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Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen

FALL 1979

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE. . .

THE DAY OF OUR BIRTH

With this issue we welcome new readers to *Katallagete*. They present us with another opportunity to think about our objectives. We began publishing in 1965. We are brought back again to statements in the first issue and we've decided we could not express the purpose of *Katallagete* any other way. So for new and old readers, and those of us who are responsible for *Katallagete*, we carry the portions which state our hopes and objectives in 1979 as they did in 1965. The passions in the political and social arena have changed; the winds of interest in religion, theology and Church have shifted. *Katallagete* seeks to be judged by fidelity to hopes and purposes at "the day of our birth."

A passage from one of Paul's letters to the Christians in Corinth was our point of departure.

For the love of Christ leaves us no choice when once we have reached the conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all mankind has died. His purpose in dying for all was that men, while still in life, should cease to live for themselves, and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life. With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer. When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun.

From first to last this has been the work of God. He has reconciled us men to himself through Christ, and he has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation. What I mean is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, no longer holding men's misdeeds against them, and that he has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation. We come therefore as Christ's ambassadors. It is as if God were appealing to you through us: In Christ's name, we implore you, be reconciled to God!

Paul's letter as an authoritative point of departure means no more than Karl Barth meant fifty years ago when he explained that his "Biblicism" was being "prejudiced in supposing the Bible to be a good book," and "profitable for men to take its conceptions at least as seriously as they take their own." But if St. Paul's declarations mean no more than that, it means at least that. It means, for example, that the authoritative character and quality of God's ways and Way recorded in Scripture are denied when Scripture is employed as a repository of ideals and principles to justify the strategies of the social obscurantist or social revolutionary. The Scripture concerns our ways with one another in the light of God's ways and Way with all of us; it is concerned with our ways only as they might affirm or contradict God's ways. For this, if for no

other reason, the message of the Bible cannot be employed as a political expedient.

Paul's letter to the Christians in Corinth imposes itself upon us irrevocably and inescapably because its message of the purpose and consequences of Christ's dying and being "raised to life" for all speaks directly to the broken relationships between and among us in the South and nation in our day. Indeed, this message of God's work of reconciliation through Christ is the only way in which the blasphemies, violences, deaths and deceptions of our time are finally comprehensible: through faith in "His purpose in dying for all..."

Our distinguishing failure—or to put the matter more accurately, our chief sin as a Church is theological, not sociological or functional. By "theological" we mean simply to call attention to the primacy of God's determination of our relationships with everyone. God's reconciliation of "us to himself through Christ" requires our faith and lives reflect obedience to the fact of this reconciliation...

The sins of the Church are always fundamentally theological; failures should be of interest to us, but they should not absorb or entice us away from our principal trust. Whenever they do, we appear to be hankering after the approval of the powerful and wise of the world. The service to which Christians have been entrusted is the message—that is, the "good news"—that "He has reconciled us to himself through Christ," the fruits of which were and are not postponed for a life to come (this would be only moderately "good news"), but that now "while still in life" Christians "cease to live for themselves because Christ lived, died, and was resurrected for everyone. That event explains how the Christian ought to act in the world with the conviction that "worldly standards have ceased to count..."

This is the "theology"—the "good news"—we reject when we proclaim ourselves, our race, our politics, our churches. Our failures—especially temporizing about race relations and political rights—were strategic, and it is too late to undo them. But these strategic failures stem directly and inevitably from the theological failure. The sin of the churches is exemplified in our persistent, determined, frantic, and generally massive efforts to reject the service of reconciliation as St. Paul described it to the Christians in Corinth.

The Church has failed to evangelize. This is what we mean by a theological and not a sociological failure:

the failure to live the "good news" in the world in which Christ lived; and the failure thereby to reject the "revivalism" by which twice a year we congratulate and perpetuate our own kind politically, socially, and racially. "Evangelism" begins when the Christian lives the confession of "good news": "He has reconciled us to himself through Christ"; "with us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man." The "worldly standards" of race and class are the most obvious, but there are other devices—politics, economics, education, geography, dialect, sex, nationality, and above all, religion—by which we have sought to justify ourselves against the power of meaninglessness and the judgment of sin and death. Kierkegaard's various attacks on "the monstrous illusion of Christendom" have more to say to us about the Church and evangelism in the 1960's than denominational journals, ecumenical statements, or seminars and study groups on the "nature" of the Church.

It is as if God were appealing to you through us... is a word of judgement but it may also be the word of renewal, for the Church becomes the Body of Christ in and through its proclamation by deed and by word in service to "the message of reconciliation."

Katallagete! "Be reconciled!" since we are all reconciled in Christ's "purpose in dying for all." Because the Source of reconciliations is the Word made flesh and "came to dwell among us," we have no doubt about where the service of reconciliation ought to lead: not into the falsely secure world of a Christendom which denies the work of the Lord by its defensiveness and isolation, but into the world into which Christ came, lived, by whom He was murdered, and for whom He died and was raised to life.

There is a sense in which the birth of a journal such as this one hopes to be is absurd. That sense will occur to those who see the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the several Supreme Court decisions of the past decade as the solution to America's race problem. Those who see the role a few church groups played in influencing these happenings as the faithful mission and witness of the Church will also find it strange that this journal should come into being at this time.

There is a strange confusion today about what whose problem is. Society assumed that its problem was race. Now it is coming to believe that its problem was not so much race but poverty. As for the Church, when it

bothered to see social ills at all, it concerned itself with alms-giving. Now it appears that if it is ever to see itself as that Body described by St. Paul in which worldly standards have ceased to count, in which all have already been made brothers and sisters in a more binding way than blood birth, the prior problem it must settle is one of race. And that solution must go beyond race to the Christian conviction that race is abolished.

During the past few years a segment of the Church has sought to settle the "question" of race. But the problem was seen as discrimination between races, not the abolition of the very concept of race in its life. Even in dealing with prejudice and discrimination we, at our best, merely indicated that we were willing to enter the arena of social reform, and at much the same level as other institutions of society.

Although the changes which have been wrought in race relations are sometimes referred to as a revolution, there was never more than social reform involved, for what the civil rights leaders of the past have insisted upon is simply that America be faithful to the political document which brought it into being. There was no suggestion that it be changed or that the system be changed.

Today there is every indication that more than social reform is in the offing. Drastic and far-reaching changes are being called for. What is being demanded now is that radical and immediate changes be instituted in the American system so that a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth become a reality. That is a far different thing from calling for first-come, first-seated on a bus, the right to a cup of coffee if you have a dime, or the right to register and vote if you have finished the sixth grade. Talk to members of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee or even the predominantly white Southern Student Organizing Committee. They aren't talking in terms of mild social reform. Nor do they see the American political system as anything sacred. If the goals they seek can be reached within the present system that is all right. If they cannot, they are for amending the system at least or wrecking the old one as a start.

It is doubtful that any segment of the churches in America today is any more prepared to speak to this development than they were a decade ago (or two years ago) to the mild social reform movement concerned chiefly with civil rights.

Our purpose here is to plead that the churches not make the mistake they did prior to entry into the social reform movement. At that time the Church, at its best, remained in a state of hypnotic indecision until the phase of social reform was near completion. The action it finally took was in an atmosphere where its guilt made impossible anything but sentimentalism, and with not enough status to be either objective or critical. For the most part it could only follow some of the more militant

groups who appeared to be going somewhere. Apparently, it did not occur to ask where exactly it was going. And such following as it did was often more like a playful father appearing to follow his child into deep water to assure him of his presence, knowing that when the danger point was reached, he could resume the leadership and save them both.

As proud as we may be of what some church leaders have done in recent years, we know that even this, belated and little as it was, did not represent the thinking of the majority of churchgoers.

It this was our best in social reform, what will we be able to produce in revolution, particularly a revolution which stands no more chance of success than the 1956 Hungarian revolt, but which would require even more drastic means to put down?

The alternatives would seem to be that either we once again serve as Chaplain to the Status Quo ("too bad about the methods but *they* did get violent, you know") or equate the revolution with the Kingdom of God and join it uncritically and with abandon. Much "white church" is apt to do the first. Some "black church" is apt to do the latter. And if either be our grand strategy, where does it lead us except to where we are now? Is either the mission of the Church? If the Status Quo had more to be said for it and if the consummation of past revolutions had a better record, the answer might be simpler. (And careful now lest we say "a plague on both your heads" and thereby side with pious neutrality with the stronger.) If there is a mission for us, it is one which God has provided and not we ourselves.

In a region where it is simply assumed that everyone is a church member, particularly those in public office, we hesitate to say to anyone that they are not Christian, or that their conduct is not Christian. George Wallace was a delegate to his Methodist Conference and Ross Barnett is faithful in attendance and leadership at his Baptist Sunday School. We feel it an embarrassing presumption to go to such a man with the bold proclamation: "Repent, George Wallace, and believe the Gospel!" His response is apt to be, "Do you know something I do not know? Have you been singled out so that God has revealed something to you? He has not revealed to me and others?" To such a response we can only reply, "That is quite possible." For it is obvious that men who would lead a State into an era of violence and bloodshed, who would with horses and storm troopers trample and beat citizens of his State who want to walk to their capitol, who would inflame the passions of an angry mob time after time, does not have the same commitment as those who see the Kingdom of Christ as

one in which worldly standards such as race have ceased to count, in which we are already reconciled, where the old order, glorious as it might have been, is gone and a new order has already begun.

Yes, we obviously know something he does not know. We know that God so loved *the world*, with *all* its people, their sins and problems, that He became like one of us and dwelt among us and died that we might all be one people—His people. We know that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and breaking down all barriers and walls of hostility which separate us from one another and from Him. We know that God, in establishing the Church, has enlisted us to proclaim that message of reconciliation. We know that we are called, not to build a Kingdom, but to bid people enter one already established, here and now, in which race is as irrelevant a category as *redhead*, *baldhead*, *fat*, *lean*. We also know that Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick and bade his followers do the same.

That is what we know and that is the evangelical message we must now proclaim to both revolutionary and defender of the Status Quo. To those who would say we have not earned the right to preach to the revolutionaries we can only say, "God, in Christ, has earned it for us."

The Church has failed in the matter of race because we have called it "social action" when all the while it was evangelism.

Whether this evangelism can be wrought within the present structure of the Church remains to be seen. Certainly the pietist influence which has dominated Southern revivalism for two centuries and succeeded so well in keeping the Church out of the world cannot be its strength. The social gospel which did go into the world but took so little of the Church with it cannot be its present help. It must instead be based on a well-defined orthodoxy. And it must be an orthodoxy which takes it into the streets, not as a gimmick to take us where most people are (though this is true) but because here is the lump to be leavened, the "those for whom Christ died," a Christ who lived in the streets and died at its hands.

And somebody, sometime will provide everything else—the President, the Congress, the Court, effective civil rights organizations.

It cannot be an evangelism of revivalistic recruitment of large numbers. No region has ever been more

guilty of such cheap and vulgar dodges of true evangelism than ours. The bigger barns we have built line the highways and adorn the cities. That it has not resulted in a redeemed community which serves as the leavening of society must now be obvious to all who have even glanced at the dry bones of Southern folk religion. There is little doubt but what those who beat, killed and buried the three civil rights workers in Neshoba County did so in the name of Jesus Christ. Because this is so, many would abandon evangelism. But how can something be abandoned which has never been tried? No one, not even Madison Avenue, has been more successful in recruitment than the churches of the South. And no one has failed more miserably at evangelism.

Repeatedly those of us who attend social action conferences hear it lamented that the Church has "lost its mission." The speaker usually infers that the *mission* of the Church is social action. He does not seem to realize that his Division of Social Action was probably created by the Establishment to avoid evangelism and thus to avoid social action—an evangelism that sees all of life as incarnational; a social action that follows as naturally as breathing.

And can the Church really lose its mission? Only if and when it assumes that it created the mission. God constantly provides the mission to go over to Nineveh and proclaim the word of the Lord. We saw Nineveh as the race problem, but like Jonah we keep catching the wrong boat to get there and find ourselves in the whale's belly of legalistic reform.

The one boat we haven't boarded to reach this Nineveh is evangelism. It is doubtful that the Church will ever do anything significant until we proclaim the Gospel.

For somebody, sometime, will provide everything else. □

WDC/JYH
1965

WOMAN AND MAN UNDER THE WORD

Fleming Rutledge

FLEMING RUTLEDGE, a priest of the Episcopal Church, is Associate Rector of Christ's Church in Rye, New York. A native of Virginia, she is married and has two teen-aged daughters. She is a graduate of Sweet Briar College and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She is a member of the editorial board of *Katallagete*.

Responding to my article "In Search of an Authentic Biblical Feminism" (published originally in *Katallagete*, Fall 1977; published in an edited version in *Plumline*, December 1977), my correspondents and critics addressed themselves to a number of points. A reply to each of these points in turn would be unmanageably cumbersome. I propose to use this space to continue the discussion in the two areas that seem to me most important. These are, first, the question of experience as a source of theological knowledge, and second, the question of Biblical hermeneutics, or interpretation. It is my intention to show that the matter of experience and the matter of hermeneutics are closely related to one another in a way which will shape the present article.

There is no use, however, in proceeding any further unless my reader and I can come to an agreement about one thing. Whenever the question about experience as a source of knowledge about God is raised, the protest invariably goes up, "But how else can human beings receive knowledge about God except through experience?" Just so; without doubt, Peter and James and John had an experience of what we call the Transfiguration, and Paul had an experience on the Damascus road. No one is arguing that this is not the case. I am not saying that experience plays no role in the divine-human encounter; that would be an indefensible position. The crucial point is this: There is a fundamental distinction between, on the one hand, theological discourse based on experience as its primary source and, on the other hand, theological discourse based on the belief that the Biblical experiences are human responses to a prior divine reality. Brevard Childs has described the way in which the Bible does indeed refer constantly to human experience, but *with a difference* (*Biblical Theology in Crisis*, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1970, pp. 119-20). It is that difference that I wish to discuss.

Some of my critics regard it as axiomatic that "intuitive religious experience is an important part of Biblical tradition." The only evidence given to support this statement is a passing comment about the Transfiguration being a "very intuitive experience." Yet it is clear that the Synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration

are essentially kerygmatic; that is, these accounts declare that Jesus was revealed to the disciples in his divine plenitude. The evangelists wish to show that God was definitively acting in Jesus; human intuition has nothing to do with it. The same is true of the Resurrection appearances, which were not subjective experiences but revelatory events, set in motion from the God-ward side. All the talk of human experience puts the emphasis in the wrong place.

The entire Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is a massive witness to the primary nature of revelation. The arrow points from God to the human being and not the other way around. "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona!" said Jesus to Peter, "for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth; he must be given (John 14:16-17). On the Emmaus road, the disciples are unable to recognize Jesus until God opens their eyes. Moses sees a burning bush, but his intuition tells him nothing of its significance; the significance is given when the self-revealing, self-naming God addresses his chosen servant. Job and his friends yammer about God for thirty-seven chapters, but when God actually reveals himself, Job responds, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know . . . I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee: therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 40:3,5-6). So much for human intuition! "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," says the Psalmist; "it is high, I cannot attain it" (139:6).

What is theology, in the first place? Is it reflection on human experience in light of God's revelation? or is it reflection on God's revelation in light of contemporary experience? The way we answer this question will determine where we go from here. In Paul's most abrupt letter, that to the Galatians, the apostle lays out his position on the matter in the very first sentence—"Paul an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father..." (Galatians 1:1) and again, "The Gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:11-12). One would think that seminary graduates, presumably well-educated in Scripture, would at least be aware of, even if they do not agree with, the substantial body of opinion that believes personal religious experience to be strictly subordinate to God's self-revelation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

It is interesting that some respondents begin their remarks with an emphatic rejection of my suggestion that much Biblical study being done by women (men too, God knows) is lacking in rigor. No indeed, they reply, women students are "taking their academic studies very seriously, in an attempt to renew their understanding of the Biblical texts." It is true that women are studying the Bible, and in some cases quite exhaustively. But in what way are they studying it? My observation is that all too often the texts are dismembered and rearranged at will, in order to serve the needs and experiences of the one who is doing the examination. Take for example the story of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah (Gen.22); this text has been repeatedly misused by feminists who want to turn it into a commentary on the oppression of Sarah, the mother of Isaac. The fact that the figure of Sarah does not appear in the story seems to these interpreters to be an example of the cruel indifference of a patriarchal society. Their own experience of anger and deprivation overrules their interpretation, so that they do not even pause to ask themselves if, in fact, the story is not about something altogether different.

A recent article by Sheila D. Collins in *Witness* magazine states categorically that "theology begins with our stories" (meaning, in this case, women's personal stories), and that the proper use of the Bible is as "a guide or primer to participating in the creation of our own biblical history" ("Reclaiming the Bible Through Storytelling," *Witness*, Sept. 1978). It is obvious in Ms. Collins' article that she accords a higher place to the personal experiences of contemporary women than she does to the witness of Scripture, which for her is only a "primer." One hopes that it is possible to affirm and identify oneself with the struggles of oppressed women at the same time that one expresses grave doubts about this method of doing Biblical study.

So great is the power of the contemporary cult of personal experience, however, that it is difficult to make oneself understood on this point. I have never forgotten a remark made several years ago by a woman seminarian who was telling of her difficulties in trying to argue for women's issues in a mixed group of church people. "Their experiences were different from mine," she said, "and since theological issues are projected out of human experience, we didn't have any common basis for communication." Almost as striking as the statement itself was the acquiescence of most of those who were listening. There are two things that I wish to point out with regard to this. First is the assumption that our shared Biblical heritage counts for nothing; in this view, the only foundation for communication is

common experience, which varies from person to person, thereby cutting off men from women, the young from the elderly, whites from blacks, and so forth. Second is the significant omission of any kind of reliance on the power of language in creating a world of discourse. It is no secret that one of the chief characteristics of our time is the increasing devaluation of the power of the spoken and written word in favor of intuition, emotion, feeling. "Let it happen" is the watchword. Whatever is, whatever exists, has value. Nowadays, the use of language, and particularly theological language, for polemical purposes is regarded as tyrannical. It has become increasingly difficult to have rigorously analytical conversation with anyone on any subject, so overwhelming is the modern American bias in favor of the validity of each individual person's experience over against any attempt to discover what might actually be true.

Along this line, many feminists in the church wish to stress the "affective aspect" of Christian faith, which is regarded as a special concern of women. The criterion in theological study, they suggest, should not be "Is it true?" so much as "How does it affect me?" Nowhere is this more clear than in liturgy today. Again and again, services of worship are assessed, not according to religious truth, but according to the amount of emotion generated in the worshippers. In the June 1978 issue of *The Episcopalian*, a woman correspondent praised a baptismal service by saying, "Let me only say I wasn't the only member of the congregation with a lump in the throat that night." One respondent, highly critical of my *caveat* concerning over-emphasis on children in the liturgy, uses the following adjectives to describe the participation of a child in a service that she attended: "touching, lovely, beautiful." What I wish to emphasize is the appeal to the affective and the aesthetic as criteria; the principal question asked is "How did I respond?" rather than "Was God truly glorified?"

Perhaps it will not be entirely irrelevant here if I restate my position regarding children in services of worship. Those who were critical of my previous article have accused me of viciously attacking children, forbidding them the Eucharist and barring them from ordinations! What I intended, however, was to raise questions about what seems to me to be a dangerously sentimental heightening of emphasis on children's participation in worship these days, resulting in a corresponding devaluation of the rational and mature. In many parishes today, young adults may go to 9 o'clock Sunday morning "family" services for years on end without hearing a single challenging adult sermon. Children should indeed be cherished and nurtured with all Christian love and concern; I repeat, however, that the Christian faith is for grown-ups, and I am convinced that we do best if we encourage our children to look forward to making a grown-up commitment when and if they wish, rather than scaling our own commitment

down to their size as we do if we allow them (literally and figuratively) to romp through the sanctuary.

In all the foregoing I have attempted to show how important it is to examine the assumptions behind one another's viewpoints if we are to have any discussion at all. The reply of my critics to my charge that feminists in the church are neglecting Scripture is "But women seminarians *are* studying scripture!" Yes, but my premise is that they are studying it in the wrong way. One, countering my criticism of certain "experimental liturgies," says that liturgy must arise out of the life of the community. True enough; but does this mean that liturgy arises out of the life of the community *per se*, so that it simply celebrates that which is? Or rather, does the liturgy arise out of the life of the community as it radically submits and re-submits itself in contrition, repentance, and obedience to Almighty God and to his Word?

We have arrived at a central point, that of Biblical hermeneutics. A respondent sums up her objections to my article thus:

In the end what she suggests as an answer to the quest for an authentic Biblical feminism is a 'radical confrontation with the word of God.' But nowhere does she actually tell us what that means. There is no hermeneutical principle...which would establish what would be an authentic confrontation with the word of God.

In the second half of this article I should like to address this matter of hermeneutics, or Biblical interpretation. It was my intention in the earlier article to give an example of "a confrontation with the Word of God" in my exegetical comments on the New Testament words *exousia* (power, authority) and *diakonia* (service), pointing toward the concept of servanthood as an alternative mode of power. A notable feature of the replies to my article is a conspicuous omission of any reference to this central part of my discussion. This is an example of the way in which the contemporary emphasis on principles of interpretation threatens to replace the exegetical task itself; method threatens to become more important than the sacred text. The demand for hermeneutical formulae has become so insistent that very often one cannot even recognize a hermeneutical exercise on the page in front of one's eyes.

The fact is, I believe, that the Scriptures of the Christian Church constantly overturn our attempts to come at them with our "principles of interpretation." If

I may propose a hermeneutical criterion, it would be this: *the Bible does not submit to the examination of the community of faith; we submit to its examination.* Before we can bring our questions to the text, we are called into question by it. When one of E.V. Rieu's sons heard that his father was going to translate the four gospels, he is reported to have said, "It will be very interesting to see what father makes of the Gospels. It will be still more interesting to see what the Gospels make of father."

Susan Sontag, in her essay "Against Interpretation," has this to say:

The contemporary zeal for the project of interpretation is often prompted not by piety toward the troublesome text...but by an overt contempt for appearances. The old style of interpretation was insistent, but respectful...the modern style of interpretation excavates, and as it excavates, destroys.



I am indebted to J. Louis Martyn of Union Theological Seminary for his image of the Biblical interpreter as an archaeologist who labors for years to perfect a very special shovel for unearthing a particularly interesting and well-preserved mummy, only to have the mummy rise out of the earth, grab the shovel, and break it over the investigator's head. Isn't this what is implied in the image of Hebrews 4:12:13 of the Word of God as the surgeon's scalpel, cleaving through joints and marrow, dissecting and laying bare? Scripture exposes our secrets, not the other way round. We are both presumptuous and pitiable in our supposition that the Bible lies inertly upon the scholar's desk like a patient waiting meekly to be examined.

I do not wish to go much further with Sontag, for her essay can be (and has been) used to support the indulgences of those who wish to abandon the hermeneutical task altogether, but I believe she points in the right direction when she continues:

Real art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content and then interpreting *that*, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, conformable.

The Bible is not "art," any more than it is "literature,"

but my point is that too much emphasis on hermeneutical principles and interpretative methods can tempt the exegete to forget that God powerfully addresses us through the text.

A second hermeneutical criterion that I would propose, then, is *respect for the otherness of Scripture*. The Biblical world is essentially an alien one. We are strangers in that world. The voices that speak to us from that world are different from our own voices. In Biblical study as in life, the one who would understand what the alien voice is saying must first of all become a *listener*. And what is required of a listener? Can there be any doubt that good listeners must first of all set aside their own agendas in order to hear what the other wishes to say? Listening to a Biblical text, like listening to another person, requires patience, humility, and a willingness to make oneself vulnerable. Interpretation based on this kind of listening always involves risk. It involves laying oneself open to the surgeon's knife without knowing for certain whether one will be wounded or healed.

If I may give a personal testimony at this point, it is this: patience and humility are not traits that are mine by nature, nor have I always been one to respect alien voices. If, in order to hear Jeremiah's or Paul's words to me, I were dependent on my own inherent capacities, my unique womanly qualities, my innate sensitivity, my intuitive instincts, or any other personal characteristics that I might happen to possess, I would be entirely incapable of following my own hermeneutical rules. After all, I am just as eager to read my own wishes into the Biblical text as anyone else. Given the deeply rooted egoism, the incorrigible self-centeredness, and the willful disobedience of the human being, any confidence I might have in my innate ability to interpret Scripture is, to say the least, misplaced. The only way for me to become patient, humble and vulnerable as I listen to the Biblical voices is through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. "When the Spirit of truth comes," says Jesus in John's gospel, "he will guide you into all the truth...he will take what is mine and declare it to you." (John 16:13-14) I know of no other way of submitting to this interpretative work of the Holy Spirit than that of daily spiritual discipline—repentance, confession, thanksgiving, waiting upon God. As Paul Holmer writes,

Theology is interpretation, but only in the sense that it construes the Bible as though it were addressed to sinners, not the curious...the New Testament and the theological tradition have an extraordinary unanimity about them, for...they suppose that we have no health of the spirit save through Jesus Christ,

the physician of souls...(Scriptural theology) will warn us of the frightful peril in which we all live, where the world has become deeply infected by sin. We are threatened by that contagion, the sickness unto death of our spirit, and it all happens so easily. The cumulative effect of sin is to make us captives by pleasantries and victims by easy conformity. Those striking teachings that make up the knowledge of God are also ways of training and disciplining ourselves so that we will not be taken in and will not conform to those standards...(The Grammar of Faith. Harper & Row, New York, 1978, pp. 9, 34)

The training and discipline that Holmer refers to will, in the case of the Biblical interpreter, apply not only to the acquiring and constant sharpening of professional tools, though these are certainly very important; more fundamental still is the total posture of the interpreter as she approaches the Word. Does she expect to be addressed by God? Does she carefully allow the voice that would speak to her to be heard before she silences it with her own objections? Does she pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit? And why does she study the Scripture in the first place? Is it to shore up her own previously determined position? Is it because, since the opposition seems to regard Scriptural evidence as significant, she needs to know the enemy's position in order to combat it? Or is it rather because, in fear and trembling, she has made a decision in faith to venture out of her own familiar territory into what Karl Barth calls "the strange new world within the Bible"?

One of the recurring themes of the New Testament is that of the homelessness of God's people, our status as wanderers in what we so fondly believe to be the "real world." We are "strangers and exiles on the earth. People who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (Hebrews 11:14-16). "Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul..." (I Peter 2:11). "Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Philippians 3:20). Let no one imagine that this means moral disengagement from human society; the author of Hebrews continues, "You had compassion on the prisoners...since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one" (12:34). In other words, it is precisely in the willingness of the believer to turn her back in secular arrangements and set her face toward "the heavenly country" that genuine Biblical faithfulness becomes possible, with all that it signifies in the realm of the ethical and social.

Everything that has been said so far is intended to point to this conclusion: True freedom is to be found in the service of the divine Word, which alone liberates and makes new. Fixation on one's own experiences leads only round and round the circle of the self. Preoccupation with hermeneutical principles effectively insulates the interpreter from the fire and heat of the "true and lively Word." Authentic freedom for women and men as children of God is not to be discovered on the treadmills of autobiography and methodology. "From now on...we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (II Cor. 5:16-17).

Jacques Ellul puts it like this:

...interpretation belongs to the order of necessity rather than freedom...one of the things that disturbs me about modern hermeneutics is its complete subjection to the modern cultural background with its fashions and fads and scientific facade and ideology. I find not the slightest sign of freedom here nor even the most modest approach to truth. Applying a structural method to the text of the Bible is not in any sense an act of freedom.

The very basis of hermeneutics is thus to be sought elsewhere, and in my view it lies in the act which God performs to liberate us...In other words, our hermeneutical freedom is bound to and by the word which creates this freedom...

In criticism and exegesis, then, freedom must be to God's glory. This is an orientation, not a limit. If I finally use my scientific methods against God, to seize him or put him to death, they show not just that I am in freedom but also that I am outside truth. My exegesis and so forth are to bring out the splendor of God, his work, and the meaning he has put in the text...If criticism becomes a weapon of war with a pseudo-liberalism which mounts an independent attack on the text...all that is expressed is man's autonomy and his situation outside freedom. Freedom toward the text aims at better knowledge of the God who reveals himself in it, the Father whose love is manifested in Christ. (*Ethics of Freedom*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976, pp. 162-7.)

We have come to the end of this particular discussion of human experience and Biblical hermeneutics under the scrutiny of the Author of life. Missing from this piece is an illustrative example of the sort of exegesis I am talking about (I should be proud if it were given the label once scornfully used to describe Barth's *Epistle to*

the Romans: "pneumatic exegesis"!). The most challenging texts will probably turn out to be I Cor. 14:34-36, Ephesian 5:21-33, I Tim. 2:8-15, concerning the role of women; these will be the subject of a future essay.

In the meantime, some readers may be interested to know the end of the story about the agnostic E.V. Rieu and his translation of the four Gospels. J.B. Phillips, interviewing Rieu on the BBC, reports:

A few minutes later I asked him "Did you get the feeling that the whole material is extraordinarily alive? I got the feeling that the whole thing was alive even while one was translating. Even though one did a dozen versions of a particular passage, it was still living. Did you get that feeling?" Dr. Rieu replied: "I got the deepest feeling that I possibly could have expected. It changed me; my work changed me. And I came to the conclusion that these words bear the seal of the Son of Man and God. And they're the Magna Carta of the human race." (J.B. Phillips. *Ring of Truth*. Shaw, Wheaton, Illinois, p. 77) □

ON VOCATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Ronald M. Kawano

A recurring phenomenon of our times, at all economic levels and racial groups, is that of unemployment. We have continually known of it as an endemic condition among the indigent, then among the Blacks, Hispanic, and American Indian Populations. Then we learn of it among the new and old immigrants from Asia and Europe. It is not an isolated phenomenon. Now, we are learning of it among the middle classes. It would only be a matter of time before the conditions which lay behind the large scale unemployment in North American society began to hit the Christian Church.

In the denomination to which I belong, this phenomenon has two edges. First, there is the high unemployment rate among Episcopal priests and, secondly, there is a continuing flow of vocations toward ordination. The second group is often quite aware of the first, but procession continues to their bishop's offices, and then on to seminary. It is in the light of this two edged sword that I shall try to examine the consequences of both vocation and unemployment.

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Dean Urban T. Holmes, III, of St. Luke's School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee, in the December 1977 issue of *New Life*, says that presently 1900 Episcopal priests are out of work. With approximately 13,000 Episcopal priests, it seems strange that so many are indeed unemployed. In his article in the January 1978 issue of *The Witness*, "The Clergy Surplus Challenge," Jones B. Shannon marshalls important data and background on this phenomenon. He finds that ordinations continue to exceed age and disability retirements each year, while the communicant strength of our communion continues to fall. This phenomenon takes place in a country where the general population continues to grow. Yet the question of survival is indicated not only for clergy; diocesan budget difficulties along with an increasing number of marginal, small parishes and missions indicate that the struggle to survive is a basic underlying factor throughout the Episcopal Church.

Some discussion has surfaced on the problems that this basic data presents. There is talk about the need for a more rigorous screening process of the candidates. That way, one writer suggests, the screeners will be able to catch those who might break down or have vocational problems later. Secondly, some discussion centers on the type of training process the Episcopal Church has used, basically the seminary or divinity school, with the primary emphasis on the master of

divinity program. There have been also the diocesan schools which have grown up, partly in disgruntlement with the Episcopal seminaries. Thirdly, some talk centers about putting a clamp on ordinations. Fourthly, not a little discussion goes into the creative potential that exists for alternative ministries with so many priests unemployed, and already many more in alternate employment.

I often wonder at this point whether the very jargon about finding creative forms and alternatives is but a cover-up for the fact that we have been ill-prepared to seek any alternatives at all (we certainly do have much rhetoric). Of course, those who desire to minister and who are not able to find their way through the institutional forms of ministry will eventually find some way to do so. So there are worker priests of all sorts. And for lack of opportunity to minister in our own communion, some have gone to other communions and to para-church and fringe Christian and non-Christian arenas. Many clergy, I suspect, have gone through the usual and traditional forms of training, tried their hand and their stoles at the usual parish situations and then begun to branch out for any number of good reasons. This had been the normative way in which alternative ministries are discovered and tried.

A somewhat similar discussion is taking place in the forums of English and the Modern Languages. There the situation is perhaps much worse. A large number of individuals continue to train for professions in college teaching when the universities are hiring fewer and fewer of those whom they have trained. When from one to five hundred apply for any particular opening, the language profession finds itself in need of some serious examination. One of the most important questions here, too, is that of alternate forms of work. Interestingly enough, though, the ones who are calling for alternative forms of work are those situated in the departmental chairs and those who already hold the coveted professorial positions. The very question of closing down parts of or whole departments is raised, but no one wants to be the first to give up his job to alleviate an oppressed job situation. Yet the question of alternate work of a congenial nature is on the minds of most holders of advanced literary, language, or linguistic degrees.

The same question is probably on the minds of many of the priests presently out of work—congenial alternate employment and an ability to continue ministry in some form or another. The question also seems to linger in the minds of many presently employed as parish priests. We need to remember that many clergy often end up seeking alternatives to parish life because of the inadequacy of parish life as an expression of ministry for themselves. I mean that the parish life may well be an inadequate personal expression for many priests, but also that it may well be inadequate for our type of modern society. Yet, the institutional church has staked its life on the parish system and it would seem foolish for anyone to go about doubting the very premise of modern church institutional life.

Although the question at hand is vocation and the seriousness of unemployment and job unavailability along usual channels, I am not concerned to continue to look at the statistics which tell us how gloomy a picture it is. Yet we must know the data, and we must take a very hard and long look at it. But we must not stop there. Two primary sets of questions need to be raised. Obviously the first concerns alternate forms of work and ministry. The second concerns a search into why this particular crisis had arisen.

About this dual problem of work and ministry a lot of data is being accumulated and much is being written. Yet the burden of any alternate form of work-ministry lies not upon those who collect data but upon the individual priests and their search for that particular set of work-ministry combination that is best for them. This is not something that can be dictated.

It should be clear that alternatives the priests will be looking at are alternatives to Christian ministry as we have known it for the last several hundred years. This job crisis focuses our attention in two areas: modern ministry and the ministry of the early church. Modern ministry itself is a question because it has presented so few alternatives or variations. The parish has been the center with the bishop over several parishes in a diocese and the seminaries serving to fill the empty slots in parish and diocesan hierarchies. This scheme could be varied in several different ways, but ministry has revolved about these set forms.

However, when we compare modern ministry to the early church as we know it in the New Testament and in the writings of the early apologists, we find the early church seems to have had a more flexible system and

more varied forms of ministry than is extant now. Obviously, all the factors which have changed the church from a fellowship of salvation to an institution of salvation account for the institutionalization and the concomitant rigidities which have since become an inseparable part of our modern picture. Because our present situation demands variability and alternatives, the experience of the early church may well be able to speak to us in ways that we have not heard before.

I suspect that sermons, articles, consultations, and confrontations could be held on this crisis (with appropriate success stories). But it is more appropriate for those searching to hear the Word of God speaking to them. For example, at least one pastor believes that the ordination of women plays a role in extending the variety of ministry. Olov Hartman, author of *Earthly Things* and *Holy Masquerade* and pastor in the Swedish National Church, originally voted against the ordination of women. As a member of the Swedish Church's Study Commission Report of 1950, Pastor Hartman had filed the only dissenting opinion against women's ordination. But he changed his mind when he was able to conceive of the ordination of women as giving modern ministry a greater variety than that concentrated in the parish priest of today (See Kerstin Berglund, "The Swedish Lutheran Church," in *The Ordination of Women: Pro and Con*, pp. 104-5).

We can here only begin a theology of ministry of alternate forms. For theology is a reflection upon experiences which we have gone through. Certainly the crisis is still with us and reflections are given along the way. It is important to reflect on this process if for no other reason than others might find us misguided and themselves find a better way through our own in-direction.

Alternatives to parish ministries and chaplaincies are but the first question facing the Episcopal Church. The other question revolves about why this crisis has come about in the first place. I think this second question takes several forms, and it revolves about two statements, which are the beginning of any discussion on the crisis of ministry. These two statements are: The Episcopal Church has many more priests than it can care for and, The Episcopal Church is steadily continuing to draw prospective vocations and those interested in the ordained ministry. If we were to make each of these statements, which are really both sides of one coin, into questions, we would be faced with a quandary indeed.

The quandary lies in the context in which these questions are raised. It is no secret that the Episcopal Church has been plagued by a rapidly falling church

membership (one every fifteen minutes, says *Time*, Dec. 26, 1977, or thirty thousand a year) and a communion with much internal dissension. I recently sat with an old friend and counsellor, a Presbyterian minister, who now works in an alternate form of ministry. I explained to him that the Episcopal Church last year lost approximately thirty thousand from its rolls. He checked me with a laugh and then went on to tell me that the Presbyterian denomination to which he belonged lost fifty thousand last year. We both had a good laugh.

One large part of this total situation lies in the fact that the Episcopal Church has no teaching office or confession or neat subscription to a holy book which spells out what the fine points of dogma and practice are for its members. Rather, its belief runs a gamut, a spectrum from conservative to very open views of Holy Scripture, from conservative social views to very liberal ones, from Reformed to Tractarian theology. We are a church which pluralistically affirms many theological and biblical perspectives.

This type of context, of a church making up its mind by drawing on the responses of the church catholic and trying to decide by consensus, of a church known for its liberal decisions and actions, yet a church struggling to keep its membership alive, is a context that is decidedly political in the formation of its key decisions. This is the context of a continuing number of individuals drawn to ordained ministry as their part in the body of Christ.

In looking at this situation, we continue to ask what factors we have not yet seen, which factors have not yet emerged, factors that will give us the key towards understanding the continuing number of vocations for ordination. To put this question in a more traditional manner, "Why has the Lord continued to raise up ministries and pastors when there is so much strife, bickering and conflict in the Episcopal Church? Why do men and women continue to come forward to identify themselves as called of the Lord?"

One way to respond to this question is to look at the data involved and to argue that we are a victim of the statistics. In *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, Dean Kelley reminds us that through the early 1960's, the communicant strength of most mainline denominations, including ours, continued to grow, until that strength peaked and started to decline in the late 1960's and 1970's. So we are presently faced with a declining communicant strength and with more ordinations than retirements. It is possible with this set of data to say that our church is indeed in a healthy state.

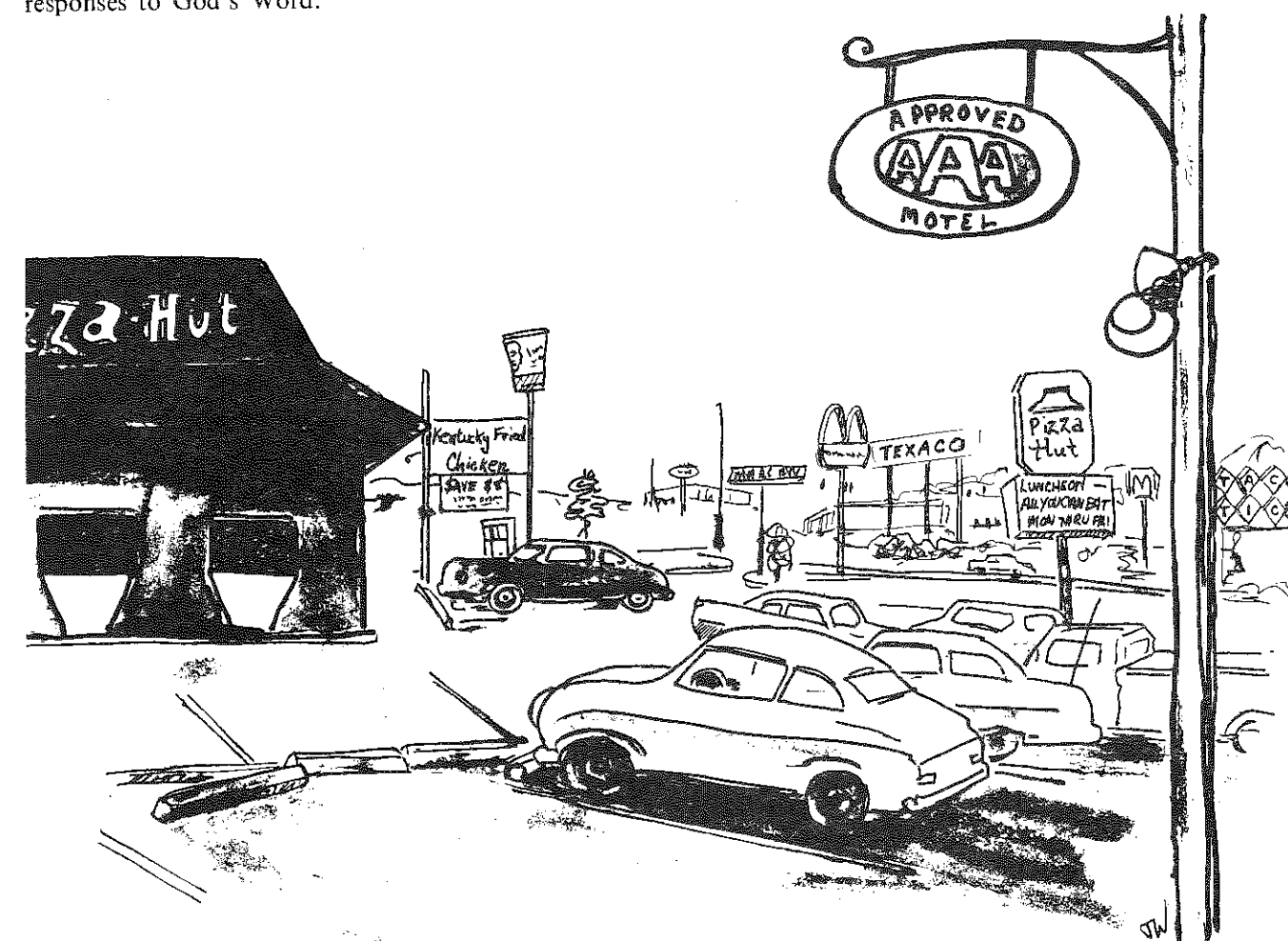
The background may suggest conflict and infighting, but we are all aware that this is the normal state of things.

A second, more cynical, way to respond to this set of questions is to interpret the data by way of American culture. Overproduction, overgrowth and overkill, has been the constant theme of the American economic system for the last several decades. In the universities, there has been an overproduction of advanced degree holders. The job market experts held that many Ph.D. holders were necessary to teach the rising tide of babies born during the Second World War. Perhaps the same has happened with vocations to the ordained priesthood. The church has continued to call for more vocations in response to the general population. But the church growth rate has certainly not kept in line with even the growth of the general population.

All this suggests that the bulging number of priests may well reflect our own cultural obesity and fatness. We have many priests, trained and formed by the ecclesiastical system. At the same time, we have too few prophets who have known what lean years might have done towards sharpening their own messages, their own responses to God's Word.

When an overabundance of clergy vie for the same number of jobs, several situations arise. One is that the tendency to move upwards in the hierarchy is severely limited. A corollary is that clergy who move to other situations will tend to move to parallel situations, without moving upwards on the job gradient. Secondly, with an increased number of clergy vying for the same position, it will become more difficult to keep one's position on the job ladder.

On the other hand, a more happy phenomenon might begin to emerge. With more clergy experiencing the wilderness of unemployment, hopefully more individuals will take a measure of reflection and rethinking on the key areas of their vocation, the job market, the traditional job hunt and the traditional clerical and lay expectations in ministry. Certainly, the several key job hunt manuals, such as Richard N. Bolles' *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, encourage this type of rethinking in terms of one's past activities, skills and desires (yet all this must be balanced by the question of obedience to what God desires of us, of specific vocation). Hopefully, this reflection and rethinking would draw out individuals willing to find a more prophetic voice in and after the wilderness of unemployment.



Certainly unemployment would bring both sobriety and humor. Sobriety with the long hard look at the traditional ways in which the church has for so long gone about its task. And humor over all the fellow clergy and laity striving to make it to higher positions or laboring to secure themselves where they are.

Thirdly, the emergence of the problems at the same time allow for an emergence of vocations toward ordained ministry, and toward variety in ministry. The totality of the difficulties and opportunities that we respond to together constitutes a sum, a sum which I can call the body. I am not suggesting that the sum of problems and opportunities are the body but rather as they are focused in ourselves, in the humanity they constitute.

I am suggesting that the working through of these problems constitutes our comprehension of faith. For the problems before us are the opportunities we have of growing in that total aspect of faith which is our "sonship." If faith constitutes the relationship between God and maturing sons and daughters, as H. Scott Holland puts it so well in the first essay on "Faith" in *Lux Mundi*, then the problems that we face in that relationship are the very structures we need to express the nature of our faith, of our life together with God.

The Episcopal Church finds itself in the midst of this multiplex quandary because of an interesting set of circumstances. We say glibly that we stand at Canterbury between Geneva and Rome (more generally, of course, we stand between Athens and Jerusalem). We participate in both forms and languages, catholic and reformed. But this is not the only way to understand why the shaking of our foundations has produced both problems and vocations. I believe that the conjunction of these two basic traditions, of the language of formation and that of transformation or conversion (standing roughly for the catholic and reformed traditions respectively), allows for the multiplex problems in our midst in a unique way, and yet allows us to continue to go on without being fragmented by the explosions.

The language of formation is used principally for the forming of priests, principally during the seminary career. The seminarians enter an ethos which is the formation process. But for the Christian laity, this formation process goes on continually: this child is baptized and confirmed, has the first communion, enters into the life of the parish. One continues to be carried along by the structured "liturgical" life of the church, a life that is constructed to carry along the

parishioners from week to week, from season to season, from year to year. The pastor may wish for a more converted life among the people, but this lives more often as expectation than as pastoral reality.

The structural life of the church has its equivalents in the life of the secular society. The secular society has its own liturgy, by which it sustains the individuals living within it. These are the stabilizing elements of society, the neighborhood communities, work, interest groups, family life, the political life, etc. These, of course, exist in the life of the church also. I emphasize them because they are background to which we pay no attention until something in them goes wrong, unless we are jarred loose by its inadequacy. The formation structure of our lives is the normative background against which all else functions. These are society's stabilizers. Without these formative elements, we would have no social life. It is the adequacy of the formational elements of our lives that we do not question until we find them inadequate.

And that time does occur. The formational life of both church and society is not always adequate to our needs and expressions. The liturgies which sustained our lives fail us and we are no longer able to find the usual sustenance and stabilizing qualities that we had come to expect and depend upon. The difficulty with the good and even the best formative and sustaining structures is that their work lies in sustaining our lives; they do not push to transform our lives. They make us aware of the need and the demand to love. Yet these very structures also prevent us from loving and from the need for repentance and change in our lives.

We become aware of the need for change and transformation in our lives when we recognize our formative processes are inadequate, and more so, are broken. However, it is in the recognition of the inadequacy of the formational structures of our lives that we also begin to recognize the need for something new, for a conversion, a transformation, a change. For when the formerly adequate structures of our lives are no longer able to sustain us, we find ourselves cast into a wilderness. The structures of our ordinary lives, whether religious or secular, are not operative here.

It is precisely when the structures of our lives, our "liturgies," break down that we cast about for support, for help, for human warmth, and we find little or none. A good example today is the person out of work. It becomes extremely important for people in time of this crisis to find and to make support for themselves. Otherwise they can wander long in the wilderness of their joblessness.

The transformations which take place in this wilderness often take the character of explosions. Fulminations occur. This explains why Christian testimony to one's ongoing conversion often includes tales with violent element. We are, most of us, brought into the kingdom by violence. Even those (and we are in the majority) who cannot claim any spectacular conversion experience certainly know that at the same time we must be taken into the kingdom by violence, for we know the darkness of our own hearts.

At its optimum, formational structures need to be open to the possibilities of transformation. Obviously, this is too often not the case. The formational institution of the Episcopal Church tends to have the operative openness which is necessary for any system of formation to work well. Rosemary Haughton, from whom I have learned much on this set of relations, writes of the positive relationship between formation and transformation: "It seems," she writes, "that any kind of community aiming to be Christian must be an educational structure, teaching a rich and flexible language, but must also deliberately leave room for explosions which can never be entirely predictable. It sounds positively Anglican" (*The Transformation of Man*, p. 250). We recognize how affirmative Ms. Haughton is concerning the liturgical language of our church. Yet we all know of perhaps too many cases where the rigidity of the institution, the inflexibility of the clericalism, and the lack of any teaching structure has made it impossible for the body to deal with the necessity of the explosions that are a matter of course in our spiritual pilgrimage.

These explosions, I believe, have yielded both our contemporary problems and our steadily continuing number of vocations. The difficulty about explosions is that it often opens up to us new veins of spiritual life and richness. Yet at the same time it can close off veins that have brought and which continue to yield rich life to many people. So transformation, though most often seen as a good, has its own problematic residues.

The problematic nature of this transformation can be seen in the following example. In one of the parishes

where I was a supply priest during my tenure of unemployment, there was an older woman who came to the weekly eucharist. As we got to know each other, she explained that for a number of years she felt a growing sense of vocation to ordination. She hesitated to speak of it to her spiritual director, who was known to be against the ordination of women. The director, being an honest man, explored the area with her and then agreed with her that indeed she had a very real call to holy orders. He said to her, "I shall remain your fiercest critic, and your strongest supporter."

I had explained to this woman that I thought that this period of wilderness for me and for many others like myself, unemployment was a time of culling out, much as Gideon had to do before going to battle. She was well aware of the specific problems that awaited her if the church continued on its present course. Then she said, in her quiet way, "But I believe something else. I believe there will soon be revival in the Episcopal Church."

I did not at all think, knowing this woman, that this was unrealistic optimism. But for people like her working towards ordination, and for those already ordained, vocation is always an active question, never a settled one or a dead issue. The very fact of vocation suggests that congeniality is not the primary consideration but rather obedience, whether that active obedience takes place in congenial settings or not.

Men and women then continue to seek out their priests and bishops about the call towards ordination: This can only be bad if we as a body do not know what to do with those who want to minister to us and to the community about us, whether this requires ordination or not. It is bad only if we are not able and willing to pilgrimage along with them, partly so they will not be alone, and, of course, partly to be solutions along with them. Much of the solution is already found when the whole body of Christ together engages in working together. To ignore is to remain in ignorance. To ignore is also to leave open the wound of our separation.

We can here only begin a theology of ministry of alternate forms. For theology is a reflection upon experiences which we have gone through. Certainly the crisis is still with us and reflections are given along the way. It is important to reflect on this process if for no other reason than others might find us misguided and themselves find a better way through our own in-direction. □

BLOOD IN THE CHANCEL

Raymond E. Gibson

The facts were not obvious, at least not immediately. The important fact was that a death had occurred in the presence of many witnesses. It was not easy to know just what had died or how it took place. Many were involved, though not as a mob. They lacked the mood a mob displays in the throes of blind violence that, as individuals, they later question or regret. Many were party to the event. Others were partners by inaction. They let it happen. Few of those present would grasp how or why it happened, or even what was at issue; even less, their own stake in it.

The blood in the chancel led from the pulpit to a place before the altar. The minister had preached a powerfully prophetic sermon. Then he had come down from the pulpit to the center of the chancel, and there, before the altar, had given the benediction. The death occurred along this path, though the wound had been inflicted in the pulpit.

The victim was the pastor. His obituary was written on hearts that felt resentment rather than blessing as he uttered the ancient benediction, "The Lord bless you and keep you..." The coldness at the door, where hostility was visible through the thin masks of civility, mutterings in the parish, trouble with the finance campaign, tensions during pastoral calls, the choosing of an "old friend of the family" to perform a wedding or conduct a funeral: all add to the evidence that the pastor is dead. Who killed him? The prophet.

*The prophet won, this time, as some had hoped he might, some day. But is he "hero" or "villain"? It is, and the French have the right word for it, *descutable*; meaning that a case can be made on either side of the issue, though in the present situation the case on one side is not being made very well.*

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The conflict is an old one. Its history is celebrated in the liturgy—"Blessed in thy sight, O Lord, is the death of thy saints," and lauded in the beatitudes—"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." We celebrate the memory of martyrs. We also use them. The roster may not be long but the images are indelible. Jeremiah was thrown in the well; Stephen was stoned; Paul was beaten; Polycarp was burned. They command respect and emulation. Yet their mantle is not easily accepted. Like the purple cow in the nursery rhyme, we'd rather see than be one.

Still it is hard to keep silence when one remembers the martyrs of the past or considers their successors in the present. Silence is an accusation; the prophets, martyrs, and saints, in their time and place, challenged the ways and the powers that prospered while permitting or encouraging evil. Prophets spoke the unwanted word: some of them were killed, others rejected. A minister takes his task seriously, the pressure builds inside him to be prophetic; his sense of unworthiness to assume the mantle may cause him to use gentler language and say that he is "being relevant." The point here is the pressure.

The pressure to be prophetic comes from many sources, some less worthy than others. The minister resents the assessment of who he is or what he does. A continuing caricature pictures him as tedious about his parish chores, calling with pomp where he is least wanted or needed, a gracious dolt who does not understand the demonic forces loose in the world or the livelier dynamics of his immediate community. He tinkles teacups while the ghetto burns. Worse still, he is accused of proclaiming peace when there is no peace, of aiding the establishment to continue to think well of themselves by a chaplaincy that never disturbs com-

placency. If he is troubled by meeting individual instances of widespread evil (alcoholism, homosexuality, economic injustice, racial bigotry), he may be helpful to the individual involved but paralyzed before the impossibility of doing anything about the larger problem he has encountered in small part. His instinctual preferences, buttressed by the knowledge of all the other things he has to do, keep him from becoming deeply involved. In this picture of his "busy life" with its demanding trivialities, the minister often sees enough truth to prompt anger. He may lash out at the larger evils in a sermon with little or no effect other than to ventilate frustrations at his own ineffectiveness. In this context his prophetic utterances are seldom more than cries of pain over the "good that he would but does not." And, perhaps, cannot! There are other pressures.

In most parishes will be found a group of "liberal" members who wish their church to be engaged in "right" causes—which usually mean the current causes of the "left"—and who hope their minister can evade

the description of the clergy as "the bland leading the bland." Seldom a large proportion of the parish, the liberals make up in impatience what they lack in numbers. If they are "talking" liberals, they provide intellectual excitement along with a measure of irritation; if action-minded, they may help turn discontent into creative projects. The former spend much time lamenting what the church is not; the latter are willing to work for what the church might become. If theologically naive, both groups may prompt worthwhile ventures in the community while making a shambles of the parish. If theologically astute, the "liberals" can resemble Isaiah's "remnant" or the leaven in the parable Jesus told to illustrate how a little yeast made the whole loaf rise. The liberals provide encouragement sometimes, insistence often, and keep the pressure on their minister to be prophetic. If, from their prompting or for other causes, he is prophetic and incurs the wrath of others in the parish, they may cheer him on, callous to the fact that the parish begins to resemble the divided church at Corinth; or they may withdraw from the fray with a disgusted "What can you expect from the church!" In either case, or in the shades in between, the pressure builds.



Less admirable, though equally real, are the frustrations-hostilities that grow between the minister and the conservatives in his parish. Questioning a national policy may raise questions of his "patriotism." Involvement in Civil Rights can estrange segments of his parishioners who prefer their neighborhoods and their schools be undisturbed. Executives in the parish bridle at any suggestion of a "stock action." The minister feels frustration when he measures what is possible and hostility when he discovers what is impossible. If his own instincts are cautious, or conservative, he may still feel hemmed in by a situation where the freedom he might not have wanted was never his in the first place. If he is liberal, he may so chaff at the solid social front of his parish that his eruptions are long on anger and short on insight. He may forget that true prophets have anger, but that its object is evil, not people. When the minister feels impelled to be prophetic, he may, in the words T. S. Eliot puts on the lips of Becket, commit the greatest treason and "do the right deed for the wrong reason."

Liberal parishioners, encounters with victims of widespread evils, or hostilities at a conservative social climate, are small compared to the authentic source of the ministers discontent. That source is in the faith itself, prior to the situation in which he is called to work. The roots of faith are as deep as a minister's hold on the reality of his task. Even deeper, it inheres in the reality that has grasped him. The divine judgment, for which the prophetic utterance is voice, is the "bad news" that is prelude to the Good News. The true prophet knows what appears to be a knowing-in-reverse; the glad word of hope whose proclamation is his primary task is real to him because he has seen the evident despair to which it is addressed.

The heart of proclamation is not a response to varying pressures so much as it is an expression of the heart of the faith—or said another way, the faith of the heart. It is not simply a call to enlist in good causes, but a response to the world's needs to which God's answer has already been given. The world has already been judged and redeemed; to participate in the redemption means to know how radically one failed in the judgement. Even in a happy, self-sufficient, do-it-yourself secular world where salvation is the product we're about to create after we've worked out a cancer cure and space travel, someone must hold the plumb line, describe the basket of rotten fruit. A minister may, if not wholly blinded, see a semblance of the visions Amos saw: the basket of ripe fruit in the locker room at the country club or at "refreshments" after a session of one of his church's social groups. The plumb line, too, may become visible, and he may feel that it checks how straight he stands as he drives through a slum on his way

to his club or church. He may see the plumb line in a nightmare if he is called to "say grace" at the Police Department's annual communion breakfast the same week a Black friend is the victim of police brutality. How can he tell any, or all, of them that their salvation has already been given—a free gift—but that they had also better understand the judgment of the God who saves them.

There is reason enough why the prophet made his way into the pulpit, even if he did not intend to kill the minister in the process. He knew why he was there and what he must do. The rough places must be made plain and the crooked places straight before the Lord's highway could be built. He could not declare deliverance to the captives without some word about their captivity. His words might not be popular and saying them will not find favor. Ordination may constitute, socially, one's formal entrance into what inevitably becomes a popularity contest; religiously, seriously engaged in that contest, it becomes the wide gate and broad way that leads to destruction.

He said the unwanted words and held the plumb line steadily. If they objected to prophetic judgment, they, as well as he, had precedents for their response. Even so he was hardly prepared to face the consequences of his action: the death of their minister. They might reject the word of judgment, even the minister as prophet; but would they reject the kindly minister who baptized the babies, married the happy couples, visited the sick, buried the dead, comforted the bereaved? Not he! Yes, even he! And rightly, too. With an instinct more accurate than his view of his several separate roles (now an advisor to youth, then a friend at cocktails; now a priest with a sacrament, then a wise counselor), they perceived the unity his vocation demanded of his person. When they threw him in the well, they threw Jeremiah, not one of his roles.

If the full story is to be known, there are a number of pressures to be prophetic. More than the consequences we have described. They suggest, too simply, that the congregation is wrong. They present, prematurely, an assessment of the minister on the verge of martyrdom. Both pictures contain errors. A longer prelude must be described, beginning with the minister's resistance to being pastoral. The pastor who was killed by the prophet, while not dead, had a terminal illness. For some time he had known what the analysts now declare: the older pastoral traditions were vanishing and one day would be extinct. Some added, "Good riddance." The remnants of those traditional pastoral practices survived more in the memories of the elderly than in the performance of the present incumbents. Mannerisms remained as a substitute here and there, but gestures

cannot substitute for substance. Pastors, at least of the old order, were passing away because they, more than laity, wanted it that way. There are good "reasons" and rationalizations for the change and they are not easy to disentangle.

Again, the image was part of the problem. The pastor, the amiable and benevolent father figure visiting his flock, creates a sense of well-being among his congregation. If his is an upper-class church, his visits may confer status as well. His presence reassures; he is the nice guy in a darkening world. He may be, in the parishioners eyes, a good and sometimes helpful friend; sometimes he may be that in fact. In the view of the critics he is the chaplain to their complacency. With his approval, and they will seldom show him what they suspect he would not approve; they are permitted, or even encouraged, to "think more highly of themselves than they ought." In the suburbs he is the kindly custodian of the wives and children while the men are off at business. His resentment at being left behind while the *men* are at work is greater because he knows how little significance is placed on his custodial role by analysts of social, economic, and political ferment. Like the old men of the Greek city-states who remained behind during the wars to care for the women and children, his service, while useful, is far from the battles that determine the future.

The resistance to being pastoral has another source that mirrors a wider problem in the society. This is the flight from real encounters with individual persons. The ennui most people experience today grows not so much from the lack of possible interesting friends but from the incapacity to be interested in them with any depth as human beings, and to demonstrate this concern by either giving or receiving. The myriad "how to" articles in popular magazines on interpersonal relationships, be they marital, family, or social, point not so much to the abundance of the available wisdom literature in these matters as to the widespread anxiety or insecurity that makes such articles marketable. Their increasing number signals little more than the extent of their failure to cope with the existing need. The minister moves in a network of relationships where the web is dense but the strands are weak. He sees repeatedly how shallow is the sharing, how great the sham, and how thin the substance. His training gives him enough clinical insight to see the anomie underneath the gaiety, and his compassion registers with growing accuracy the pain behind the pretty faces he sees at endless meetings or parties. In his counseling experience it is documented beyond any possible doubt how vast is the extent of the emptiness and how great the loneliness it creates. When the lonely crowd is more than he can help in any meaningful way, his reaction can vary from despair at the size of the problems to feelings of acute guilt at how

inadequate he is in meeting them. He is eventually convinced that the old patterns of routine pastoral calls may expose the needs, but do not provide the mechanism or method for significant or sustained help. If he has clinical training or counseling skills, he will soon find his schedule so filled that routine parish calls are impossible. Surveys indicate that of all individuals who seek some sort of personal counseling over half turn first to the clergy. In a society where personal problems and mental illnesses grow steadily in numbers and severity, the future prospect in the demand for the parson's time is clear. The kindly pastor of the past making his rounds is replaced by the (hopefully) competent counselor spending increased time at his study in intensive relationship with a segment of his parish whose numbers may be small but whose crises are large.

We are suggesting that the older pastoral role, as understood by the majority of parishioners, was already in a terminal phase when it was killed by the prophetic. Now we can see why it was possible. The general climate of personal relationships being shallow, the minister is easily accepted by the crowd at the club or the church. More important, in this case, he can be as easily rejected. When he conforms to the group to whom he ministers and, as his denominational superiors are prone to say, "fits" the parish, the question of rejection need not occur. He does not "rock the boat" or "tread on toes." He is widely accepted because he knows and abides by the rules of acceptability.

When the minister brings prophetic judgment to bear, and especially when he challenges ways of thinking that are firmly set, there will be little power in the personal ties to weather the crisis of dissent. In the language of the entertainment world, when the popularity rating falls, "you're dead." Some of the most shattering personal experiences for clergymen have been the resultant shock when apparently popular pastors, after taking a stand on a public issue with which their congregations did not agree, faced the collapse of nearly all their personal relationships: trust replaced by suspicion, affection by hostility, acceptance by rejection. The intent is not, at this point, to blame or praise the would-be prophet, but to indicate why, personal relations being what they are in church and community, it is possible to kill the pastor with one swift stroke of the prophetic. The problem is not so much prophetic relevance as it is a failure in the quality of community—*Koinonia*, the bonds of interpersonal relationships—within the church. This failure explains how, and why, the crowd participated in the killing of the pastor by the prophet and why, as well, they could not understand the

issues at stake, even less their importance.

The kind of alienation described here is likely to grow rather than diminish. The distance between clergy and laity will increase until clergy accept a dead level conformity. Some will hide in the mysteries of charismatic renewal or the spiritual equivalent of the TM movement or other self-oriented and self-modifying experiments.

A number of results can be anticipated. Attendance will drop except at show business spectacles; membership will decline, churchgoing will be less popular and perhaps more rewarding; social status, as it has attached to churchmanship generally, or a particular parish, will wane. All this will cause alarm in those quarters where the effectiveness of churches is measured by ever mounting statistics—where baptisms, confirmations, and new members constitute an ecclesiastical Dow Jones Average, showing the stability of the market. Evangelicals will be more immune to this trend because they have not as many impulses toward involvement on the one hand and because their focus on individual salvation causes them to be less concerned about social structures and systemic evils. Among evangelicals there will be estrangement between those who want to continue their concerns for individuals and those who want to address the “principalities and powers of this present darkness.”

There will be little regret, however, among those who have detected how little authentic religion there has been in the so-called religious revival since World War II. They understand too well the inflationary nature of so-called spiritual advances and how much devaluation has occurred in the religious currency in circulation. They know how utterly bankrupt is the culture religion of the American-way-of-life, both in the idolatry of its pretensions and the hypocrisy of its performance. The irony is not lost on them that the idealized democracy that has supposedly stood as a bulwark against a godless communism has fostered, in its common life, a materialism more savage than Lenin ever dreamed possible; whose citizens' sense of and devotion to a national mission has been outstripped by both the Russians and Chinese.

The shaking and settling is overdue. It cannot come, however, without some severe and exacting judgments about what is amiss, morally and spiritually, in our churches and our social and political life. It was no accident that the most memorable struggles of the Hebrew prophets were directed to the priests and established religion on the one hand and to the king and

his court on the other, questioning among other things, the entente both found it profitable to encourage.

It will continue to be a shaking and sometimes a shattering time for ministers. The relationships that were congenial without being deep can hardly be expected to provide stability through times of increasing stress. If he tells the truth and speaks plainly, the alienation from his people will grow. There will be reason for their hostility beyond their rejection of his prophetic voice. He will appear the hypocrite. His parishioners will not, in most cases, have seen his deeds in a light that makes his words believable. Often, and regrettably, there will have been few deeds, if anyone bothered to look. The credibility gap experienced by congregations is based in part on their inability to bridge the distance between the words of faith and the facts of life—their own and their parson's. Their hostility, when he becomes prophetic, is engendered in part by their knowledge that they fail to live in a way that might match his words, but even more in that they see so little difference between his life and their own. The worth of his words requires some authentication beyond the words themselves. At this point more than any other the minister's authority has suffered its greatest losses. If he does proclaim the Good News now and then, the congregation may still wonder why he looks so “unredeemed.”

The situation is not without its hopeful side. In spite of the evident attrition the prophet may find, perhaps to his own, if no one else's surprise, that his propheticism opens new and authentic pastoral possibilities he did not know existed. These possibilities, it is true, may not count for much with the majority of his church's members and conceivably may register only with those who have some inkling of what the gospel and the church are about.

The discerning, be they clergy or laity, know that the pastoral role, as it is usually practiced today, needs a better vision of its task and a firmer grip on its method. The pastoral is sick in a way that might find healing from a new—or renewed—emphasis on the prophetic. The order of preaching that accompanied the pastoral spirit was too often constructed from an assortment of tired moralisms lacking both the rigor of the divine judgment and the consolations of the divine mercy. Pietistic clichés created guilt feelings but few conversions, pointing to the human failures rather than to the grace of God. It was not news; even less Good News. It was condemnatory in tone, self-righteous in presentation and too often hypocritical in performance.

Moralism suffers the same defect as legalism; it is trapped in the killing power of the law when it most needs the life-giving spirit. The older pastoral practice, even when it did not give its benediction to the evils of the inequitable status quo, created a false sense of righteousness by fostering the shepherded group of good people in a less-than-good world. The pastoral image of the shepherd of the flock encouraged a kindred “sheepfold” separation from the dangers of the world and, more regrettably, a sheeplike docility that is powerless in its intention and effect upon the world.

Prophetic preaching when biblical has depth, urgency and power. Rooted in the Word, it derives authority from a source transcending both the preacher and people. Its judgments are not drawn from the relative moral attainments of preacher vis-a-vis his parish, but from a biblical picture that puts the failures of both in perspective. There are pastoral possibilities in the prophetic because it provides one kind of needed stability. Just as the child gains confidence by the structures and limits surrounding its life, so the adult needs structures of meaning and a reminder of their continuing authority. One heard an echo of this in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, when, after describing the terrible moral ambiguities of the situation in which “both sides prayed to the same God,” he pointed to the one who transcended both parties, whose ways were “true and righteous altogether.”

Prophetic preachers, even when they are damned by critical parishioners, are often given a quality of respect these same critics seldom accord pastors to whom they never take exception. Though they may resemble Job's

“comforters,” a minister's best moments are often spent with his worst critics. This is the case if they grapple with issues of substance rather than spar with each other, and especially true if they are driven, together, toward the Word as authority for the answer to their questions and the Spirit as the source of a unity that transcends their differences.

The authority of the Word can order the life of a parish; not of course, when it is a club in the preacher's hand, but when it is the power and guide by which pastor and people discipline their planning and their stewardship. It can call to judgment and point toward the grace of a forgiving God. It can summon to mission and action because it has a high view of the uses of life. It can envision the noblest deeds and the most rigorous norms, placing them in the realm of spirit and freedom and the constant mystery of grace.

The stains in the chancel, then, may not represent the “blood of the martyrs.” The pastoral side of things are now outmoded and dispirited, having lost touch with a vital center. In a former age “bloodletting” was a prescribed way of dealing with certain kinds of illness. If we have read the signs of the times with accuracy, the blood in the chancel may not point to death so much as to the possibility that beyond the turmoil there is hope of renewed vitality and more vigorous health. □

CLASS OF '79

Will D. Campbell

Horace Germany pointed to a six by eight timber reaching from the floor of his living room to the ceiling. A small shelf was attached to it, decorated with artificial flowers and a small blue china pitcher from Niagara Falls. "Yeah, that's all that's left of the old house. When we left Mississippi to come to Texas I loaded it in the truck and brought it with us. When I built this house I put it right smack in the middle. I guess if we moved it down the whole house would come tumbling down around you. Yep, that's heart pine from Neshoba County, Mississippi. It held my grandma's house up there, and now it holds this one up here. I guess that doesn't say anything to anybody but me." I said perhaps not.

I had not seen him for almost twenty years. The "old house" to which he referred had been the site of our last meeting. Then, he lay on a couch in an old farmhouse in Mississippi, a house that looked something like the one in which we were sitting in Kendleton, Texas. On that first occasion he spoke to me with strained eagerness, trying to tell me his story without pulling the sutures that held his bottom lip to his chin. His tongue moved slowly and painfully across the space which ten days earlier had held six of his bottom teeth in place. The grotesque swelling of his face and head, the wounds, contusions and abrasions on his upper body suggested a horror movie make-up. But it was all real. He had been viciously beaten by a mob, people of his own community, people who prayed to the same Lord as he, and left for dead on the ground, a heap of butchery.

Horace Germany, a white man, is a Church of God preacher. He had left his home in Neshoba County as a young man to get an education. At Anderson College, Indiana he had written a paper for a sociology class on theological education for black Church of God ministers in the South. As he traveled about the region doing his research he had expected to find it bad. Instead, he found it non-existent. From then on he had a driving passion to build a school which would alter his findings.

He returned to Mississippi, to the farm his family had operated for three generations, and set about the task. The usual challenges of building a new school—fund raising, construction of buildings, recruiting a faculty—were dwarfed by one which proved insurmountable. He was not allowed by the community to make the effort.

From the beginning his work was in disfavor with most of the local white citizens. The sight of interracial volleyball in the front yard, white children riding piggyback on black shoulders, even blacks and whites at common prayer, were too much for Neshoba County at the time. A campaign to rid the community of this menace was soon started. It ended on the streets of the county seat town when the mob attacked him. But the end of their campaign was not the end of his obsession.

He had told me a part of the story the day I visited him in Mississippi. I reported it in various places as best I could. Twenty years later, I was hearing the rest of it many miles away. In 1959 the racial attitudes of Mississippi and East Texas were for the most part not far removed.

A week prior to the beating a young physician from Meridian, forty miles to the southeast, had visited the Germany residence. Only Mrs. Germany was at home. They did not know each other but he told her that he feared for her husband's safety. He had heard the street talk, threats and rumors of an ominous plan to do him bodily harm. He explained that it would not be easy for her to get medical attention in that county, and that he

wanted her to know that if something happened to any of them they were welcome to come to his clinic. Mrs. Germany, a woman of sturdy frontier stock, quiet with deceptive comprehension, tough, yet with a kindness and gentleness not in keeping with the times, froze his instructions and directions in her mind, keeping it all to herself when the family returned.

When his warning became a reality with the near lifeless form of her man in the back seat of their car, wrapped in towels and sheets to absorb the blood, and propped on pillows to cushion the bumps of the rutted country dirt road she followed the Samaritan's map to his clinic.

As the doctor bound his wounds, knowing that he could not survive without more intensive and prolonged treatment, he weighed the possibilities of where to send him next.

"This doctor, he was a Methodist," Horace told me. "And he called a young Catholic lawyer and the two of them sat there in his office trying to figure out what to do with me." They discussed sending him by ambulance to New Orleans but two fears dissuaded them. The first was that he wouldn't make it. The other was not knowing who would be driving the ambulance. Would he deliver him into the hands of the mob, sure to come looking when it was discovered that he had survived?

"The lawyer said they had best take me to St. Joseph's, to the Catholic hospital in Meridian. He said he knew some of the Sisters there and that I would be safe."

They were only partly right. He was safe enough in the hands of the Sisters. But at nightfall the mob began making the rounds of every hospital in town, checking them room by room. In 1959 no one stopped them. St. Joseph's was the last to be canvassed. Someone, he never knew who, tipped them off that the men were on their way there. At one o'clock in the morning he was awakened by four women, two nurses and two nuns, their ghostly habits silhouetted against the tightly drawn window shade, one at each of the four corners of the bed sheet, lifting him onto a stretcher. With few words they rolled him down a darkened corridor and onto a service elevator. "I didn't know where we were going but I could tell we were moving up. And that was the right direction for me. Huh, Mamma," he joked, patting his wife on the shoulder.

In a barnlike attic they quickly and quietly fashioned a sickroom, bringing in the necessary equipment piece by piece, doing all the work themselves, sharing their secret with no one. Through the long night they took turns in the combined ministry of healing and sentry. And for nine days and nights thereafter.

"What do you think those women would have done if the mob had found you?" I asked my host as we sat on the campus of his transported school.

"Well, I don't know exactly. But I tell you one thing. They'd of fought 'em off like tigers if they had to. They never would have let them to me. They would have had to walk over those Mississippi women. Man, they were tough." I was glad to hear him say it. I was glad to know that there were folks like that around in 1959.

Others were equally tough but not so gentle in their efforts to salvage this man and his property. One of the tactics to discourage anyone from challenging the rigidly segregated system, a system already in trouble with the Federal judiciary, was a Mississippi law known as the Involuntary Bankruptcy Law. If one was indebted to a bank, or even to an individual, and for any reason it was suspected that he would not be able to make the mortgage payment, he could be declared by the creditor to be in a state of bankruptcy and given ten days to pay the entire amount of the indebtedness. If he could not make the payment his assets were seized. It was an effective device. Few farmers, large or small, could afford to incur the wrath of the white majority, determined to preserve the status quo on the racial front no matter what pain must be inflicted upon the transgressor. Leading members of the powerful White Citizens Council, an organization dedicated to the preservation of the segregated social order, had to do no more than make one call to the banker to convince him that Horace Germany's mortgage note should be sold to them. Before they could get there with the money a neighbor, knowing of their intention, presented himself at the bank with the amount needed. Under the law, once the holder of the mortgage declared the bankruptcy the note was on an open market. The banker had no choice but to let him have it, though his sympathy lay elsewhere. "This neighbor, he was not a religious fellow at all. He had never shown any interest in us one way or the other. He was just a man who ran the feed store and knew some things simply weren't fair." Those who designed the law had not anticipated a neighbor friendly to such blatant racemixers. At the feed store he was soon called upon by a hostile *posse comitatus*, claiming the authority of the State Sovereignty Commission, the legal and investigative arm of the State's stand against integration. They demanded the note. Pulling a sizeable and impressive revolver from his desk, he held it steadily in the direction of those he addressed, by now a startled committee of the people. "You sonsofbitches. This ain't that Church of God preacher you messing with. Get your asses off my property or I'll blow your goddam head off." They soon departed.

Another neighbor, hearing of their troubles, came to visit. "He came flying down the road, kicking up a cloud in that old Chevrolet you could hear from a mile

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off. At first I didn't know if he was friendly or not, he was so excited. When he calmed down he said, 'Germany, I just have one question to ask you?' I said, 'Well, everybody else has asked me questions lately so I guess I can spare you one.' He said, 'How many heavens are there?' I told him that my Bible just mentioned the one. Then he said, 'Well, what's going to happen if some of these black people make it?' I could tell by then that he was favorably disposed toward us and we had a long talk. He said his boy had called him from overseas and begged him not to let anything happen to that man who was trying to build a school. The boy had read about the trouble in the military newspaper. Told his daddy that the best friend he had in the world was his navigator, a black Air Force officer." I had heard stories before about "some of my best friends." But occasionally the track record gives credence to the cliché.

Neither the charity of a Methodist doctor and Catholic lawyer, the mercy of the nuns, nor the up-country justice of the two white neighbors was enough. Mr. Germany and his compatriots, knowing that in their fierce determination and stubbornness they could build the buildings but that the students would be chased off as fast as they could be recruited, sold the property, loaded everything which might be used in future construction onto trucks and Horace Germany led the sad and silent convoy into the night, out of the piney hills he loved and knew so well, gaining momentum as the dirt road turned to macadam, and gaining confidence as they crossed the Louisiana state line several hours later, heading for the relative freedom, and security of the Texas panhandle.

Pendleton, Texas is a small all-black town about an hour west of Houston. To get there it is best to have a niece who lives in Houston to meet you at the airport. The little town, never more than four hundred in population, was founded soon after the Civil War in an arrangement between the Freedmen's Bureau and the Land Grant Act. After a bloody shoot-out between Freedmen and whites in the area, blacks followed whites in the practice of homesteading. For more than a hundred years the farms and businesses have remained in black hands. Someone in the widely spread network Horace Germany had attracted knew of a sizeable tract of land near Kendleton and convinced him that he and his notion of building a non-racial school would be welcomed and encouraged there. And that is where the little band of tired and unyielding exiles stopped, bringing little more than their infeasible vision and passion. And a name—Bay Ridge Christian College,

taken from the familiar fragrance of Neshoba County's bay trees.

Twenty years ago I had gone to Neshoba County to pay the hospital bill of a man who had been left for dead by my own people because I felt helpless, because it was the only thing I could think of to do. The money had been furnished by the National Council of Churches. Now I felt a similar, yet vastly different, kind of helplessness as I experienced an overwhelming urge to be a party to this exciting venture. That day in Mississippi he had talked freely with me only after I produced a letter of introduction from another Church of God preacher who was my neighbor in Tennessee. We had not met before. And I had not heard from him since. Now we were sitting, talking, walking on the site of his realized dream.

Horace Germany had a school. Unpretentious, not the imposing and majestic grandeur one becomes accustomed to when visiting America's Academies. Modest. Cinder block or frame buildings. Well kept. Neat. Planned and spaced to allow for growth and appropriate to stand as they are if growth does not come. An air of dignity bespeaking both humility and pride.

Horace Germany had called me two months earlier, at night, when the rates are cheaper. Since our first and only meeting he had not known where I lived. Someone had sent him a book I had written in which he had been mentioned. After a few minutes of trivia he asked if I would come to Bay Ridge and give the Baccalaureate sermon.

My God. Yes. Of course!

"We will have five graduating seniors," he said. "Four of them are preachers. And they're ready."

"Brother, if you have produced four educated preachers that's quite enough. *Praise the Lord!* That's a good year's work. I'll see you there."

"Well, we want you to get here in time for the banquet. That'll be Saturday night in Houston. We have a bus now. One of our Board members gave us a bus. The banquet will be at the Wyatt Cafeteria. We'll just go through the main line but they'll give us a private room. Things have changed some since the last time we were together. We'll have a room at the Wyatt Cafeteria. That's something, huh?" I said yes it was.

What I was seeing as we walked was evocative of Mark Hopkin's log. Though students and faculty knew for sure which was their end of the log the distance

between them was informal and cordial. At no point was there evidence of learning by intimidation.

"We have ninety-four graduates now," President Germany told me. "That's counting the five we will send out tomorrow."

"Where did they come from?" I asked him. "And where do they go from here?"

"You see that fellow who just walked by? I don't know where he heard about us. He came in here from the swamps. Everything he owned was in a paper sack.

There wasn't one pair of socks in that poke and that's the truth. I took him over to the house and gave him three pairs of my socks and cut out a piece of cardboard to make an insole to keep his feet off the ground. There he goes again! Look at him!" Moisture of excitement, mixtures of joy and sadness, hurt and satisfaction welled in the eyes of this college president as he continued to talk about one of his students. "Where's he going? Who knows. On Monday he'll load up his old car and be gone. He's been called to pastor a church in the mid-west." Horace Germany fell silent, staring after the student, watching as long as he could see him. "Maybe we didn't give him what the state university would have. I really don't know. But I do know we gave him something they wouldn't have. A chance. He'll be all right now. He wouldn't have made it in Austin. Fact is, he never would have got there. He'll make it now. He'll be all right.

"And here comes another one. He came from four states away. Had one last name when he got here in the fall and when he came back after Christmas he had a different one. Said his Mamma told him she had got mixed up on who his Daddy was. He wears the name proudly, without apology. And without judging his Mamma. Said he wanted to have the same name as his Daddy had. He says he knows who he is now. And he does. In more ways than one. I like to think we helped him find out. He's going to a church in Florida. That's better than to the penitentiary, wouldn't you say so?" I said I would say so.

We walked the spacious acres, meeting and greeting deans, teachers, students, families and Board members.

"I guess I'd have to say this is integrated education at its best," I said. Without rushing he interrupted.

"I don't see it that way. We never talk about integration here. And we didn't in Mississippi. That wasn't what we were up to. Even though I almost got killed. When you use that word, well, Brother Campbell, don't get me wrong. And I'm not one to offend company. But, well, I was all for what you fellows in the Civil Rights thing were about. But that wasn't my calling. I never went on a march, never took part in a demonstration. Sure, in places like Mississippi, and now we know Mississippi wasn't all that different from Boston, in places like that you had to talk about getting



folks together. But you know, that's really a racist word, *integration*, I mean. When you say you're going to *integrate* the races you're really saying there is, after all, such a thing as different races. And that went out with Pentecost. That's not New Testament talk. Now I don't say we have succeeded in ignoring the notion of race altogether. For example, we have it in our by-laws that there can never be a majority of whites on the Board. I wish we didn't have to do that. It really isn't in keeping with Christian principles. But those of us who are here now won't live forever. Who knows what the future will bring. But I have never thought of us as an experiment in race relations. Sure. I know I'm white and the Academic Dean knows he's black. But that's no more than you knowing you're baldheaded and me knowing I'm not." I made no answer. "I'm sure you can find discrimination of various sorts around here. But I really don't think we pay much attention to race." I had heard institutional claims before, generally suspected them, found them often rife with patronizing sentimentality, adroit maneuvers to skirt and elude something hidden under a neat scar, *noblesse oblige* of a by-gone era, smelling at times of the most blatant racism. But I had found no cause to question him further. So I changed the subject.

"You ever go back to Neshoba County?" "Yeah. Three years ago that young doctor's father-in-law died in the County and he had requested that I be the one to bury him. The funeral was in that great big Methodist Church there in town. But he wanted me to preach his funeral."

"Were things much different?" I asked him.

"A lot different. Not even like the same place. Oh, the problems are still there. Still a lot of poor folks. Still black people not much better off than they ever were. But at least if someone wants to try to change things they're given a little wider berth to try. Up to a point I guess I'd have to say."

"And how did the white people treat you?"

"You know, and I told my wife this when I got back. The only thing wrong was that they were *too* nice. Women and grown men coming up and hugging me, people who wouldn't speak to me in public before I left. But I knew why. That's really what just broke our hearts. They wouldn't speak because they were afraid. Just plain scared. It's hard to believe now, but they could have got their houses burned down just for being nice to us in public. And us nothing but country preachers. I asked one fellow why everybody was being so nice to me. He said, 'I guess we're just trying in our own way to say we're sorry. We were so blind. Just so afraid. It's too bad you had to suffer so, but I reckon this county is a better place for it.'"

The Germanys were not the only ones to suffer in the county. It was the same county where, a few years later, three young civil rights workers were murdered and buried with a bulldozer not far from where the Germanys lived.

I asked him if he saw any of the men who beat him. "You know, that's a funny thing. Well, not funny. Bizarre. The funeral director told me as we were riding out to the cemetery in the hearse, 'Well Germany, if it's any consolation to you I carried most every one of those men to the top of this same hill we're going to. And all within five months of that beating. Six men died in five months.' He said he thought some of them just got so scared wondering if they would be next that they died. In five months six of them were gone. It gave me a strange kind of feeling."

The strange feeling was mine when he told me of one who had survived. "In a way I guess you could say his fate was worse than theirs. He became an outcast. Lost everything he had, business, holdings, everything. Now he lives on a little hill farm way out in the country trying to make a living. It seems everybody in town turned against him when it was all over. He was a prominent citizen before that."

I remembered two men who had killed a teen-aged black child named Emmett Till four years before the Germanys were forced out of the state. The support they received during the trial, a trial which brought them quick acquittal, was overwhelming. But when it was over they were shunned like lepers, trash, never accepted in polite society again. And I thought of individual members of the Ku Klux Klan, marching yet again in many parts of the country, created, or certainly reflecting, the neglects, the views and political acts, the prejudices of the majority culture, but their symbols decried and their own civils right often trampled upon when we see ourselves in the mirror of that which we have generated. Lessons come hard. We go on creating that which we can't stand when it is done. When it is ready to look at with our own eyes it seems someone else's doing. Performers never please the playwright.

We talked more of his school. To partially support himself and his family, Horace Germany raises and trains bird dogs, some of them bringing good prices. I asked him how many dogs he had that day, seeing and smelling the kennels as we walked. "Not all of them are mine, of course. But I guess there're about sixty out there right now. I train dogs for folks from all over the country. I guess in some circles I'm a lot better known for being a bird dog trainer than I am as a college president." I said I reckoned it was better than making tents. He said he supposed so except St. Paul didn't have to feed his tents.

He spoke of possible accreditation for Bay Ridge. "We wouldn't change a thing if they put us on their list."

I guess the only reason we need it at all is that there is no way to get government funds if you don't have it."

"Government funds?" I asked.

"Yes, and I know what you're thinking. And the more I see, well, the more I think it would ruin us. But, you know, that's the real pitiful part of it in this country. You can't exist without that support and you can't be what you want to be, ought to be, with it." I said I understood. "There was a government fellow in here a few months ago. Black fellow from Washington. A lawyer. H.E.W. official, you know. After looking us over, seeing what's going on here, he told me that we were doing exactly what they were giving away millions and millions of dollars to try to encourage colleges and universities to produce. And he said, 'You know, President Germany, we don't get much results. They take the money but what they're spending it on isn't the kind of folks you're turning out here.' But then he told me they couldn't give us any money because we aren't accredited."

After the ride to the Wyatt Cafeteria in Houston, a time of giving awards and honors, of fun and frivolous stunts, of bequests from the seniors to the juniors, of good-byes to four of the most important years of a lifetime, we talked again.

"I guess you noticed we don't have many staff and faculty in the middle years. Just young people and old people. Well, most colleges and universities have a big reservoir of material to draw from, a past, a history, swaps and deals with sister institutions, a back-log of leadership. We had none of that. We had to raise our own. A lot of our administration and faculty are folks we produced right here. They went off to graduate schools and then came right back to us. Most of our first classes were what you and I would call 'seed crops.' And then we get a lot of retired, retreaded people. Folks who have been put out to pasture because they are sixty-five years old. It's a shame, but it's good for us. They still want to be useful. They still know as much as they ever knew. Probably more. And some of them work here and all we give them is a place to live."

Waiting for the ceremony to begin next morning I had the empty feeling that I was not up to the task at hand. The prepared speech seemed not in keeping with what I had seen and heard. I stood alone against the far wall as President, Dean, Teacher, and Maintenance Man donned academic gowns for the occasion. I watched, but did not stare, as they teased the scholastic caps in place, making sure the tassels hung in the prescribed manner. The kept back feeling it gave me lingered. Seems like I've been here before. Am I wat-

ching the end of the beginning or the beginning of the end? What will this place be like a hundred years from now? The pottage of *Akadēmos* stirs sweetly in the cup. I wanted to sound a tentative note of caution. Let it pass.

I was restored by an act of Southern manners. The marshall, noting that I had brought neither cap nor gown, and knowing that Bay Ridge Christian College does not have "one of each" extras hanging forever in the sacristy against such a ruinous day, calmly announced that there weren't enough caps to go around and that those to be seated on the dais would not wear them.

Inside I listened to the music and watched the processional moving slowly toward us.

Five People.

The Class of '79.

I noted that they were all black. Then felt uncomfortable as President Germany's words of the night before came back.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, a tall and handsome man from Kansas, about to retire as the first black supervisor on the Santa Fe Railroad, came forward to preside over the offering. "Most people don't lift an offering at Baccalaureate ceremonies," he began. His voice was a pleasing, deep well bass. "We do. With no apology. Two years ago I asked you for twenty thousand dollars and when we counted it we had twenty thousand dollars. Last year I said we needed five thousand dollars and you gave it. Today I am calling for an offering of ten thousand dollars."

Ten thousand dollars! Where would it come from? The congregation was small. Affluence was nowhere in evidence. During the prayer I peeked. His own check was five hundred dollars. Railroad supervisors work by the hour. That's a lot of hours.

Now it was time for me to begin, to stand up and address the Bay Ridge Christian College, sired in Mississippi, coming of age in Texas.

"There's something going on around here. You folks are up to something. And I want a piece of it. But someone will have to...."

Maybe it isn't too late, but there is so very much I would have to overcome. There was never a shortage of mortarboards where I went to school. □

Jacques Ellul

LUST FOR POWER

The first thing we must realize is that the lust for power is not purely subjective. Neither is it a wholly moral nor psychological nor sociological matter: the desire to exploit and dominate others is not peculiar to one category or class (be they the wicked, bourgeoisie, capitalists, or imperialists). Such a view misses the point entirely. In fact the whole matter of lust for power revolves about the union and the interpenetration of objective systems, the accumulation of means whose very power is the logic of the means themselves. At the same time of course it includes the people who make up the system and acquire a subjective or class-based lust for power by the system or its methods. For example: a man owns a car. At face value the car is but an instrument. If he goes too fast or drives dangerously it is his fault and his alone: he is certainly free to do otherwise. The driver possesses a sense of power which he submits to in favor of automobile and speedometer, which in turn can take him to 90 or 100 mph. And, this man is a member of a society which thrives on records, speed and the economy of time—where spectators get highs at raceways, and the media are filled with all sorts of speed records. Consequently, our driver is less than completely free in the way he drives his car.

Secondly, one might say that power in itself is indifferent; it can be used for good or evil; it is part of social reality. Then there is authority—a positive idea, because power seems at one and the same time regulated by institutions and recognized as power by everyone. There is also force, which more often has a negative

connotation—the domination of one by another by violence. I believe, however, these distinctions are far too simple and inexact when considering the reality of these phenomena we are considering. Authority as well as power contains force, domination, and (to a point) violence. There is no such thing as an authority that is pure, objective, serene, freely approved. All authority—psychic, charismatic, or functional—is necessarily linked with force, that is, with some constraint and repression. In the same way there is no such thing as objective, neutral power. All power is tied to the exercise of force and, therefore, to constraint, and sometimes to violence. There is no constitutional change that can transform the organization of force into “morally pure” authority. Spiritual change or moralizing cannot make a system of force into a simple instrument for the service of mankind. Thus there is a certain amount of contamination among these realities of power, force, and authority.

Having said this, we must point out that the structures of power are diverse: there is the power of money to which we are perhaps the most sensitive, what with all the denunciations leveled against it by liberals, socialists, and humanists. But political power is no less unknown in our world. Indeed, we find ourselves, willy-nilly, between at least two systems of power. For some the power of money is the most abominable and has corrupted everything. They think it necessary to create a popular state, free of the power of money, one that is untainted and able to make guarantees to its citizens. For others, the greatest danger lies in *political totalitarianism*, the omnipotence of the State. In this case the first goal is to fight dictatorship, to promote the concerns of the people, to preserve liberty. Of course there will be abuses and the power of money may take over, but this would be a lesser evil. In addition to these two objective forms of power, however, there is the power of science and *technique*. This, too, is pure domination. It represents a system; that is, technique,

too, is subject to its own proper laws. Technique necessarily implies domination, force, total efficiency; it cannot be otherwise.

Now in these three cases, it is necessary to remember that money has its power *in itself*, as do the State and technique. It is not a matter of choice at all—it is a matter of the intrinsic logic of the systems. The only utopian possibility is simply to pass from one to the other while pretending to be free. But in all three cases, we have independent processes which necessarily produce either an accumulation of money or the growth of State domination or the geometric increase of technological efficiency. Like it or not, this is the law under which these systems operate. Then, of course, the systems meet up with the thirst for power, the desire to dominate. It is here, at the meeting of factors organically independent and qualitatively different, that we find the *real* problem of power today.

When a man who wanted to lord it over others had at his disposal only the rudimentary armaments of the Middle Ages, his ability to dominate was necessarily limited. He did not find himself caught up by considerations of the contemporary means for action we have been discussing for the simple reason that they were limited means. But as methods of power became less limited, they took on an autonomy that proportionately increased man's ability to dominate other men—this happened without man being aware that he had made a clear choice to dominate. Today, however, the so-called objective attitude of the technologist, or even the neutral attitude of the politician who makes a choice for a variety of given objectives, is in reality only a veil disguising a real penchant for power. The greater the methods of power, the less the concern about aggression in employing them. Hand to hand combat requires making faces, crying out, and gesticulating to frighten the enemy. Pushing a button at an atomic missile console can be done without disturbing one's cool, for this is simply a response to a technical calculation, and has nothing to do with conscience. There is neither aggression nor hatred in pushing the button. This characterizes the transformation of force in our society: it simply reduces the rational, passionate, and existential reality to a mere exercise in technique.

Therein lies the advantage. We are promised a transition from the political realm to the administrative realm. We move from the political craving to dominate and manipulate to a cold, impersonal mode of behavior that seems the very guarantee of non-domination. We pretend to eliminate the individual's personal decision to dominate through the simple use of mechanical

efficiency. In reality, this is more an expression of the spirit of power than technological objectivity. It is essential to technique to increase in power. But the one who uses technique is not simply a robot: he himself is invested with power and can recognize the possibilities of his actions. Consequently, he proceeds under the pretext of scientific objectivity to give free rein to his lust for power in a new way: he is not a tyrant but a “technologist who exercises power,” even if no technocratic organization exists in the narrow sense of the term. Thus increase of power comes about in our society by the union of the *means* of exercising force with the spirit of power. Bit by bit, absolute efficiency is achieved in an objective and impersonal way, without passion, without feeling.

The above considerations are necessary to evaluate the effects of power in our contemporary world not only outside the traditional categories of good and evil but beyond analyses that are purely psychological. The first obvious question is whether power can be used for The Good. This is the position of those who, for example, favor dictatorship to assure man's well-being: if just, virtuous, wise men exercise absolute power, they will lead humanity towards well-being and The Good. However, this presents two difficulties. We must always remember that power tends to run wild. From the moment any system of power has been set in motion, power is never satisfied with itself. This means that, on the one hand, the power at hand is always considered insufficient to achieve the great objectives envisioned by power. It is always necessary to augment power with the conviction that tomorrow one will finally have the means to realize the original vision and the man with these ideas never betrays a lack of power. On the other hand, power which has increased in the immediate past cannot restrain its own growth. On the contrary, it necessarily continues in the same direction. In the primary accumulation of power is both the condition and also the necessity of further acquisition of power. For example, it is explained that when an economic system has a growth rate of 5 percent per annum over ten years, a growth rate of 0 percent cannot occur; the system is economically and technologically condemned to follow the growth rate for a sufficiently longer period of time. The principle of power thus tends towards the unlimited. There is no limit for power other than that which it *can* effectively accomplish in time, but it does not cease wanting to surpass this limit of pure “temporal impotence,” in order to be able finally to accomplish that which yesterday seemed inaccessible.

However, the principle of unlimited growth poses a decisive problem: can there exist values in a society which are subordinate to unlimited growth? I invoke

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that famous statement of Talleyrand, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." (And in the same vein is the profound analysis of Jünger in *The Glass Bee*, where he shows that the growth of power necessarily and inevitably leads to the destruction of values.)

If values exist, there exist as well areas that power cannot reach—not because power is "weak," but by the very nature of reality. Consequently, power is always subject to judgment, for there exists a reality which cannot be judged by power. Without these two conditions, there are no values. But these are the very conditions which power (be it money, the State, science, or technique) cannot tolerate. How could there be anything inaccessible to power? This would be precisely the area which power must designate and control. It is precisely the source of values and their development which interests all power, for power is never content to exist in a neutral situation. Power as power needs more and more proof, declaration, and recognition that it is good and just and proper and lawful. It is the very nature of power to want to be all things. Power is never content with a mere exercise of power.

How could independent values ever sit in judgment on power? Power cannot tolerate judgments, because that would suppose a power beyond, and in fact, greater, than itself. Power and those who exercise power cannot interpret anything except in terms of power. For those dedicated to the pursuit of power, judgments are possible only because of the superior power of the judge. The mechanism of the growth of power is inevitably a destroyer of moral and spiritual values, no matter what group, no matter what society. (See the admirable book by H. Boll, *The Sacrament of the Bull*)

We must also consider the problem from another point of view. Power necessarily implies the subordination of man. Power always works against man as well as nature and objects. When power is exercised it is inevitable that this power be used against others. It makes little difference whether the minority suppresses the majority or vice versa. Tocqueville has shown that the dictatorship of the majority is just as terrible as the dictatorship of the minority. He is right, not Marx. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not made legitimate by the number of its supporters. The masses or the mob which exercise power is as radically evil as the dictator. (The name of the demon is "legion".) Moreover, when power works on man, the inevitable result is a radical one: man becomes a thing, he is objectified (which is quite a different status than "alienation"). Power works on man as its just and proper victim. Therefore it can lead him, manipulate him, and transform him; it can strip him of his humanity to make him simply a

function, or at best an adjunct of power. Man so transformed will give power a rein to its full capabilities. Power has no respect for man, for that would be a contradiction in terms. Power which would consider each man as an individual, which would be mindful of his value and sense of life—such a power would cease to be power. The courts, since their invasion by psychology and psychoanalysis, have in reality given up judgment: as soon as the accused becomes an individual whose behavior can be explained and whose face is the expression of a complex story, it is impossible to condemn him. Power loses its very reality, for the reality of power is the negation of humanity in the ones who exercise it as well as in those over whom it is exercised. This is the drama of Hegel's master and slave.

In these conditions, the real problem in maintaining the possibility of human life in society is how to limit power. We would seem to have three possibilities. The first I call the conventional limitations of power, namely, law and constitution. Whoever has power obeys the law and agrees to abide by certain limitations. This is the whole theory behind the democratic liberal state: the principle of the division of power. But in reality this is ineffectual in practice: this system works in so far as whoever holds power accepts it and indeed goes along with it. The extreme weakness of the constitutional theory is that political power itself makes the constitution. Thus at its own will (in spite of referenda), power can change from one constitution (when it becomes troublesome) to another. (We have seen this in France since 1793). Second: if law has its source in the State, it is evident that the State is a limit to power only to the degree tolerated by power. Power has only to change the rules of law to remove limits to itself. (The work of Hans Kelsen not only identifies these principles, but spells out their consequences.) If law is founded on something other than the State, then the State will not rest until its power seizes the source of law and makes law nothing more than an instrument of the State itself. Third: the weakness of Montesquieu's theory of "the balance of power": the legislature acts as a balance to the executive branch and the judiciary acts as a balance and control to the other two. But if the three powers are integrated into one ensemble—the ensemble of the State—they cannot balance each other. A simple reorganization of the State can neutralize either or both of these powers—and who would stand in the way of such a reorganization?

And this leads us to a second point: balances, law, constitutions, etc., can be a safeguard in the face of power only if they have their foundation in something

other than the organism of power. If law is *created in the manner of a custom*, is it independent of the State and a genuine obstacle to power. If judiciary power is implanted in an autonomous social group (for example, the Parliaments and the bourgeoisie in France in the 18th century), it cannot be destroyed by the State. On the contrary, it is actually the social group which holds the State's reins. In other words, for power to be limited it must encounter obstacles having their source and reality in independent, autonomous social groups which can deliver resistance. This obstacle must be exterior to the organism of power and cannot simply be moral rule, ideal, or constitution. The reality of these obstacles to power must be deeply rooted. The Church, for example, until the seventeenth century was a real obstacle in the face of the autocratic inclinations of monarchs and States.

For democracy to live, it is not sufficient that its formal, democratic rules be legalized. Rather, it is necessary that there exist within the social body a group, community or organization which issues childlike challenges against the government in power, and identifies and thereby confronts the structure of power itself, the aims, the bureaucratic tendencies, the technological systems, etc. This is the *only* true counter-to-power. But we must be careful, at just this juncture. If the goal of our counter to power is simply the conquest of power, the replacement of one regime by another, it is nothing. Worse, it is nothing more than a new incarnation of the spirit of power, as, for example, are Communist parties everywhere. A true counter to power neither seeks power nor seeks to destroy the system in power. Rather it seeks to produce in society a zone of uncertainty, to introduce contingent factors, to throw a wrench into an all too perfect, all too efficient machine. Any counter to power necessarily aims at reducing efficiency, introducing tensions, troubles, uncertainties, "fading," etc.—and this not from malice but simply from the recognition and conviction that if power is not obstructed, it obeys its own laws. The idea of a counter to power, of course, does not imply pure spontaneity, but rather recognized opposition.

All this said, this idea of a counter to power is not wholly satisfactory. It will lead, inevitably, to a conflict. The dominant power will seek to destroy, assimilate, absorb or recover the counter to power which cannot be tolerated indefinitely. There are then only two results: either the counter to power augments itself and thereby enters the cycle of other growing powers; or, it abandons its current form and seeks other bases, other expressions, other principles, and reorganizes itself. It changes its battlefield, front, and appearance. This is the only satisfactory response, but—and there is no need to hide it—it is extremely difficult to realize. (I

have discussed these points in detail in my *Autopsy of Revolution*.)

But there is an even more radical possibility: the deliberate choice of "non-power," the rejection of all forms of power whatever they may be and no matter how legitimate they are. "Non-power" obviously goes much further than non-violence or opposition to war. Non-power is a radical rejection of the more "normal" tendencies in man—aggression, reacting to violence with violence, the rule of an eye for an eye and *all* the values and institutions of our society, in particular the economic organization, the ideas of competition that life is a battle which the best man wins. As long as we preserve this ideology we are inevitably preparing for the advent of communist or fascist dictatorship and their technostuctures. Of course, we must not fall into the trap of idealism—that is, we must not hope that any future society could exist with an ethic of total non-power. There is no need to devote ourselves to an anarchistic utopia.

In our day, and in our society which has chosen power, there must be an unceasing and uncompromising rejection of power. We, the small but indispensable voice of dissent, must choose *non-power*. We are indispensable, because if our affirmation is not grasped and lived by us, society is doomed. The witness of non-power (non-success/inefficiency, "failures," etc...) lives in truth by constantly questioning all the ideologies of society. It is neither the production of wealth nor the success of the means and systems of production, distribution and consumption, nor the political constructions of justice, which provide society with a future.

The future of our society rests upon the only free persons in our society. The witnesses to non-power are the only free persons around us, for those who are bent on power resist sociological change, especially as it effects them as individuals.

There is no other way. Indeed, this way holds greater implications and possibilities than one might think; there are hidden and profound implications for all of us.

WHAT PUEBLA

DID TO MEDELLIN

Thomas E. Quigley

This is as good a time as any to essay a quick analysis of Puebla. Much earlier and we would have to depend on the anecdotal and wildly contradictory assessments tossed off by the army of pundits who invaded Mexico in February—some 3000 “journalists” flashing their instant credentials—and briefly converted a regional meeting of bishops into a global media event. Much later and we would be saddled with the uncomfortable burden of real data, the lived experience of the Latin American people who alone will be able to tell us what Puebla meant and whether or not it was a “success.”

For now, though, we have the written words, the 230 page final documents, and we have the airport evaluations of some of the participating bishops. It's good to hear at least what they think they wrought; or fear they did.

We're at the point, then, of the three week visitor to China. After six days, you know everything but after a month or so you begin to know enough to know that you don't know, and to sense what only a long immersion can reveal.

Moving from China to Puebla, a simple judgment seems possible: the third generation conference of the Latin American episcopates was a qualified success; which is to say, it was about as successful as it could have been. And for those of us who look to that part of the world for hope and inspiration, for those of us who believe that what cutting edges Christianity has in today's world are most sharply honed in Latin America, the Puebla outcome was, all in all, an encouragement and an advance.

In a word, Puebla signified the consolidation of Medellin. It was the occasion in which the Latin American bishops made a more genuinely conscious and fully responsible affirmation of the 1968 commitment than they had at any time since then. Without Puebla the debate about the acceptance of Medellin could still go on; now the results are in.

Everyone “knows” Medellin; few remember it. Contrary to the many silly references to it that the media served up during Puebla, Medellin was not a tri-continental conference for guerrilla bishops, or a liberationist scam masterminded by Gustavo Gutierrez. But it was the watershed event in the 450-year history of the Latin American church. It wasn't planned that way and few of the participants, even right after the meeting, thought it would have such impact.

The decision to hold a second general conference was made while the bishops were in Rome for Vatican II, its purpose being essentially to consider the application of the Council to the region. The 60's were fateful years, however, there as elsewhere in the world; rapid, accelerating and radical change became the norm. The First Development Decade was failing, the Alliance for Progress was losing its way, revolutionary movements inspired partly by the Cuban success of 1959 were exploding, and the church was reforming itself. The encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in 1967 stimulated the formation of new groupings of social activist clergy such as Golconda in Colombia and Iglesia Joven in Chile. In the following years such groups proliferated and established close connections with one another, giving new reality to the “Latin Americanness” of the church in the various countries.

Finally, the rapid development of the social sciences and the new acceptance of dependency theories of the region's political economy served to catalyze these

forces: the deterioration of the lot of the vast majority, the disillusionment with the role of the United States and other powers, increasingly seen as neo-imperialists, and the intense engagement of a reforming church with the lives of the poor, all found in the social sciences a way of describing today's human condition that gave Christian theology a new language.

Most simply put, as the “classic” formulation of the church's task—to teach, rule and sanctify within a presumably static *corpus christianum*—gave way through faithful reading of the signs of the times to a vision of the pilgrim people of God moving in history towards the Kingdom, the social sciences became acceptable tools for describing the actual condition of the people of God and even for suggesting how the march toward the Kingdom might proceed. The ancient dualism of the two kingdoms, or of salvation history as being apart from history, gave way to the insistence that history is one and that God's liberating action is to be seen wherever the hungry are fed and the naked clothed.

The tools of social science, what has been called the “sociological imagination” (which was simply unavailable prior to Weber, Marx, Durkheim et al.) gave new precision (thus, new definition) to hunger and nakedness, and have facilitated what, in Jose Comblin's words is today's essential Christian task, “to make love effective.” That is, the two great commandments, subsumed into the one command of love, must today become effective love, changing the condition of the hungry neighbor. Discovering how now becomes possible and, for the Christian, imperative.

It would not be accurate to say that the bishops at Medellin, or very many others in the church at that time, had fully internalized these insights. Nor had they engaged in the profound re-reading of the Scriptures that was to become such a hallmark of the next decade. Nor, except for some in Brazil, some fewer in Colombia, Chile, etc., had they come to face the direst consequences of repressive authorities that was just around the corner.

Medellin was a charismatic moment in the life of the whole church. It gave expression, at the official level, to the profound intuitions that Latin American Christians had begun to realize. Its conclusions were uneven, perhaps not fully consistent in all parts, and not as solidly grounded in either the social sciences or in Biblical reflections as later documents would be. But it was the inspired event against which all others, including Puebla, have to be measured.

And having taken the measure of Puebla in the light of Medellin the judgment has to be that Puebla is the legitimate offspring and heir of the event—the really

decisive *événement*—of that extraordinary year a decade ago.

The Puebla document, reflecting the process that produced it, is one of compromise; neither the worst fears nor the fondest hopes of either the progressives or the conservatives were realized. Thus, not much, if anything, really new; no radical advances, no great setbacks.

But no small achievement either. The sixteen day process was dynamic and relatively conflictual. The outcome by no means predictable. There was constant give and take in the several votings in the many commissions and, considering the highly defined, frankly anti-Medellin orientation of the official preliminary documents and the organizational controls exercised by the conservative CELAM secretariat, the consensus document that emerged marks a new development of the Latin American church's engagement with the social reality of its times.

The ecclesiological emphasis in the document, as certainly in the Pope's opening talk, is very pronounced. This could suggest an overly narrow focus on the nature and structure of the church, a preoccupation with itself. But, overall, the thrust of the document's ecclesiology is on the church's evangelical task in the world; it presents a church concerned not with itself, but with the world.

How is the task defined? Medellin said clearly it is the evangelization of the poor. (Not just the social-political aspects of liberation but the full announcing of the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ—but especially to and through the poor). The preparatory document sought to put the emphasis on evangelizing the culture of Latin America. Puebla retained some of this: emphasis on the role of culture, the problem of secularization, the meaning of popular religiosity.

These issues were not much treated in Medellin so, in a sense, Puebla represents an advance here; but their treatment is not wholly satisfactory. There is still too much emphasis on the uniquely Catholic character of Latin American culture, leading to some suggestions of the attempt to construct a Christian civilization; and too little attention, in discussing popular culture, to the socio-economic factors that historically have conditioned these expressions. The liberation theologians insist that popular religiosity, whether to be seen as an expression of an oppressed consciousness and an escape from history or as a bearer of the genuine historical consciousness of the people, must always be seen in relation to the fact of oppression.

If the church's task is not seen as clearly defined in terms of the poor as it was at Medellin, this may be just one of the areas in which the progressives decided not to

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fight to dot every eye; everything else of the central Medellin content that leads to such a definition of task is fully picked up and affirmed.

First of all, agreement on the nature of the Latin American reality (the context of evangelization): it is a situation where the majority is oppressed by a minority of oppressors. Not just some rich and lots of poor, but, following the Medellin insight, oppression, domination, a situation of sin, of institutionalized violence, etc.

Second, Medellin's "historic commitment," the church's obligatory option for the poor, was fully affirmed at Puebla despite attempts to inject distinctions between the materially and spiritually poor and to put more emphasis on such concepts as the Latin American people and culture. The phrase, "preferential option/love for the poor" (with or without the Pope's cautionary "but not exclusive") is clearly one of the two or three best known notes of Puebla.

Third, the increasingly preferred (but not exclusive) modality of organization is, as Medellin called for, the small base community. The preparatory document again shifted emphasis back to the traditional



The preparatory document had sought to shift from the oppressed-oppressor/rich-poor antinomies, to a generalized discussion of Latin America's move from being a largely urban-rural society to an urban-industrial one. But Puebla stayed with the Medellin insights (as did the Pope in his words about mechanisms of oppression) and in effect issued clear condemnations of the present economic systems in the region.

organizational models (parish, etc.) but Puebla affirmed the option for the *comunidades eclesiales de base* as "motives for joy and hope in the church...focal points of evangelization and motors of liberation and development.

Thus, Puebla, in general, was as clear and uncompromising as Medellin in setting forth the context of evangelization (the Latin American reality of oppression), the principal subjects of evangelization (the poor) and the preferred structure (basic community).

As a document, Puebla will not have the same impact in Latin America as Medellin did, and will continue to have. Medellin was their moment of special grace, of light breaking through the clouds, of individual intuitions and insights suddenly bursting into a chorus of assent that became a rallying cry, an agenda, and an unexpected, undreamed of, source of renewed hope for many.

Puebla, for Latin America, is a confirmation and consolidation of Medellin. But it could be something else for North America.

It is, first, a challenge to our society to redouble efforts to lessen the problems of Latin America that can in any way be laid at our feet or that could find some partial resolution through our efforts. The bishops especially stress the problems caused by inequitable terms of trade, by the runaway activities of multinational conglomerates, by external pressures to reduce population, and by the "utterly treacherous trap" of the arms race. They focus as well on the distorting

effects of the mass media which both present false values and manipulate information, much of which also derives from North American controls.

Second, Puebla challenges and should inspire the Church in the United States to engage in its own serious, continuous and profound analysis of its own reality, and to do so, as the Latin churches have done, in a more coordinated way than before. If the churches of more than a score of distinct national entities with all their historical, cultural and even linguistic diversity could develop such a collaborative style of working together, the American church should be able to do the same.

Third, Puebla challenges us to do this analysis out of an on-going process of theological reflection. The whole Christian community here, not restricted to but certainly including those for whom theology is a profession, needs to be energized to engage in a collective process of theological reflection and action.

Finally, there is a challenge from Puebla to do what the bishops there so strongly endorsed but did not do themselves: to open up for the process of shared reflection and analysis to the whole People of God, to listen to the grassroots communities, to take seriously their own words about the charisms of the religious life, to create a process leading to—if not our Medellin—at least an ecclesial structure of shared responsibility.

Medellin-Puebla was made possible not just by the heightened awareness of crisis but equally by the faith-filled commitment of many Christians to struggle toward the Kingdom. The same Christians are here. □



THE IRISHMAN IN FINALITY ALLEY

Daniel Berrigan, S. J.

FATHER BERRIGAN's most recent book, to be released in October, 1979, will be *The Discipline of the Mountain: Dante's Purgatorio in a Nuclear World*. Other recent titles include: *A Book of Parables*; *Uncommon Prayer*; *A Book of Psalms* and *Beside the Sea of Glass: The Song of the Lamb*. (All published by Seabury Press).

That look of the dying, it goes through you like steel wire, drawn and drawn.

This Irish hellion, mid thirties, sere as a June leaf in January; he looks at me.

'You know something, you're a sleeper.'

'A sleeper—what's that?' I ask.

'You're a cat in the dark.'

There've been others, presentable ones by the hundreds; most don't show their sores so visibly until just before the end; but he's gaping with them, he stinks to high heaven. You can't bend over him without getting a whiff of it to the northward. If you approach him from the south, you get it from his guts, whence his ars has been cunningly transposed. There, the odor is that of an open privy, which in truth he has become.

Drugs, alcohol, street smarts, talk talk talk, the Irish volume of talk would wither the pages of a world encyclopedia. After awhile, you're spinning with it, you forget to ask yourself if he's right or daffy. As in Nijinsky, the leap is all, you forget if he ever landed.

This one's got a big Connemara rosary with stones of solid marble. The first day I met him, he was inconsolable, it'd gotten lost. They found it later in his water jug and he went triumphantly around with it draped around his neck. It was like a rake's progress in purgatory.

Of course he knew who I was, once he nudged me for my last name. 'So you're the one!' His eyes flared up for a bit, like a light from a cheap match. It was one bucko adverse to law & order, acknowledging another.

I had no comment. He was so near evading all the silly laws and cops of this world; the difference between him and me was dissolving into a rueful smile. Doesn't Paul name death a Snatch-All?

He was the kind you wanted to hang around, to hear, not his last words—that was an unlikely idea; he would go on and on like the brook, all sound and sporadic sense. The fascination was that he was alive at all, talking at all, perking away at all, in that rain- and fire-damaged dwelling, like a swamp shack in high tide.

I see him yet; his yellow neglected teeth, lips thin and nearly colorless, tongue faint pink, dry as crepe paper...And the eyes. When he was drugged to the cranium, one open eye rested on you. That gave him the rakish look of a pirate in port, or death on a holiday. Then the drugs wore off, and he lay there or sat there, and stank and suffered and talked. Those were the good times.

He had been in and out of mental hospitals, in and out of jails, in and out of cheap rooms on the lower east side, in and out of the church. His life was a revolving door, inject and eject, half of hell was getting there.

Toward the end, his mother told him, after his colostomy and drugs and drunks, in and out, off and on, she told him to get out and stay out. He could come for a meal, but as for her house, which by all reports, was no prize, he was unwelcome after sunset.

Prosit. He took to the streets again. This time he staggered into a final collapse, was picked up in pieces. And over the hill to the cancer ward....

Mainly the dying are wrapped like a crysalis in the silence before the journey. I don't mean the coma, but the intense musing, a withdrawal enforced by pain or entered by choice. Frequently the inarticulate life of the poor, especially the Irish poor, brings them to a speechless end. Most are unable to tell the world, with any verve or art or self mockery or tragic plumbing, who they are, why they are in the world, why they are stuck. There they sit in the great cities like thrown objects, stones. They make the appointed rounds, seldom probe or scream out at life's fury or injustice or folly. The church doesn't encourage such deviance, few of the Irish have an education worth talking about; only that early grubby grind that gets the young inured to the grind that follows.

One day his mother appeared in the ward. She was broad of face and foot, as he was emaciated; ruddy where he was white as a wall. She sat there silent and talkative by turns, his turns. She was interrupted at any and all points, there were no rules or courtesies to govern these hours. He jumped in, loud non sequiturs, tacky or high on whatever pills had been dispensed that hour. A word of hers would touch off a torrent; he was not following her, apt to strike off on his own, like some high flying brain in search of anchor or outlet. It was pitiful, it was brilliant. As if all those mad wayward years on the streets, shooting up in back rooms and toilets, studying photography and Chinese painting, reading and whoring and drinking like the thirst of hell—all that store house of degradation and spoiled glory, were erupting his guts, filling the room with the stink of damnation.

And something more. Because this Irishman, damned as he was by his own swinishness, was also hooked on God, as surely as a foolish fish, gaping, dying in mid air. There he crouched, barely holding his guts in place, a rank breath for reminder of past folly, death shadowing him, a past of no note, cancer for his portion, a mouth like the inside of a sand bag, Mother Ireland and Mother Church and Mother Brooklyn to mock his fair beginnings. And those beads. A Connemara rosary clutched like a tough fish line in hands pocked with grave marks, white and brown, breathed on by the long dying.

Those beads! That ignorant ululation, no better (say the liturgical skulls) than a litany in Hindi or Ordu yelled

out by pagans. Those beads told by minds that knew no better, symbol of inferior art and dank churches and overheated pubs and bad food and dumb believers and overbearing priests and sporadic violence; how it all came to roost, the world's frown like a cloud over the island of no snakes, the snake pit of superstition and woe, the hands that clutch the dead past and refuse the only present we have, hang on to the rosary, are buried with it, waked with it, and (to come back briefly to this ward and this unlikely phiz) cling to it, hell and high water. Why you could almost hear the fruity voice of some displaced soul warbling away, My rosary, my rosary...

He said to me again and again, Help me believe, help me in my despair.

I would say, But you do believe, you took communion this morning.

And he; But anyone can take communion, help me believe.

And having led me that deep, into that seam of darkness, he would stall there, and I beside him, our feet planted against rock, a rock wall against our faces, no where to go. We were like two dumb blocks of stone, waiting for someone's hammer to give us a human face.

And I who confess to knowing very little and day by day lose ground on that little, at such moments I had nothing to say. And so said nothing, but held him, and he me.

He could judge, he was savvy with that still insight of the near dead; he and I were after all in a like predicament. Which is to say, I knew as well as he that anyone at all, willy nilly, believe or condemn, love or be lukewarm, any publican or pharisee or freeloader in the world, could step up and take the Lord's body. And who was to say him nay, who was to forbid or read aloud the indictment of craven hearts? He knew and I knew, he took communion that morning and so did I, who was to say whether we received to our glory or damnation? Who indeed but the Lord of the loaf, that invisible one so skilled in the breaking of his body, in discerning the spirits, in reading the crooked texts of lives?

So we had a fraternity of sorts, a basis. That was what he wanted, not to go off alone. He had had enough of being alone, of the common way of life in the world, which it must be insisted was in his case, a matter of choice, long and foolishly pursued.

Pursued; to this day. He knew what he was doing. It could not be doubted he knew. He knew it from his childhood and first communion and parochial school. That was the trouble, as the trouble grew. You knew precisely what you were doing. It was weakness and strength, though among those who educate the young, it

was presented only as strength. You'll always know what you're doing, they'd say, with that look that would turn Mary Magdalene into a pillar of salt. You know what you're doing; further, the Blessed Virgin knows what you're doing and Saint Joseph and your guardian angel and all the saints of the heavenly court.

They missed something. Having so many witnesses to one's behavior, having them presented as hostile witnesses, as witnesses who, like their mouthpieces on earth, always expected the worst—all those eyes and ears end up precipitating the worst. Many of us, like my dying cohort, expected nothing but the worst; we were led to expect moreover, that all those thousands of pearly impersonal orbs bent on us, had only hell in mind for us. Or at least, surveying as they did the course and outcome of human nature, shaking their heads at the sight; a long purgatory.

It was like living your life out, in all its seams and patches, its amatory and biological details, in a hall of mirrors, the other side of which was starred with seeing eye angels. Or worse yet, living onstage in a public theatre, the gallery crowded with one's maiden aunts, defunct and dynastic...

So here sit the three of us, mother, son and myself, in lengthy but spotty discourse. He sips ma's egg nog, I tell a story. Of how we found in our attic, after our parents' death, letters from my great uncle Will Doherty. How the letters urged my father, uncles and aunts, to leave the farm, 'There is no future for you there. Get your education. The first to leave, upon graduating, should sacrifice and send back the aid required by the next of age. So that one by one, all may emerge into a better life.' How Will was a plowboy who decided at age 28, with no Latin and less Greek, to be a priest. So enrolled in the Albany New York seminary, achieved some Latin and less Greek, and was duly ordained. And lived only four more years, to build his own church, to be struck one day by a falling plank, to die in his thirties of something vaguely described as a 'lesion of the spine', to be buried in Whitney's Point, New York.

Luck of the Irish? The mother sat there, she cried out against the curse. She's spent her life, she said, 'cleaning the apartments of her betters,' had worked in the parish cafeteria for less than what we call euphemistically today, a 'living wage.' It was unfair. Her burdened body planted there, going nowhere like her life, she keened away... 'The Irish don't stick together like those others.' (A circumlocution as we knew, for you know who.) But when gossip or memory touched a nerve, her eyes sharpened like knives. There it was, the true skill, the unsheathing of the blade, memory which is terrible and vivid—and seldom life giving. You could hear it humming away in any of the great cities, where the Irish borrow the survival tactics (of you know who), settle into ghettos to trample down the past and make mince-

meat of the future. O she wanted only to fold her hands, forever if possible, to let her eyes run through the labyrinth of memory where all the defeats and glories of the Irish are stored, emblazoned, embalmed, and now and again confound the world by rising like Christ on a shield of legend.

Your father was a Maynooth man, holy to the end. I'd come on him at night, on his knees by the bed; an hour later, there he'd be, still on his knees, asleep.

But what did he make of his life? seminary, two months to go to priesthood. And he blew it all. Landed in New York in '27, to end up a window washer. There was a living could be had in those days, but barely, barely.

She lifted her red hands, widespread, thick as a man's. All that toil, all that promise! now she sat in the ward of a hospital, a wastrel son beside, her man long dead, her boy sliding down hill to the end. Her body squat, tough, her mind acquiescent, resigned, lit with the faintest after light of regret.

He turned his green eyes on me, both of them wide open. The drug was wearing off, the world was nudging him, a hot prod in the ribs.

How about a cup of coffee? He could be sharp as a sarge present arms. Wasn't it his show, not hers or mine? He was the one dying, wasn't he?

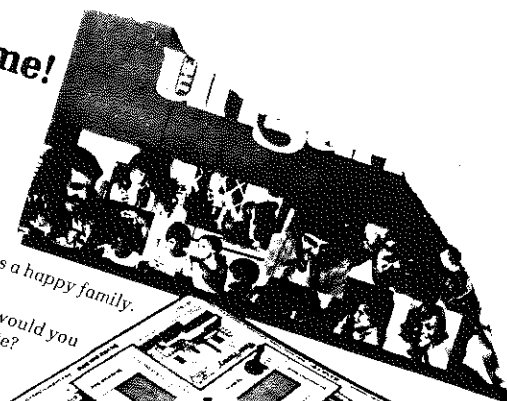
You can mix fact with fiction and call it heightened fact, or something less grand. Depending on whether you're Irish. You can mix faith and brute folly and call it living, you can snatch faith from the jaws of faithless conduct, you can whirl your Connemara beads overhead like the sword of ghostly kings, you can stupify the three headed dog that guards the gate. Good, bad, indifferent, you do what you can. When it comes down to it, you're not much more than a botch, put together by fate and foolish putty and here and there, a sound bolt and a working joint. When you suffer, you suffer badly. You live your purported life as though you were shinnying up a greased pole and tumbling down a fever chart.

And then you come to die. And that's when the only thing that counts, begins to count. Your best moments are spent in irresponsible listening silence, a silence called out sternly by the very old or the young, who have died in this ward, in this bed. Then your unteachable renegade heart misses its beat; the presence of something that for once, for a moment of light and grace, stops the show. □

O we were something; she turned to her son.

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