (p.164).

Is anything gained by the devotional mode? The answer to this will reflect what is believed about the manner of intellectual exercise. This exercise assumes that all human thought is dialectical, and that we need the

stimulation of another mind to activate our most effective thinking. If no one else is physically present, we still think dialectically, often debating with ourselves. It is more effective, however, if we force ourselves to use our intellects against a position which we have known in a well articulated form; to avoid straw men and seek the sharpest, strongest opposition for the testing of our views.

How high does one look for testing grounds? It must be appropriate to the quest. What if one seeks God? From days of old men have wrestled with God — in faith, in doubt, in unfaith. It may be God's greatest gift that we can throw our puny weight against Him and exercise our intellects in His presence as an act of devotion, — that is, to seek a blessing. □



DANDELION SPRING

Julius Lester

*Say of nothing: It is mine.
Say only: It is with me.*

May, 1976

Spring. I missed it again. I was determined to catch it this year. Each morning since the first of April I have looked out the bedroom window for the first glimpse of forsythia. Every evening standing at the kitchen sink washing dishes, I inspected the red maple tree for adumbrations of feathery buds. This year I was going to be as vigilant as a cat, waiting with silent tension to leap on spring, catch it, and tie it in a bow around my little finger.

Spring came, and it must've been during the night, or maybe on the afternoon I got the car inspected and would've missed the Second Coming when I was told

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that I owed two dollars for the inspection sticker and ninety-eight for three new tires. But spring is like that, waiting until you blink your eyes or blow your nose, and lo! it has arrived.

Here in New England the first sure sign of spring's advent is buckets hanging on the sides of maple trees like a fungus. Though the air is still chilled, the sap has begun streaming through the trees, and seeing the buckets renews my faith in the cycle of the seasons, a faith which February snows test and the winds of March almost destroy.

That is part of the cycle, though. Winter must break our faith that any other season ever existed, or even could. Like the earth we must die and lie fallow, unaware that the new is preparing itself within our limbs to be tapped for sweet juices, to spring forth in forsythia yellow.

I know, and yet I wish I could catch spring in a butterfly net, place it in a jar and on a snow-encrusted January day, unscrew the cap and let spring blow warm over me. I can't. Even now, when spring has convinced me that it will remain forever, it is swelling toward the dog days of August. Spring is not like me, who wants to stop life at a single lovely moment and hold it forever. Spring is never here: it is always a-here-going-there.

No wonder I could not catch the birth cry of spring. It does not stop long enough for me to say "Aha!" It does not even pause to compliment itself on producing, yet once again, blue-petalled periwinkles looking like fallen stars. Spring cannot stop to preen itself on its accomplishments, for its job is to prepare the earth for summer. The ground must be dried and warmed to receive the seeds the wind will scatter, that insects and birds will carry from one place to another, and even those I lay in furrowed ground. Spring is not a prize won from the tight hands of winter. It is winter's child and summer's parent, and I try to find my place among the pine-green that softens winter's white stare and the white-topped yarrow stalks of summer.

However, I don't know where I belong on the rolling circle of the seasons. All the definitions by which I have known myself continually die, leaving me with question marks piercing my heart like hooks. The one constant in my life was always knowing that I was a writer, but this winter I could not write. I'd thought that writing was a way of life, but it is not. It is merely a function, not a definition of being, and I do not know how to be.

I was once THE WRITER: Now I am nothing and I sense that I must go into that nothingness, as frightening as it is. Living in New England I have learned that the

only way to live with the severe winters is to accept that I am going to be cold from November to May. Once I accept the cold, I am no longer cold. I am cold only to the degree that I fight against it.

Spiritual death is like that. If I embrace the death, I will be reborn. But that's the problem being facile with words. I find it easy to say what I cannot live. I know the meaning of the spiritual dying, but that does not exempt me from the screaming agony of the death. There is no alternative to stumbling through the darkness. Only when I wholly experience my nothingness will God fill the void. If I am full of myself, there is no room for Him. When I am wracked by the humiliation of my nothingness, I become a suitable recipient for God's grace.

So it was one warm day last month when I decided to make dandelion wine. With bucket in hand, my son and I went outside to pick the flowers. Dandelions are everywhere in the spring, and like most Americans, I regarded them with the same distaste as dog droppings. I'd been picking the flowers for some time before I looked at one. I stopped, more still than dawn. I'd never seen anything more beautiful. How many hundreds of tiny, perfect petals were there on this one flower, each petal so intensely yellow that I almost had to shield my eyes. I looked around and there were dandelion flowers everywhere, like a million tiny suns, and I laughed. Of course it would be just like God to make the most beautiful things the common ones. And it would be just like people to see beauty only in the rare.

And there was another afternoon when I listened to a bird singing. This bird's recital was a twice-daily event and always caused me to listen, for its song was rich and melodious, skipping from a high register to a low one with delightful improvisations in each. I decided to go outside and look for the bird. Its song was so loud and full that it seemed to be coming from everywhere, but finally I thought I had located it in a white pine tree. My eyes went slowly up the tree, searching each limb carefully. I passed over the robin perched on a limb midway up the tree and continued looking. The bird sang! I looked frantically, but saw no bird. Then, I wondered: Could that be what a robin sounds like? Of course not, I quickly concluded. The song came again and I looked at the robin in time to see its throat bulging and quivering with music. It was difficult to accept that a bird so ordinary was the source of such exquisite beauty. Well, that's God for you.

Over the next few weeks, the dandelion flowers were transformed into what I hoped would be dandelion wine, and the robin sang gloriously, arrogantly unmindful of

my despair. But why shouldn't it? A robin didn't awake one morning and realize that it might be a chicken. The robin knew itself as part of the circle whose perimeters were illuminated by the light of dandelion flowers. I knew myself not at all. The root of knowledge, however, is ignorance.

I began digging a garden. I didn't know what I was doing, despite so much of my growing up being in the rural South. I was of that generation of young blacks whose parents had made the journey from the sweat of cotton fields and vegetable patches to the ease of city living, and although my father always planted a garden in the backyard every spring, I was determined to prove (to myself? to whites?) that blacks were capable of doing more with their lives than tensing their muscles to guide a mule-drawn plow across a field. I was fiercely determined to be a writer, an intellectual, a scholar, with hands as soft as rose petals.

Now, here I was, my hands gripped around a hoe handle, the knees of my pants dirty from where I stooped to dislodge stones and pull weeds whose roots were like claws clinging to the innards of the earth. As I worked day after day, it was with surprise that vivid images returned to me of my father doing the same, and how no one in the family worked with him, or even asked about the garden. He never asked for any help or resented our disinterest. I understood suddenly that his garden had no relation to us, or even to his life with us. It was what remained to him of his life before us, and each spring he renewed a covenant with that time before, with his father whose life was bounded by fields and haunted by train whistles calling him to a future he could never know. My father had ridden the train my grandfather could only look at while resting on his hoe. And my life is acted out in worlds my father cannot imagine. (When we see each other, he glows with pride as he tells me of meeting people and being asked, "Are you any kin to Julius Lester, the writer?" We laugh, and while the laughter brings us close, I am aware of a yearning within it, a hunger each of us feels for the common ground of our father-son relationship.) Every evening as I wash the dirt of the garden from my hands, I now experience that ground, for I have assumed responsibility for the covenant and my slave forebearers rest a little more easily, perhaps. The garden is not the object of my labor: I am. It is my soul being turned over and weeded; it is the rocks within me that I grab and fling away. I am the furrow being opened to receive new seed.

The miracle is always there for the man who can pass his hand through to it, to take it.

July, 1976

I try to remember the bedrooms in which I have undressed, the sound of her (whoever she was) undressing on the other side of the bed in the night-dark-stillness. Sometimes I thought of St. John of the Cross when my fingers touched the wonder of God-nippled-breasts and I couldn't understand how he could give his passion to poems, for nothing was more beautiful than my nakedness against hers (whoever she was), no passion more permeated with numinosity than that in strange bedrooms when she and I became one and one is One.

Yet, sometimes I recall, too, peering into the darkness of those bedrooms, looking for her face and being unable to find it. The terror rose within me when my memory failed to give me any image of who she was, and my mind could not tell me why I was with her. But I was and she could not know that I made love silently because I was afraid I'd call her by the name of another woman. By morning, though, the terrors of the darkness were forgotten, and in the light I gathered into myself the rise and fall of her breasts, the round richness of her hips, the succulence of her thighs.

So it was for years, and while I knew, I did not know. It is difficult to see ourselves as we truly are, even to recognize how little of ourselves we really see. Sometimes in the darkness, however, we are disturbed by vague intimations that we are less than we thought we were. But the morning comes, and with it, the shadows of our illusions, rounded and nipped.

Last spring there was no morning. There was one strange bedroom too many, one erotic flight whose currents and crosswinds my wings could not ride. I'd thought I was angling for the upper reaches of the stratosphere even while I was falling with broken wings. I no longer knew who was real — the me who kneels beside a bed of twisted sheets with thanksgiving, or that me whose body bends before the Cross? Was the illusion she whose body I entered with reverence, or She whom I Hail as Blessed among Women? Was the reality the light of dawn through the Rose Window at Notre Dame, or that morning light in which my body arcs above hers?

Both are real and the time has come when I must somehow reconcile them, when I must collect the two halves of my soul — the monk and the lover — and find

the place where the two become One. The light of morning shines equally through the stained glass windows of monastery chapels and the drawn shades of strange bedrooms. I would like to think that I have sung God's praises in the light of both places.

But I cannot be sure. Perhaps I am nothing more than a child of my age who read and believed the journalistic proclamations about the "sexual revolution," the "good news" of the twentieth century in which the body was resurrected from the Puritan tomb, and each morning one awakes in a strange bedroom is Easter. (I can imagine myself being canonized one day as the patron saint of strange bedrooms, St. Julius of the Sheets. Ah, what a Feast Day I will have!)

Working in the garden is making me look at myself from the earth's perspective, and how finite and ridiculous I appear when I see myself through a rock's eyes. (Every farmer must at some time think that God loved stones the most, because He made so many of them.) From the rock's eternal vantage point, I vaguely perceive that my personal dilemma is also the problem of Western civilization itself, which has never known how to reconcile the flesh with the spirit, passion with reason, the classical with the romantic. Whatever language one chooses, the problem is the same: What do we do with that part of ourselves which is emphatically and unredeemably animal?

Western history has alternated between two answers: denial and indulgence. One era denies the reality of the body and the next lives as if there were nothing else. The baths of Pompeii were the logical successor to the Acropolis, and after the Middle Ages there had to be a Renaissance. The animal within us can only be denied or controlled for so long, for it sings a melody whose complexities we must learn.

St. Augustine said that Eros is the power which drives men toward God, that it is the force which urges us to transcend ourselves, to seek union with the One. But we live in an age when the religion sanctioned by the society no longer has the force of Eros. We are left only with the *erotic*, for in our age, it alone has the power to take us out of our loneliness, to merge us with another and leave us with a haunting aftertaste of holiness. In our society the erotic assumes an existential religious function, because that Eros which was palpable in the early Church is not any longer. Regardless of how pornographic the expression of the erotic becomes, it is an inverted attempt at transcendence and union with the One.

Like nothingness, the erotic is an experience to be embraced and accepted fully instead of fleeing from in

frenzied terror. Yet, the erotic cannot be loved wholly for itself, because when it is, one becomes its possession. Neither, however, is the erotic to be condemned as sin. I will never believe that the love I shared in those bedrooms was sinful, that that passion which burst through us with all the glory of creation was condemned by God. (How lovely it is to realize that God is not a Christian. God is God.) I cry with Heloise, who wrote to Abelard that, "If I suffer because of my sins, it is not because I have committed them, but because I am no longer committing them."

The erotic is not to be condemned as sinful or legislated out of existence. It is to be transformed into Eros. A strange bedroom may be the road to Damascus.

If there is one thing men need to learn, it is to collect each man his own soul together deep inside him, and to abide by it.

August, 1976

As Joanne and I drove north from Phoenix and started toward the mountains of northern Arizona, I knew that I was home. I have never lived or been here before, but I am profoundly at home with these mountains and mesas, this arid land beneath an overwhelmingly infinite sky.

It is remarkable that the whites who live here are among the most conservative in the country, represented as they are by the likes of Barry Goldwater and John Rhodes. But I recall the times when I have gone to Nature for comfort and found myself bludgeoned by its unsparing indifference. Nature is not like a mother's breast, nourishing anyone who places the teat in his mouth. Nature is a mirror and will give us a perfect reflection of who we are, without ever caring that we are. The politics of fear is powerful here, because this land is harsh and unyielding to those who do not love their finitude. This land tells you how inconsequential you are and you either smile, thanking it for allowing you to live with it for what is scarcely a second on its cosmic clock, or you clutch your life in utter desperation, hating the fact that the least particle of wind-blown desert was here ten million years before you and waits patiently for the dust of you to join it.

Without the unrelenting pain of this year, I could not now exult in this land. I am beginning to know, yet anew,

my own spiritual poverty, my need of God, and now that I know it, God is present everywhere — especially in this beautiful nothingness. O God, I am nothing. Make me more so.

Arcosanti, Arizona

Paolo Soleri, an Italian architect, is building a city here. When completed, it will house two to three thousand people, and will be, we are told, a model for what a city can be, existing with Nature instead of against it.

Walking through it, however, I feel isolated from the expansive land surrounding it. The city feels more like a piece of live-in sculpture than a community. Yet, from what we are told, it has been designed with complete attention to ecology. Ecology, however, is not a matter of technological design and efficiency. If I am ecologically balanced within, then whatever I create will be in ecological equilibrium. It is that simple and that difficult. No one can build a city. It is enough if each individual builds his own house.

It is dusk and I hear a distant sound.

"Listen," I whisper to Joanne.

It comes again. I smile. "Did you hear it?"

She nods. "What was it?"

"A coyote." I've never heard a coyote, but I know I am not mistaken, for that is the sound my soul has made so often at dusk.

The wind is blowing now and from the porch of the reception area, I hear music. I turn and see the hundreds of wind bells there. Soleri makes bells of all sizes and shapes and the sound of them in the wind is magical. There is one bell whose deep ring holds me and it is many minutes before I locate it. "This is the sound of the Universe," I tell Joanne. Even though it takes most of my money, I buy this bell, for I know that during those times when I am trapped in my fears, the sound of the bell will call me out.

I wonder if Soleri knows that it is O.K. to be just a bell maker.

Tuzigoot National Monument; Montezuma Castle National Monument.

Tuzigoot is the ruin of a ninety room pueblo in the Verde Valley. It was built in the twelfth century, that very time when Heloise refused to deny her passion for Abelard. I wonder what they who lived here did with their passion? The stones of these walls know, but if they can speak, I do not know how to listen.

I have never been any place so old, and it is frustrating knowing nothing about the people who lived and loved here. The potsherds, arrowheads and tools which archaeologists have unearthed don't tell me what I want to know: What did it feel like to be alive on this hilltop eight hundred years ago? I stand here, looking into the valley below and the surrounding mountains. Eight hundred years ago in the month of August, someone else stood here and what they saw was little different. That is the only similarity between me and that person. No person named Kojak appeared in their dreams. They did not walk around carrying more knowledge in them about the world than they could ever use. They knew only what they needed to know: How to irrigate the fields, how to grind the corn, how to build a house with small stones, and how to praise their gods. When you come right down to it, you don't really need to know much more than that.

Montezuma Castle is a few winding, mountainous miles southeast of Tuzigoot. It, too, was built between the 12th and 15th centuries and has been abandoned for six hundred years. No one knows its real name, or whether it even had one. Montezuma Castle was attached to it by ignorant white pioneers and soldiers, who thought that it might be the castle of the Aztec leader.

Where Tuzigoot stands on a hilltop as if it were growing there, this ruin was carved from the face of limestone cliffs. It is a nineteen room apartment house, five stories high. It is seventy feet from the ground and from that point, rises 150 feet up the face of the cliff. Of course, the fact that the Indians created such an edifice from the wall of the cliff without modern machinery amazes people. I don't know why. Out of the thousands of years of human history, machines have been commonplace for only little more than a hundred, and then only in the Western world. We are the oddities of humanity, wholly dependent on machines and technology, and categorizing those who aren't as underdeveloped. Perhaps we are the underdeveloped ones.

Some of the ruins are open to the public and Joanne and I crawl into one of the narrow, low-ceilinged rooms. I do not think anyone could have truly lived in this room.

It is dark and so low, even a child could not stand up. No, these rooms were only for sleeping, perhaps. Living was done in the valley below. No one knows why the Indians did not build dwellings in the valley. The National Park Service booklet speculates that living high up on the cliff, the people were immune to attack from enemies. How typically American. As I crawled out into the light and squatted on the cliff ledge, I think I understood why the Indians built their homes here. Only here does one not intrude upon the land. Only here, tucked into the cliff, could one find his rightful place. Only here could one sit of an evening while dusk descended with the softness of spring and know that man's rightful place in the world is a low dark room in the face of a cliff. And that is why no one will go to Soleri's city six hundred years hence and find peace.

Hopiland

It is evening when we enter Hopiland. The quiet stillness is so stunning. It is like a woman's embrace.

The Hopi communities are scattered over the tops of three mesas, each standing above the horizon line like a Mayan temple. From the mesas one can see an incalculable distance, all the way to the San Francisco mountains, where, the Hopis say, the *kachinas* live. From these Mesas the Hopi saw the Spanish come and fought them, century after century, never incurring defeat. For eight hundred years they have been here. They will be here eight hundred more.

The Hopis are best known, perhaps, for two things to outsiders: draft resistance during World War II (their name means "Peaceful People"), and the Hopi Snake Dance. This dance is among the lesser important Hopi rituals, but the spectacle of people dancing with poisonous snakes in their mouths always attracts hundreds of tourists. How odd that what is at least tolerated when done by the Hopis is condemned when done by poor whites in the mountains of Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia. More startling, however, is to realize that Hopis and poor whites share the same form of religious expression.

Orthodox Christians look upon snake handlers as beyond the lunatic fringe. Yet, I wonder if it is not these outcasts from the Christian establishment who keep the faith vital. I recall an interview with one who, when asked if he was not afraid of being bitten, responded that

he wasn't. He simply knew that he wouldn't be when a particular feeling came over him. The only time he was bitten was the Sunday morning he sat and *thought* about handling a snake. After that, he said, he didn't do any thinking. Just sat until the urge to handle was so strong that it was *the only way* he could give witness to his joy in knowing God.

The Hopi and Christian snake handlers know the Living God. No sitting in pews in proper dress to praise their God. When the spirit fills you, grab a water moccasin and shout HALLELUJAH! Wrap a rattler round your neck and yell, GLORY! Put a sidewinder in your teeth and DANCE!

The ultimate beauty of the Hopi and Christian snake ceremony comes when I remember that the snake is symbolic of many things, but first and foremost, perhaps, it is a symbol for sexual energy, that energy and power which is life itself. The snake ceremony is one way of reconciling the earth and the sky, passion and reason. The monk is a lover.

I fear the power of God has not so filled me that I feel impelled to celebrate my oneness with Him by dancing with a rattler in my mouth. How I wish it were not so.

Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico

It is the Feast Day of Saint Dominic, and we are here at this pueblo named for him. This is no traditional Feast Day, however, for it is also the day of the Corn Dance. We arrive early, but already the Indians have attended mass and removed the statue of St. Dominic from the church, carried it through the streets to the accompaniment of guns firing and placed it in a bower made of cottonwood branches beside the kiva. (Ah, St. Dominic! It must be a real pleasure to get out of the church for a while.)

The dancing and chanting has already begun. Hundreds of men, women, and children stand in rows, dancing in place, while a chorus of old men stand to one side, chanting. I understand nothing I see or hear, and it doesn't matter. Later I can refer to books to learn the symbolism of the women's headdresses, the painted bodies of the men who dance in and out of the ranks, the pine boughs each dancer wears. It is enough to know that corn is the universal symbol of life and fertility, and the corn I planted in June was growing tall when I left. So I, too, have cause to celebrate this life and the good harvest

I hope my own living represents.

It is hot. There are few trees and the little shade they provide is already occupied by Indians from other pueblos and hundreds of tourists. Already perspiration is wetting the faces of many of the dancers, but they seem not to notice. They are renewing their covenant, not only with their ancestors, but the Corn God. This is strenuous worship, and I know that I could not dance through the morning, into the afternoon, and the evening. Such endurance requires an active faith, one which knows that it is necessary to dance and chant if the cycle of the seasons is to continue. This is faith beyond reason, because the Indians know that the seasons will come and go, each in its time, without their dancing. But their knowledge does not turn them into passive spectators of the year's continuing line. They do not relax and put their faith in God. They remember what we have forgotten: God has put His faith in us.

What I am seeing is only the public part of a ceremony that has been going on for three days. Whether there were tourists here or not, the dancing and chanting would be taking place. This is not a performance, but a communion celebration. Each dancer is intent upon his/her dancing. We look at them, but they do not look at us.

After several hours I turn to Joanne and whisper, "We are witnessing a pagan ritual!" I don't know whether my obvious remark means as much to her, but I live in continual frustration at the limits of time, of being defined historically, and am always seeking ways of living outside time, of finding the window to eternity. Maybe that is why I am always journeying to the West and to Indian lands, because here I feel myself to be outside the continuum of history. These mountains on the horizon couldn't care less if Jimmy Carter or a yucca plant were President. (And for once in my life, I am one with the mountains.)

I repeat it to myself: I am witnessing a pagan ritual. Yes, St. Dominic stands in the bower, and early in the afternoon every dancer takes an offering and lays it at the feet of the statue. But St. Dominic is not the center of this ceremony. He is merely an invited guest. The Indians here joined the Church when the Spanish missionaries came, but they did not convert. They attend mass and then come outside to chant and dance. They have reconciled the two worlds of the cathedral and the kiva.

But how do I, born into the Christian world, invite into my life that pagan who still lives within me? I don't know, and I resent that the religion of my culture has denigrated the pagan, confusing it with sin. When I speak to religious groups, I sometimes say that perhaps

we are called upon to be trees. Invariably, some minister or devout Christian asks, "Isn't that pantheism?" (I never know what to say. Hell, I thought it was a good idea. I wouldn't mind being a birch myself, as long as the land wasn't owned by a paper company.) I am trying to find out how to live my life and if a tree can give me any help, I'm not going to turn it down just to keep from being called a pantheist.

Pagan! How I love the word this day, St. Dominic's Day. It returns to me the ever present reality that this earth and my existence are a miracle, that I am not to regard this earth and my existence as my just due. Pagan! It is to live with the awareness that Life is a gift whose depth a million years of living would not begin to plumb. Anyone could create an orchid after thirty or forty years of work, but to create a trillion jillion dandelions, each one with perfect yellow petals? Only God could do that! And do it over and over and over, year in and year out! It's a miracle!

The last thing I did before leaving home was to go to my garden. I still cannot believe that it is growing. Damned if I know how. I didn't do anything. Yes, I cleared the land, turned it over, raked it, etc. Then I planted the seeds, and what an awesome act that was, for I felt myself to be participating in the act of creation, an act repeated since Cain. I held the seeds in the palm of my hand and could not believe that food grew from things so small. From one yellow kernel, corn stalks, six feet high would grow, and not only stalks, but dark green leaves, tassles, and lo! ears of corn each one covered with enough kernels that I could share some with the worms and still come out ahead. And what did I do to make it happen? Nothing.

My favorite rows in the garden are, however, the ones where the mustard greens grow. (My garden has a decidedly Southern twinge — mustards, collards, okra, black-eyed peas. Next year I'm going to plant fried chicken and gravy.) Never having gardened, I was not prepared for how tiny the mustard seeds would be. Scarcely bigger than a grain of sand. I stared at them in my hand. "Oh, my God!" I exclaimed aloud, as I remembered that faith the size of a mustard seed could move mountains and that "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed." As many times as I'd heard in churches that faith the size of a mustard seed could move mountains, it had meant nothing. I wondered why no minister had ever passed out mustard seeds to the congregation so that we might know just how little faith was required. With my palm filled with mustard seeds, I could see just how little faith I had.

In Hopiland, too, I was reminded of how miniscule my faith is. The Hopi growing season is only 133 days and annual rainfall is twelve inches. Yet, they grow corn, squash, beans and cotton in what looks like sand. No non-Hopi knows how they do it, and there are many secret rituals and ceremonies concerned with growing. They, too, have an active faith, one that penetrates and becomes a part of the continuing mystery of endless creation. We think the Creation was finished in seven days. The Hopi and the Indians of Santo Domingo live as if Creation is unceasing, and they are active participants in it. But that is pagan, which is probably worse than pantheist. But I wonder if maybe there wasn't a little of the pagan in Jesus. He took a handful of fish and fed five thousand people. That's almost as good as growing corn and beans in sand.

Santa Fe, New Mexico

It is strange returning to this beautiful town. It was here on my first visit six years ago that my eight year marriage ended. Joanne knows, and she wonders as I do if this will be where our five-and-a-half years of unwedded matrimony will come to a close. I wonder if I am being brave or foolish coming here at this critical juncture in our relationship. Whichever, it is certainly no accident.

That ostensible reason for coming was to spend a few days with my friend, Nancy, who is working here for the summer. In reality, I want to exorcise the past. Six years ago I was not prepared for this place, six thousand feet in the mountains, surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Six years ago mountains named Blood of Christ frightened me, and I had paranoid fears of being swallowed by this huge sky. Now I curl in the bowl of this sky like a cat in a chair, and while my faith is not sufficient to budge the mountains, at least it does not quail before them.

Living is not a process of continually going forward, but a going forward to go back. I find that I must return to the places I have been, physically and spiritually, to cleanse myself of what I still carry of them and no longer need, and to glean from the past all I was not capable of gathering when I was wholly in it.

Thus I return to Santa Fe, another woman beside me

who is weary of my worshipping in strange bedrooms. I understand, but understanding does not necessarily create change. Like a reformed alcoholic vowing to never drink again, I have sworn never to touch another woman's breast. Joanne wants to believe me. So do I, but I am afraid to. My inner journey is inseparable from the women I have known, because each one carried some part of my soul, which I was unaware of before her.

Six years ago I met Carol here, and while my wife sat in the hotel room with our two children, I danced with Carol. Yes, I am ashamed now, but not repentant. If I sinned, it was only because I was seeking my virtue. That is where virtue lies — at the heart of our greatest sin. This does not mean one should sin with impunity. But the road to the Above leads through the Below. The tree can grow only as high as its roots go deep.

I am back to the paradox. Carol lived it. I was not consciously aware of that then. She and I would discuss theology for hours (after I left my wife and went to live with her.) Then, an hour or so later, she would be intensely involved in a conversation with a bird. She even held a long discussion with a buffalo once.

Catherine was like that, too. Chipmunks sat in her hand to eat. The birds seemed to know her by name. She was completely pagan and when I finally ended our relationship this past winter, she said, "You're too refined for me." She was right, and that was why I so desperately needed her for almost a year. Not knowing how to live the wild, savage part of me, I needed her to live it for me. Joanne is as refined as I am, and maybe that is why I have brought her to Santa Fe. I must learn to live with her as I learn to live the pagan in me.

Taos, New Mexico

Last evening we walked around the town and wandered by the Catholic church. In the quiet, dark blue dusk, the bells rang. Day is done and all is well. Next to the church is a playground and we pushed each other in the swings, played on the see-saw and laughed a lot.

This morning we went to Mass. There were only fifteen or twenty people present, but the young Chicano priest conducted the mass as if every pew were filled. Sitting there in the shadows in the back of the church, I could not rid myself of the feeling that this man cared

about me, whom he did not know existed even. I had read of the Hindu *darshan*, i.e., the experience of being transformed by the presence of a holy man. Until this morning I had not understood it. I still do not, but it is real. Grace is Amazing!

Grace was also there in my encounter with the drunken Indian outside the hotel later in the morning. I was sitting on the hood of the car waiting for Joanne when he walked up to me. He talked for some time, giving me in slurred tones a capsule of his life before asking for a ride to the pueblo a few miles outside of town. I told him I couldn't, because there was no room in the car. At first he couldn't believe that I had refused him, and neither could I. There is a part of my soul which is as white liberal as Hubert Humphrey, which condescends to sympathize with drunken Indians. He was used to preying on the guilt of white tourists and to him, I was a white tourist, black skin notwithstanding.

I was glad for the encounter with him, because it was the reminder I needed not to glorify or romanticize Indians. They do not carry the answers for my life: I do. I can watch a Corn Dance, but the Indian I met on the square this morning reminded me of the other reality. Those who live in the unceasing miracle are few. Most of us are drunkards looking for a ride home.

Taos Pueblo

The Taos Indians say that this is the spiritual center of the world. The Hopis claim the same for their land. I believe them both. (In a world so multifarious, there must be more than one center.) Sitting here beside this stream and looking up into the face of the mountain, I have no doubt that this is the spiritual center of the world, for that peace which passeth all understanding is here.

I imagine that this stream flows from Blue Lake, hidden somewhere in the mountains. It is central to the religion of the Pueblo and was taken over by the government of the United States many years ago. How ironic that Richard Nixon was the President who returned the lake to the Indians. But it would take God to find a good use for Nixon.

A young Indian came up to me. He gave me what I know as the Black Power handshake, and I almost laughed aloud. I wonder now if it is the Indian Power

handshake. He cannot know that I was one of those who were "there" when that handshake came into being and thought it ridiculous then. But a decade later I find myself doing it again at an Indian pueblo in New Mexico. He talks to me intensely for a few minutes about how we are all brothers and must come together to fight the white man. I nod my head, trying to figure out if I've been caught in a time warp. Some of his words sound like direct quotes from my writing of a decade ago. (Spare me, Lord!)

Now, sitting beside the stream, I am playing with some children from the pueblo, teaching them how to throw a rock so that it will skip across the surface of the stream. I fall quite easily into my father's role when two of the children stop fighting, and as I admonish them, they become my children. It feels nice. One of them asks Joanne to take her picture. Joanne does. We play with the children for an hour or so, and I wonder if Joanne will ever consent to having the children I so desperately want, or if this time here with these children will be our only ones.

We stand up to go. The girl who asked Joanne to take her picture holds out her hand. "You must give me money because you took my picture." And all the joy and love vanishes. Joanne does not know what to do since she can't release the tears I know she feels, and neither do I. But I want to find the young Indian militant and shake his hand again, for I am surprised to find that the old anger is still there and I am ready to burn down America just so this child, who is only five, will not have to hustle for money.

Joanne reaches for her purse. "No," I tell her.

"But - "

"No!"

"You must pay for taking my picture," the little girl repeats. "You cannot take an Indian's picture without paying."

I kneel before the child and tell her that we will not pay, not only because it was she who asked for the picture and not us, but because it would not be right. I don't know why, but I know that it wouldn't be. If she's going to hustle the tourists, don't make friends with them first. Do it as it was done when we entered one of the apartments of the pueblo earlier to look at some crafts. Once inside, the door was quickly closed and the old Indian woman in the corner said, "My grandson will now do the famous hoop dance for you. Very old." And before I could protest, she started beating her drum and the little boy started dancing through his hoop. When he finished, he held out an empty plate. I paid.

Somehow what the little girl was doing was far worse. She was unconsciously exploiting the joy we'd shared, and herself. I did not know how to tell a five-year-old not to be a prostitute.

As we left, Joanne said, "That really spoiled everything. Why did she do that?"

"Well, I'm sure you don't want to hear a lecture on American history, and she didn't spoil anything. The reality of our playing with her is still real. So is her trying to hustle us. They're both real and one doesn't cancel out the other."

"But what do I do with both of them?"

"Nothing. Let them do with you."

San Cristobal, New Mexico

The road goes up, up, up into the mountains for miles. I begin worrying that we have taken the wrong road, but just then there is a sign with an arrow pointing: "D.H. Lawrence Ranch."

We arrive. No one is here. We are to meet Nancy, but she has not arrived yet. She is one of those friends who came to me in the mail, responding to something I had written. A correspondence developed. Eventually we met. I cannot believe that we have known each other for almost a decade now. But we have and we have shared our inner selves with each other in a way not possible with our friends, for Nancy lives in relationship to men as I do to women. If someone combined her strange bedrooms with mine, we could build a hotel. Oddly, we have never slept together. But we don't look to each other to uncover the unknown parts of ourselves. Nancy and I need each other for confirmation, for support in the way we live our lives — recklessly and always willing to risk everything for the opportunity to love. It is appropriate that she should be with me on this pilgrimage to Lawrence's grave.

She has not arrived, and after a few minutes, Joanne and I decide to walk the rest of the way up the mountain to the mausoleum where Lawrence's ashes reside. It is a small white-washed building crowned by a stone eagle. Inside, a railing separates us from the urn which holds Lawrence's ashes. In the corners of the building, on each side of the urn are large pine boughs. I turn to Joanne and smile. "Good. It is properly pagan."

As we walk outside to stand before the pine bough-covered grave of Lawrence's wife, Frieda, Nancy is walking toward us.

"Hi, you guys!" she exclaims with typical exuberance.

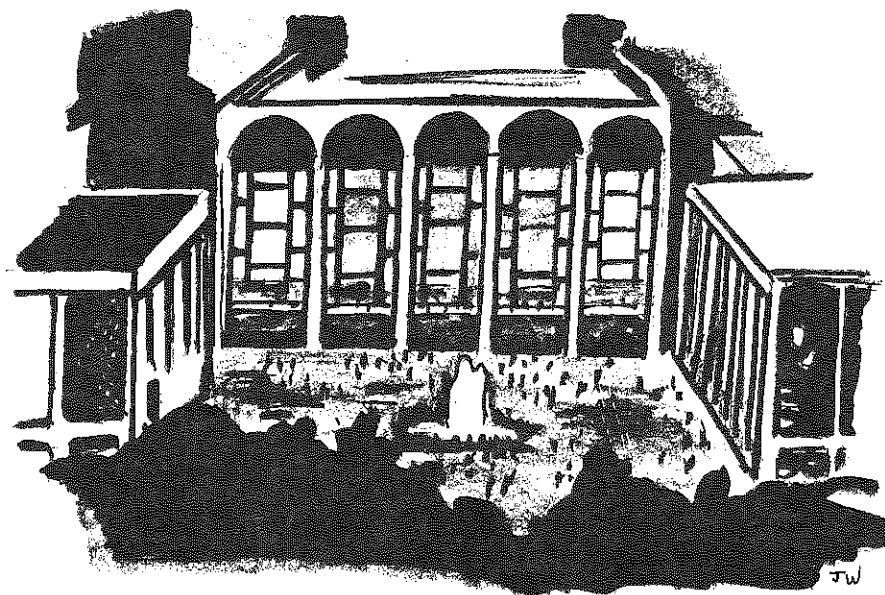
I smile. The journey has ended and it is complete. I am glad to be here with Nancy, who has read more Lawrence than I ever shall. But that is not important. It is important only to pay homage to this man who tried to find the way to live — with integrity — in right relationship to the demands of the blood. Blood! It was one of his favorite metaphors to describe that part of us which is instinctual. Lawrence knew that not until we learn to live with what is pagan in us will we be truly civilized and truly religious.

There is only one thing that a man really wants to do, all his life: and that is, to find his way to his God, his Morning Star, and be alone there.

Amherst, Mass.

January, 1977

I have no answers. But I no longer have questions either. There is only Life, and if you ask too many questions, Life cannot touch you with its burning hand. Joanne is no longer here and, for the first time, I do not ask why. And it has been quite some time since I've seen



a strange bedroom. As I become more pagan, I wonder if I will become monogamous, or even celibate. The way to the Above is through the Below. I send my roots into the earth so that I may touch the sky.

The ground is covered with snow and already I am planning the garden, just as the snow is preparing the earth. How odd to be planning my garden while there is snow on the ground. But I was calculating how many canning jars I needed before the first tomato turned red. Being a gardener is teaching me that the seasons do not come in orderly succession. They are intertwined and interdependent, threads of different colors wrapped around each other. I missed spring last year because I was looking for it. But when the forsythia blooms, spring is over.

One morning soon, I will trudge through the snow to the forsythia bush and taking one of its thin, cold limbs in my hands, I will hold it quietly for a moment. I am certain that if I am as still as a snowflake, I will eventually sense a tiny twitch from within the limb. With a satisfied smile, I will return to the house, uncork the first bottle of dandelion wine and drink to the birth of spring. □

The italicized quotations heading each section are from *The Plumed Serpent* by D.H. Lawrence.

REVIEWS

THE FASCINATION OF HERESY

I remember the day that I laughed at Bishop Ussher's chronology of ancient history which located creation morning on a Monday in 4004 B.C. Obviously religious people had some catching up to do, and while science was not totally in command of the situation, it was a lot more sensible than Christian fundamentalism. Later, when I became a geology student and was taught that the dinosaurs strode across a mud flat, imprinted their tracks, and the sand blew carefully over them, strata subsided, limestones and sandstones topped the tracks, and millions of years later erosion presented them to us, science lost its mystery also. Why, hell, every summer we used to ride horses and chase cattle and all those tracks were lost in a couple of weeks, even in the muddiest terrain. The fantasy of preserving dinosaur tracks, even presented in the most serious scholarly vein, was nonsense.

Thus it went. The Bible was not literally true but scientific explanations, if subjected to the same careful scrutiny and reflection, were no better. Like fundamentalism, however, scientific theories were tenaciously held as doctrines of faith which could not be questioned by rational and polite people. An idea that was only a suggested hypothesis by one scholar would be cited as "proven" by a succeeding scholar until one was convinced, and indeed, many scientists were convinced, that we knew the proper explanation for nearly all phenomena. So it went with evolution, with geological eras, with the formation of coal and oil deposits, with the descriptions of revelations and visions, in fact with practically anything a curious person would question.

It is with great delight and a streak of irony that I now report on the existence of a number of pleasantly heretical books that call into question the whole fabric of scientific explanations of the origin of the world and raise once again the question of the literal interpretation of Old Testament accounts. Most significant in this respect are the writings of Immanuel Velikovsky, *Worlds in Collision*, *Ages in Chaos*, *Earth in Upheaval*, *Oedipus and Akhanton*, and *Peoples of the Sea*, expounding a catastrophic interpretation of planetary history, and bringing a startling literal substance to *Exodus*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, and other books of the Old Testament.

Starting from an intimate knowledge of the Old Testament, Velikovsky asked himself whether the accounts of the escape from Egypt might not be a literal account of a great physical catastrophe. He began to collect documents from Egyptian and other ancient sources that might have some correspondence with *Exodus*, discovering in a number of them descriptions of the same catastrophic conditions which we met in the Bible. With a devastating knowledge of ancient mythology and training in psychoanalysis, Velikovsky probed the accounts of spectacular events as recorded in the literature of the Near East and developed an amazing theory of planets and comets in electromagnetic collisions and near-collisions.

The Old Testament provides Velikovsky with a chronological framework for describing two near total disasters, one in the 15th century B.C. and a continuing problem in the 7th and 8th centuries B.C. in which Venus, an erratic comet, ejected at some prior time from

Jupiter, careened around the solar system, upsetting Mars and our moon, dumping billions of gallons of petrochemicals on our planet, and generally disrupting things. The accounts of Joshua, for example, and the "long day" became not the fantasies of a primitive people but the memories of a cession, albeit temporary, of rotation caused by the electromagnetic tensions of the earth with Mars and Venus. And the list is endless when we begin compiling the implications of this theory for interpreting physical phenomena and the religious traditions of the different human societies.

One swallow does not a summer make, but this particular swallow is the harbinger of even better things. *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch* by Donald W. Patten accepts the catastrophic interpretation of earth history and deals with the flood of Noah in approximately 2800 B.C. Now even the most staid secular scholars have on occasion suggested the possibility of a universal deluge at some remote point of time in the past. But Patten, who is a very competent meteorologist, combines the Noachian Flood with an examination of theories of glaciation, making an almost irresistible argument about the origin of mountain building and glaciation as partial effects of the catastrophe which produced the Great Flood.

Particularly convincing in this respect is Patten's examination of wind currents on the planet which absolutely prohibit the creation of glaciers, at least in the locations where we have been taught glaciers once existed. Well, it seems that, according to Patten, Mercury was once an errant comet, laden with water and headed for a very close encounter with the earth. Arriving within 15,000-30,000 miles of our planet, Mercury promptly unloaded its mass of water, creating the Great Flood and producing glaciers at an absolutely astounding rate. The water, arriving in a rather icy state from outer space, hit the Van Allen belts which surround our planet and came crashing down on the magnetic poles, producing almost instantaneous freezing conditions in North America — remember the frozen mammoths with flowers still in their mouths — and pushing icy mountains out across the terrain with a great deal more swiftness than geologists are today ready to admit.

Taken in the context of modern science and its feeble attempts to explain glaciation, Patten easily carries the day, and his theory of glaciation seems irrefutable. Mountain building seems a little more tenuous as presented by Patten but is intimately related to the

formation of glaciers. It seems that Mercury got itself entangled with the earth's electromagnetic and gravitational forces and was held in a near-fatal embrace for the better part of a year. As it approached close to the earth, continuing to spew forth water, it raised arc-like welts on the earth's fragile skin, producing the mountain chains surrounding the Pacific Ocean and the Alps-Carpathian chains on a subsequent approach. Sounds good and at least as good as orthodox theories which require millions of years to accomplish but which give us no mechanism other than a tenuous balancing of sedimentary pressures to explain the rise and fall of mountains.

Fine. So two rather unorthodox minds have attempted to prove the literal truth of the Old Testament. Well, we have these throwbacks occasionally in every historical period. But it doesn't end there. No, indeed, not at all. Derek V. Ager, respected authority on geological stratigraphy, has published *The Nature of the Stratigraphic Record* wherein he suggests that the most sensible approach to the proper interpretation of geological formations is the assumption that planet-wide catastrophes have done most of the work of creating sandstones, limestones, and gravels. So geology may be out of control, but surely that can be brought back together by reference to evolutionary biology, which has proven the case for uniformitarianism beyond doubt.

Not so. Norman MacBeth, an attorney who read books on evolution as a means of recuperating from a bad heart attack, has a little volume entitled *Darwin Retried* in which he applies the rules of evidence to the proofs offered by the scientific divines concerning the validity of evolution. He could, MacBeth suggests, get the case thrown out of court if presented since evolution is not true — it is simply a more acceptable theory than divine and instantaneous creation. His arguments are steady and relentless — and sound. And reading MacBeth then recalls a funny thing. Everytime that Ager mentions "index fossils" in *The Nature of the Stratigraphic Record*, he notes that they have no ancestors and no descendants — a weird situation for a theory that depends upon gradual adaptations of species and their transformation from one form to another. And that flicker of doubt is reinforced by memories of reading *Animal Architecture* by Nobel Laureate Karl von Frisch in which many species are said to have no ancestors or descendants or to have changed very little since their appearance in the geologic record. So what have we

here, anyway? What does science know for sure?

Then we have efforts by quasi-orthodox thinkers to repair the damage done by Velikovsky and Patten. *Climate and the Affairs of Men* by Nels Winkless III and Iben Browning attempts to set us straight, to quiet our fears, and to bring us back to scientific sanity. They suggest that weather plays a very important role in human history — a thesis not so novel remembering Joseph's dream and the years of fat and famine. But, they suggest, weather changes radically every time an asteroid hits the earth and since they feel that asteroid hits account for mountain building — and we have had fourteen periods of mountain building — we have had fourteen major hits by asteroids. Good grief, we live on a target, not a planet. Velikovsky and Patten were mild compared to this couple.

Charging bravely into mythology, of which she knows little, and combining it with geology, of which she knows a great deal, and refuting Velikovsky's theory of planetary catastrophes, is Dorothy Vitaliano's *Legends of the Earth*, a first rate, first effort book which combines geology and mythology. Building her case around the eruption of Thera in the eastern Mediterranean, Vitaliano eventually arrives at the Exodus phenomena, suggesting that the Hebrews did indeed cross a sea of reeds which a strong wind had pushed back. The strong wind, of course, arriving in the Sinai as a consequence of Thera's volcanic explosion several hundred miles north. Perhaps, she suggests, a relationship between the Exodus account and a local but severe earthquake-eruption, but no more.

But it just doesn't fit. I live in a very windy area. We get 120 mile an hour winds that blow over trailer houses but we haven't gotten any winds that would part waters as yet (cross my fingers). So if Vitaliano is right, we are talking about prolonged winds of say 400 miles an hour to part the waters. It simply remains for her to explain how all those Hebrews cross a muddy flat with a 400 mile an hour wind blowing at them from the side and we can forget the planetary catastrophe theory and explain things quite simply as an unusual but not impossible demonstration of natural forces.

All of these questions, of course, raise the problem of determining exactly what those ancients knew and for this problem we then turn to *Hamlet's Mill* by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend who explain the

knowledge of the ancients by using the literature to demonstrate that they knew astronomy and astrology exceedingly well and built a synthesis of human knowledge around the procession of the equinoxes — (the houses of the Zodiac for the uninformed). It would be an easy matter, they assure us, for the ancients to have kept track of the procession even though it only moves one degree in 72 years. A wise ancient astrologer need only have passed his knowledge down to his disciples and they could look at the sky and determine the movement and check their calculations and everything would be fine.

Except that each person would, with luck, see the movement of one degree of the procession of the equinox only once in his lifetime. So how did he know that it had moved? Then we come across that old passage of Josephus warning us not to doubt the ages of the pre-Deluge patriarchs since they spent their time observing the heavens and since the great year of the equinox took six hundred years, they could dope out the movements easily within their respective lives and pass the information down to us. Well, to be honest, I see no other way to explain how we got astronomy or astrology.

So there are disturbing little bits and pieces of knowledge that just don't fit. There are insoluble problems with current scientific explanations of how things happened and how we came to know the stars, and all kinds of other things. Armed with these disturbing questions, I traveled to several annual meetings of scholars hoping to discover the latest reports which would assure me that science had things under control. But in asking questions of the eminent scholars I am met with the retort: "It couldn't be!" In reply, of course, I ask: "Why not?" and am told again: "It just couldn't be." This kind of dialogue is not particularly enlightening.

Now I suspect that we had better not throw away our Bibles and volumes of folklore just yet. Things are not well with the scientific establishment. Instead of answering very simple questions about some phase of human knowledge, they assert their authority and tell us that "it couldn't be." If religious leaders were intolerant of other views a century ago and insisted on the literal interpretation of Genesis, it was probably because they felt that there was some historical substance to things. But we have thrown out the baby and the bathwater. One can reject a dogmatic, intolerant exclusionary interpretation of the Bible and should. But can one really write

everything off to primitive excitement and superstition? Regardless of what interpretation the ancients gave to unusual events, the fact remains that they still experienced those events. One can easily *mis-interpret*, but can one really *mis-experience*?

Now, I am not advocating a return to closed-mind religious fanaticism which allows no room for speculation, sees no validity in non-Christian traditions, and reduces all human knowledge to a couple of creeds and catechisms. Neither do I see how we can benefit from rejecting out of hand the documents, legends, traditions, myths, and sagas of our ancestors simply because they

didn't have a means of footnoting their experiences to established authorities which would be acceptable to our modern conglomerate of scholars which we are pleased to call scientists.

We badly need an expedition of religious thinkers to move into the world of science and see what is happening and report to us on how it affects our understanding of our respective religious traditions. Scientists a century ago spent much time encouraging heresy within religious ranks and we would be amiss if we did not return the favor now that the sacred doctrines of science are proving less than capable of explaining the world to us. □

— Narké



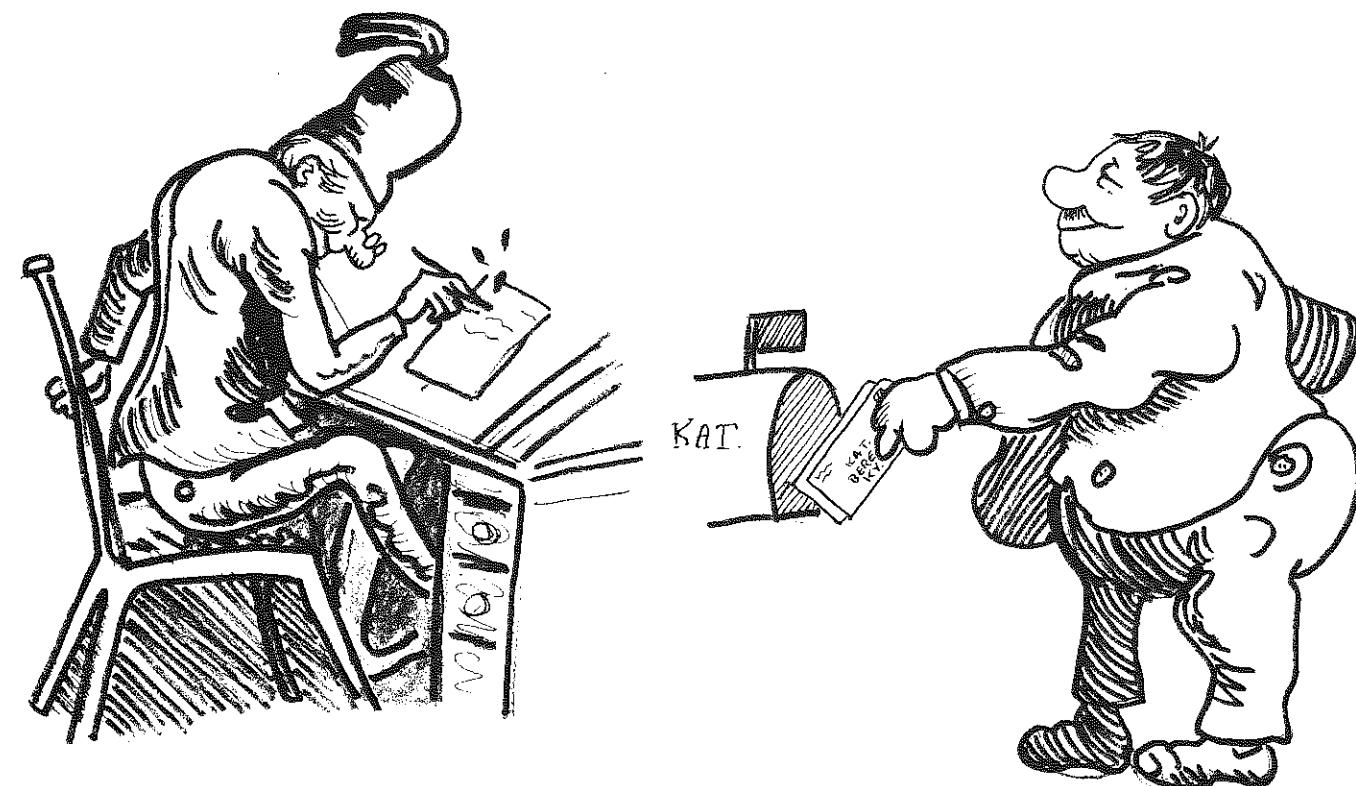
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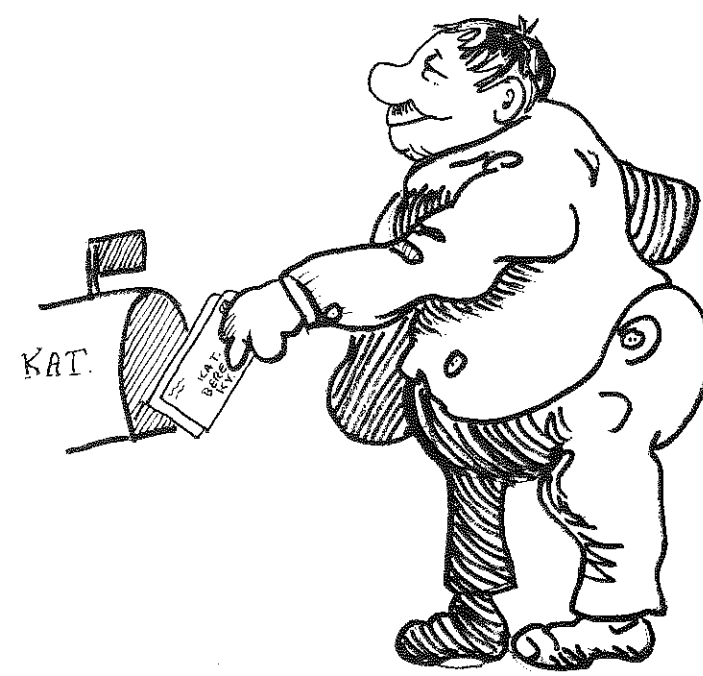
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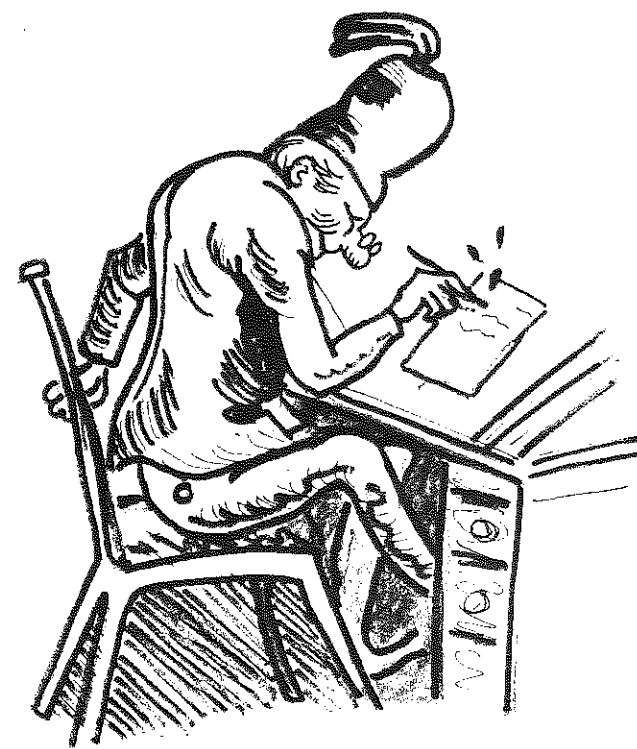
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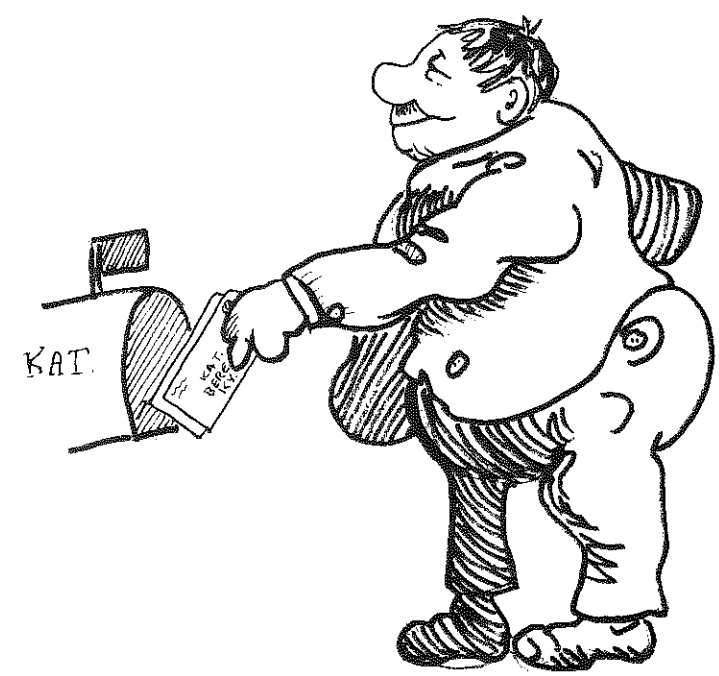


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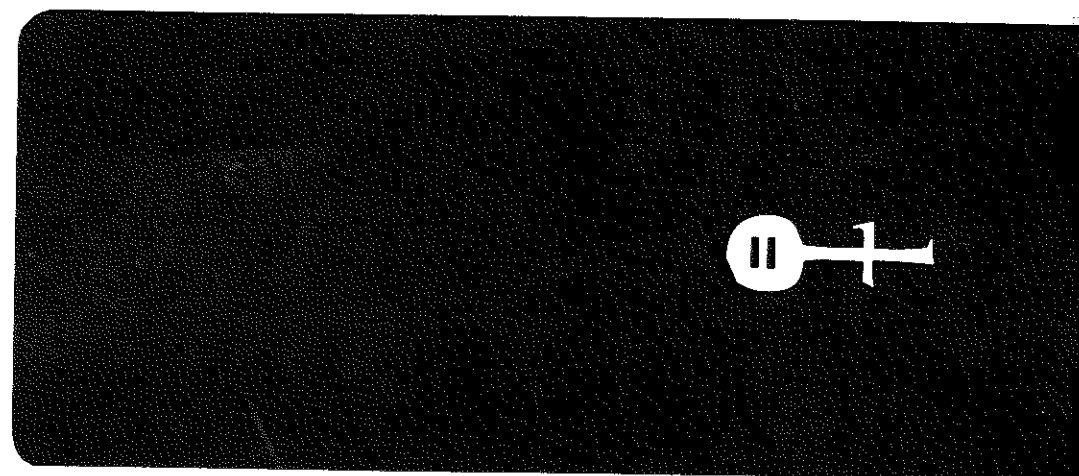
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Jesu Christi custódiat ánimam
tuam in vitam ætérnam. Amen.

Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen FALL 1977

To Dorothy

On November 7, 1977



For Being Amongst Us
For Being Dorothy Day

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam

BE RECONCILED

Committee of Southern Churchmen

Volume 6, Number 3

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To Dorothy

On November 7, 1977



For Being Amongst
For Being I

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EDITOR

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In Search of an Authentic

By Fleming Rutledge

To be a feminist, to be a woman, to be a theologian, to bear witness before the rulers of this world, to be radically evangelical in obedience to the commanding priority of the divine initiative: these are the imperatives which, in ascending order of importance, give shape and meaning to my life at the same time that they daily call my life into question. To be this kind of person, to be called to give this kind of testimony, to be set under this authority (Luke 7:8) is sufficient, it is enough; it is to walk an unknown path with a known guide. It is to know with John Bunyan's Mr. Stand-fast that

... I stand easy, my foot is fixed upon that which the Feet of the Priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. The Waters indeed are to the Palate bitter, and to the Stomach cold, yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and the Conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing Coal at my heart.

That sounds more like the ending of an article, not the beginning of one. New Testament eschatology has that effect on a person's writing. "In my end is my beginning" (T. S. Eliot). It is only out of this set of convictions that I feel able to speak at all concerning the subject of this article.

My subject is the peculiar difficulty of being a woman, a feminist, a theologian, and an evangelical (a Calvinist, if

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you will) at this present time in America. It is not just a matter of the scarcity of models; even more, it is the confluence of currents in American life that combine to create a climate highly inimical to the growth of a genuinely Biblical feminism. I propose to take a look at some of these currents and at the ways in which they flow together, with the hope that a descriptive article might prove to be thought-provoking.

First on the list is the well-known *anti-intellectualism* of American culture. This pervasive phenomenon has been endlessly remarked upon and does not need to be developed here. The significance of American anti-intellectualism for our present purpose is its spurious connection in our own time with women's issues; I am particularly interested in those issues which are related to woman's role in religion, as evidenced in seminaries and church-related groups, though the insidious connection probably holds true across the spectrum.

What I have in mind is much more specific than the generally familiar notion that a girl shouldn't appear to be too bright lest she frighten off the men she must attract in order to be approved by society; many women are making significant inroads against that attitude. What is rather more alarming, I think, is the deep-seated suspicion of the intellectual enterprise within the Women's Movement itself. Although feminists vehemently protest against gender-based stereotyping (e.g., men deal with abstract

Biblical Feminism

ideas while women rely on intuition), very often the content and style of the protest simply reinforces the stereotype. For example: in one recent seminary dispute, almost (not quite) all the women students and their male supporters lined up on the side of an experimental, experiential "learning model" over against the traditional curriculum, which was seen as the enemy. I am, of course, guilty of some oversimplification here; part of what was going on was an extension of much that was good and useful in the student protests of the 60's, and in that respect is not pertinent to feminism *per se*. What I am attempting to emphasize, however, is the widespread feminist mistrust of classical Biblical and theological scholarship. The fields of study which were most closely allied with the women's protest in the aforementioned seminary were the practical and pastoral. In the Biblical and theological fields, the only professors whose courses attracted significant numbers of women students were those who were willing to experiment freely, substituting clay-modelling for traditional exegesis, assigning the keeping of autobiographical journals rather than the writing of scholarly papers, offering Gestalt exercises instead of closely reasoned lectures on the Trinitarian controversies. I am not suggesting that Gestalt exercises might not be a helpful technique in certain instances; however, there is certainly some kind of antipathy being expressed here by women seminarians for classical scholarly work. Most disturbing of all is the way in which this attitude is encouraged by faculty sympathizers, many of whom seem to assume that because very few women choose to specialize in dogmatic theology, therefore dogmatic theology must, *ipso facto*, be oppressive and most go (or, alternatively, must be altered beyond

recognition in order to "meet women's needs").

This brings us to a second current in American Christianity and in Christian feminism, namely, its *anti-theological* bias. We ought to say here what we mean by theology, so I offer the following as a working definition:

theology is that activity of the Christian church which seeks to give a coherent and systematic account of the present-day significance of the Christian Scripture and tradition.

Now: if that definition is anywhere near the mark, it will be seen that we are already in trouble. First of all, it is a very narrow definition, and the tendency of late has been to broaden the definition. (We hear that poetry is theology, dance is theology, successful stewardship campaigns are theology, liturgy is theology, *Life* (wow) is theology — and that means that what has been traditionally called theology is, like, man, dead. I vividly remember a conversation I had with a clergyman friend just after I started seminary. He asked me what my favorite course was, and I happily answered, "systematic theology." He looked at me as though I had turned into a toad and said with distaste, "systematic theology! Well! Let me make a suggestion for your next paper. You should call it 'Why There is No Such Thing as Systematic Theology.'" I am quite sure that if I had told him I liked *feminist* theology, his reaction would have been altogether different. I was duly intimidated, but by God's grace survived to become at least a systematic theologian

manqué.) From the feminist standpoint, another problem with my definition is those crucial words "coherent" and "systematic". If it is true, as I am suggesting, that women have been encouraged to avoid rigorous scholarship and systematic theological thinking, then this is an example of the confluence of currents that I mentioned earlier — in this case, the anti-theological and the anti-intellectual.

Is it true that there is an anti-theological strain in American Christian feminism, and if so, why? I must refer here to a widely praised recent book by Ann Douglas, of the Columbia University faculty, which has been an important catalyst for my thinking. The thesis of Douglas' book, *The Feminization of American Culture* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), is that in 19th-century New England there was formed an alliance between liberal Protestant clergyman and the literarily-inclined women in their congregations that was to have a profound and far-reaching influence on American religion and society. The ministers and these ladies produced a torrent of mawkish books and magazine articles that contributed conspicuously to the transformation of American Christianity into its sentimental stained-glass, eyes-upturned, Sunday-School, Mother's Day, funeral-parlor, child-centered, tender-hearted Victorian version. One of Douglas' chapters is tellingly entitled "The Loss of Theology." It is her belief that when the liberal clergymen abandoned the older Calvinist doctrine of the Atonement, a "basically paternal (or gubernatorial) and authoritarian view" was exchanged for a "fundamentally maternal and affective one." One might quarrel with Douglas' representation of the severity and "masculinity" of the substitutionary Atonement, but she is right, surely, in suggesting that the replacement of the doctrine of the Atonement by the ideal of a beautiful, suffering Christ who evokes sympathy and tears is a step in the direction of extolling weakness — weakness, furthermore, in a sense that was specifically identified in the days of Horace Bushnell as "feminine." Douglas says, in describing this process, that

the new Bushnellian Christ has become a being who tactfully refuses to overwhelm those favor he courts; he wisely prefers to prove his power of infiltration (rather) than to test his capacity for onslaught. Newly sensitized and feminized in image, defined as a lover of all the world's 'little ones', the liberal Jesus too is interested in discovering and tapping the world's unconscious . . . (he) is connotative, even derivative; he must suffer rather than command, precisely because he is dependent for his reality, not on (our) abilities to perceive objective truth, but on (our) capacities for subjective impression and reaction (p. 130).

One is tempted to say, here, that Christ is not dependent on *either* of those human perceptions for his reality, but Douglas' main point is none the less well taken. It is the identification of "the loss of theology" with femininity that I particularly want to emphasize. As American theology became "softer," so also the corresponding new version of Christianity became more and more associated with women, with children, with emotions and sensations, with nurture and pastoral care, with play and fantasy. Does anyone need to be told how much this sounds like contemporary American "theology"? To be sure, the authors of Christian education materials in the 1970s would vigorously resist any suggestion that such associations were more feminine than masculine; nevertheless, the decline of respect for doctrine, dogma, and rational adult discourse in the

American church has entered into partnership with Christian feminism in a very particular way. To mention one curious manifestation of this situation, there has recently been a marked emphasis on the participation of small children in the rites and ceremonies presided over by women clergy. In my own denomination (Episcopal), children and babies were prominent in the recent ordinations of various women priests to a degree unknown in ordinations of males. I recently received an invitation to a procession and "celebration" of ordained women in my area; I was instructed to process in my "worship attire" (that sounded like a fashion show to me. Don't clergypersons wear vestments or robes any more?) and to bring my children, who would also process while playing rhythm instruments. My own children would sooner have

endured an afternoon at the dentist, I'm afraid, but the thing that is truly puzzling is that whereas many of these very women would be highly incensed at the suggestion that child nurture is a specifically feminine function, yet they have been at great pains to advertise their peculiar esteem for and relationship with young children. I do not see how we can have it both ways. Careful exegesis of the famous passages of the New Testament in which Jesus brings children into his circle reveals an utterly unsentimental and adult-oriented message about entrance into the Kingdom. Unfortunately, the weakening of theology, as described above, has deceived us into believing that Christianity is really a happy-hearted, permissive, inclusive religion that is especially well-suited to children. (The children themselves know better, which accounts for the fact that they hate Sunday School. I am reminded of a splendid little book called *Teaching Your Child About God* by members of the Max Odorff group, based on the child-development theories of Jean Piaget (St. Mary's College Press, 1970). Two of the chapters are

called "The Bible is for Big People" and "Jesus is for Big People." Bravo.)

There is a crucial misunderstanding at the heart of all this. If it is true that many women have been cut off, or have chosen to cut themselves off, from a commitment to strict Biblical exegesis and dogmatic theology, then there is likely to be a corresponding tendency to undisciplined *syncretism*, a third trend in American life. Though it is certainly possible that I am not being fair, it seems to me that the anti-theological, anti-intellectual stance of American Christianity in general and feminism in particular produces more than the average amount of eclecticism, gnosticism, heterodoxy and (dare I say it?) heresy. I do not wish to disparage the important role of heresy in theological debate. However, when wildly unorthodox positions are uncritically hailed on all sides as newly revealed truth, it seems to me that theological debate has broken down.

Let us look, for example, at a widely distributed (Published in *Ruach*, Newsletter of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, December 1974) Eucharistic "liturgy of thanksgiving" written by and for Episcopal women (and this is a denomination noted for its liturgical orderliness and discipline!):

Celebrant:

Blessed be God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer (official Prayer Book reading: "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit").

Community:

And blessed be God's presence, now and forever (original reading: "Blessed be God's Kingdom. . .")

All:

And behold, all that God created was very good.

All plants, animals, earth are good.

All women and men are good.

All bodies, minds, souls, feelings are good.

Behold, it is all good.

Come, God creator into this place, into us, into me. . .

Come into us Adam's and Eve's equal in your image,

And breathe into us mystery,

Breathe into us.

Later in the service, in place of the usual acclamation, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again", we find:

Celebrant:

God is not dead

God is bread

And the bread is rising.

On one level, this "liturgy" is merely hilarious. On another level, though, I find myself asking about the significance of the fact that it was written and distributed by *women*. Call it monism, call it pantheism, call it mush, but by no stretch of the imagination can this liturgy be based on a knowledge of anything remotely resembling Christian theology. What are we to infer? that women do not know theology? That they do not care? Surely we are not to fall back on the belief of the early Fathers that women are more susceptible to heresy than men? Or are we simply to get off the hook by saying, with most contemporary people, that heresy is a useless concept?

This brings up to yet another characteristic of American feminism and feminist theology, and that is its *non-critical* stance. A few feminists have called attention to this from within the Movement, but for the most part their warnings have gone unnoted. An article by Elinor Langer in *Ms.* magazine takes Kate Millett to task for producing the undisciplined, self-pitying, confessional *Flying* in the wake of her solidly researched *Sexual Politics*; Langer says,

Confession protects. By pretending we are presenting 'life', not art, we avoid criticism...*Flying* remind(s) us of the absence of a genuinely critical tradition in the Women's Movement ("Confessing," *Ms.*, October 1974).

Millett did not heed this wisdom; her third book, *Sita*, is even more blatantly confessional and self-protective than the second.

Karl Barth insists that

theology is an eminently *critical* science, for it is continually exposed to judgment and never relieved of the crisis in which it is placed . . . by its living subject (*Evangelical Theology*, p. 8).

Compare and contrast this statement by Penelope Washbourn, writing in *The Christian Century*:

The Hebrew religious tradition, the imagery used by Jesus, Pauline theology, Aquinas, Luther, Barth, Tillich, contemporary women theologians, I myself stand under judgement — the judgment of relativism. There is no absolute authority, no inspired word safe from the limitations of being conditioned by a human perspective. Each theologian, including Jesus, reflects the thought patterns of a time and expresses the meaning of the divine within the conceptual, spatial

and temporal framework available to him or her. Feminine theology need not ask Christian theologians of the past to justify today's changes in theology or church structure and practice. It does not matter whether Paul was a chauvinist or a liberationist. It is not our business to ask the past to see what we see now, to understand what we understand now . . . ("Authority or Idolatry? Feminine Theology and the Church." *Christian Century*, October 29, 1975.)

On a superficial level, it might be thought that Barth and Washbourn are saying the same thing, since Barth is scrupulously careful at all times to maintain the tentative, incomplete, humble character of theology. In actuality, of course, the two statements are poles apart. Washbourn has removed herself so far from the critical arena as to make any judgment on her work impossible. Her position is an extreme example of the lengths to which the women's movement in the church has sometimes, oftentimes, gone in its renunciation of memory, tradition, and revelation. The "Eternal Now" has gobbled up the gospel. There is nothing and no One left to judge the theologian and her theology.

The emphasis on experience as a source of data for theological thinking is one of the most characteristic traits of American religion, from fundamentalist right to radical left. A typical statement is found on a seminary syllabus, serving as caption to a unit on experience and tradition: "That may be true, but it's not true for me." Here the anti-theological, anti-intellectual, and non-critical currents come together. The final appeal is to one's own experience, which no one can dispute. Sample arguments: Many people who are medically resuscitated after apparent "death" have visions of lights, music, and Jesus, therefore there must be life after death; a hymn proclaims, "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart"; a woman seminarian encounters nastiness from a certain professor, therefore that professor is a sexist oppressor and any woman who holds otherwise can only be pitied because her consciousness has not been raised.

Theologies based on religious experience, or on experience in general, often claim to be less tyrannical, certainly less dogmatic, than theology based on Scripture, tradition, revelation or even reason. This is true, obviously, for those who have had the prescribed experience, whether it be the "Baptism of the Spirit" or feelings of impotent rage at every member of the male sex living or dead. Those whose experiences have been different, however, will find the in-group to be very tyrannical

indeed. All kinds of subtle and not-so-subtle methods can be used to discount or disparage the testimony of those who do not share the attitudes of the majority. Most difficult of all in such a setting is any attempt to espouse the view of Barth-cum-Kierkegaard that "no soul-and-sense experience can bridge the gulf" between man and God (*Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford, 1933, p.163). Trying to convince an American, whether of left or right, of the merit of this theological tenet is about as futile as trying to book Jacques Ellul into the Rose Bowl.

The quest for experience is epidemic; we can no longer "see" an exhibit or "hear" a concert — we have to "experience" them. Everything from roller-coaster rides to human-potential weekends is advertised as a "total experience." The appeal to experience in theological discourse is the polemical device *par excellence*, because a person's experience cannot be effectively refuted. Since it is women who are supposed to be more open to feeling, emotion, and sensation (somehow the idea of an *intellectual* experience is not so highly regarded these days), there is more recourse to experience-as-argument in the Women's Movement than there is almost anywhere else. It was widely noted at the Episcopal General Convention in Minneapolis last fall that most of the speeches in favor of the ordination of women centered on personal experiences of injustice and expressions of individual conviction, whereas the speeches for the opposing side were much more likely to be built on Biblical and theological foundations. Some of these latter speeches were ill-considered at best and vicious at worst, but the point I am making is that Christian feminism is, by and large, scornful of or indifferent to traditional theological discourse. It is not supposed to be "where we are at." We cannot "relate" to it. It does not meet us "where we are." Perhaps it is silly to bring in these well-known contemporary phrases, and yet it seems to me that, ridiculous and trite though they are, the attitudes toward the educational process that they embody command near-complete allegiance in most American schools, universities, and main-line seminaries. "Meet the students where they are!" is the almost universal rallying cry.

In my not-so-long ago student days (it was 1974), I listened as a woman seminarian, sitting over coffee in the student center, complained bitterly about her morning class in Patristics. Her exact words were, "I don't give a s--- what Tertullian thought about the Trinity!" This could, of course, be dismissed as the kind of thing that disgruntled students have always said, but in this case, as (I think) in many others, her remark was received with solemn assent by those sitting around, as though it were a serious theological formulation — which, indeed, it was; it is the equivalent of Washbourn's view that it does not

matter what Paul thought about women. Behind the student's statement, and behind the acquiescence of her companions, lie several assumptions: that the content of the tradition is easily grasped, that its relevance to modern life should be readily apparent, that if such relevance is not readily apparent it must not be present, that professors who teach irrelevant material are oppressors, and that (this is the clincher) the tradition may at any time be hailed into the court of subjective impression and judged before the unassailable bar of personal experience and emotion. In this view, theological education should be instantaneous and free of cost. No effort, no pain, no suffering need be involved. The idea of a confrontation between the student and a possibly alien body of tradition is by all means to be avoided.

Paul Minear has recently attacked this attitude head-on. "An effective study of the Bible," he says, "produces culture shock; the more intense the study, the greater the shock."

Like Americans junketing in Asia, we can carefully select the itinerary, stop only at Western-style hotels, use guides who speak fluent English, eat only American food, albeit with quaint seasonings, and shop for foreign bric-a-brac with BankAmericards. Indeed the guiding of travelers through the world of the Bible with a minimum of culture shock is often assumed to be the chief function of ministers and teachers. They are expected to limit the questions and to select the answers which will not threaten the self-assurance of their customers. They are duty-bound to translate words or ideas, one at a time, into contemporary American jargon and ideology, so that any emotional disturbance will be minimized. They preserve the illusion of travel, without its risk or its profit. They remain blissfully unaware of how completely they have destroyed the integrity and independence of that other world.

But past shock can be as devastating as future shock. To achieve a genuine penetration of the ancient world can actually destroy a person's at-homeness in his own habitat. In fact we cannot fully grasp the cogency of ancient ways of thinking without surrendering that habitat. In ancient literature we encounter people who are marching to the sound of a different drummer; the tempo of their life is vastly different from ours . . . As long as a student shies away from that alien world, so long does Bible study remain bland, superficial, and tepid. But each step of penetration will increase his excitement, though also his bewilderment, for at each step he encounters a collision between two languages, two mentalities, two modes of existing in the world, in

fact, two worlds. Each collision threatens that world in which the student has heretofore found shelter (*To Heal and To Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke*, Seabury 1976.).

I quote Minear at some length because, as a conclusion to this article, I intend to say a few things about the "collision" between the "two worlds." We move from the explicitly theological realm to the explicitly political realm (implicitly, we have been in both all along). My particular concern with regard to Christian feminism is the way it takes shape in the political arena, and the way in which political action arises out of commitment, or lack of commitment, to theology as I have attempted to define it.

Am I wrong to suggest that the "bland, superficial and tepid" Bible study that Minear attacks is particularly characteristic of women? Perhaps. But I think not. Certainly it is true that male professors and students have collaborated enthusiastically, but if Ann Douglas is right about the flight of liberal Protestant clergymen into the feminine subculture, then this collaboration becomes intelligible:

. . . As we have seen, disbelief in female capacity for scholarship and real intellectual or artistic achievement was widespread in American culture. The clergy, anxious to preserve their claim to distinction . . . fostered such skepticism; its effects on women and on their attitude toward religion were largely and predictably negative . . . (Douglas, *op cit.*, p. 142).

Assuming, then, that Christian feminists and their male supporters continue to avoid hard-nosed confrontation with unvarnished Biblical ideas, we can easily account for the very understandable failure of the Women's Liberation Movement in the churches to deal seriously with the crucial Biblical concept of power and authority (*exousia*). Christian feminism, to use the terminology of Luke 22:25, has been operating according to the rules of the "Gentile" world, as though it alone were real — that is, women in the Movement see *exousia* being wielded by men in the church (men who call themselves "benefactors", of course, as Luke reports), and the feminist counter-move is either to fight for a share of that *exousia* or, more drastically, to maneuver so that it can be given solely to women. Then, naturally, the women can be the "benefactors" instead of the men. The call for this kind of shift in the power structure is frequently called "radical", but in fact, it is not radical at all. In such a power struggle, there has been no collision between worlds; there has simply been a change in the faces at the top.

What would a really radical power shift look like? This is the fundamental political question. I do not see how Christian women can hope to come to terms with this question in any genuinely theological way without the most serious, diligent and obedient attention to the sometimes tiresome, sometimes threatening, sometimes painful task of listening to Scripture — not our ideas and feelings about Scripture, but the thing itself, the living Word. Of course, if the Bible is thought to be merely one good book among many, then there is an assumption gap between evangelical feminists and the Christian feminist leadership of such mammoth proportions that no amount of “dialogue” can hope to bridge it. If there is no commitment to the veracity of Scripture as the Word of God, then, naturally, the interpretation of a given text will arouse only mild interest, and that of a rather academic sort, unless of course the text is seen to be a helpful slogan for the cause. Thus, Galatians 3:28 has been endlessly flaunted (literally — on banners — as well as figuratively) as a party cry of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the churches; unfortunately, the only Episcopalians who have made public their interest in the context of the verse in the Epistle to the Galatians as a whole have been the women’s opponents.

In view of this characteristic feminist non-commitment to a Biblical-theological view of things, there really is not much point in continuing the dialogue across the assumption gap. In lieu of dialogue, let us offer proclamation. He (sic!) who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The *exousia* question is, as we said, crucial. Let us look once again at the Lukan text.

A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:24-27)

In this text, the two worlds, that of the “Gentiles” or unbelievers, and that of the Christian community, are set over against one another with truly radical sharpness. *Exousia* is exercised in the unbelieving world in ways that we all recognize, and it seeks to justify itself by its works (hence the appellation “benefactors”). “Among you”, says Jesus — that is, in the believing community which is the church, it is to be altogether different. The key word in the text is *diakonos*. Who wields *exousia* in the community of Christ? It is the *diakonos*, the one who serves,

the lowly one, the one who is in the subordinate position, even as Christ comes among us as a *diakonos* (“I am among you as one who serves”). The crucial (Latin *crux*, cross) distinction between the two worlds is made; one world defines *exousia* according to its own rules of competition, rivalry, greed, and self-seeking, while the other world offers an *exousia* of lowly, patient self-giving even to death.

The truly revolutionary political implication concealed in the passage is the astonishing link between *exousia* (power, authority) and *diakonia* (service). As John Howard Yoder puts it in a particularly striking comment on our text:

Jesus recognizes — As Luke reports it — that “doing good” is a claim the powerful make for themselves. He doesn’t say outright that the claim is false. Nor does he affirm it. He simply sets the idea aside in favor of servanthood as his way to be the expected King, and therefore his disciples’ way as well.

But servanthood is not a position of non-power or weakness. It is an alternative mode of power . . . So it is that when we turn from . . . self-righteousness to service, this is not a retreat but an end run . . . (my emphasis)

There is no more disastrous misunderstanding in all of Christian ethics than the one which assumes that power (*exousia*) must be relinquished altogether in order to render service (*diakonia*). To put it another way, the person who chooses quiet, patient service instead of “Gentile” routes to power is considered weak, if not an actual traitor to the cause. We are Biblically illiterate because we do not know that *diakonia* IS *exousia* — though, to be sure, it is an *exousia* of a different order. “When I am weak,” said Paul to the Corinthians, “then I am strong” (II Cor. 12:10).

The way that this misunderstanding works itself out in practice can be illustrated by a quotation from a letter sent out prior to the Episcopal General Convention in Minneapolis last year, asking for funds to support the cause of the ordination of women:

(Our) concern is with the appropriate political strategy for successfully accomplishing our objective at the 1976 General Convention. We intend to win and we are already defining and implementing a strategy that will succeed.

If anyone in the National Coalition for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood had seriously suggested the Biblical idea that the “appropriate political strategy” might be repentance and prayer, he-she would have been hooted out of the circle of power brokers. The miraculous irony is that the Holy Spirit seized control of the meeting

anyway; at the request of the convention special committee on women’s ordination, the entire convention and gallery (some 3500 people) stood in silent prayer for five whole minutes just before the vote. The overwhelming spiritual power of those moments, and of the committee chairman’s plea for reconciliation in Christ, will be remembered and talked about long, long after the machinations of the “strategists” are forgotten.

It has been said many times, of course, that if it had not been for the lobbying and fund-raising and “operating,” the vote would not have turned out as it did. This assumes the dependence of the Holy Spirit upon “Gentile” political tactics. This is something less than faithfulness, something less than a truly serious regard for Jesus’ clear command that it be “not so among you.” This belief that the work of the Spirit needs augmenting, that we can teach him a thing or two about how to get things done, seems to me to be one of the most drastically wrong-headed trends in the American church. In feminist circles, the error is compounded because women are understandably sick of waiting on tables and being subordinate, and are consequently unwilling to consider the possibility that *exousia* might actually have something to do with *diakonia*. In denominations (like the Episcopal) that have a catholic tradition, there is a particular irony in the fact that many who believed that a woman could not be a priest were more than willing to declare the suitability of her being a deacon (*diakonos*). Women deacons therefore found themselves in the position of expressing public dissatisfaction with their ancient order; it seemed as though the much longed-for *exousia* could be exercised only by the “Gentile benefactors,” while the lowly way of *diakonia* was once again despised.

I have tried to describe some of the pressures that prevent Christian feminism from taking its Biblical-theological roots seriously, and I have attempted to show how this failure has sent us down the wrong path. We have unwittingly allowed ourselves to be patronized and exploited by men who, however well-intentioned, have encouraged us to continue to think of ourselves as impulsive, sentimental, non-verbal, undisciplined, emotion-driven, in need of special courses and special treatment, too delicate to handle abstract ideas, too weak to commit ourselves to scholarship, too fragile to face the severity of the Bible. Men who allow us to carry our own packages and open our own doors but continue to try to protect us (and themselves) from the Wrath of God do us no favors.

Christian feminists, it seems to me, have chosen the way of the “Gentiles” when it comes to political activity.

We have not considered the way of authentic discipleship, which is the harder way. We have listened instead to the voices of those who have told us we must fight with the weapons of the enemy if we want to be effective. We have rejected the *exousia-diakonia* connection because we have not cared to understand what it really means. We have allowed our “benefactors” to convince us that the end justifies the means; if “liberation” is the goal, then “appropriate political strategy” is, of course, the time-honored way of getting there.

To the unbelieving eye, the “Gentile” world, with its shifting patterns of power, seems like the only reality. The War Between Men and Women, as James Thurber limned it with his unerring pen, goes on apace, creating its own batterfield ethic as it unfolds. In this world, *diakonia* looks like failure. There is no human possibility in such a situation except that of eying one’s fellows with sleepless suspicion.

Have we any other alternatives?

There is only alternative for faith. Nothing short of a radical confrontation with the Word of God can deflect us from our haunted path. Men and women alike, feminists, chauvinists, professional theologians and amateur Bible-readers, revolutionaries and reactionaries, we all stand together in the same place: under the relentless scrutiny of the Divine Word.

For the word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the place where life and spirit, joints and marrow, divide. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the heart. There is nothing in creation that can hide from him; everything lies naked and exposed to the eyes of the One with whom we have to reckon. (Hebrews 4:12-13). □



Defenders of Cruciformity — Detectors of Idolatry

The Case of Sixteenth-Century Restitutionists

Eric W. Gritsch

The relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church throughout the ages might be illustrated by a World War II incident on the Italian front. An Italian infantry company, led by a captain, was to assault the American lines somewhere at the foot of the Alps. When the moment arrived to lead his men into battle, the captain grabbed his pistol, swung out of the foxhole, and yelled, "Everybody follow me!" But the soldiers, impressed by the dramatic bravery of their leader, stayed in their foxholes, clapped their hands and cried "*Bravo, bravissimo!*" The captain died a lonely death, cheered from behind.

The history of Christianity is filled with similar incidents. There have always been those who remained in safe foxholes, unwilling or unable to follow their Lord into the conflict areas of mission in the world. What the ancient Hebrews defined as "original sin" (the serpent's call to be like God, according to Genesis 3:5) has become "ecclesiastical original sin": the willingness to absolutize a certain way of life, to adore it, and to deify it as the way to salvation. The deification of culture has been a human trait since the beginning of recorded history, as the world's kingdoms identified themselves with the kingdom of God. Idolatry is the worship of the human foxhole, man's favorite place vis-a-vis God. Its most pious justification is the popular Christian theological notion that the Lordship of Christ must be safeguarded by something "worldly" — unchangeable canon law,

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triumphant hierarchies, impatient theocracies, or any other identification of the Word of God with the word of man.

Christians live under the perennial mandate to live in constant distinction (not separation!) from the "world" — understood as that power which lures people into believing in the possibility of salvation without Christ. The history of resistance to that lure is the story of those reformers who "put the heat" on idolatrous Christian communities; who called for unconditional obedience to their resurrected Lord; and who re-formed their own lives into the shape of the cross. The purity of their intention determined the degree of their persecution. Their "No!" to idolatry meant "Yes!" to cruciformity. True reformers read the signs of the times so as to distinguish between the idolatrous deification of the church and the cruciform embodiment of Christ's gospel in the world. Some of them were only lonely voices in the wilderness of ecclesiastical triumphalism; others created movements of repentance which changed, for a time, the course of church history. Martin Luther was a reformer whose voice was heard, even though later "Lutherans" were once again lured into the foxhole of what has been called "cultural Protestantism."

The re-formation of Christian priorities is a never-ending process, and true reformers do everything to lead their flock out of the corral of idolatrous cultures and institutions. False reformers make every attempt to keep the herd inside; theirs is the mission of the cowboy: drive them in, brand them, count them, and keep them obedient to the rules of the corral. True reformation forms

the church into the cruciform shape of discipleship outside the walls of a "safe world"; false reformation maintains the status quo in the name of holiness and righteousness — interlaced with succulent lies and scheming deception.

The Restitutionist Challenge

The sixteenth century called for Christian priorities. Martin Luther demanded a radical change in the ecclesiastical system of penitence according to which one earned peace with God via a credit system: the amount of human effort expended (works of charity, confession, or other "investments") earns the appropriate amount of release from eternal punishment, as worked out by theologians and applied by the church hierarchy. Luther proclaimed that one should simply trust God's promises offered freely "by grace alone" through Christ, instead of earning God's forgiveness through "good works". The human heart's relationship with God is like the unconditional surrender of a lover who is hooked on his beloved. "Faith" has absolute priority over "good works".

Luther also succeeded in creating a movement bent on reforming the church catholic from the bottom up. Many people, to be sure, were motivated by other causes when they joined: German nobility envisaged a nationalist church; oppressed peasants dreamed of liberation from feudalistic bondage; and the academic world sought freedom from the restrictions the church had put on scientific inquiry.

John Calvin became the leader of a theocratic movement which, based in Geneva, swept Western Europe like a thunderstorm. Calvinistic Huguenots in France fought for a new government free from Roman domination; Dutch Calvinists succeeded in creating an independent Netherlands after a bloody revolution against the Spanish throne. By the end of the sixteenth century, the map of Europe had changed. Lutherans, Calvinists and Anglicans had created their own territories, and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 sanctioned limited religious pluralism.

But Luther's reform movement was not radical enough for some of his own disciples. In the early years of the movement there was already a demand for the faithful "restitution" of the church of the apostles. Why not re-create the conditions of the first Christians? Why not live "according to the Bible"? Why not be like those first

disciples of Christ? As one of the most radical "restitutionists" put it in 1523,

*In reading the history of the ancient fathers, I have discovered that soon after the death of the apostles the immaculate, virginal church was made into a prostitute by the seducing clerics. The common people were cheated of their right to choose their own priests . . . There was not an iota about the true, living word of God. The time of harvest is now, and God has hired me to gather it in . . . For the sake of Christ's blood, help me fight these arch enemies of faith. Before your eyes I will bring them to shame in the spirit of Elijah. For in your lands the new apostolic church will be born, and then spread everywhere. (*The Prague Manifesto* of Thomas Muentzer, 1523)*

Muentzer hoped to create a "radical reformation" and to establish a new "apostolic church" modelled after that of the early Christians, which would have no ties to government, expect the end of the world to come soon, and reject everything the church had accumulated over the centuries. He joined the German peasant uprising in 1525, was captured and executed as a traitor.

Besides Muentzer, other proponents of what has been called the "radical reformation" called for the restitution of the "apostolic church". The leaders of this radical reformation espoused a rupture with the immediate past and all its institutions, and proposed either the restoration of the first-century church or a new church, the last church before the end of the world — untainted by "Romanism" or whatever "political" reformers like Luther created. The restitutionist challenge was, "Restitute the direct relationship with God in the spirit of the first apostles who made no allegiance with the world!"

The greatest restitutionist challenge came during the 1520's in Zurich, from the Swiss "Brethren in Christ" — nicknamed "Anabaptists (re-baptizers)". Their leader, Conrad Grebel, opposed the Zurich reformer Ulrich Zwingli when the city fathers enforced the Zwinglian reformation through legislation. Grebel called for the rejection of political structures in the church and the creation of a new community, which was to feature the basic characteristics of the New Testament church as he understood it: only committed believers to be allowed as members; members to lead a life in which all goods were shared; no member to hold political office; and disobedient members to be excluded from the community. It was to be a church of "true disciples" governed by the rules Christ had set down, mainly in the Sermon on the

Mount. The Zurich Brethren felt that the church had fallen away from its purity during the fourth century fusion of church and state under Emperor Constantine, and had since prostituted itself as a "state church". Since the baptism of infants created church members by political induction (through education and other means), they favored adult baptism after a person committed himself to Christ and the new community. This move brought immediate and harsh persecution, for the act of "rebaptizing" was a capital offense in all territories of Christendom and merited death by fire. Many "Anabaptists" soon joined the list of martyrs, and throughout the sixteenth century most of them were religious refugees in search of a home.

"Martyrs are the seed of the church". This ancient Christian truth applies to the sixteenth century restitutionists. The Hutterites, named after Jacob Huter of Austria, and the Mennonites, named after Menno Simons of the Netherlands, prove the point. Huter intensified the restitutionism of the Swiss Brethren by homing in on the question of communal discipline, which usually imposes itself on any Christian community at times of persecution. He tried to keep his group together by enforcing the economic communism of the first Christians recorded in Acts 4:32: "They all shared with one another everything they had." Hutterites demonstrated their faith by rejecting private property, despite debates and even schisms in their midst. Settled mainly in Moravia (now Czechoslovakia), and then in other parts of Europe and finally in the United States, they regarded economic communism as a bulwark against idolatry. Their 1545 *Confession of Faith* stated,

One sees in all things created that God from the beginning ordained nothing private for man, but all things to be (held) in common (Genesis 1:26-29). But through wrong taking, since man took what he should not and forsook what he should take (Genesis 3:2-12), he (man) drew such things to himself and made them his property, and so grew hardened . . . Now, because what is temporal does not belong to us, but is foreign to our true nature, the law commands that none covet strange possessions (Exodus 20:17), that is, set his heart upon and cleave to what is temporal and alien (Luke 16:11-12). Therefore whosoever cleave to Christ and follow him must forsake such taking of created things and property (Matthew 10:32-39), as He Himself said, "None of you can be my disciple unless he gives up everything he has." (Luke 14:33).

Menno Simons dealt with the problem of communal discipline through rigoristic restitution of the apostolic ban, instituting the Mennonite practice of "shunning":

total non-communication with the excommunicated member. Although later Mennonites often shied away from this strict discipline, Menno Simons' word remained in force, for strict discipline was needed in a community constantly threatened by persecution and always anticipating the end of the world. They considered the restitution of apostolic institutions such as sharing all goods and excommunication to be the best instruments to defend the cruciform life for which Christ had called his disciples, and to detect the signs of idolatry which had prostituted the church.

Although sixteenth-century restitutionists did not always agree with each other, they were all convinced that Christianity had experienced its great fall with the erection of medieval Roman Catholicism, and that the reformation of Luther and others would again lead to a betrayal of early Christian beliefs and structures. Restitutionists like those in the city of Muenster, Westphalia, in the 1530's, created a restitutionist philosophy of history to make their point. Bernard Rothmann's *Restitution* of 1534 outlined a series of "falls" and "restitutions": the fall of Adam and the restitution of mankind in Christ; the Jews' bondage in Egypt and their restitution in Canaan; Babylon and the restoration of the temple; the fall of Christianity under Constantine and its final restitution in a sixteenth century community of the committed.

Sebastian Franck, the first German historian to interpret the Reformation as a movement of "three faiths" (Lutheran, Zwinglian and Anabaptists), opposed any and all attempts to create visible manifestations of the Christian faith. He was committed to a "fourth faith" — the community of those who belong to the invisible church of the spirit.

Restitutionist philosophy of history stressed two themes: (1) "Primitivism" — the vision of a community of faith patterned after the first Christian community, with a minimum of externals such as sacraments or institutional structures; and (2) "Universalism" — the conviction that everyone will be saved in the end, even Satan. Although not unanimous regarding the methods of how to achieve a wholesome restitution of the church — cruciform in shape and free of idolatry — restitutionists were ready to give their lives for the realization of the apostolic ideal.

An Enduring Problem

The Radicals had a gripping conviction as to individual responsibility to witness Christ in the world and a fresh

awareness of conventional responsibilities accompanying the radical Christianization of ecclesiastically hitherto neglected areas of human relationships so basic as the brotherhood of men of all classes, the equality of men and women, and the solidarity of all races of mankind before a God who is not a respecter of persons . . . The bleakness, squalor, brutality and frenzy of the vast scene in which they played their parts was relieved for them — as for us as spectators — by the intense assurance which these people had that within the shadow of their crosses God stood keeping watch above his own. The cumulative effect of their testimony is that Christianity is not child's play, that to be Christian is to be commissioned (George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* Philadelphia, 1962, p. 863).

It is the great tragedy of the sixteenth-century Reformation that the restitutionist challenge to explore the manifest differences between early Christian discipleship and later church membership was met with persecution rather than dialogue. The phenomenon of the "believers' church" has been historically assessed and, in some fashion, theologically discussed. (See, for example, Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church*, New York, 1968). The dominant themes in what can loosely be defined as "radical Protestantism" are: the difference between being "apostolic" and "apostate"; the eschatological tension between the visible, witnessing community and the final restitution of Christ's kingdom at the end of time; and the prophetic ministry of radical dissent.

I see the sixteenth-century call for the restitution of apostolicity to be the continuation of a strong, early Christian — as well as medieval underground — tradition which tried, at times with desperate courage, to affirm the proper distinction between self and God, human freedom and divine power, egotistic pride and unconditional love. Although restitutionists have sometimes yielded to the temptation of "bibliolatry" (the biblicistic fundamentalist notion that God is a book), their true message is Christian freedom. They wanted to say, "Before God we are believers who are saved by his unconditional affirmation of love in the Jesus of Israel; and before men we are lovers who no longer have to live for ourselves but can do so for others. God's disclosure in Christ freed us from speaking and acting as Christians who need to earn merit points to reach God. Such 'goodness' leads to idolatry: faith in the ultimate power of man to save himself. We are free to be unselfish lovers rather than selfish believers, even though such freedom may lead to suffering and death. Here on earth, we try to embody the cruciform witness to Christ, thus exposing the idolatry of selfish love."

How to move from doctrine to life, from proclamation to implementation, from self-love to unconditional love — that is an enduring problem for Christians. It is not easy to be free from worrying about salvation through one's own efforts. We know that we should speak, act and plan in such a way as to preserve the Christian freedom from idolatrous selfishness. We know that we should live "excentrically" rather than egocentrically, neighbor-directed rather than self-directed. But we also know that such freedom threatens the status quo and urges us into new ventures. So we tend to prefer safety rather than freedom, since we may put many cherished institutions out of business when we become uninhibited and free under the gospel of Jesus.

Sixteenth-century restitutionists were persecuted because of their unyielding insistence that true freedom is grounded in the uncompromising witness to the lordship of Christ — witness which points to a new life beyond the confines of the world and its burdens of death, sin and pride. They struggled for a realistic humility of the church on earth; and they opposed any form of idealistic idolatry, be it the state church, a new Protestant culture, or any other form of "earthly holiness". Hindsight tells us that they were not the best theologians of the Reformation, and that many of their descendants did not remain faithful to the original restitutionist intentions. But the best theologians of the Reformation did not recognize their commitment, and their most ardent descendants refused to strive for a cruciform life when tempted by worldly success.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." This slogan, attributed to Thomas Jefferson, is certainly true for the restitutionist movement in the sixteenth-century. Their dissent from both Roman Catholicism and main-line Protestantism was a dissent from the temptation to identify human with divine power, institutionally or otherwise. True Christian freedom means to experience the separation of human and divine power. Christians need to practise again and again the vigilance to *let God be God!* The sixteenth-century restitutionists were vigilantes of Christian freedom. Their witness should be a lesson in our time.

Ecumenical Implications

The time has come to place the restitutionist challenge of the sixteenth century squarely into the contemporary ecumenical movement. But while Believers' Churches have begun to come to terms with their heritage in the midst of denominationalist fragmentation (especially in the United States), their

concerns have not yet made any realistic impact on the contemporary dialogue for Christian unity. Periodic conferences on the concept of the Believers' Church and the meaning of "restitution" have broken significant ground (see James L. Garrett, ed. *The Concept of the Believers' Church*, Scottdale, 1969, with Addresses from the 1967 Louisville Conference; also, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLIV (1976), No. 1, with Addresses from the 1975 Malibu Conference).

We must ask whether sixteenth-century restitutionists and their descendants (Mennonites, Hutterites, Disciples of Christ, and English dissenters such as Baptists) could provide a basis for serious discussion on all sides, assuming that "all sides" are serious about discussion! So far, most of the mainline churches of the Reformation (Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans) and the Roman Catholic Church have not made any serious attempts to include these descendants of sixteenth century radical reformers in their dialogues for Christian unity. The dissent of the evangelical Anabaptists, for example, represents the ecumenical correction to both Roman

Catholicism and the Lutheran-Calvinist Reformation. (See the European discussion regarding the ecumenical place of the Mennonites in Hans-Jurgen Goertz, ed., *Die Mennoniten*, Stuttgart, 1971). Could it be that contemporary mainline churches are still hung up on the nineteenth century sociological distinction between "church" and "sect," according to which "church" means orthodoxy and "sect" means heresy?

In any case, the time has come to "restitute" the sixteenth century dissent in terms of the *legal* meaning of restitution: to assign a proper ecumenical place to those who now, more than ever, deserve "due process": in the vicissitudes of history and its theological hermeneutics. Those who want to be realistic "ecumeniacs" can no longer bypass the restitutionist challenge of the sixteenth century and its impact on modern denominationalist Christendom. □



Starting Over

John Egerton

Reading roadmaps is an interesting pastime. The countless thousands of American place names are like artifacts, scraps of evidence from a long and continuing search for community. They express hope and despair, promise and futility, victory and defeat. They preserve honored names from the language of native Americans from whom the land was seized, and perpetuate the names of colonial intruders who seized the land. They express a remembrance of departed places in other parts of the world, and an anticipation of greater glory to come. They honor unforgettable women, courageous men, the beauty of nature, the perseverance of the human spirit. They are drawn from the Bible, from literature, from legend, from whimsy. They represent the strivings of an endless stream of searchers, of people repeatedly taking risks. The names give us only a hint of the gropings and failings and small triumphs and larger tragedies of people starting over, coming together voluntarily in strange places, trying against the odds to make a go of living. The names, and their faint suggestion of high hopes and hard times, are often all we have to inform us of what went on before we got here.

There is at least one New Hope in almost every state of the Union, and almost as many Fairviews and Pleasant Hills. Athens, Rome, Paris and London have been reborn. Columbus is everywhere. So are the kings and queens, the chiefs and braves, the generals and presidents. And so, too, are terse messages of determination and desperation and unquenchable faith: Last Chance. Heartbreak. Harmony. Death Valley. Paradise. Utopia. Bethlehem. Heaven. Hell.

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A closer look at the place names and the stories behind them in one state — in this case, Tennessee — is one way to gaining a better understanding of who we are and how we got here. The names of cities throughout the ancient and modern world can be found on a map of Tennessee. Athens, Rome, Carthage, Sparta, Troy, Sardis, Alexandria, Memphis, Milan, Como, Paris, Bordeaux, Moscow, Dresden, Dover, Belfast, Bogota — they are all there. So are Egypt, Persia, India, Denmark, Cuba, Brazil. The founders of those towns and villages may never have seen the place whose names they chose, but some of them did see Santa Fe and Tampico and Saltillo and Buena Vista and Montezuma when they fought in Mexico and the Southwest in the 19th century, and those among them who survived gave those names to new communities in Tennessee. The nickname of Tennessee — the Volunteer State — is commonly thought to be a recognition of the large numbers of men who went from there to take part in the war with Mexico. One of them was David Crockett, who died at the Alamo — and in his home state now, a town called Alamo is the seat of Crockett County.

Long before the 19th century, the land that is now Tennessee was in the stewardship of its original inhabitants, and the names of dozens of cities, towns, rivers and mountains (in fact, the name Tennessee itself) are reminiscent of those first Americans. Chattanooga, Tullahoma, Etowah, Sequatchie, Chewalla, Culleoka, Pocahontas — in large cities and quiet hamlets alike, the indelible memory of the dispossessed Indian remains.

Near the Mississippi River in West Tennessee there is a place called Nankipoo — that being the name of a character in Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, *The Mikado*. The state also has a Liberty and a Reverie, a Static and a Dull, a Harmony and a Prosperity, an Only and a Nameless, a Difficult and a Defeated. It has Hanging Limb, and Peeled Chestnut, and Finger, and Frog Jump, and Tiger Tail. It has Nosey Valley, and Stupidville, and Number One. It has a Washington County, an Adams, a Jefferson City, a Madison, a Monroe County, a Lincoln County, a Lafayette, and more than one Franklin.

When the Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto led the first party of white men into the Tennessee country in about 1540, there was a large Indian village called Chiaha on an island in the Tennessee River a few miles from the present site of Chattanooga. The place where DeSoto is believed to have crossed the Mississippi River — identified then as the "fourth Chickasaw Bluff" — is now the location of Memphis. French and English explorers who came into the territory in the 1600s found the Chickasaws and the Cherokees already there in great numbers, and the Cherokees in particular had a highly organized society.

Their seven "mother towns" in the eastern mountains included Tanasi (Tennessee) and Great Tellico (on the present site of Tellico Plains) and Toskegee, birthplace of the great inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, Sequoyah. By the time larger groups of whites began to intrude in the 18th century, the Cherokee towns had become highly developed and thriving communities. Elsewhere in the state, there was a trading post known as Big Salt Lick or French Lick for almost 100 years before James Robertson and John Donelson began the settlement that came to be known as Nashville.

The first white people to settle permanently in what is now the state of Tennessee were probably William Bean of Virginia in 1769 and James Robertson of North Carolina in 1770. They, and others who joined them in what became known as the Watauga Settlements, later formed an association and adopted the first written constitution among European settlers in America. During and after the Revolutionary War, the Watauga territory was the subject of claims and counterclaims involving its white settlers, the Cherokees, the British, the state governments of Virginia and North Carolina, and the government of the United States. In 1777, the Wataugans asked North Carolina to make them part of that state; the following year, all of Tennessee became Washington County, North Carolina, and Jonesboro, now known as Tennessee's "first town," was established as the county seat.

But the problems of frontier warfare and disputed land claims continued, and the people of the Watauga region became increasingly dissatisfied with their North Carolina connection. In 1784, they held a convention in Jonesboro and voted to form a separate state, to be called Franklin (in honor of Benjamin Franklin). A year later, Franklin's elected legislature met, and under the leadership of John Sevier (later to become the first governor of the state of Tennessee), counties were created, a militia and a court system were set up, a taxing mechanism was established, and Congress was asked to formally recognize the new government. North Carolina's strenuous opposition to the separation was decisive, however, and Congress refused to recognize the new state; by 1788, the government of Franklin had collapsed, and a year later, North Carolina ceded the entire Tennessee territory to the United States. Seven years after that, in 1796, Tennessee became the sixteenth state of the Union.

The leaders of Franklin had wanted to include in it all of what is now known as Southern Appalachia — the

mountain counties of eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, southern West Virginia, western Virginia, and Northern Georgia. More than fifty years after Franklin failed, another East Tennessean resurrected the idea of mountain unity, and once again came close to forming a new state.

Ezekiel Birdseye, a transplanted Connecticut Yankee who had become a successful businessman in the Tennessee town of Newport, collaborated in 1840 with Jacob Peck, a one-time Tennessee state senator and supreme court justice, in an attempt to form a free labor colony in East Tennessee. Their long-range plan was to join together the mountain counties of five states to create the new state of Frankland, a sovereign entity pledged to industry, free labor, and the abolition of slavery. According to an article by Henry Lee Swint in a 1944 issue of the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Birdseye and Peck sought to merge two reformist sentiments then present in East Tennessee: abolition and secession. The former drew upon small but influential groups of whites who opposed slavery; the latter was a result of pervasive sectional hostility to the political and economic power that had shifted from the mountains to the western two-thirds of the state. The abolitionists and those who felt alienated from the state's power base were not necessarily allies, but Birdseye and Peck adroitly drew upon both groups to form their "free state" movement.

They came surprisingly close to success. A resolution calling for a study of "the expediency and constitutionality" of East Tennessee's secession from the state — and requiring the governor to open discussions on the subject with governors in the adjacent mountain states — was introduced in both houses of the Tennessee General Assembly in 1841. The sponsor of the measure in the Senate was Andrew Johnson, an East Tennessean who later became President of the United States. The Senate passed the resolution by a vote of 17 to 6, but it failed in the House, and the dream of a free Frankland faded and finally died.

Some of the names on the present map of Tennessee can be traced to the arrival of European immigrants in the nineteenth century; other communities established in that same period have since disappeared. One of the latter was a Welsh settlement in Scott County known as Brynyffynon ("the hill with a spring"). A Welshman named Samuel Roberts, seeking relief from hard times in his native country, purchased a large tract of land in East Tennessee and prepared a brochure to advertise it as a new frontier calling to his fellow countrymen. About forty people bought land from him at the equivalent of approximately

50 cents an acre, and in 1856 the first small group of them arrived and began clearing land for a settlement. But only a few families ever came, and only Roberts and his brother stayed. The courage and tenacity of the Robertses kept alive the dream of a truly Welsh settlement in Tennessee for another decade, wrote Wilbur Shepperson in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* in 1959; but when they left, Brynyffynon "was deserted and quickly dissolved into the forests from which the cabins had been hewn." Welsh immigrants came again to Tennessee a quarter of a century after Samuel Roberts, and established a coal-mining community known as Coal Hill. There is also an ancient legend alive in Wales today of Welshmen building smelting furnaces in the Tennessee mountains in the twelfth century.

More successful than Brynyffynon—if no less arduous—was a Swiss colonization venture in Grundy County after the Civil War. E. H. Plumacher, a Swiss government official, was sent to the United States in 1867 to seek settlement sites as a partial answer to overpopulation and economic depression in his native country. President Andrew Johnson referred Plumacher to friends of his in the mountains and a private company from Switzerland headed by Peter Staub subsequently bought up a twenty-square-mile tract of land in Grundy County and promoted it for sale at about fifty cents an acre to Swiss citizens eager to leave their homeland.

The first party of settlers arrived in 1869, and in time more than seventy-five families emigrated to the colony, which was named Gruetli ("a clearing, a meadow"), after a place by that name in Switzerland. The colonists suffered great hardships in the beginning, and the primitive conditions they found there contrasted so sharply with the picture of paradise Peter Staub had painted for them that the angry settlers felt misled and abandoned. But they were determined to succeed, and they built a community that at its peak numbered close to 300 Swiss, a tight-knit and homogeneous group with a strong sense of cultural identity. For nearly thirty years they managed to preserve their German language, their school and church (Protestant), their music and dance, their woodcarving and winemaking skills, and their agricultural way of life. But many of those qualities succumbed to the influences of assimilation and mobility and the changing times, and Gruetli today bears little resemblance to the authentic Swiss village it once was. The original settlers never lost their contempt for Peter Staub, however. One of them told Frances Helen Jackson, a Vanderbilt University graduate student doing research at Gruetli for a master's thesis in 1933, that Staub was, in the opinion of the colony's survivors, "a first-class swindler."

European promoters of land sales in Tennessee and

other American states in the middle of the nineteenth century apparently included more than one "first-class swindler." In a brochure called "East Tennessee U.S.A.," published in London in 1842, depressed and oppressed Europeans were invited to buy "fertile meadows, bold limpid streams, evergreen pastures ... every requisite for comfort, convenience, and pleasure" — in the rugged and formidable mountains of Tennessee.

German-Swiss emigration to the United States between 1840 and 1860 was substantial, and although the foreign-born proportion of Tennessee's population was only 1 percent as late as 1880 (compared to 15 percent nationwide), several communities in the state originated in the nineteenth century as German or Swiss settlements. More than half a dozen of them still exist, among them Gruetli, Germantown, Mosheim, Hohenwald, Belvidere, Allardt, and Wartburg. Wartburg was a substantial land development enterprise that began in 1844 and in ten years attracted close to 1,000 immigrants. Now Morgan County's seat of government, Wartburg has a population of approximately that same figure, but few traces of its German heritage remain.

An altogether different kind of new community in Tennessee in the nineteenth century was the health spa. Middle Tennessee abounds with mineral springs, and more than thirty of them were developed into health and recreation resorts attracting affluent Tennesseans to spend their summers there. One of the first, and by some accounts the finest, was Beersheba Springs in Grundy County. Incorporated in 1839, its first hotel opened that year, and the resort had its heyday in about 1859, before declining during the Civil War. Perhaps the best-known spa was Red Boiling Springs in Macon County. It had several boarding houses and hotels in the 1880s, and both before and after World War I, it was a thriving and prosperous summer community. Before a series of disastrous fires, the Great Depression, and the advent of the automobile signaled the end of its good times, Red Boiling Springs had nine hotels, a rich variety of cuisine and entertainment, and its famous mineral waters, reputed to be a cure for almost any ailment from diarrhea to gonorrhea. Among the other watering spas that are still on the map are Hermitage Springs, Eldorado Springs, Castalian Springs, and Bon Aqua; the latter, in Hickman County, was a health resort as early as the 1820s, a decade or more before Beersheba Springs began to attract visitors. Charles B. Thorne, writing about the watering spas in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* in 1970, noted that one or two of them still have limited facilities in

operation during the summer months, but for the most part, the small, quiet villages have been bypassed by a new generation of vacationers bound for Gatlinburg and Opryland and the bright lights of modern diversions elsewhere.

The contemporary version of the resort community can be seen in the proliferation of heavily promoted land development projects, particularly in the eastern half of the state, that cater to the recreation, retirement, and second-home dreams of the American middle and upper classes. The largest of them has more than 15,000 homesites, and the promotional literature extolling their assets is reminiscent of the "fertile meadows-limpid streams-evergreen pastures" language in that 1842 brochure from London. On the Cumberland Plateau alone, more than a dozen major speculative land developments have sprung up on the mountainsides and in the forestlands of a people who have never known great economic prosperity, and the contrast between the indigenous residents and the affluent newcomers is stark and pervasive. A number of apparent or potential problems related to these developments — problems of environmental impact, water supply, sewage treatment, solid waste disposal, police and fire protection, medical services, and property valuation — are cited in a 1974 report issued by the Upper Cumberland Development District, a regional planning and development agency. The report also describes an adverse social consequence of the new communities:

The large developments themselves are highly self-sufficient in terms of the particular needs of the residents of the development. One of their selling points is that an almost total play and relaxation environment is provided within the confines of the development (there are some exceptions, notably potable water and health care) Seemingly, the developments are assuming the character of super "country clubs" or resorts for metropolitan residents (and) retirees. . . . The new community residents (come) to relax and play while the established residents carry on working and day-to-day living. The differences in life-style contrasted in affluence and marginal subsistence. . . . portray the likely divergence of the communities. . . . There will probably be a high degree of social isolation unless there is ample opportunity to break the barriers.

The Tennessee General Assembly, in an attempt to reduce the problems caused by the creation of these new communities, enacted in 1974 the New Community Development Act; the law provides for a Tennessee Community Development Board to regulate and oversee the establishment of new communities in the state. As the

phenomenon of land speculation and promotion continues, the quality, stability, and permanence of Tennessee's new communities of the present period cannot yet be adequately assessed. Whether they will be the Nashvilles and Knoxville of the future — or the Brynffynons, the Bon Aquas, and the Beershebas — will remain for a later generation of Tennesseans to say.

Not many new communities have come and gone in Tennessee since the beginning of the present century, but there have been a few. For example, there was a Bohemian (Czechoslovakian) settlement on the Cumberland Plateau near Mayland in 1913. Its residents, most of them immigrants who had been struggling to survive in the cities of the North, attempted to farm collectively and to recapture the agricultural way of life they had known in their homeland. Internal dissension quickly shattered their agrarian dream, however, and most of them returned to the cities.

During the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a rural resettlement program brought poverty-stricken coal miners and others into the Cumberland Homesteads near Crossville. The community did not become an incorporated town with an official name, but it was successful nonetheless; several of the original families still live there. Two other unincorporated but distinct communities that have existed in Tennessee for more than twenty-five years are the Amish and Mennonite settlements in Lawrence and Overton counties.

There are older cities, such as Kingsport and Oak Ridge, which have been made over, so to speak, by industrialization and by the massive intervention of the federal government. Kingsport, which was an unnamed settlement when the Declaration of Independence was written, began its "reconstruction" during World War I, and blossomed, ironically, during the Great Depression, when the Eastman Kodak Company initiated expansion of its industrial complex there. Kingsport grew from 12,000 people in 1930 to more than 50,000 by the end of World War II. The renaissance of Oak Ridge resulted from creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Atomic Energy Commission.

Only a handful of place names on the contemporary map of Tennessee have been added in this century. One of those is Norris, a town that was built by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933 for construction workers at Norris Dam, the hydroelectric facility named for Senator George Norris of Nebraska, who introduced the legislation creating TVA. Norris, now a town of about

2,000 people, was owned by TVA until 1948, when it was sold at public auction for \$2.1 million to a group of Philadelphia businessmen who in turn sold individual properties to occupants as their leases expired. (More recently, TVA has talked of developing a new city, a planned community to be named Timberlake — for Henry Timberlake, a British emissary among the Cherokees in the eighteenth century — but so far, the idea has not materialized because of litigation.) Another twentieth-century name on the Tennessee map is Pressman's Home (identified on some maps as Camelot) in Hawkins County. Developed as the headquarters of the International Printing Pressmen's and Assistants' Union of North America, it once boasted a large hospital, printing facilities, a training school, and housing for several hundred residents; now, it is all but deserted. The name Camelot was given to the community by real estate developers who bought the property from the union.

There is in all of these ventures, spanning more than four centuries on the land of Tennessee, a common element of exploration and enterprise. The motivating forces behind them have varied greatly from each to the next. Some were nationalistic in nature, some ethnic, some cultural; others were political, or social, or religious, or ideological; still others have been economic or commercial. The history of every state and every country is, at least in part, a running account of the endless succession of individuals who have merged their common interests and objectives in order to start anew, to form new alliances and build new communities. Human nature being what it is, the impulses have not always been pure; the desire to exploit and control and gain advantage has dominated almost as often as the desire to find liberty and equality and peace. For good and ill, these new communities have helped to shape the character and the history of Tennessee. Each has attempted in its own way to preserve a familiar way of life, to extend it from one setting to another, and the contribution they have made to the state's heritage has been substantial.

There has been another group of new communities in Tennessee history that can be considered in a class apart from the ones already mentioned here. Rather than attempting to preserve and extend an accepted pattern of living, they were consciously founded on one theory or another of social reorganization, and their intent was not to recreate an image of the past but to give substance to an idealistic vision of the future. In a book he wrote in 1516, Thomas More described an imaginary island that had a

perfect political and social system. He called the island — and his book — Utopia, and the word has survived as a descriptive term for the still-sought and still-imaginary social order that can justly be called ideal and perfect. A few of Tennessee's new communities seem legitimately to belong to the mixture of myth and reality and idealism that sets apart the utopias of history.

The most recent Tennessee utopian venture, and the only one currently in existence, is The Farm, a self-styled "family monastery" near Summertown in Lewis County. Established in 1970 by a former California college instructor named Stephen Gaskin, The Farm is a spiritual and agricultural commune embracing more than 1,500 acres of woods and fields and more than 800 people, most of them young adults and children. Having overcome the initial suspicions of their neighbors in the surrounding countryside, Gaskin and his followers have established themselves as a respected fixture on the local scene, even though their way of living differs greatly in many respects from that of the indigenous people. (Gaskin, with three of his disciples, served a prison sentence in 1974 for growing marijuana.) His spiritual teachings to his flock are a cosmopolitan blend of Eastern and Western religious thought, often couched in the contemporary vernacular of the American youth culture. The residents of The Farm hold all their property in common, eat no meat or dairy products, practice neither birth control nor abortion, and apparently regard Gaskin as a sort of messiah whose wisdom and leadership approach infallibility. That such beliefs and practices can coexist peacefully with the conservative traditions of people in rural Middle Tennessee seems surprising. On the other hand, the young residents of the commune are themselves conservative in many ways. In appearance, they resemble nineteenth-century country folks; they wear beards, long hair, bib overalls, full-length dresses and bonnets. They are industrious, hard-working, law-abiding, and — in their own fashion — pious, moralistic, and orthodox. And, in a county that had only 6,761 people in the 1970 census, The Farm represents a block vote that compels local politicians and officeholders to regard the colony with seriousness and respect.

One of the common characteristics of utopias is their impermanence. If The Farm follows the pattern of history, one of two things can be expected eventually to happen to it: it will become more and more like its surroundings (and thus no longer a utopia, "a perfect social order"), or it will break up and disappear. It is the faith of Gaskin and the people of The Farm that they have found the formula

for a perfect social system, and that with it they can save the world. Such has been the faith of all utopians.

Gaskin's spiritual ancestor in Tennessee could be said to be Christian Gottlieb Priber, a German socialist and utopian who joined the Cherokee Nation in 1736 and for seven years labored to create what he called the "Kingdom of Paradise." Verner W. Crane wrote about him in a 1919 article in the *Sewanee Review*.

Priber was known as a polite, refined, well-educated, and intelligent man who believed deeply in equalitarianism and an open society. Such views were incompatible with the political and social thought of the times, and the price he paid for holding them was repeated exile, first from Germany, then from England, and finally, in 1735, from South Carolina. At Great Tellico, the principal town of the Overhill Cherokees, Priber became a willing and welcome convert among the Indian people, and there he lived until 1743, when he was captured and imprisoned by the British.

East Tennessee in those years was Cherokee land coveted by both the British and the French — those two forces of imperialism were soon to engage in a war for supremacy in the American wilderness — and each side suspected that Priber was an agent of the other. In fact, his loyalty was to neither, but to the Cherokees, whom he sought to protect from exploitation, and who in turn protected him from the Europeans who wanted him removed. Priber's idealistic conception of a Kingdom of Paradise envisioned a society in which "all colours and complexions" of people would live in friendship as equals, holding all things — including their children — in common. He also hoped to unite all Southern Indians into a single political body, and the French and English viewed such a "red empire" with alarm. The English, who were eventually to win the wilderness war, were particularly distrustful of Priber, and James Adair, one of the few Englishmen to see and talk to the elusive utopian during his years at Great Tellico, reported that Priber "impressed them (the Cherokees) with a very ill opinion of the English, representing them as a fraudulent, avaritious (sic), and encroaching people."

The Kingdom of Paradise apparently was well received by the Cherokees, who regarded Priber as an honored brother, but it had not reached an advanced state when he was finally seized and imprisoned for life. Priber was known to have in his possession when he was captured a dictionary of the Cherokee language and a manuscript describing his life among the Indians and his visionary plan for the Kingdom of Paradise. Both apparently were destroyed. The backwoods utopian died a few years later in a South Carolina prison. The Cherokees suffered under successive assaults from smallpox, from the British, and

finally from the U.S. Government, which forced their removal to Oklahoma in 1838 on the infamous "Trail of Tears." The Kingdom of Paradise, and the Cherokee Nation itself, succumbed to what Christian Priber had called "an encroaching people."

Between the Kingdom of Paradise in the 18th century and The Farm in the 20th, three fascinating and extraordinary utopian colonies came and went in Tennessee: Nashoba, near Memphis, in the 1820s; Rugby in the mountains of East Tennessee, in the 1880s; and Ruskin, in rural Middle Tennessee, in the 1890s. Nashoba was a pathfinding interracial experiment founded by a Scottish woman named Frances Wright. Rugby was a Christian cooperative community launched by Thomas Hughes, a noted British author and reformer. Ruskin, named for the British social critic John Ruskin, was organized by an American Socialist named Julius Augustus Wayland.

To say that those three communities broke new ground in the search for satisfactory ways of "starting over" — only to fail spectacularly — is to tell the truth, but not the whole truth. They aspired unapologetically to be utopian communities, reflecting both their founders' dissatisfaction with the way things were and their optimism that ways could be found to improve the social contract. The literal meaning of the Greek word utopia is "no place" — a romantic and idealistic vision of an impossibly perfect society. But the functional meaning — for Wright and Hughes and Wayland, at least — was not perfection but the pursuit of it. Not winning, but trying. Not being victorious, but being right. They should be remembered now not for having failed spectacularly, but for having dreamed impossible dreams, and for having mustered the will and the courage to try to make them come true.

It has been conservatively estimated that 200 experimental utopian communities were started in the United States in the 1800s. The number since then has been far smaller — and what is more, the places that pass for contemporary "new communities" are more often than not commercial developments, enterprises promising profits to the builders and protection to the buyers. Americans today are either too comfortable or too dispirited to nourish new visions of utopia. Frances Wright and Thomas Hughes and Julius Wayland, could they see us now, would no doubt conclude that their own impossible dreams were wasted on us. □

Are the Cults a Judgement on the Churches?

John Garvey

It might be true that the new religions have a direct and lasting effect on only a tiny fragment of our population. It *might* be true. I have my doubts. I think that as the influence of established religion weakens, the influence of alternative religions will grow.

I live in a medium-sized midwestern town, a place which is culturally as far from California as you can get and still stay in America. Without making any effort at all, just by being here, I've come in contact with a number of people who are deeply interested in cults, occult phenomena, bizarre self-improvement techniques, and so forth. The impact on their lives has not been slight, as it would be if their interest were merely faddish. Some of these people have had their lives changed, friendships and family relationships and marriages shattered, all because of their involvement with the cults. Some examples:

—A man I know went from Camus and fashionable university *angst* through the Self-Realization Fellowship to a Hindu cult, complete with guru. The cult involved, among other things, some strange notions of child-rearing, and the fasting and meditation asked of members were rigorous. At one point my friend insisted that I look at a religious picture he had. With great devotion he showed me a picture which reminded me of the sentimental Catholic art I had seen in school as a child, except

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that the figure had extra arms. He and his wife had given their child a Hindu name. They seemed happy.

—A woman married a man who was agnostic to the bone at the time of their marriage. They had a child, and started a business together. Then he got religion: the cult was a Hindu offshoot, involving vegetarianism and the belief that all outsiders would be miserably reborn. Women were considered inferior creatures, especially pregnant ones. Her husband began to nag her about joining the cult, and once during an argument she said, "I think if your guru asked you to throw me and the baby off the roof, you'd do it." He admitted he would. The marriage ended.

—A young man tells me that he isn't allowed to divulge the "inner teachings" of his new-found faith (which adopts a lot of Catholic trappings but little of Catholic teaching) because it would be "like giving food to a baby which is too strong for the baby's system." One of the things he is willing to tell me is that black people have great karmic vibrations, and their humility will help them in the long run. Brother Philip, this young man's teacher, is a nice person who smiles a lot and tells me that he himself went from Lutheranism to dope and all sorts of negative things before discovering yoga, which led him in a roundabout way to his present discipline, one who teaches "the inner truths of Christianity." Western mysticism is a technique, they believe, handed on secretly from adept to adept. Brother Philip tells me that after years in the Jesuit order they teach you the things his order is willing to teach faster—if your system can take it.

—A man who had been expelled from a Catholic seminary for radical political activity left the Church, but this left a void in him. It was filled temporarily by a group which will remain nameless because they are adept at suing people. They answered his questions with a vision of life which reconciled good and evil rather neatly, but as he approached the initiation ceremony he grew suspicious. Entering the cult would require the surrender of all his worldly goods to the organization; no witnesses could be present at the ceremony (a fact which he believed was stressed too pointedly); and he sensed that the ceremony would involve something dark, though he didn't know quite what that might be. In retrospect he believes that the members of the cult he met looked high and narrowly focussed all the time. He was drawn to them, though, by their obvious sense of mission, and their clear vision of life.

—A man I know went from the beer and marijuana period of the Beach Boys and surfing music through LSD and the Beatles, working his way through a number of other chemicals along the way. He not only listened to records; he tried to *convert* people to those records. He honestly believed there was something prophetic in the music we were getting. One of his friends was considered a guru of sorts. He peddled LSD around campuses, and was given to saying things like, "See that piece of wood over there? That's God."

—A newly married friend introduces me to his wife, who within five minutes of the introduction asks me if I believe in the third eye.

—A woman who thinks I might be sympathetic tells me that she has found "that Holy Spirit grin" and that she was a Catholic before she found Jesus. Another one of the saved tells me that because of my involvement with the publication of a book called *Buddha and Jesus: Conversations* I have participated in a work of the devil; how could anyone mention Buddha and Jesus in the same breath, without infernal help? She also believes, it turns out on further conversation, that the Nazi murder of the Jews was prophesied, which makes it all right.

In addition to all of this, I could mention the people who have turned to psychodrama, *est*, and other forms of psychological and personal therapy (or for that matter political ideology) which are in their ways as demanding as any religion could be. In a sense this would take us too far a field—cults, after all, are the subject at hand—but the appeal is the same: to clarity and certainty, to a fulfillment which cannot be found in the culture at large or in establishment religion.

The worry about cults is in many ways understandable. It is strange to see people rush into what seems a wildly unreasonable view of the world, and if you are a parent or friend, it is more than strange—it is profoundly unsettling, at times heartbreaking, to see a person who was once apparently capable of sorting things out now facing you with a blank look and answers which come out of a handbook. Life isn't that easy, we say, and the answer is "But you don't *know*..."

Even though at this time the cult phenomenon involves only a fragment of the population, the problem is not a small one. Cults and the reaction they provoke have not only made interesting news copy; the deprogramming controversy has made the existence of cults a matter which involves fundamental civil liberties and challenges our definitions of religion, maturity, and responsibility.

I think it is necessary to make a few distinctions before leaping at the issue. First of all, odd as they may look to most of us, all cults are not the same. There is a difference between the Hare Krishna people and the followers of Sun Myung Moon, between a member of the Children of God and a Scientologist. In this sense cults are not very different from most religious denominations, except for their newness to most of us. For most of us, "religion" (in the sense we have grown used to) has been an accepted and more or less acceptable part of the social landscape. Precisely because it seems so familiar we are not particularly upset by the presence among us of Quakerism or Catholicism, though at different times in our history people holding these beliefs have been seen as threats to society.

It can't be enough to define anything we find threatening as a "cult" or a "sect"; the words "religion", and "cult", and "sect" are much more vague than we would like them to be.

What does the word "religion" mean? If you are a fundamentalist Christian you will say that all *religion* is false, that you have to be saved...a definition which looks to outsiders like a description of some kind of religion. If religion means a belief in God, most Hindus will ask what you mean by the word, and most Western believers will not offer a definition which is satisfactory. (One Hindu told me that his pious mother was worried when he came to the United States; she feared he would lose his faith and begin to believe in God!) Buddhists, who are non-theistic, will say that the existence or non-existence of God is a question which distracts from the *real* problems. And if

you try to define religion as some scholars have, as a system which has to do with ultimate meanings, you will have to include Marxism.

The problem lies in making the definition so broad that it includes almost everything which matters deeply to anyone. If there is something worrisome in the cult phenomenon (and I believe that there is) it must be approached only after we have looked at the broader picture of religion in America, at the notions Americans have about religion and its place in life. Cults—and at a secular level the new therapies, like psychodrama and *est*—are answers to a felt emptiness, one which is not challenged by the churches. Should the churches try to fill up that emptiness? And if the existence of the cults is in a way a judgement on the established churches, what is the judgement it brings? Is it that the cults are doing, with some degree of success, what the churches fail to do?

These questions are related, since most Americans who come from a religious background, and who later leave it, tend to leave because of betrayed expectations. Those who do not come from religious backgrounds are nevertheless influenced by a vague belief in what "religion ought to do." For example, people who have no religious background will sometimes ask others, "Are you religious?" The question is embarrassing, not because people are ashamed of going to church, but because it assumes too much. It assumes that religious people live with a certainty, a lack of doubt and pain, a consoling conviction which carries them through passages the rest of humanity has to deal with in agony and uncertainty; and to answer that you "are religious" seems in addition to be a claim to righteousness, as if you were saying that you are saved, pure of God's will, a specific thing in a wavering landscape.

The most unsettling thing of all is that some believers are willing to buy this picture of religion. Religion in the eyes of these believers, as well as most non-believers, is a form of therapy which deals with ultimate things, like death, "the meaning of life," sexual behavior, and so forth. Believers recommend it because it is true. Non-believers tolerate it because it makes people feel better about themselves. Whichever point of view is adopted, the result is the same: nothing changes. The very things which have made people desperate enough to seek the certainty of religion remain untouched. During the war in Vietnam Billy Graham was able to say that it was not his job to criticize US policy, since he was "a New Testament evangelist, not an Old Testament prophet." (He wasn't even a *New Testament* prophet. He was what most US churchmen were—a tacit supporter of an action which

killed people.) On Christmas priests and preachers remind us that we should not be *too* materialistic; with regard to wealth, in a world where people are starving to death, we are told not to be too terribly *attached* to wealth.

This religious tameness is a self-evident good to many churchgoers. Religion is understood by many people as a sign of respectability; church going, like voting and keeping a clean lawn, is a signal to the world at large that you are a responsible member of the community. For years this social role was upheld by general opinion. The agnostic or atheist was regarded as dangerous at worst, and at least as an eccentric. Social pressure (which does not always have to be heavy-handed) as much as belief helped to fill the churches.

But for the generation which came to mature after World War Two and Korea it was just as respectable to be indifferent to religion. It is no longer shameful for someone to admit that he or she has no interest in religion and has not been to church in years. The church is no longer considered the institution which looks after public morality. It is clear that religion is not required for simple decency; and this presents many churchpeople with a problem, since for years this was the church's main selling point to the secular society: Look at how good it encouraged people to be. At the height of the war in Vietnam I saw a sign in front of a church which read, THOU SHALT NOT KILL-DRIVE CAREFULLY. The morality involved is always personal, seldom social. When it is social it is either conservative or liberal or radical, along lines which are predictable without reference to religion. It is as if religion had nothing to say to the world which is not being said by the secular world, and the secular world usually says it first; it is as if religion's job is to put a seal of approval on the best of the secular lot, whatever you consider "the best" to be.

The impression which the average Christian church gives to outsiders is one of blandness and ineffectuality. This is increasingly the impression it gives to young people from churchgoing families. The exception to this rule is to be found in the evangelical churches of the fundamentalist variety; such churches are growing, and I would suggest that their appeal is similar to the appeal exercised by the cults.

What is that appeal? Why would anyone of average intelligence fall for a system obviously shallow as that preached by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon? And is it fair to compare Christianity in any form to these bizarre

movements? Perhaps more basic questions would be, what are the differences between the cults? What makes a "cult" different from legitimate religion?

It should not be assumed, because we find them both strange, that the Krishna Consciousness movement appeals to precisely the same thing in a convert as does the Unification Church, or that a person attracted to either would have been attracted to the Children of God, or to Scientology. There is something manipulative, for example, in Scientology: you learn one level after another of mind control, stripping away negative "engrams". You learn to be in charge. The type of submission demanded by the Unification Church or the Children of God or the Hare Krishnas would probably not appeal to someone who takes up Scientology. Similarly, many of those who have entered the Children of God come from fundamentalist backgrounds which would never allow them to be appealed to by the Hinduism of the Krishna Consciousness movement.

There is something dangerous, though, about someone who believes that his leader—the Guru Maharaj-Ji, for example, or Sun Myung Moon—is so profoundly in possession of the truth that he can be obeyed without question or thought. I have talked with Hindu converts from Christianity who were rational people; I have frankly never met a rational Moonie. By that I don't mean that I have never met a Moonie who was not in most of his waking activities a controlled and relatively reasonable person; but when belief came up there was no argument, no possibility of a real appeal to reason. The answers were set, pat, beyond reason. However, I have met exactly the same attitude in some Biblical literalists, whose religions are not currently being greeted with the same fear and hysteria. It may or may not be true that there is an ominous connection between the Korean government and the Unification Church (or at least between the Korean government and some officers of that church), but as ominous as this possibility may be, why concentrate on this danger and exclude others? Why is it that Americans have regarded the Reverend Moon as a more serious threat than Gerald L. K. Smith, with his vicious racist and anti-Semitic views, or the ultra-right-wing fanatic Billy James Hargis? Is it because Moon is oriental and unorthodox (as if any genuine orthodoxy ever entered the heads of people like Smith and Hargis)?

What is the threat, then, that people see in the cults? For one thing, rejection. The young person who becomes a Krishna devotee or a member of the Unification Church is breaking with his parents' background and values in a

radical way. This applies not only to the limited notion of religion which is socially acceptable; more than what we consider polite religion (that is to say, membership in a non-controversial denomination) is involved. A common complaint of parents whose children have joined the cults is wasted talent—they are selling candy on the streets, when they could have become doctors or accountants.

It is disturbing to meet people whose eyes are glazed with simple truths. We have all met people who are unable to listen with genuine sympathy or compassion to another's deeply felt belief, because there is no reason to. They have the *truth*, and any consideration beyond their own sparkling connection is not worth a minute. But although many of these people are members of new cults, their number also includes Catholics, Protestants, Communists, Lubavitcher Hasids, Libertarians, Anarchists, and members of the John Birch Society.

Should we proceed, under law, against everyone who feels that doubt is a sin and certainty is a necessity? Should we forbid this, or allow parents who are distressed by their children's religious choices to kidnap them? In fact many of the arguments made against the cults could be made against Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox religious orders. ("He could have been a doctor but he's cutting firewood with the Trappists!") And anyone who believes that the kidnapping and deprogramming methods used against the cults will stop with the cults we don't like should consider the fact that Ted Patric, the leading deprogrammer, is *persona non grata* in Canada because he assisted in the abduction and deprogramming of a woman who, against the wishes of her Protestant parents, converted to Catholicism and joined a catholic community.

It isn't that the Reverend Moon is our equivalent of George Fox, a simple persecuted prophet. I think the charge some people have made—that Moon is a spiritual fascist—applies in spades. But he is in a strange way a caricature of American religion. He has simple answers, generates enthusiasm, gives people what they want to hear, makes them know that they are right. So do some churches. There is more to Moon than that, and this is where the cult's judgement on the churches begins.

What made the Jews infuriating to Romans was that they would not allow their God to be put into the Pantheon, along with all the other gods. He was not a God to be commanded, reduced, used, or made part of something. When Pilate, in violation of the Jewish law, had the emperor's image brought into Jerusalem, the

Pharisees risked death in protest. They bared their throats to Roman knives when threatened with death, and continued to fast silently as they surrounded Pilate's residence. Pilate was forced to back down. Scripture tells us that it was a concession when God permitted his people to have a king, so that they could be "like other people". It was not something to be celebrated, a fact the prophets tried to make clear time and time again. We were never intended to fit in, to be at home here.

But on *The PTL Club*, an evangelical television show, the host (a Johnny Carson imitator who has taken to heart an obscene interpretation of Paul's counsel to "be all things to all men") says that America is rich because of its faith in God, and India is poor because of its lack of faith. He gets applause.

Given a choice between that and the Moonies, can you find a better and a worse?

The cults make one appeal which the churches should not try to answer. That is the appeal of simple answers, and the feeling of certainty. The churches should not, like the cults, offer simple therapy, or push techniques which are in themselves powerful enough to lean a theology against. At the center of the Christian faith is a man who was God, who asked the Father to spare him in his agony. Religion was not therapy for him. It was, simply and dreadfully, a radical obedience to the will of God, which took him through dread and death to resurrection.

To demand a way around doubt, dread, and death, a way which makes them less than what they are and have been to the human race, which suffers them daily, is to ask for less than the real world; and God asks us at least to accept the world's agony as real, something suffered in real flesh.

But even though we are right to reject the over-simple vision of the world offered by the cults, we have to ask how it is that such a vision became attractive. A church which was uncritical of other idols—money, politics, respectability—suddenly worries about this one, as if the idea of "false gods" only arrived with the cults, as if our own picture of God or Jesus could never possibly have been in itself a false god. Is it because the cults interfere with "our territory," the little space we have marked off as religious? If so, we are involved with competing gods, a problem which affected every god in the Roman Pantheon—except for the God of the Jews and the Christians, the one God who wasn't playing that game. The living God does not need to be sold, or to compete. The cults and the fundamentalists don't seem to know or believe this.

The churches and synagogues do not need to offer a simple or therapeutic vision in order to compete with cults; competition in any case should not be the point.

But the assumption should not be that what they are presently doing is in any way adequate. When the people who look to other sources for enlightenment say that they don't "get anything out of" the churches they are not complaining about a lack of distraction or entertainment (it isn't really as if there were something very subtle going on which they miss). They are rather subject to a problem which arises as a result of a vast cultural shift, in that they come to the churches without the prejudice which informs most churchgoers: they don't see churchgoing as a self-evident good. Why *should* they look to the churches for anything at all? The burden of proof is on the churches now, not on them.

The saints and prophets speak of a life which is God's own life, shared with human beings. Athanasius tells us that "the Word became man so that men might be gods." Paul says that Jesus was the first born "of many brothers and sisters." The psalms are full of the relief and joy which invade the soul which has learned radical obedience. The Bible says that we are called to repentance and transformation.

But transformation has to be real, not emotional, or a simple matter of changing a life-style. The cults push alternatives, ones which seem real, and allow their adherents to experience levels of imagination and emotion which they have not until that time encountered. While the thirst for transformation can at one level be a bad thing—that is, it can be another manifestation of the deep boredom which penetrates our time and leads us on a constant search for new experiences and never-ending distraction—on the other hand it can be a good thing, in that it is at least a recognition of the fact that in order to be what we are meant to be, we must be changed. *We are not now what we are meant to be.* That is the message of the prophets and of Jesus. But it is not seriously preached in the churches, where the words of scripture are allowed to canonize the present order, and the Christian life is reduced to a completely private moralism.

I've heard it argued that the Christian tradition offers plenty of examples of transformation every bit as powerful as the ones the cults speak about, and of course this is true: we have the Fathers of the Desert, the transfigured saints of Eastern Orthodoxy, the mystics, and spiritual revolutionaries like St. Francis. But this is

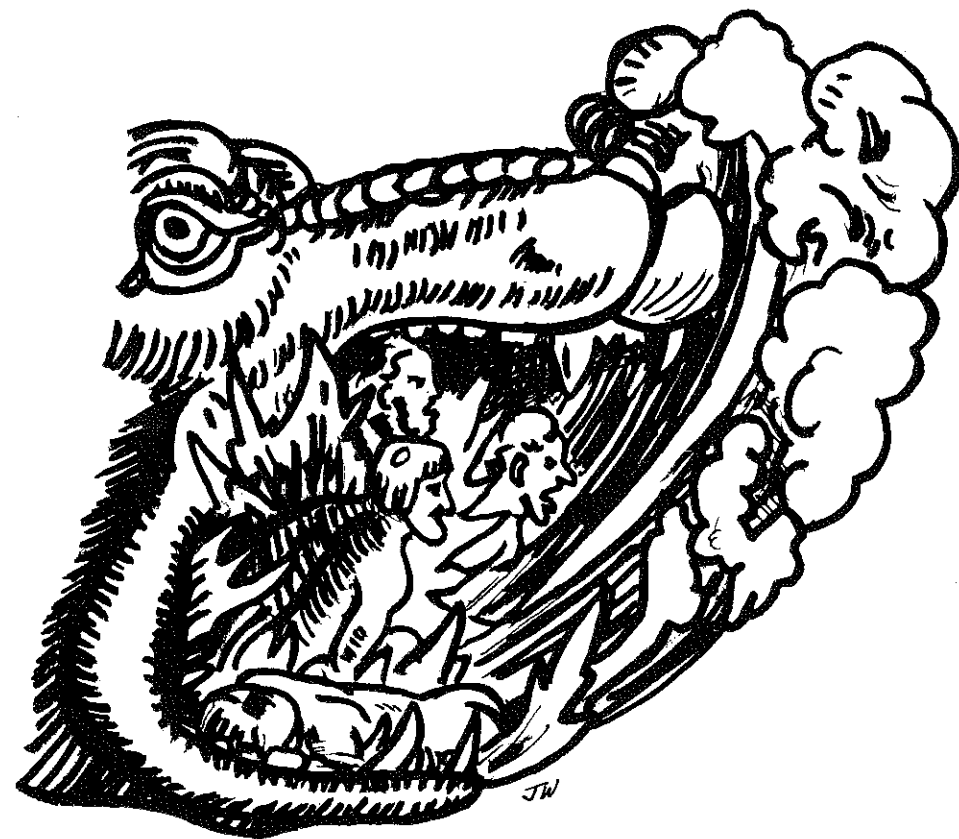
not what is encountered in church. Cults claim to deliver this, or something like it. The churches seldom if ever bother to make the claim. Attention to the radical Christian tradition of the Fathers of the Desert and Francis of Assisi could be a beginning, and it should be undertaken not because the cults might otherwise win the competition, but because they could not be Christians and cooperate with that civilization at the same time; or rather, they would be counterfeit Christians if they attempted to do both. They did not, as some would have it, flee the world. They fled *to* it, to the real world, away from the socially maintained illusion.

The person from a conventional religious background turns to the cults for a mixture of reasons: relief from the

soul-crushing boredom which pervades his life, the need for simple answers, and the desire to be transformed. In rejecting the church as he has known it, he could be right to this extent: he could recognize that a tamed and domesticated Christianity is false.

People who turn to the cults are hungry. The cults feed them candy, but the churches which could feed them meat, real bread and real wine, feed them nothing. Perhaps the message of the gospel, if lived out in the life of the church, would still not be listened to; people became gnostics and neo-platonists in an era when the gospel had not yet been made Caesar's pet. But at least the alternative of the gospel would have been presented, as it is not, now.

□



“If We Buy This, What Comes Next?”

Jo McGowan

On May 1st of this year, I was arrested, along with 1413 others, at the Seabrook nuclear power plant site and spent sixteen days in jail. On June 29, I was arrested, alone this time, in an abortion clinic in Amherst, Massachusetts, fined \$25 and sentenced to eight days in jail when I refused to pay. On August 6, Hiroshima Day, I was arrested with seven others at Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, and spent four days in jail. On all three occasions, I was arrested for the same thing. Murder by nuclear poison, murder by abortion, and murder by nuclear weapons. All result in the same thing: dead people.

There is no need to discuss the insanity of nuclear power and nuclear weapons. But abortion is something else. For a long time now, I have been bewildered by the almost total acceptance of abortion by the peace movement. I have tried over and over to understand how women and men committed to non-violence can go along with inflicting such violence on another life. I still can't understand.

I realize that abortion is very much tied up in women's rights. As a woman, I, too, insist on my right to control my body. My body is my self. But, if I become pregnant, then it is no longer only *my* body in question. Another body, another life now exists, and I can no more control my body by destroying my child than I can insure my safety by building Trident submarines. I ask this question in all seriousness: “Can we, as non-violent people, ever claim that anyone, woman or man, has a right to kill another?”

A friend wanted to know if I thought I could understand what it means for a woman to give birth to a child she didn't want, and to bring it into a world that did not

want it either. No, I'm not sure that I do understand. I'm not sure that I understand anything I haven't experienced myself. I'm not sure I understand what it means to be a poor parent worrying about my children being hungry. But, I don't think the answer is to kill the children. I'm not sure that I understand what it means to be an old person living alone in Detroit, terrified to leave the apartment for fear of being mugged. But, I don't think the answer is to beef up the police force and put more locks on the doors. I'm not sure that I understand what it means to be afraid that the Russians are going to invade us any minute. But, I don't think the answer is to pay war taxes and get a job at Electric Boat building Trident submarines. It's the whole system that has to change. A system that says the answer to a rising crime rate is bigger prisons. That says the answer to child murders is capital punishment. That says the answer to the problem of killing people and sparing property is the neutron bomb. That says the answer to unwanted children is abortion.

Easy answers. Easy answers that make it possible for us to avoid dealing with what's really happening — or not happening. We're not loving each other, we're not caring. What amazes me is that we've been tricked successfully. How is it that we see so clearly what is happening when we are offered the arms race as the answer to fear, but not when we are offered abortion as the answer to the continued oppression of women?

It seems so clear to me that abortion is nothing more than another method devised to perpetuate the patriarchal systems. As long as women are solely responsible for their pregnancies, we are no closer ideologically to where we want to be than we were fifty years ago. As long as women are primarily responsible for deciding whether to carry their child to term or to abort; as long as women are

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responsible for the consequences of their decision — dealing with the emotional-physical results of abortion, or bring up the child — we are exactly where They (the patriarchal systems) want us to be. We are still dealing on Their terms. We are still accepting the idea that pregnancy and birth are women's problems to be dealt with by women — and abortion makes things that much easier. With abortion readily available, the community need not feel any particular responsibility because there is nothing to feel responsible to: the woman has graciously taken care of her little "problem" and everyone can breathe a little easier.

This is what I think: a child born is a community responsibility, especially when its mother or father is not prepared to care for it. But, the influence of those with power in patriarchal systems is pervasive. They realize that if communities began taking their responsibilities seriously, if their members began caring for each other, then it would be but a short time before the communities had the power where they had none. So, countless means of alienating us from our communities and ourselves have been instituted by patriarchal systems which have us working at things which have no relation to our lives. They give us just enough to keep us scrambling with each other for a job or a scholarship or whatever else it is we've been told we want. Further, we are carefully taught from childhood that our primary responsibility is to ourselves and to our families and that if everyone minded her-his own business, everything would be fine. But, fine for whom? I think abortion is just another clever tactic, designed to lend

credence to the idea that everyone solves one's own problems. Obviously, then, since the community will have nothing to do with it, the only solution to the problem of an unwanted child is to kill it.

Of course, the best thing is to believe that it's not a child at all and then it isn't murder to kill it. I can't think of words strong enough to explain how much this confuses me. Have we so little imagination that we can only believe in the life we see? Is it really true that because we cannot see the child, it is, therefore, not a child? We cannot see the lives of the children, women and men killed at Hiroshima and Hagasaki, but we feel so strongly that every year on August 6 and 9, thousands of us vigil, fast, and commit civil disobedience. How can a life destroyed by an atomic blast thirty-two years ago be any more or less real than a life destroyed by abortion today? Why is it that the peace movement sees so clearly the insanity of building weapons to insure peace and fails almost entirely to see the equal insanity of taking away the rights of one to insure the rights of another?

The answers aren't easy. But then, we've never expected them to be. We talk about a world without weapons, without class, without prisons, without fear, with love. Can we even consider abortion?

Ah, dear sisters and brothers. It frightens me. If we buy this, what comes next? □



REVIEWS

The Good Man

Letters of Aldous Huxley. Edited by Grover Smith. Harper & Row, New York. 1969

Aldous Huxley: A Biography. Sybille Bedford. Alfred A. Knopf-Harper & Row, New York. 1974

The Hindus reckon four ages—that of the schoolboy; that of the married man living in the world; that of that mature man who withdraws into the forest and tries to understand nature, things, and his own essence; that of the aged man who detaches himself completely from desire and, though living bodily, dwells in the eternity which he perceives even in temporal things.

Aldous Huxley to Phillipe Dumaine
April 23, 1945

It is the description of all our lives. We are given four seasons, and the success or failure of our lives depends on how well we live the demands of each season. The mid-life crisis Gail Sheehy describes in her popular book, *Passages*, exists only because our society has forgotten (assuming it knew) that there are four seasons in our journey toward Being, and if each is lived fully, we will have done what we were supposed to do—become monks in the world.

Aldous Huxley lived his four seasons with exceptional grace. Known to the world as a writer, he is best remembered for his prophetic novel of 1932, *Brave New World*, and *The Doors of Perception*, an account of his experiments with hallucinogenics in the fifties. Although

these two works have had an enormous impact on our culture, Huxley published forty-seven books in his sixty-nine years. All of them are inadequate reflections of him, because he was not the sum of his work. But none of us can be equated with our work, not until our work becomes exclusively and consciously our relationship to Being.

One's ideal, I dare say, should be, not the snail, but the slug—naked, not armoured. Unless one is vulnerable, one probably never learns to be strong.

To Mrs. Flora Strousse
October 13, 1934

The task of the first half of life is to arm ourselves to live in the world, to set up our tents in the sandstorm. Our identity is established when we can say, "I am a . . .": teacher, bus driver, or priest. It is a way of knowing ourselves before others and our relationship to them. (The father of a victim of the "Son of Sam" killer in New York City said, "I'm a Teamster and if I ever get my hands on the guy, I'll mop the floor with him.") We have to see ourselves in clear relief, a part of the frieze of reality, but standing out from it in strong, sculpted lines. Then, and only then, can we embark on the terrifying journey to the God within.

Huxley knew himself first as a writer and intellectual. His fame began in the nineteen-twenties with his witty, cynical novels about the post-war generation. *Chrome Yellow*, *Antic Hay*, *Those Barren Leaves*, and *Point Counterpoint* were to that generation what the songs of Bob Dylan were to the sixties, reflecting "the life and

opinions of an age which has seen the violent disruption of almost all the standards, conventions and values current in the previous epoch" (Letter to his father, November 26, 1923). Yet, Huxley was dissatisfied with his novels, because they were novels of ideas, in which the life of the mind was put forth as the only life worth living. He sensed that this was only a part of the human reality, and the heroes of Huxley's novels are half-human, intellects without emotions, able to perceive the world but unable to experience it.

However, during the first two seasons of a man's life, there can be no other reality, because it is with the mind that man defines himself and the world. (It is more than coincidence that Jesus' first act as a man was not the performance of a miracle, but to argue with the rabbis at the temple. It was his rite of passage.) For a man the word is the sword of St. George, subduing the dragon of chaos and establishing order in the landscape of his soul where the non-rational threatens. Only when a man has established order in this way can he go into the inner wilderness to be tempted by devils.

This sense of the non-rational was absent from Huxley's novels, but not from his life. As early as 1916 when he was twenty-two, he wrote a bit of advice to his brother, Julian: "The people that I propose you shall read are as follows: Blake perpetually, with a foundation of Jacob Behmen (Boehme); that will keep your religion all right, the importance of which I cannot overemphasize."

The journey toward wholeness is not a matter of becoming whole, but more one of ceasing to mistake fragments of ourselves for the whole. Once we cease to exalt one aspect of our being above all the others, we experience the wholeness which has been within us always. Yet, we cannot be whole if we do not develop one aspect of ourselves and disregard the others. It is a paradox as long as we forget that each season has its special quality and character which must be reverently respected.

Huxley's emphasis on the mind was the proper task of the first season, and in 1919, in another letter to Julian, he wrote with the unself-conscious arrogance only allowed the young: "Great events are both terrifying and boring, terrifying because one may be killed and boring because they interfere with the free exercise of the mind—and after all, that freedom is the only thing in the world worth having."

Yet, the sense that he is only defining a corner of reality recurs five years later when he writes his father: "A too early passion for reading detracts from the powers of observation and it is more important for the child to notice vividly what is going on outside him than to make a precocious acquaintance with the inside of books." Only someone who knew little more than the "inside of books"

could make such a statement, and it indicates a growing tension between how Huxley knew reality and other ways of knowing it.

A year later, in April, 1925, there is the first statement that the tension has been resolved—at least intellectually. In a letter to his close friend, Robert Nichols, he wrote that

the most vital problem is not the mental so much as the ethical and emotional. The fundamental problem is love and humility, which are the same thing. The enormous difficulty of love and humility — a difficulty greater now, I feel, than ever; because men are more solitary now than they were; all authority has gone; the tribe has disappeared and every at all conscious man stands alone, surrounded by other solitary individuals and fragments of the old tribe, for which he feels no respect. Obviously, the only thing to be done is to go right through with the process; to realize individuality to the full, the real individuality, Lao-Tsz(u)'s individuality, the Yogis' individuality, and with it the oneness of everything. Obviously! But the difficulty is huge. And meanwhile the world is peopled with miserable beings who are neither one thing nor the other; who are solitary and yet not complete individuals; conscious only of the worst part of themselves...and devilishly proud of what they regard as their marvelous independence and their acuteness of spirit. For them love and humility are impossible....What's to be done about it? That's the great question. Someday I may find some sort of an answer. And then I may write a good book, or at any rate a mature book, not a queer sophisticatedly jejune book... like all the blooming lot.

It will be another ten years before Huxley begins to say publicly what he writes in this letter, but when he does, his contemporaries from the twenties will be baffled and wonder what happened to the witty agnostic. The answer is obvious: He has fully entered the second season.

My besetting sin (is) the dread and avoidance of emotion, the escape from personal responsibility, the substitution of aesthetic and intellectual values for moral values—of art and thought for sanctity.

To Mrs. Kethavan Roberts (January 13, 1935)

The seasons of our lives do not, like birthdays, come in neat succession. The human seasons overlap, and we get glimpses of the second and third while struggling to meet the demands of the first. Huxley's second season began in the midst of his first, and it is generally that way with men, because the second season is the one of marriage, when a man seeks to engage his opposite. (Sometimes this is the necessary prerequisite for fulfilling the tasks of the

first season.) The woman a man marries symbolizes those parts of himself inaccessible to him through the intellect and words. Woman is a way of knowing, without recourse to books or intellectual processes, and, the ability to trust that way of knowing.

Such a formulation may be distasteful to many women during a time when they are refusing to live the onerous roles imposed upon them by men. It would be safer to talk of *yang* and *yin*, perhaps, but we must seek the shape and form of our lives in the language of our culture, for that language has molded the way we experience ourselves. (As Huxley said in his essay, "Words and Their Meanings," "Conduct and character are largely determined by the nature of the words we currently use to discuss ourselves and the world around us.") Unfortunately, the words *man* and *woman* are used today to designate political entities, and their symbolic and mythical dimension is rapidly disappearing. Yet, this dimension functions in our lives whether or not we are mindful of it. To confine man and woman in the sacrophogus of politics is to consign ourselves to a spiritual tomb.

However, it is not easy to free the words, man and woman, to be symbols without slipping into the value structure assigned to them by our culture. While there can be no question that the cultural values assigned to male and female must be removed, it is a mistake to assume that social and economic equality between the sexes means the eventual eradication of sexual distinctions. It is the values placed on these differences which must be removed. The differences will remain and the failure to see and acknowledge them will be to ignore the law of opposites and lose the resultant creative tension without which wholeness is impossible.

In this sense, then, woman is not necessarily the specific gender of person, but a specific function within one's own being. Women, because they are women, do not necessarily have more ready access to this way of knowing than men.

On Huxley's essay on D.H. Lawrence, he quotes Lawrence on woman: "And God the Father, the Inscrutable, the Unknowable, we know in the flesh, in Woman. She is the door for our in-going and our out-going. In her we go back to the Father; but like the witnesses of the transfiguration, blind and unconscious." Lawrence was speaking literally, but his description has more meaning and depth if it is heard symbolically as Woman-within. Lawrence had the prescience, at least, to know that Woman is the symbol for a man's soul instead of reducing Her to the function of wife to a house.

Lawrence's words must have had great meaning for Huxley, because they are a graphic description of the place his wife had in his life. In 1919 he married Maria Nys, a young Belgian woman, who after thirty-two years of marriage wrote their son, Matthew, wondering why Aldous had chosen her "out of the many prettier, wittier, richer, etc. young girls? Knowing all the time ... that he could never teach me to write poetry or remember what I read in a book, or spel (sic) or anything he did set value on." But Aldous chose her precisely because she was his opposite. She was outgoing, at ease with people, intuitive, and spontaneous. Maria herself said that she was "his personal relationship interpreter," and Aldous called her his "dragoman," his guide.

Most marriages are predicated on this dynamic, and our culture has acknowledged it with a cliché — "Opposites attract." The nature of that irresistible attraction is that in a love relationship we are drawn to the opposite part of ourselves which we first see in another without recognizing that we are gazing into a mirror.

This attraction of opposites produces the inevitable first glow of romance, and as long as it persists, we consider ourselves "in love." We forget, however, that opposites, also, repel, and every love relationship reaches the time when one partner wearies of being a looking-glass for the other. At this point relationships fail, or painfully begin to grow toward a true marriage where each sees the other as he or she is, not as he or she is needed to be. The marriage that is created, however, is not only one between two people, but the marriage of the opposites within the soul of each.

This marriage occurred within Aldous, but not in his relationship with Maria. At least, not until the very end. Maria devoted herself wholly to Aldous, and she paid for it. "I took over too much!" she wrote her daughter-in-law. Aldous' efforts to create relationships to the outside world ceased, because Maria was there to do it for him. Eventually, Aldous realized what had happened and began to make his own connections to the outer world. By that time, however, Maria's sacrifice was almost total and while she was glad that Aldous "needs no interpreter ever now with human beings," she realizes "it is a bit late for me to start training my mind in memorizing quotations which Aldous has at his fingertips." She admitted to her sister that she "suffered" because she hadn't developed her own abilities, or even lived her own life: "If I weren't married to Aldous, I would be a Catholic." Her devotion to him did not end, however, even after realizing just how much of herself she had lost. But how could it? Devotion

was the only life she had known, and in 1954 when she learned she had terminal cancer, she refused to allow anyone to tell Aldous because, "My husband has a book to finish and must have peace of mind." During the months of her dying she worried that, "It would be wrong for me to die before Aldous — I should have failed in my duty to him" And just as she had arranged Aldous' sexual liaisons throughout their marriage, even in the face of death she found a woman she felt would be a good wife for him after her death. And Aldous married this woman, Laura Archera, a year after Maria's death.

One cannot advocate Maria's devotion as the ideal. Without her, however, it is doubtful that Aldous would have attained the high degree of spiritual realization he did. But Huxley repaid his debt to her in such an extraordinary way that one hesitates to criticize Maria's devotion, either.

As significant and indispensable as Maria was to Aldous' journey toward wholeness, D.H. Lawrence was also important. Huxley said that he was "the most extraordinary and impressive human being I have ever known." Lawrence was Instinct as opposed to Huxley's Mind. He was violent in his opposition to the rational and scientific, preferring the non-rational, what he called "the dark loins of man." His influence on Huxley's life can be heard thirty-one years after his death and two years before Huxley's own in the London interview of 1961:

The blood and the flesh are there, and in certain respects they are wiser than the intellect. I mean if we interfere with the blood and the flesh with our conscious minds, we get psychosomatic trouble. But on the other hand, we have to do a lot of things with the conscious mind. I mean why *can't* we do *both* - we *have* to do both. This is the whole art of life: making the best of all the worlds.

And this, of course, is another statement of the opposites.

The second season is the time when we begin to confront "all the worlds," because the season of marriage trains the soul in the crucible of intimate relationship. Of course, what is being trained is our relationship to those primal forces within us which cannot and will not be dictated to or ruled by reason and intellect. In a letter to Julian in October, 1946, Aldous put it succinctly: "The unchanging essence of existence consists, in Rozanov's

words, in 'picking one's nose and looking at the sunset.'" This is what the Woman-within knows instinctively. But we seldom listen.

Another symbol of Huxley's emergence from his "besetting sin" was his love of warm climates. From 1923 until his death forty years later, he lived in southern Italy, southern France, and from 1938, southern California. It was as if he knew that if he were to be warm spiritually, he needed continually thawing literally.

Through Maria, Lawrence, and the sun, Huxley began living those parts of himself he'd had to neglect during the first season — emotion, intuition, and sensuality. He was ceasing to approach the world with his intellect and learning to immerse himself in it. Symbolic of this was his learning to paint, and Robert Nichols quoted Aldous as saying:

It's so devilish exciting. And the discoveries one makes! Quite ordinary, of course — any painter who knows his job can put you up the wheeze. But the thing is to discover them for oneself. You can't imagine the lusciousness of putting on the paint . . . Well, one day I discovered that if you waited till your paint was half-dry and then brushed it over — carressed it — with a dry brush, you got the most marvellous effects — a bloom! My dear Bob, I wouldn't have sold the excitement and the pleasure I had in making that discovery for a million pounds. Incredible!

His paintings were of physical objects: trees, a seashell, swing in the garden, nudes and portraits. Through painting he was learning to know the physical world in its concreteness, as something alive in and of itself, and to use "the powers of observation" which had been neglected because of his own "too early passion for reading."

In spite of the appalling possibilities of unhappiness and the appalling frequency with which the possibilities are realized, I think on the whole it's most decidedly worthwhile — not for any good reason, of course; but for some mysterious good unreason.

To Mrs. Flora Strousse (January 28, 1930)

It was December of 1935 before the transformation Huxley had been undergoing announced itself in a public forum. On December 3, with war immanent in Europe,

he made a public speech, something almost unprecedented for him at the time. In it he announced that he had become a pacifist.

Our end is peace. How do we propose to realize this end? If we want to be treated with trust and affection by others we must ourselves treat those others with trust and affection We largely construct the ethical world in which we live. It is to a great extent a matter of choice whether we construct it as a world of fear and greed or as a world of trust and love there is nothing inherently absurd about the idea that the world which we have so largely constructed can also, if we so desire, be reconstructed on other and better lines.

. . . No end can be realized without appropriate means. . . . No pacifist can permit himself to think in abstractions. . . . war is a process of large-scale murder . . . hostile nations consist of individual men and women . . .

There was nothing particularly startling in these words, but Huxley went on and shocked his listeners by insisting that pacifism could not be based on humanism,

but in a spiritual reality, to which all men have access and in which they are united. God . . . regarded, and if possible experienced as a psychological fact, present at least potentially in every human being.

If enough people address themselves to living up to this belief, if enough people set out to experience spiritual reality . . . then there will be peace; for peace . . . is a by-product of a certain way of life.

The speech marked the turning point of his life. Thereafter he ceased to be a clever writer and became a compassionate one.

Love, compassion and understanding or intelligence — these are the primary virtues in the ethical system, the virtues organically correlated with what may be called the scientific-mystical conception of the world. Ultimate reality is impersonal and non-ethical; but if we would realize our true relations with ultimate reality and our fellow beings, we must practice morality.

The words are from *Ends and Means* (1937), and surprisingly, this book had the same impact on that generation of students as had his novels on the previous one.

Huxley's new insistence on morality brought him into intense conflict with other English pacifists, because he refused to align his pacifism with politics or political

action. In a letter to Kingsley Martin in 1938, he put forward a position which foreshadowed the thinking of Jacques Ellul:

I become more and more firmly convinced that it is completely pointless to work in any field of politics . . . first, because one can't achieve anything unless one is in a key position, and second, because even if one were in a key position, all one could achieve would be, at the best, a deflection of evil into slightly different channels

Religious people who think they can go into politics and transform the world always end up by going into politics and being transformed by the world. Religion can have no politics except the creation of small-scale societies of chosen individuals outside and on the margin of the essentially unviable large-scale societies.

Huxley had arrived at a perception of spiritual reality so clear that when he was asked to sign a newspaper advertisement protesting the persecution of the Jews in Germany, he refused, saying:

I don't see that any good would be done by my writing even two or three thousand words on the subject. The persecution of the Jews in Germany is horrible in the extreme; but it is not by proclaiming the fact in a loud voice that this particular persecution will be stopped or that human beings will discontinue the habit of persecution, which is immensely old and which is bound up with habits of thought, feeling, action and belief, with traditional methods of social and economic organization such that, if the latter persist, the former must inevitably manifest itself. It is useless to treat small-pox by cutting out the individual pustules and stitching up the wounds.

In a letter to Julian in March, 1941, he reduced his letter to Kingsley Martin and the one above to Jacob Zeitlin to a simple sentence: "Saints would appear to be the only antidote to statesmen."

He had entered the third season, withdrawing "into the forest . . . to understand nature, things, and his own essence." The third season brings wisdom, that ability to see into the heart of people and things without disillusionment at what is there. Wisdom is the smiling acceptance of what is, and Huxley had reached that place when, in 1941, he wrote: "We live under the illusion that all problems are at all times susceptible of a reasonably satisfactory solution. They are not."

Among those few who get as far as the third season, there are two ways of living it traditionally: the way of the sage and the way of the hero. The sage is the one who, having penetrated to heart of Being, remains there in silent communion with it. This is the way of the hermit, and to a lesser extent, the monk. The hero goes to the heart of Reality, but returns to the mundane world, there to offer what was learned to whomever can hear. The latter was Huxley's way and the prophetic element in his writing becomes pronounced. In 1946 he was predicting a world food shortage by the end of the century: "Power politics guarantee that the world shall *not* be fed properly." The same year, in a letter to Julian, he writes that "oil will become a tool of international politics, as well as uranium if atomic energy is developed as a source of power." In 1947 he wrote an essay, "The Double Crisis," undoubtedly one of the first on ecology.

Industrialism is the systematic exploitation of wasting assets. The thing we call progress is merely an acceleration in the rate of that exploitation. Such prosperity as we have known up to the present is the consequence of rapidly spending the planet's irreplaceable capital. . . .

Treat Nature aggressively, with greed and violence and incomprehension: wounded Nature will turn and destroy you . . . if, presumptuously imagining that we can "conquer" Nature, we continue life on our planet like a swarm of destructive parasites—we condemn ourselves and our children to misery and deepening squalor and the despair that finds expression in the frenzies of collective violence.

And while he allowed his vision to see into the future of the objective world, his hold on the inner one intensified so that he did not despair by what he saw without.

My wife and I have just become grandparents. I wish the baby might have been born into a less dismal kind of a world; but perhaps it is no more dismal, after all, than it has always been. And in spite of all our efforts, we shall never succeed in making it un-divine.

. . . we (can't) really be happy until we have nothing to rejoice at—nothing, that is to say, specifically *Ours*. Only then do we begin to have everything, impartially—the entire visible universe and the invisible too—being happy in all the countless reasons for happiness that exist in a world of infinite depth and beauty and significance, and not unhappy in our particular reasons for rejoicing, however compelling they may seem. But of course this is dreadfully easy to say, dreadfully hard to practise.

God is even in one's own posterior when at last one has crawled full circle and seen it revealed in its full glory.

To Mrs. Elise Murrell (November 14, 1951)

The fourth season of Huxley's life is impossible for me to write about, for I cannot write what I have not experienced. However, I recognize the hallmarks of the fourth season in his trenchant comments about others:

On T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia fame): He is one of those great men for whom one feels intensely sorry, because he was nothing but a great man.

On George Bernard Shaw: I have never found him very interesting. Did he, after all, ever know anything about human beings?

On Timothy Leary: I spent an evening with him here a few weeks ago (1962)—and he talked such nonsense . . . that I became quite concerned. Not about his sanity—because he is perfectly sane—but about his prospects in the world; for this is nonsense—talking is just another device for annoying people in authority, flouting convention, cocking snooks at the academic world; it is the reaction of a mischievous Irish boy to the headmaster of his school. One of these days the headmaster will lose patience . . . I am very fond of Tim . . . but why, oh, why, does he *have* to be such an ass?

On Love, from a letter to his son on the dissolution of the latter's marriage:

To become capable of love—this is, of course, about two thirds of the battle; the other third is becoming capable of the intelligence that endows the love with effectiveness in an obscure and complicated and largely loveless world. It is not enough merely to know, and it is not enough merely to love; there must be knowledge-love and charity-understanding or prajna-karuna, in the language of Buddhism—wisdom-compassion. People have been saying this for the last several thousand years; but one has to make the discovery oneself, starting from scratch, and to find what old F.M. Alexander called "the means whereby," without which good intentions merely pave hell and the idealist remains . . . ineffectual, self-destructive and other-destructive . . . It has taken me the greater part of a lifetime to begin to discover the immemorably obvious and to try, at least, to act upon the discovery. I hope it will take you only half a lifetime and that you will emerge from this excruciatingly educative ordeal with enough love and understanding to transfigure the second half.

On Reality: I hope and think that by awareness of what one is doing from moment to moment, one may be able to remain out of one's own light.

In February, 1955, Maria died, and it was, perhaps, at this time that the marriage between her and Aldous occurred, because at that time when she was on the threshold of eternity, Aldous showed that he dwelled "in the eternity" which can be perceived "even in temporal things." The following is his account of how he helped her die.

I spent a good many hours of each day sitting with her, sometimes saying nothing, sometimes speaking. When I spoke, it was always, first of all, to give suggestions about her physical wellbeing . . . I would suggest that she was . . . comfortable, free from pain . . . These suggestions were, I think effective; at any rate there was little pain and it was only during the last thirty-six hours that sedation became necessary.

. . . Under hypnosis M had had, in the past, many remarkable visionary experiences of a kind which theologians would call "pre-mystical." She had also had, especially while we were living in the Mojave Desert. . . a number of genuinely mystical experiences, had lived with an abiding sense of divine immanence, of Reality totally present, moment by moment in every object, person and event. This was the reason for her passionate love of the desert. For her, it was not merely a geographical region, it was also a state of mind, a metaphysical reality, an unequivocal manifestation of God.

In the desert and, later, under hypnosis, all M's visionary and mystical experiences had been associated with light. (In this she was in no way exceptional. Almost all mystics and visionaries have experienced Reality in terms of light—either of light in its naked purity, or of light infusing and radiating out of things and persons seen with the inner eye or in the world.) Light has been the element in which her spirit had lived, and it was therefore to light that all my words referred. I would begin by reminding her of the desert she had loved so much, of the vast crystalline silence, of the overreaching sky, of the snow-covered mountains at whose feet we had lived. I would ask her to open the eyes of memory to the desert sky and to think of it as the blue light of Peace, soft and yet intense, gentle and yet irresistible in its tranquilizing power. And now, I would say, it was evening in the desert, and the sun was setting. Overhead the sky was more deeply blue than ever. But in the West there was a great golden illumination deepening to red; and this was the golden light of Joy, the rosy light of Love. And to the

South rose the mountains, covered with snow and glowing with the white light of pure Being—the white light which is the source of the coloured lights, the absolute Being of which love, joy and peace are manifestations and in which all the dualisms of our experience, all the pairs of opposites—positive and negative, good and evil, pleasure and pain, health and sickness, life and death—are reconciled and made one. And I would ask her to look at these lights of her beloved desert and to realize that they were not merely symbols, but actual expressions of the divine nature—an expression of pure Being; an expression of the love which is at the heart of things, at the core, along with peace and joy and being, of every human mind. And having reminded her of these truths—truths which we all know in the unconscious depths of our being, which some know consciously but only theoretically and which a few (M was one of them) have known directly, albeit briefly and by snatches—I would urge her to advance into those lights, to open herself up to joy, peace, love and being, to permit herself to be irradiated by them and to become one with them. I urged her to become what in fact she had always been, what all of us have always been, a part of the divine substance, a manifestation of love, joy, and peace, a being identical with the One Reality. And I kept on repeating this, urging her to go deeper and deeper into the light, ever deeper and deeper.

So the days passed, and as her body weakened, her surface mind drifted further and further out of contact, so that she no longer recognized us or paid attention. And yet she still must have heard and understood what was said; for she would respond by appropriate action when the nurse asked her to open her mouth or swallow. . . . Addressing the deep mind which never sleeps, I went on suggesting that there should be relaxation on the physical level, and an absence of pain and nausea; and I continued to remind her of who she really was—a manifestation in time of the eternal, a part forever unseparated from the whole, of the divine reality; I went on urging her to go forward into the light.

At a little before three on Saturday morning the night nurse came and told us that the pulse was failing. I went and sat by M's bed and, from time to time, leaned over and spoke into her ear. I told her that I was with her and would always be with her in that light which was the central reality of our beings. I told her that she was surrounded by human love and that this love was the manifestation of a greater love, by which she was enveloped and sustained. I told her to let go, to forget the body, to leave it lying here like a bundle of old clothes, and to allow herself to be carried, as a child is carried, into the heart of the rosy light of love. She knew what love was, had been capable of love as few human beings are capable. Now she must go forward into love, must permit herself to be carried into love, deeper and deeper into it, so that at last she would be capable of loving as God loves — of loving everything, infinitely, without judging, without condemning,

without either craving or abhorring. And then there was peace. How passionately, from the depth of a fatigue which illness and a frail constitution had often intensified to the point of being hardly bearable, she had longed for peace! And now she would have peace. And where there was peace and love, there too would be joy and the river of the coloured lights was carrying her towards the white light of pure being, which is the source of all things and the reconciliation of all opposites in unity. And she was to forget, not only her poor body, but the time in which that body had lived. Let her forget the past, leave her old memories behind. Regrets, nostalgias, remorses, apprehensions — all these were barriers between her and the light. Let her forget them, forget them completely, and stand here, transparent, in the presence of the light — absorbing it, allowing herself to be made one with it in the timeless now of the present instant. "Peace now," I kept repeating. "Peace, love, joy now. Being now."

For the last hour I sat or stood with my left hand on her head and the right on the solar plexus. Between two right-handed persons this contact seems to create a kind of vital circuit. For a restless child, for a sick or tired adult, there seems to be something soothing and refreshing about being in such a circuit. And so it proved even in this extremity. The breathing became quieter, and I had the impression that there was some kind of release. I went on with my suggestions and reminders, reducing them to their simplest form and repeating them close to her ear. "Let go, let go. Forget the body. Leave it lying here; it is of no importance now. Go forward into the light. Let yourself be carried into the light. No memories, no regrets, no looking backwards, no apprehensive thoughts about your own or anyone else's future. Only the light. Only this pure being, this love, this joy. Above all this peace. Peace in this timeless moment, peace now, peace now." When the breathing ceased, at about six, it was without any struggle.

Their son, Matthew was present during those last hours, and afterwards, wrote his wife:

Those last three hours were the most anguishing and moving hours of my life . . . Aldous was whispering to her all during the time. Whispering the lesson of the *Bardo Thodol* . . . but framed in such a moving and personal way — illustrations from their lives together and incidences. . . and her own revelation of what the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* speaks about. "Let go, let go . . ."

It was over so quietly and gently with Aldous with tears streaming down his face with his quiet voice not breaking. . .

There can be no greater measure of a life than having the courage, wisdom and Love to help "the closest being"

in your life to die. Maria's total love for Aldous was met with his total love, enabling him to put aside his won grief and loss, to be her dragoman for the passage into the eternal season.

Four years later, a few hours after John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Aldous Huxley died. His own last days were spent in dictating an essay on "Shakespeare and Religion." On Wednesday, November 20, he dictated the final paragraphs, beginning with Prospero's speech from "The Tempest":

"Our revels are now ended. . . .

. . . We are such stuff

As dreams are made on; and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep."

Prospero is here enunciating the doctrine of Maya. The world is an illusion, but is an illusion which we must take seriously, because it is as real as far as it goes, and in those aspects of the reality which we are capable of apprehending. Our business is to wake up. We have to find ways in which to detect the whole of the reality in the one illusory part which our self-centered consciousness permits us to see. We must not live thoughtlessly, taking our illusion for the complete reality, but at the same time we must not live too thoughtfully in the sense of trying to escape from the dream state. We must continually be on our watch for ways in which to enlarge our consciousness. We must not attempt to live outside the world, which is given us, but we must somehow learn how to transform it and transfigure it. Too much "wisdom" is as bad as too little wisdom, and there must be no magic tricks. We must learn to come to reality without the enchanter's wand and his book of the words. One must find a way of being in this world while not being of it. One must find a way of living in time without being completely swallowed up in time.

"But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool;
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop."

On the morning of November 22, he grew perceptibly weaker, but around noon he asked for the writing tablet, and scribbled a request for "100 mm" of LSD. Laura, his second wife, administered it and began talking to him, as he had to Maria, telling him to "let go, let go with ease." At five-twenty, he died.

Cyril Connolly, a man not given to romanticising life or anyone he knew, wrote of Huxley, "What is almost peculiar to him is the radiance of serenity and loving-kindness on his features; one no longer feels 'what a clever man' but 'what a good man,' a man at peace with himself . . ."

There can be no greater summation for any life.

□
Narke

FROM JULIUS LESTER:

October, 1977

Dear friends,

How do I say "Thank you!"? I honestly don't know, because your response to my letters about Katallagete's need for financial support has been overwhelming. To date, you have enabled us to do more than we dared dream. We've paid the typesetters, printers, mailing service and the Post Office for the last two issues, as well as other outstanding bills which have accumulated over the months. In addition, the issue you hold in your hands now is a direct result of your responses.

We'll owe some bills in the next couple of months, yes; but we're confident that the subscription letter, which many of you will receive shortly, will keep us on course.

A simple "Thank you!" seems inadequate. And I've never learned how to write a smile, a hug or a kiss. I would invite each and every one of you to join me in the living room of my new house and look through the windows at the New England autumn in the woods out back, but being a fiercely solitary person, I'll have to ask you to accept the thought, but not to take me up on it. I thought about saying "Thank you!" by washing all of your cars, bicycles, tractors, or whatever you use to be mobile (I will not shine shoes, however), but since I don't wash my own car, there's not much chance I'd get around to doing yours. The last thought I had was to buy a TV for any reader who might not have one, because it is really impossible to understand Katallagete if you don't watch "Kojak," "Hawaii Five-0" or Joe Morgan at bat. But I had to discard that idea, too, because having bought a house, I can't even afford to buy a ticket to the poorhouse where I belong.

So, I guess I'm stuck with saying, "Thank you so very, very much." Thank you for being there, thank you for caring, and thank you for expressing your caring in the way you did, particularly since I know that for many of you, doing so was not easy.

Now, sit back, put your feet up, and hope that McGarrett never catches Wo Fat.

Much Love,

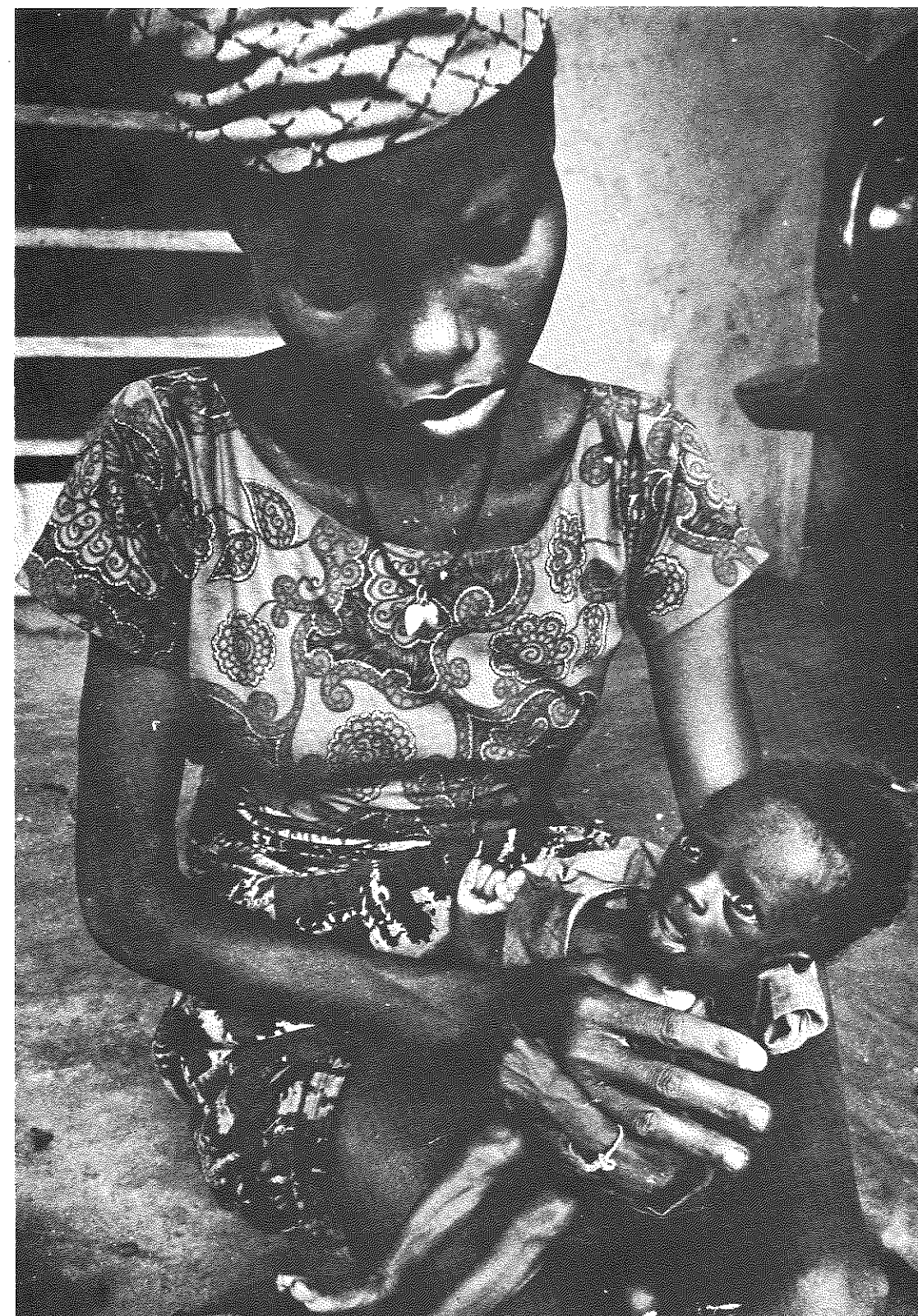
Julius Lester

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Hoc est enim Corpus meum.

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