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KATALLAGETE

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Prayer and Politics

Bill D. Moyers

You would think that at least today senators in favor of school prayers would turn out in force for the daily prayer that opens the Senate. But no, only four senators were present. Four of one hundred. Apparently, what is thought necessary for children is merely optional for grown-ups in public life. Otherwise, the chaplains of the House and Senate would not routinely have to intone to chambers almost empty of the champions of public prayer. Surely so poor an attendance record, which we've monitored now for days, speaks to the emptiness of ceremony when it becomes custom instead of conviction.

This is what puzzles me about my cousins in the faith who clamor that we have to get prayers back in the schools. I know they sincerely believe that culture is being deprived of a rich and uplifting symbol. But true prayer is no ornament of culture. It's an act of conscience, the deepest and most intimate essence of religion expressed in the simple but powerful address of adoration, petition and confession. Any prayer officially sanctioned, tailored to fit a public circumstance, is faith with strings attached.

I know that when I was growing up, I was relieved that the public ritual of a corporate act could pass for the real thing. I preferred

to hide from God in the company of my classmates, between the Pledge of Allegiance and the multiplication tables, rather than be left alone and unguarded contemplating the immeasurable mystery of the holy. A minister in town was opposed to school prayers for just that reason. His favorite text was from the Gospel of Matthew, where Christ says that "when you pray, go into your room and, when you've shut the door, pray to your Father who's in a secret place." We kids didn't much like that. We weren't eager to go one-on-one with the Lord when there is safety in numbers. So that little banality every morning satisfied our appetite for religion with the edge taken off. It did to faith what the rote repetition of the pledge to the flag did to patriotism—made it a kind of collective narcotic that spared us from thinking about what we were saying and from acting on it.

Fortunately, my Baptist parents and other elders believe with Saint Theresa of Avila that prayer "is an intimate friendship, a frequent conversation held alone with the beloved"—or, as a Protestant ancestor once put it, "a silence full of reverence." It seems to me that religious folk ought to be especially grateful to the Supreme Court for not allowing the state to make something so trivial of something so sacred.

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EDITOR
JAMES Y. HOLLOWAY
Box 2307, College Station
Berea, Kentucky 40404
(606) 986-8218
(606) 986-9341
(Ext. 422)

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Box 2307—College Station
Berea, Kentucky 40404

ABOUT THIS ISSUE....

1984 and The Second Temptation

LUKE 4:1-13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit ² for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵ And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and ⁶ said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" ⁹

And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,' ¹¹ and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" ¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The temptation in 1984 is to harangue. It happens that the final draft of "About This Issue" was rejected as an harangue, given the context of national politics in Summer/Fall 1984: season of harangues, carping, self-serving and self-righteous political/religious statements. One more stick of kindling on the bonfire would enlighten no one. Perhaps the next issue or the issue after the next, KAT will reflect upon "issues" as the only agenda of "the worldly kingdoms" claimed by the devil and *doctrine* speaking to the "issues." Perhaps reflections on *doctrine* in response to the devil's temptation. Jesus invoked doctrine: *worship*. He did not deny the devil's claim of authority; he invoked *worship*.

The setting: temptation: Jesus's forty days in the wilderness. "The kingdoms of this world" claimed

by the devil Jesus does not deny. His response is *worship*. In 1984, is this an indictment of the Church? There is not much *worship*; rather religious services focussing on "issues" set by "the kingdoms of this world," west and east, north and south, communist, neutralist, democratic. Words beyond this in 1984 become a harangue on *worship* as the *issue* for the Church to meet the "issues" of "the worldly kingdoms."

What follows is no harangue about the second temptation; instead it is a confession from one who never knew the temptation to harangue, Simone Weil. Her paradoxical, maddeningly complicated spiritually turned to the God, who searches for us amid the twists and turns of worldly kingdoms. It's a letter to a priest.

My Dear Father,

This is a postscript to the letter that I told you was provisionally a conclusion. I hope for your sake that it will be the only one. I am very much afraid of boring you. But if I do you must blame yourself. It is not my fault if I believe I owe it to you to keep you informed of what I am thinking.

The obstacles of an intellectual order, which until lately stopped me on the threshold of the Church, might if necessary be considered as eliminated, since you do not refuse to accept me just as I am. Yet there are still obstacles.

After thoroughly considering everything, I think this is what they come to. What frightens me is the Church as a social structure. Not only on account of its blemishes, but from the very fact that it is something social. It is not that I am of a very individualistic temperament. I am afraid for the opposite reason. I am aware of very strong gregarious tendencies in myself. My natural disposition is to be very easily influenced, too much influenced, and above all by anything collective. I know that if at this moment I had before me a group of twenty young Germans singing Nazi songs in chorus, a part of my soul would instantly become Nazi. That is a very great weakness, but that is how I am. I think that it is useless to fight directly against natural weaknesses. One has to force oneself to act as though one did not have them in circumstances where a duty makes it imperative; and in the ordinary course of life one has to

know these weaknesses, prudently take them into account, and strive to turn them to good purpose; for they are all capable of being put to some good purpose.

I am afraid of the Church patriotism existing in Catholic circles. By patriotism I mean the feeling one has for a terrestrial country. I am afraid of it because I fear to catch it. It is not that the Church appears to me to be unworthy of inspiring such a feeling. It is because I do not want any feeling of such a kind in myself. The word want is not accurate. I *know*, I feel quite certain, that any feeling of this kind, whatever its object, would be fatal for me.

There were some saints who approved of the Crusades or the Inquisition. I cannot help thinking that they were wrong. I cannot go against the light of conscience. If I think that on this point I see more clearly than they did, I who am so far below them, I must admit that in this matter they were blinded by something very powerful. This something was the Church seen as a social structure. If this social structure did them harm, what harm would it not do me, who am particularly susceptible to social influences and who am almost infinitely more feeble than they were?

Nothing ever said or written goes so far as the devil's words to Christ in Saint Luke concerning the kingdoms of the world. "All this power will I give thee and the glory of it, for that is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will I give it." It follows from this that the social is irremediably the domain of the devil. The flesh impels us to say *me* and the devil impels us to say *us*; or else to say like the dictators I wish a collective signification. And, in conformity with his particular mission, the devil manufactures a false imitation of what is divine, an *ersatz* divinity.

By social I do not mean everything connected with citizenship, but only collective emotions.

I am well aware that the Church must inevitably be a social structure; otherwise it would not exist. But in so far as it is a social structure, it belongs to the Prince of this World. It is because it is an organ for the preservation and transmission of truth that there is an extreme danger for those who, like me, are excessively open to social influences. For in this way what is purest and what is most defiling look very much the same, and confused under the same words, make an almost undecomposable mixture.

There is a Catholic circle ready to give an eager welcome to whoever enters it. Well, I do not want to

be adopted into a circle, to live among people who say "we" and to be part of an "us," to find I am "at home" in any human *milieu* whatever it may be. In saying I do not want this, I am expressing myself badly, for I should like it very much; I should find it all delightful. But I feel that it is not permissible for me. I feel that it is necessary and ordained that I should be alone, a stranger and an exile in relation to every human circle without exception.

This may seem to contradict what I wrote to you about my need to be merged into any human circle in which I moved. To be lost to view in it is not to form part of it, and my capacity to mix with all of them implies that I belong to none.

I do not know if I have succeeded in making you understand these almost inexpressible things.

Such considerations have to do with this world and seem miserably poor when one turns to the supernatural character of the sacraments. But it is precisely the impure mixture in me of supernatural and evil that I fear.

The relation of hunger to food is far less complete, to be sure, but just as real as is that of the act of eating.

It is perhaps not inconceivable that in a being with certain natural propensities, a particular temperament, a given past, a certain vocation, and so on, the desire for and deprivation of the sacraments might constitute a contract more pure than actual participation.

This issue raises questions about "The kingdoms of the world" and the Christian faith.

Jacques Ellul writes of "Politics: The Realm of the Demonic." Christopher Lasch responds. William Stringfellow accepted the invitation to respond but a season of ill health intervened. Stringfellow sends regrets. We respond that we need him and anticipate a long season of good health.

Two reflections from travel abroad. Eric Gritsch on Martin Luther and Karl Marx, East Germany, Rachele Linner on Hiroshima now as then.

Michael Baxter responds theologically to the Bishops' Statement on Nuclear Warfare.

Robert Williams reflects on the life and ministry of Kelly Miller Smith; Bill Moyers on Prayer in Public Schools.

JYH

Politics: The Realm of the Demonic

Jacques Ellul

Everything in our time seems to be more or less directly the result of politics. Jonah cries, "Yet forty days..." to Nineveh which was the political city par excellence, the imperial city, ruled by the most powerful of kings. If evil has piled up upon evil, if the tide of danger is rising, the reason lies in politics and nowhere else. Politics is the contemporary image of absolute evil. It is satanic, diabolical, the home base of the demonic. And when I say politics, I am not pointing at the state—that's another problem again. The point I want to make concerns those who would conquer and use the state for their own purposes. Nor am I accusing a specific kind of politics, rightist or leftist.

No, the issue is politics itself, whatever form it may take, whatever its objectives, doctrines, methods, social roots, intentions, or rationales. I am talking about politics in the concrete, as put into practice by the political world. I shall not bother with those sententious allusions to the Greek *polis*, which has nothing to do with the United Nations we are all familiar with; I shall not bother with those pious definitions of politics as the quest for the common good or the public interest, as the art of living together, as the blissful key to harmonious construction of the ideal city.

All such nonsense is worse than the worst religious trickery designed to cast a veil of modesty over naked reality. Politics is the acquisition of power: the means necessary for getting it, and once you have it the means for defending yourself against the enemy and so holding on to it. But what does one use it for—for goodness and virtue? No, one uses it for *power*; it's an end in itself. And that's all there is to politics. All the fine talk about politics as a means of establishing justice, so forth and so forth, is nothing but a smokescreen that on the one hand conceals harsh, vulgar reality and on the other justifies the universal

passion for politics, the universal conviction that everything is political, that politics is the most noble human activity, whereas it is really the most ignoble. It is, strictly speaking, the source of all the evils that plague our time. And when I say that it is diabolical and satanic, I mean these adjectives literally.

Politics is diabolical. The devil can be the one who divides, separates, disjoins, disrupts communions, brings about divorce, breaks up dialog. In the Bible the devil is the one who instigates the break between God and humankind, who uses various means to shatter the communion that once linked the creator with creation. He takes advantage of perfectly natural and healthy human instincts: God creates humans free, bidding them govern creation and subdue it. The devil induces them to declare themselves *independent* of God's will, to seek autonomy. And in the same way he transforms the power given by God into a will to dominate.

This kind of distortion is typical of the way the devil acts, pretending to accomplish God's work, while transforming it into its opposite. This is also where idealistic politics—the highly moral, community-oriented sort—turns into the real politics I mentioned before. To achieve this reversal, the Bible says that the devil operates through seduction (Eve looks at the "tree" and plainly sees that it is beautiful, good, pleasing, intelligent, etc.) and through what is often called lies (the devil is the father of lies), but what is rather the exploitation of truth to produce effects contrary to those of the truth. Thus in the dialog between Eve and the devil, the latter doesn't lie. He does inform her that people will be as gods, determining good and evil, and that they will not die. But basically he seduces by shifting meanings and values. Finite reality becomes ultimate truth. And finite reality puts people in a situation different from the one they had imagined or hoped for as they peered through the glimmerings and refractions of the devil's seductive speech.

Now speaking concretely of society today, what is the father of lies? It is politics, and I would go so far as to say politics alone. France is divided into two blocs, which fact is absurd enough, because we know

very well that both are largely interchangeable, that it's six of one, half a dozen of the other. But France is divided nonetheless. There are the victors and the vanquished, labeled as such by politics—and the terms are nothing but labels. There is White imperialism and Red imperialism, ready to go to war against each other. And what is it that drives nations straight to war, even though in general and on their own they have no such thought in mind? Politics.

What makes boys from Texas go off and kill Vietnamese, and boys from Estonia go off and kill Afghans? Only politics, which claims to represent the common good, collective interests, the homeland, and all that. Obviously, there are groups and clans who don't agree with each other, tribes, families, and corporations that are hostile to one another. But this does not have any terrible consequences—it leads at most to vendettas. But when these local interests are taken in hand by politics, then they come to stand for the general good. And then we find ourselves in collective tragedies where the innocent pay for the guilty.

When this happens, it's useless to talk about economic interests being more fundamental: without political structures, strategies, installations, and ideologies. Economic interests are nothing and can do little to change conditions. It's politics that conquers colonies and markets (with a good deal, admittedly, of economic profit), politics that mobilizes people for wars that economic interests have made inevitable. And even if it isn't always true that politics is motivated by economics, still politics is the divisive force par excellence. It is politics and not economics that causes class divisions and shapes class struggle.

Look how incredibly hard it is for partisans to get away from politics. The unions are continually being drawn back into it. And when a workers' movement tries to be both revolutionary and antipolitical, as anarcho-syndicalism was, it fails and its lifespan is short. (An anarchist movement which sought to use trade unions to attain the rights of workers through economic, rather than political, action. The movement flourished between 1895 and 1912; its leading theoreticians were Georges Sorel and Fernand Pelloutier.—Trans.) The "progress" made by socialism has come by way of politics, not by the struggle of economic classes. And the anarcho-syndicalists who condemned politics had a clear notion of its divisiveness when they insisted that trade unionism ought not to get involved in politics, because it only creates division and it would inevitably make the working class split up into conflicting ideologies.

If you want to maintain working class unity, the anarcho-syndicalists said, you have to stay out of politics. They had a fine sense of what politics is all

about, but nobody paid them any heed. Politicians who advertise themselves as "bringing people together" are preposterous: they bring a group together at the cost of widening the gap between it and the rest of the nation. Similarly, politics doesn't bring a country together except insofar as it takes it into a war to the death with another country. This is in fact the simplest and best known way of uniting a country.

Politics creates nothing, least of all an authentic encounter and permanent ties between human beings; nor does it unify society, make it humanly responsible, or lead it forward. Politics produces nothing but division and inner conflict, which are useless, baseless, absurd. When fifty years have passed and we look at the divisions that led political adversaries to set upon each other with savage hatred, we are always stunned by the hollowness and stupidity of the motives of such hatred (and of wars in general). Was that the reason why those people butchered and massacred each other? We would never be so foolish.

But what we don't see is that, given other grounds, other objectives, we would do exactly the same thing. And the political motives behind our struggles will seem just as idiotic to our grandchildren. That's how politics is; it induces, lures, and provokes people into frenzied conflicts. It makes us deadly serious about the cause or the doctrine or the opinions that must be defended against those of others. It gets us to rise up against our brothers and sisters for superficial ideological reasons. And in the name of such stupidities it brings on mass slaughter. In the name of opening up Siberia to agriculture, the Gulag is built. In the name of intensive cultivation (which was not needed) of rice, Pol Pot massacres a third of his people. In the name of political prestige France invades one fourth of the world.

We hear solemn, grandiloquent political proclamations, but their only real, long-term effect is discord and massacres. But for the moment people believe them, with their eyes closed. Politics blinds us. It invents all the ideologies that get us ready for war and turn us into killers. It stirs up irreversible conflicts. To take a single example: ever since the Middle Ages Druzes and Maronite Christians had lived peacefully together in the Middle East. They disagreed about everything, but through daily contact and habitual acquaintance they had come to a satisfying *modus vivendi*. And then politics thrust itself onto the scene in the 1800s. English foreign policy competed with and tried to stymie French foreign policy. The Russians and the Austrians stuck their noses in. Each country intervened, it said, to protect some local community—which was doing very well without their

JACQUES ELLUL is Professor of Law and Jurisprudence, Emeritus, the University of Bordeaux, and a member of the Editorial Board of *Katallagete*. His most recent books published in the United States include *The Betrayal of the West*, *Apocalypse*, *The Ethics of Freedom*, *The New Demons*, and most recently, *Living Faith: Belief and Doubt in a Perilous World*, from which this selection is taken. Copyright ©1983. Harper & Row. Used by permission.

help. Once politics took charge of relations between the two groups, their rapport was shattered. For the first time Druzes massacred Maronites, and the latter replied in kind. And this has been going on continually now since 1840. All this horrible violence was the immediate result of mixing politics and human relations.

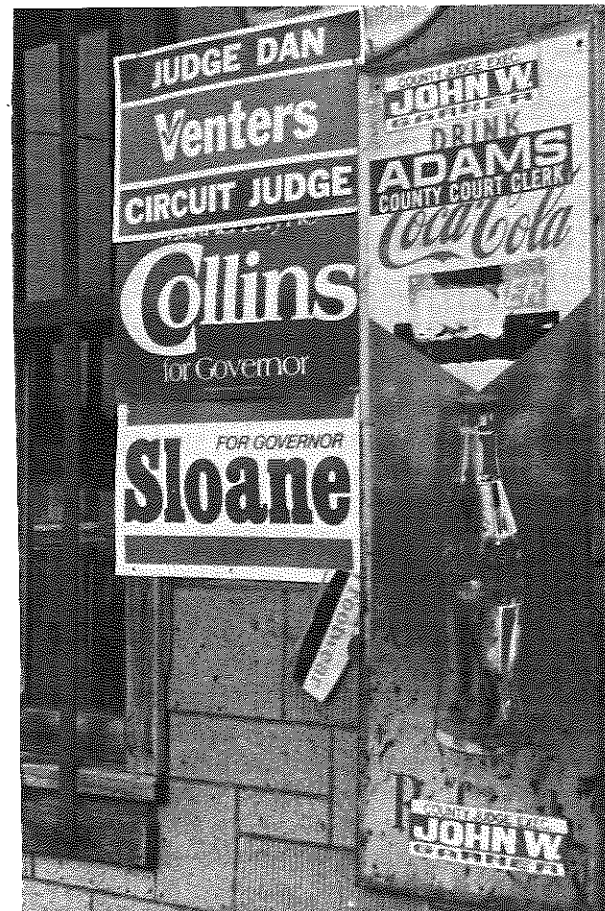
I could cite other examples. When people have dealings with individuals of a different color or race, when they meet with strange customs, with curious ways of dressing and acting, it doesn't necessarily prevent mutual understanding. People are quite capable of respecting one another. But as soon as politics seizes on physical or cultural differences, then these become grounds for exclusion, and racism is born. Racism is always stirred up by politics, making use of natural feelings of antagonism—which were never an absolute bar to coexistence, despite occasional clashes. Thus politics makes differences murderous, conflicts irreversible, disagreements irreparable. This is true diabolical discord.

But a distinction has to be made here. I have never favored any sort of conformism or rigid unification or endless cloning of a single human or social type. I have always fought for pluralism and against mass production. I have always said that dialogue is inevitably rooted in differences. So when I accuse politics of being diabolical, it's *not* in the name of unity. The division fostered by the devil is the sort that has no basis in reality, that leads people to reject pluralism and coexistence, to refuse to acknowledge others, not to respect varying opinions, the crazy-quilt of human relations, of multiple and divergent interests. And if you tell me that concern for all these things is precisely what defines liberal politics, I shall send you back to consult the record of liberalism, and you will see that it's been just as divisive as other forms of politics.

SSecond, my objections to politics do not concern either philosophy or theology; that is, I don't claim to be describing politics per se, politics as an unchanging, eternal, metaphysical essence. I'm talking, as always, about here and now, the present situation, about politics over the last three hundred years, about Western politics—which has, however, invaded and conquered the world so that Asian and African politics now fit into the Western mold. The diabolical has taken on different forms down through history, and currently the devil, the sower of discord, is politics, and politics alone. We see it diabolically corrupting the law, lying about justice, arousing false hopes (ever brighter tomorrows), driving people into a labyrinth of hostility.

That is just how the diabolical element operates: it dramatizes everything; it leads to breaches that can't be healed, to one hopeless impasse after another. And it does this by seduction, by promises, by illusions. We shouldn't forget that the principal weapon of every political system is propaganda and that propaganda is essentially a lie. In our time the father of lies speaks through propaganda, which engenders passion and false clarity, burning commitment and inner alienation. The great lie of this age is found in the celebrated phrase, "Everything is politics," or, "A people can express itself in only one way—through politics," or "If you don't take political action, you don't do anything at all." These absurd maxims show us the radical mendacity of the father of lies, who is literally and totally incarnate today in politics. Politics nowadays *is* the devil.

But it's also and at the same time Satan. In the Bible, Satan and the devil are not identical (nor is either the same as Lucifer, who doesn't appear until long after the closing of the biblical canon). The devil is the one who sows discord through seduction. Satan is the accuser, the one who stands before God in continual accusation, accusing people, but God as well. And wherever accusation occurs, even when it is well founded, legitimate, and judicious, Satan is at work; Satan himself is there.



The point of contact between Satan and the devil is obviously that both of them, though they follow different paths, are the negation of love and communion, the negation, destruction, and corruption of love. Where in our time do we hear the great accusations that condemn certain persons or groups as absolutely evil? What plays the role of world prosecutor, bringing charges against a whole class or nation or race? The answer can only be politics. We have seen that in the realm of the diabolical there is some sort of correlation between politics and economics, but not here. The satanic is the pure distilled essence of the political. Gone is any reason or balance, any human consideration at all which might serve as a mitigating force. The Other is accused of all the evil that occurs; he or she is reduced to the level of absolute evil, with the certitude that if only we can eliminate that person, we shall finally see true purification and liberation.

Accusations are leveled at the communist or the bourgeois or the black or the colonialist or the capitalist or the Nazi or the Jew. How many times have I read the words (which seem to have been written in a trance), "Capitalism is absolute evil"? The writer is a Christian, as it happens. But the phrase might just as well have been, "Communism is absolute evil." This accusation leaves no room for pardon, for leniency, for conversion. Once you have been a communist, you can't change; you remain crushed beneath the weight of the satanic accusation. The enemy, by definition, has nothing good or admirable about them; the only remedy is to wipe them out completely. This is the only solution, and it was invented by politics.

No doubt some readers are objecting, "But aren't you really talking about religion?" One thinks of the Inquisition, the interdicts and excommunications, the forced conversions. My answer on this point is direct: yes indeed, religion has become satanic, every time it has fallen into the grip of politics. The dreadful part of the Inquisition was not the church's doing, but the crimes perpetrated on behalf of and often by the state. The extermination of the Cathars was much more the work of the king who used the church than the work of the church itself. The Inquisition did not resort to extreme measures until it came under the control of the king of Portugal, the king of Spain, and the republic of Venice. Excommunication was nothing more than a *remedium animi* (healing of the soul) until it became a political tool. And who was responsible for the forced conversions? Who used violence to convert the Saxons? Charlemagne. Who used violence to

convert the New World Indians? The conquistadors. (Some of the Christian missionaries who came later refused to be the servants of the political order and defended the lives and customs of the Indians.) The spirit of accusation, of blanketing good by calling something an evil that must be extirpated is always the result of politics.

The worst accusations of our time have always come from politicians, they have been based on political motives, and they have always ended in death in the political arena. Arthur Koestler makes this brilliantly clear in *Le Zero et l'Infini* (*Darkness at Noon*). And just as politics tries to pass itself off as the whole of reality, dethroning God in the process, conversely politics raises accusation to the status of an absolute, thereby counterfeiting—that is, utterly falsifying—divine justice. So it is no facile literary image but a far-reaching insight into the nature of politics to call it satanic, to view it as Satan's handiwork, implanted by Satan in human hearts.

Once again, this evil growth is grafted onto spontaneous human feelings, namely the desire to justify oneself and to expel one's enemy so as to achieve self-purification or catharsis. People always need to feel that their lives are just and righteous, and into our era the task of religion has been to provide people with the means of self-purification, sacrifice among other contributions. The great classical religions have disappeared, however, or have lost their power through lack of faith. But people's religious needs are as intense as ever, especially their need to lead a pure and righteous existence in their own eyes and those of others. And the only way now available to them to achieve this goal is through accusation, through the political discovery and designation of a *scapegoat*.

Here all evil is concentrated into the others, the ones who are unlike us, and all evil will be driven out when the others are driven out or, still better, destroyed. The adversary becomes the enemy, and the enemy becomes the absolute incarnation of evil. Only by annihilating them can we be assured not of a simple political victory but of paradise, justice, and freedom. When we ourselves have been incorporated into the assembly of the just, we cannot help sharing in their justice.

Everything is based on accusation, that is, on the work of Satan. It is not simply a matter of political structures or organizations; we shall have to press beyond them. First, though, we ought to specify that the devil or Satan is not, of course, a historical character, a figure situated in a given place, a personified will with a certain objective. I am saying that from the biblical point of view every time an accusation or a break in human ties occurs, something more than a simple sociological or psychological phenomenon is taking place, something inexplicable

by and irreducible to sociopsychological factors. There is a spiritual dimension of God's domain, a dimension that goes beyond the human, an unanalyzable power that makes the whole thing so terrifying. This is what we mean by the terms Satan and the devil. In the world that we currently find ourselves on, politics is the incarnation of the biblical Satan.

Politics today is indeed the realm of the demonic. It is the realm of total illusion in our society. (I have recorded specifics and theory in my *The Political Illusion*, 1967.) Politics is the art of multiplying false problems, of setting up false goals, and of starting false debates, false with reference to the concrete life of concrete people, false with reference to the actual socioeconomic trends that politics never touches.

Having created this false orientation, politics mobilizes everyone's energies, it involves all of society in spreading falsehood. Everything is constantly being risked on false problems that politics has suggested and elaborated as the only true ones—and then finally imposed them as such. This illusory element has to be combined with the mechanism of political mediation.

Politics becomes the necessary universal mediator between the individual and society. Politics offers the only possible way to act upon society as a whole. It is invested with an *a priori* legitimacy marking it as supreme in the public sphere. It establishes a corps of officially approved mediators. Through this political mediation everything that happens is translated into the language of politics, thereby supposedly becoming rationally comprehensible.

The final stage of political mediation is reached when the particular will is interchanged with the general will, the common good, whatever. This process of mediation pervades every aspect of our lives, ultimately prevailing upon everyone to accept it as the sum total of human life. Here once again is the *demonic* feature of politics: it substitutes the means for the truth; mediation replaces everything else. In the end, the modern state claims to be our savior. We have already made the transition to the state-as-Providence, but now we've gone beyond that to the state as dispenser of salvation. What is actually a lie proclaims its salvific mission—such is the power of evil to disintegrate reality.

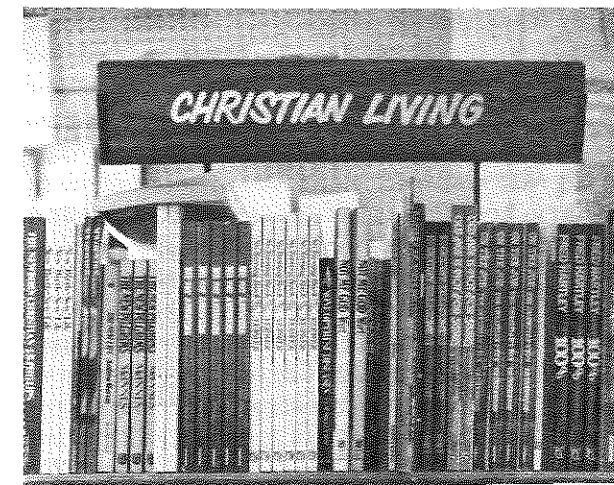
If we combine the total illusoriness of politics with its enforced mediation, we get on the one hand organized unreality and on the other the antimeditation of the whole social order. Thus strictly speaking it is not the mediating function of politics that attests

to its demonic nature but, first, its seizure and monopolization of the mediation process, which is then made a party to illusoriness, which leaves us with a mediation between nothing and nothing, between a lie and an illusion, absorbing all the human energies of all the people in that society. There we have one specifically demonic quality of politics, but the others are demonic too.



Besides this the demon is the one who takes possession of the interior person, who makes good on promises to accomplish what is supposedly God's will, and who, owing to his promises and their "obvious" fulfillment, takes the place of God. The demon is in all things the reverse imitation of the divine. Here we must turn to Castelli's *The Demonic in Art*: "Communion that pays no heed to Christ means believing in a kind of self-importance that only the demonic could inspire." "Unlimited, undefined horror: the feeling caused by something whose nature has been definitively perverted." "The facade of a face—this is an allegorical anticipation of the dehumanized masses, a prelude to the concept of everyone in general, that is to say, nobody." The "power of disintegration." These excerpts from Castelli spell out the character of the demonic. They point out features of the demonic, all of which we have clearly seen in our experience of politics: lies and illusion, the creation of a wholly falsified universe, conspicuous evidence of a promise to accomplish people's will, the feeling of perversion, the facade of a face....We could go on in this vein.

Finally, politics has an irresistible force of absorption and assimilation. The French anarcho-syndicalists active around the beginning of this century were completely right when they argued that politics inevitably corrupts—in itself and by itself—all our intentions and all our projects. They were right when they affirmed that the socialists, once they began to engage in politics, may have continued to speak from a socialist point of view, but their praxis was antisocialist, and that likewise the revolutionaries inescapably stopped being revolutionary when they got into politics. These assertions were later borne out by subsequent history: Millerand, Aristide Briand, Paul-Boncour, Clemenceau, all serious, committed socialists and revolutionaries, turned out to be, once they got to power, exactly the opposite of what they had promised. In the same way Christian leaders are caught in the tragic dilemma: either they try to remain Christians and their politics will be stupid (Jimmy Carter), or they'll be effective politicians but no longer Christians. Rocard is correct to insist on the essential incompatibility of these two options.



Our choice of the term demonic was not, therefore, artificial or gratuitous or an attempt to dramatize the issue. My point was not to show the difference between the theory or the ideal and prac-

tice, nor simply to acknowledge the necessities of political reality. Beyond that, there is a certain structure of the demonic that accounts for certain real phenomena whose existence and importance can never be explained in any naturalistic-positivistic fashion. (Marx had a presentiment of this when he mythicized the proletariat and the class struggle.) The surface of politics has another dimension stretching into the depths beneath it. This is a fact. The question is, how can we go along with it?

I have observed that the structure of contemporary politics corresponds point for point with the structure of the demonic. But couldn't we in turn extend and banalize this correspondence—couldn't we also say with equal justification: the economy is demonic, money is demonic, science and technology are demonic, and so on? I have done quite a few studies on technology, but I've always been careful not to say that it was demonic or diabolical. The reason is that I want, as far as possible, to keep my use of words relatively precise. If the demonic answers to the Bible's description of it (and I think it does), as explained by Castelli and others, and if we don't take the word too loosely as signifying everything unpleasant, unjust, or evil, then we can't apply it nowadays to any areas of life apart from politics, since none of them actually fills the bill. Science as science does not produce lies and falsification. The economy is not "the undefined horror: the feeling caused by something whose nature has been definitively perverted." By contrast, I would say that money certainly was the demonic force par excellence in the nineteenth century, as Marx has shown to perfection. But nowadays money has been denounced, exposed, and labelled as demonic so often and so eloquently that it no longer qualifies. *When the father of lies is exposed, he disappears.* He ceases to exercise his power in the place he had chosen. He moves into different realms and makes use of new mirrors. We have passed from the demonic reign of money to the demonic reign of politics. We have made a great deal of progress—in self-torture.

Theology and Politics: Reflections on Ellul's *Living Faith*

Christopher Lasch

Jacques Ellul first became known in this country as an analyst of technology and propaganda. Many of his readers found it hard to recognize the theological context of his thought. Only later did it become evident that Ellul is part of the twentieth-century movement in religious thought variously described as crisis theology, neo-orthodoxy, or existential Christianity, a movement nurtured by social crisis and by a growing impatience with liberal platitudes and liberal optimism, which has returned to the tradition of Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Kierkegaard as the best answer to twentieth-century chaos and despair.

But what are the political implications of this revival of orthodox Protestantism among intellectuals? Neo-orthodoxy rejects liberal theology, but does it also reject liberal politics? In the case of Reinhold Niebuhr, it led in the end to an accommodation with liberalism, after a Marxist detour. In Karl Barth's case, it seemed to lead, at times anyway, to a rejection of politics. Ellul's case is more complicated. Like Barth, he sometimes appears to advocate a radical withdrawal from political concerns—nowhere more vigorously than in his most recent book, *Living Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983). But half of his numerous books deal with society, technology, mass communications, and other aspects of the public history of our times. His work, taken as a whole, does not look much like the work of a man who thinks a Christian should take only a passing interest in the things of this world.

Before looking any further into the politics of neo-orthodoxy—a term I use for want of a better one—we need to consider more closely the politics of liberal Christianity, against which neo-orthodoxy

first defined itself. Obviously liberal religion encourages liberalism in politics, but what is the inner nature of this liberalism? The social gospel took shape in the late nineteenth century; but it was not until the crisis of the 1930s that its underlying implications became unmistakable. In *The Challenge of Russia* (1931) and *Russia Today* (1934), Sherwood Eddy of the YMCA found in the Soviet regime the fulfillment of the social gospel. "Russia has achieved what has hitherto been known only at rare periods in history, the experience of almost a whole people living under a unified philosophy of life." For Eddy and other critics of Western individualism, the Soviet Union provided the sense of purpose and meaning that was missing in the West—the antidote to existential anxiety and disenchantment. "We of the West have witnessed a philosophic decadence and disintegration. Where feudalism once united the world, capitalism has divided it up by the competitive anarchy of a loose individualism. Not organized society but the insecure individual is now the unit, where every man is for himself." Soviet communism, on the other hand, gave the individual a sense of belonging. Harry F. Ward, another veteran of the social gospel who wrote admiringly of the USSR in the thirties (*In Place of Profit*, 1933), compared the Communist party to the Jesuit order "in the days when it was the power behind every throne in Europe. Communist organization is more like that of a religious order than a political party.... The Jesuits tortured and burned people for the good of their souls, the Communists ask them to live meagerly and discipline them in 'Isolated Communities' for the sake of a nobler society on earth." (Ward's apology for the party bears an uncanny resemblance to the arguments advanced by Naphta in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, published a few years earlier. "The Father of the church," Naphta contends, "repudiated the idea of personal possessions.... They taught that avarice...represents the rights of property and is the source of private ownership...They hated money and finance, and called the empire of capital fuel for the fires of hell....Now, then: after centuries of disfavour, these principles and standards are being resurrected by the modern movement of communism....The proletariat has taken up the task of Gregory the Great, his religious zeal burns within it.... Its task is to strike terror into the world for the

healing of the world, that man may finally achieve salvation and deliverance...") The party, Ward thought, had created a new type of "socialized individual," and it was to the credit of its leaders that they had "no interest in the problem of the personality." By submerging the individual in the group, they gave him something to live for, something to believe in. "The significance of the [Five-Year] Plan is that it gives the masses that which our liberals are so afraid of, that which life has not had since the breakup of the Middle Ages—a central purpose."

Obviously critical of liberalism, with its timidity, evasions, and compromises, these celebrations of the "Soviet experience" carried the liberalism of the social gospel to its logical conclusions, already implicit in the social gospel's fusion of religion and politics. Marxism served Eddy and Ward as a substitute religion, in other words; but this political religion of Marxism represented a continuation, in more drastic form, of liberal Christianity itself, which identified God with historical progress. Even those who rejected Marxism, like A.J. Muste, and who carried the social gospel to pacifist conclusions instead of taking sides in the class struggle, advanced a religious conception of politics. As Donald Meyer points out in his study of the social gospel in decline, *The Protestant Search for Political Realism*, the radicalism of Muste's pacifism in the thirties should not obscure its origins in the "liberal image of a profoundly homogeneous, pervasively moral society, highly imperfect but organized by and saturated with the sanction of religious goodness." Muste's pacifism, according to Meyer, revealed the "ultimate reaches of social-gospel logic." It embodied the "old progressive image of the good society." For Muste, "politics had to offer a clear and consecutive line of progress from the political present through to the fulfillment of politics in the absolute end, the ideal future....He was the most perfect exemplar of the pure, unmixed, unadulterated social-gospel soul. The life of society and the life of the spirit in its individuality were indeed one."

Neo-orthodoxy began as a critique of liberal religion and specifically as a critique of the social gospel's confusion of religion and politics. It began with a critique of what Ellul calls the "political illusion." Ellul's work, like that of Niebuhr and Barth, has always had as one of its principal targets the messianic conception of politics in all its forms—

Marxist, liberal, pacifist, or (more recently) conservationist and ecological. By insisting on the gap between man and God—the "incommensurable distance," as Ellul puts it in *Living Faith* (in language reminiscent of Barth)—neo-orthodoxy reminds us that politics remains the realm of contingency, the realm of the provisional, in which action has unpredictable consequences and absolute certainty, absolute justice, and absolute love are accordingly impossible. But a "realization of the relative character of [politics and] a public philosophy is not necessarily a specifically Christian experience," as Rene Williamson notes in his recent study, *Politics and Protestant Theology*. "It can be found in Aristotle's *Politics*...." What then is specifically Christian in the Christian conception of politics? Reinhold Niebuhr identified it in the course of attempts to distinguish his own position from the social gospel as preached by Sherwood Eddy and Harry Ward. The Christian conception of history, according to Niebuhr, differs from both the classical conception, in which history is circular and meaningless, and from the Judaic, messianic conception, which assumes that history has a meaning that will be disclosed, however, only in the Last Days. The Christian paradox that Jesus is both human and divine expresses the idea that there can be a relation between the historical and the timeless. It is a contradictory relation, however; and it is this tension, according to Niebuhr, that is dissolved, in different ways, by the Renaissance and the Reformation. In the Reformation, the absolute separation of heaven and earth relaxes the tension between them, destroys the uneasy conscience, and leads to a complacent social morality. In the Renaissance, history is seen as moving toward a goal realizable in history itself. History solves its own problems through the accumulation of "knowledge and wisdom," as Niebuhr puts it, "and by the consequent increase of virtue." Renaissance thought—which Niebuhr defines broadly to include not only humanism, Cartesian rationalism, and the Enlightenment but the pietist and millennialist sects that shred the Renaissance expectation of fulfillment in history—conceived of the relation between history and eternity not as a contradiction but as the fulfillment of the former in the latter, in a heavenly city on earth or in some secular equivalent to the kingdom of God. Renaissance thought, together with most of modern thought as a whole, ignores the likelihood that an increase in men's capacities leads to an increase in the possibility of chaos and destruction.

Since Niebuhr makes such a sustained and sharp attack on political messianism, the Renaissance heresy, and launches this attack, moreover, from a theological perspective derived from the Reformation, it is important to note his unequivocal, unqualified judgment, in *The Nature and Destiny of*

CHRISTOPHER LASCH is professor of history at the University of Rochester. He is author of *The New Radicalism in America*; *The Agony of the American Left*; *Haven in a Heartless World*, and *The Culture of Narcissism*. His most recent book is *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *Katallagete*.

Man, that the "sectarian conception of the relation of the gospel to social problems is right and the Reformation is wrong." The sectarian conception—and this presumably includes even its pale echo in the social gospel—is right, according to Niebuhr, because it takes the issue of social justice seriously and refuses to separate private from public morality. Reformation theology and its twentieth-century derivatives, on the other hand, ignore the "relative distinctions of truth and falsehood which are so important in the history of culture." Its "defeatism in the realm of social morality" ignores all the "relative possibilities of realizing the good in history."

In view of Jacques Ellul's many books on technology, propaganda, revolution, violence, and politics, he can hardly be accused, as Niebuhr accused Barth and Emil Brunner, of ignoring the relative possibilities of realizing the good in history. In Ellul's recent work, however, those possibilities have receded almost to the vanishing point. In a brief survey of world politics near the end of his latest book, Ellul paints a picture unrelieved by any sign of hope: starvation and military dictatorship in Africa, civil war in Lebanon, aggressive Soviet expansionism in eastern Europe and Afghanistan, totalitarian dictatorship in China, genocide in Cambodia, right-wing repression in Latin America, purges and massacres everywhere—a "worldwide chamber of horrors." As for the West, its prosperity can no longer conceal the "anomie, *taedium vitae*, the longing for death, a collective suicidal hypnosis, wherein the West has already begun to feel its chastisement." Only a writer seriously engaged with political issues for a long time could feel such sincere and unmitigated disgust. "In my innermost being I feel the rising tide of disaster." No paraphrase can do justice to Ellul's current mood of near-despair or to the power with which he conveys it.

I am sick over the world I shall leave behind, sick at heart, physically and intellectually sick. I had been so hopeful when at the age of twenty I first committed myself to action, when we hoped to change the course of the world. In 1930 we could already see the oppression and disorder of that world taking shape. And we had the absurd hope of turning it away, however slightly, in a different direction, toward humanity and freedom, toward justice, toward a true democracy....I saw correctly, I spoke, I gave warning—it all went for nothing.

When the time was ripe no one listened, and when my message gradually found an audience, it was too late. We had started down a slope that we couldn't climb back up; we had accumulated powers that were indestructible; we couldn't get back to our origins anymore from which to strike out on a new path. It all

went for nothing. Inexorably it has become the worst of all possible worlds.

Without quarreling with this somber assessment of the contemporary scene, we might ask whether it is not mitigated by the signs—however faint—of a spiritual awakening, in the form of the peace movement, the environmental movement, and the revival of religion. The last of these developments, in particular, has attracted a good deal of attention of late, now that intellectuals themselves are beginning to talk about the need for a renewal of religious belief. But it is precisely this unexpected outbreak of spirituality against which Ellul directs his most withering scorn. The new esteem enjoyed by the church; the "spectacular conversions and spiritual sagas" and "spiritual stripteases" with which intellectuals have announced their adherence to Christianity or Buddhism or Sufism or some other attractive set of ethical norms; the growing criticism of science and technology—these signs of the times do not please Ellul at all, him who ought to see this regeneration of the religious impulse, one might suppose, as the fulfillment of his own critique of technology and the "political illusion." He himself raises this self-critical consideration. "Shouldn't you rejoice," he asks himself, "now that you see your old message accepted, heeded, honored as true?...If [Bernard-Henri] Levi has gotten Parisian intellectuals whom you never reached to discuss the Bible, why this bitterness?... How can you deny the authenticity of those stirrings in the heart and mind that plumb the depths of human beings?" Ellul is not unmoved by such appeals; he takes them seriously enough to answer them at length; but instead of welcoming the religious revival, he remains not merely skeptical but downright disapproving. "We ought to be very worried by the contemporary upsurge in religious feeling," he writes, "because this suggests that future conflicts will be of a religious nature.... Thus the admirable formula 'The twenty-first century will be religious, or it won't be at all' ought really to be reworded: 'The twenty-first century will be religious, and, for that reason, it won't be at all.'"

The new talk of "values," the belated understanding that science can't provide them, the founding of new communal experiments based on respect for nature and rejection of advanced technology—"all this is fine, but it's not God; it doesn't bring us any closer to God, nor is it in keeping with 'the will of God.'"

Ellul's argument against the contemporary spiritual revival hinges on a distinction between faith



and belief, developed at some length in a dialogue in *Living Faith*, in which one of the participants argues that only religious belief can save the world, while the other, defending a more rigorous interpretation of the Christian message, remains skeptical. According to "Una," it is the decay of belief that has "brought on the pitiless age of contempt and mass murder." Religion has been rejected in the name of science; but science itself now leads us back to religion. The discovery that man is alone in the cosmos, instead of discrediting the idea of a God who takes an interest in human affairs, gives new life to the "ancient legend that God chose the earth on which to plant a unique garden." In our time, "scientific probability links up with the inspired belief of the first ages of humanity." Human beings find themselves alone in space, on a planet uniquely capable of supporting life; and this new view of Earth, made possible by science but perfectly consistent with the insights of earlier religions, leads to a new respect for nature, a new awareness of man's role as caretaker and guardian of nature, and a new understanding of the dependence of morality on religious belief. "Ethics began to disappear with the breakdown of belief in humankind's unique role and responsibility," says "Una," the enlightened advocate of religious belief.

The rediscovery of man's uniqueness will lead us back to a "morality that boldly distinguishes good from evil."

To these arguments, so eminently sane and reasonable, "Monos" replies, in effect, that faith is never eminently sane and reasonable. Nor does it arise from human needs, not even from the need (which Ellul's own books have helped to demonstrate) for an ecological ethic or "planetary consciousness." "Monos" argues further—and much of *Living Faith* consists of variations on this theme—that belief itself, not the absence of belief, underlies modern barbarism. It is because men need something to believe in that they have created totalitarian states and totalitarian technologies and other monuments to their own powers. The need for certainty transforms the contingent into the absolute. It leads to the worship of technology, the worship of politics and political systems, the worship of human powers and intelligence and creativity. Note that "Monos"—Ellul—does not condemn these false religions in the name of true religion. He condemns religion in general. Religion itself, in his view—the impulse to found churches and formulate creeds—is no more exempt from the corrupting influence of human pride than the secular religions that have competed with it and largely replaced it. Institutional religion transforms a momentary illumination into a permanent establishment. Instead of reminding men of their powerlessness and limitations, it gives them the security of a closed system of beliefs impervious to doubt. It satisfies their need to ascend, as Ellul puts it; their need for the illusion that they can overcome the limits of their biological condition. It raises men to the level of God. Whereas the idea of God ought to serve as a check on the illusion that nothing lies beyond human comprehension, religion makes God himself comprehensible. Religious belief satisfies the need for certainty. The political illusion, it appears, originates in the religious illusion.

At a time when the world stands in greater need of religion than ever, Ellul has revived the faith of the Reformation in its most uncompromising form: the rejection of organized religion precisely on the grounds that it rests on human needs and therefore ignores the word of God. Ellul defends revelation against religion, faith against belief, Christ against Christendom. Faith arises against a background of doubt, nihilism, and despair. It brings neither safety nor certainty, only a "certain attitude to life," a disposition to "trust those who don't deserve any trust."

The rigor of Ellul's Reformation theology appears most clearly in his opposition to ecumenicalism, his

acknowledgment of the divisive and disruptive influence of faith on community life, and his insistence that faith is not to be achieved through an "intellectual operation." "There is no intellectual road to the attitude...of faith." Men cannot work their way or reason their way up to God; God announces himself to men, once and for all, through the agency of Christ. As always, a theological emphasis on revelation tends to undercut the claims of organized religion and to isolate the believer in a direct relationship with God. It also undercuts claims to religious universality, efforts to define the religious community in creedal terms (as a mere "profession of faith"), and the impulse that underlies ecumenicalism today, which tries to find common ground among a variety of religious traditions and to distinguish the common thread, for example, in the thought of Jesus and the thought of Buddha. The Christian revelation is unique, according to Ellul, and its uniqueness lies in its challenge to all religions, including Christianity itself.

So much for the attempt to reconcile religious differences by stressing their common features—an attempt much favored today by those who urge the need for a new antiwar and environmental ethic and for a custodial attitude toward nature. But the hardest point to accept—and not only for right-thinking people newly conscious of the importance of "community" but for many of Ellul's readers who agree with him about many other matters—is his insistence that revelation not only undermines religious unity but divides communities and even families. "I came to bring not peace but a sword." Here again, the existential reality of faith stands opposed to religion, which is one of the strongest forces that help to maintain a people's identity. "While religious belief founds communities and leads to unity, revelation shatters and tears asunder. Wherever it intervenes, it brings an end to society, to all 'convergences.' The sword of the Word severs the strongest ties of nature." Ellul quickly warns against jumping to the conclusion that human communities are unnecessary or of no importance. The point, presumably, is that they have no spiritual sanction.

But this brings us back to the weak point in the Reformation outlook, which coexists with its many strengths: its condemnation of the whole political order and its separation of public and private morality. *Living Faith* concludes with some hopelessly

reductive statements about politics, which tend to vitiate Ellul's dark but justified reading of the current political situation by leaving us with the impression that *all* political life is corrupt, inherently corrupt, and therefore that such judgments are really beside the point. "We shouldn't forget that the principal weapon of every political system is propaganda and that propaganda is essentially a lie." In earlier books, Ellul analyzed propaganda in its modern context; now it supports "every political system." But in that case, why concern oneself with politics at all? Why bother to distinguish between political lies and political truths? And what are we to make of the statements that it is "politics"—not Western statesmen and businessmen and technicians—that "conquers colonies and markets" or that "politics produces nothing but division and inner conflict" or that "politics nowadays is the devil"? Ellul's reification of politics reaches its climax in passages like these:

What is the father of lies? It is politics, and I would go so far as to say politics alone....What makes boys from Texas go off and kill Vietnamese, and boys from Estonia go off and kill Afghans? Only politics....It is politics and not economics that causes class divisions and shapes class struggle....And what is it that drives nations straight to war, even though in general and on their own they have no such thought in mind? Politics.

Since we have to live in communities, as Ellul reminds himself occasionally, this indiscriminate condemnation of politics—couched here in the most careless abstractions imaginable—means (as always) that public life will continue to be dominated by men of little faith, since the faithful have resolved beforehand to have nothing to do with it. It is completely in keeping with the spirit of Ellul's new book that it ends with a plea for a new "antipolitics."

Elsewhere he notes, however, that we live in a "culture of forgetfulness," that the disappearance of the past is an important source of the contemporary malaise, and that our collective amnesia leads, in particular, to a pervasive atmosphere of fear. These two lines of argument, the one urging the importance of collective memory and the other calling for a faith that seems to have no use for money, do not seem to agree with each other. How is the amnesia of our time to be countered by an "antipolitics"? How is it to be countered by a faith that urges the faithful to "leave everything behind" and tells them that "we do not have to settle down [or] busy ourselves before all else with organizing our surroundings, or our class, our economy"? Such a faith is suitable only for

those who are waiting for the end. This has always been the radical appeal and the radical mistake of Reformation theology. Today it is the mistake, perhaps, that has become most striking, because the "end" has become an ambiguous concept. It can mean, as it always has, that a trusting attitude toward life ought to make us willing, as individuals, to leave it. But it can also mean the end of the world, which now looms, more than ever before, as a real possibility—one that cannot be viewed in the same way as the death of individuals. To be told at this point that we do not need to busy ourselves with "organizing our surroundings" is an invitation not to faith but to complete irresponsibility. In this context, Ellul's critique of the false spirituality of the times is bound to lose much of its force, unless it can be combined with a more discriminating attitude toward political concerns. If faith has nothing to say about issues that

concern the very survival of humanity, who wouldn't prefer a man-made religion, even if it "has nothing to do with God"?

In reply to these objections, Ellul could reply that faith alone will give humanity the cheerfulness and courage to make a new beginning. "It leads us to remake humanity, to fashion a people without fear, a people rooted in a true past, a free people, capable of standing up under fire because they are profoundly motivated [and] who are confident of the future and practice the spirit of prophecy." It would be nice to think so. But how can faith, as Ellul understands it, root people in the past when it encourages them to "break off old ties"? How can it make them confident of the future when it exhorts them to "leave this world, this age, and its works"? I find no answer to these questions in *Living Faith*.



Life in Two Realms

Reflections of an Immigrant

Eric Gritsch

How much is real unless it is personal? When I became an American citizen in 1959, it was not easy to shift my allegiance from Austria to the United States. Moreover, I was not enthusiastic about the "cold war" between the super powers, for I had vowed years before never again to bear arms for any country: not for pacifist reasons, but because I had had it bearing arms as a member of the Hitler Youth during the final months of World War II. Consequently, when the time in a Boston court room to take the oath of allegiance as a citizen of the United States, I joined a group of like-minded people who were advised to delete the phrase "and bear arms for the United States" from the oath. What I had known in theory about the United States had become true in practice: the "inalienable rights," asserted in the Declaration of Independence of 1776, to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" had become *my* rights. "To secure these rights," the Declaration asserts, "governments are instituted by men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Or, according to the Constitution of 1789: there shall be freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and the freedom "to petition the government for redress of grievances."

As a Luther scholar, I had the opportunity to attend the Sixth International Luther Research Congress in Erfurt, East Germany, in August of 1983. Every time I visit the German Democratic Republic (DDR), I wonder about the stamina of the Christians in the Communist East and the Capitalist West.

ERIC GRITSCH is Professor of Church History and Director of the Luther Institute at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Reformer Without a Church*, a study of Thomas Muntzer; *Born Againism: Perspective on a Movement*; and most recently *God's Court Jester: Luther in Retrospect*. He has translated several volumes in the recent edition of Luther's works and with Robert W. Jenson wrote *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings*.

An East German Paradox: Marx and Luther

Nineteen eighty three was the centennial of Marx's death and the quinquecentennial of Luther's birth. Some clever minds in the DDR coined the slogan "Proletarians of the world unite—for God's sake!" When I arrived in Erfurt, a large banner greeted tourists at the railroad station: "What Marx says is true because he is omnipotent." Marx dominated, but Luther had received revised attention. He was no longer judged to be a "lackey of the princes," but had become "the initiator of a broad revolutionary movement" impeded by backward religious ideas. And there was money to be made from Westerners making their pilgrimages to the "Luther-lands" located in East Germany. Marx did not provide the East German government with political shrines that would make money. Marx was born in Trier, near the French border, and died in London. Luther, on the other hand, spent his life in Saxony and was one of the region's most famous sons. With financial support from the West, especially from Lutherans, the DDR government restored the Erfurt monastery in time for the International Congress meeting. But the window of a butcher shop symbolized the paradox of the two anniversaries: amidst Marxist slogans and plastic imitations of pork chops there was an open Luther Bible. The living word among phony meat. There was no meat for sale in the store.

The train from Frankfurt, West Germany, to Erfurt was crowded with East German "pensioners"—retired folk who were permitted to spend time with relatives in the West. It is the DDR's way of saving money and food, since East Germans are not allowed to export anything and must live off their relatives in the West. These people had lived through World War II, some even remembered their early years during World War I. The East German couple in our compartment was eager to talk once they discovered that their companions were Luther scholars. But when we approached the border—with its watch towers, its carefully raked strip of land studded with mines, and its barbed wire—there was silence. The old man looked at us and shrugged his shoulders apologetically. "That's the way it is," he seemed to say without

opening his mouth. Then the train rolled into the heavily guarded station. We had been informed by the sponsors of our Congress that a deal had been made between the East German Lutheran churches and the DDR: Luther scholars and their families were not to be harassed; they did not have to open their luggage, and the amount of money they carried did not have to be checked by customs officials. Moreover, they were not to be exposed to any chicaneries against East German citizens. To their great surprise, the pensioners in our compartment were not searched and were treated as politely as we were. "O God, had we known that," the elderly woman gasped when the customs officials had left, "we would have smuggled in food and books."

The reception had been quite different some years earlier when my wife and I travelled by car to an international church meeting in Wittenberg, in East Germany. It took more than two hours to cross the border. Machine guns and guards surrounded the car. We were searched; every penny and every individual earring was counted and registered; the atmosphere was icy. Every step had to be announced in advance, and only once did we succeed in meeting a Lutheran minister without surveillance. The minister symbolized the hostile relationship between church and state. Being a pastor in the town where guard-dogs were being trained to hunt down refugees at the border, he lived without a family and was frequently the victim of vandalism. His own German Shepherd dog was the only one in town trained to attack uniformed intruders. Needless to say, the dog training school authorities watched every move this pastor made. "Sometimes Christians have to live in a dog-eat-dog world," he mused in excellent English, "and my dog is a Christian dog—but his teeth are sharper."

My ten days in East Germany in 1983 were filled with contradictory experiences. There was life in the new "inter-hotel Kosmos," a Holiday Inn-like structure in the center of Erfurt, East Germany. Only foreigners were permitted to stay there, mostly Russians and Americans on official guided tours through the Luther-lands. There was marvelous food, low-priced champagne and dancing in the bar, just like in the West (but no tips!). Russian officers and their spouses from the many garrisons in East Germany are sent for "R and R" to these inter-hotels. They stormed the two creaky elevators serving eighteen floors (including our 13th); they sang and drank a lot until the wee hours of the morning; and they beamed at us whenever we met on the difficult route to our rooms. But the "people's police" (Vopos—

Volkspolizei) kept close surveillance of Congress members on the cobblestoned streets of medieval Erfurt. We were instructed to wear our tags at all times in order to avoid encounters with the Vopos.

The morning saw long lines at food stores which never seemed to have stock sufficient for local demand. The Kosmos Hotel served a breakfast which included whatever heart and stomach desired. Our delegate lunches and dinners were served at two assigned restaurants in town: a main meal at noon with soup, a pork dish with canned vegetables, and cake for dessert; dinner consisted of individual cold-cut platters prepared ahead of time. Delegates who went to other restaurants were given a menu, but only one entree was served: "Sorry," the waiters would say politely, "we have run out of the other items on the card." Erfurters told us that there never was a real choice and that reservations must be made at least four days beforehand. The "inter-shops" at the "inter-hotels" sold whatever the West produced and could easily package. East Germans could buy Western goods if they had Western currency; if they *did* have Western money, they were suspect and had to undergo interrogation about the source of their funds.

The East German government went out of its way to create for its international guests the illusion of freedom and prosperity. The Minister of Religious Affairs, an amiable man with a rabbinical personality, presided at a reception for the more than hundred Luther scholars. The buffet was a magnificent display of an incredible amount and variety of food, from caviar in ice sculpture to fruit and pastry. Tables set for six gleamed with white napery, crystal and silver. But there were no chairs at the tables. Not one. There was an atmosphere of ideological relaxation. East German church officials enjoyed the relaxation of tension and let the Minister know, in the inevitable pre-and-after dinner speeches, how much more freedom the church needed than it actually had. "We shall not forget the benevolence of the state during these days," declared the East German chairman of the Luther congress, "and we expect such treatment to continue." The Minister responded by pointing out that the future would be influenced by Western actions concerning the deployment of Pershing missiles in West Germany. Suddenly the Luther anniversary had become involved with the Marxist propaganda. Illusion gave way to reality. The friendly exchanges between church and state were also overshadowed by the fact that the Lutheran head of the Erfurt monastery had been jailed for the duration of the Congress because of rumors of his possible defection to the West with the help of visiting Luther scholars.

Luther spoke of the reality of Satan's rule in the world through sin and death while Marx offered the

world a vision of a classless society no longer in need of religion. Luther rejected any form of revolution and advocated political quietism in the face of the imminent end of the world. Marx advocated political change through the dictatorship of the proletariat which would be the first necessary step to peace and justice.

Today, Lutherans and Marxists coexist in East Germany under the watchful eyes of Russian generals in command of forces which seem invincible to the ordinary citizen. There is the well-staged public illusion that all is well in East Germany. There is the private reality of fear that matters would be worse if one were to fight for freedom. Life in these two realms is lived by a people who experience what Hannah Arendt called "the banality of evil."

An American Dilemma: God and the Constitution

To be an American would seem to mean to be committed to the freedom to debate the proper balance between the power of the government and the power of the people. The political fathers of our nation were men guided by the philosophical principles of Greece and Rome, revived by the international European movement called "enlightenment." The most significant feature politically, of the Enlightenment, was British "deism," the belief in a god who created a world governed by the powers of "reason" and "nature" rather than by "faith" and "supernature." The American dollar symbolizes the deistic philosophy of the founding fathers: the creed "in God we trust" is flanked by the Great Seal. One side of the seal depicts an Egyptian pyramid with the eye of God—a popular Free Mason symbol. This side of the seal carries a Latin inscription from the Roman poet Virgil (20-19 B.C.) who announced the beginning of a "golden age" with the reign of Caesar Augustus Octavian in 40 B.C., "the year of a new order of centuries." The year is 1776. The thirteen layers of the pyramid symbolize the thirteen colonies which signed the Declaration of Independence, and the benevolent eye of God graces the unfinished height of the pyramid. The other side of the seal carries the Latin democratic slogan, "one out of many," and thirteen stars depict the unity of the thirteen colonies, safeguarded by a watchful eagle carrying the symbols of peace and war.

Pragmatic rationalists like Benjamin Franklin, rather than theocratic Puritans like Cotton Mather, created the government of the United States. To govern meant to debate differences for the sake of compromise rather than to establish uniformity. The balanced relationship between the legislature (Con-

gress), the executive (the Presidency) and the judiciary (the Supreme Court) guarantees the freedom of the nation. This constitutional doctrine of trinitarian power is the driving force of this government. Whenever one of the three powers threatens the other two, free debate for a return to the trinitarian power balance must take place to facilitate proper democratic procedures. Loyalty to the Constitution demands dissent and opposition to tyrannical tendencies on the part of *any* constitutional powers. Such dissent is the most essential of all "civil rights." My "inalienable" and "civil" rights are exercised, secured and proclaimed in the open space which the trinity of constitutional powers provide. Refusal to participate in the constant debate for the proper balance of power is unpatriotic and breeds tyranny.

There is an affinity of sorts between the American constitutional doctrine of trinitarian power and the Christian doctrine of the separation of human and divine powers affirmed in the ecumenical creeds (Nicene, Apostles' and Athanasian). Born in bitter conflict over the Christian faith's proper witness in the Greek Mediterranean world, the trinitarian creeds call for the exclusive worship of God as Creator, Savior, and Spirit. Thus they stand against the perennial temptation to equate human with divine power. The tendency to equate both is regarded as man's most "original sin" in Judeo-Christian history. "When you eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge," the serpent said to the woman, "you will not die. You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5). To be "like God" is true idolatry—the renouncing of one's humanity and creatureliness. The Christian gospel asserts that death, evil and sin are only overcome through the relationship with the Palestinian Jesus who is the resurrected Lord leading believers to a new world without death, evil and sin.

The Christian doctrine of the separation of human and divine powers (as expressed in the Trinitarian Creed) as well as the American doctrine of the separation of the three governing powers (as expressed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) assert the frailty of human existence and its tendency to deify itself by creating idols to be worshipped as saviours. Our deistic founding fathers shared a deep insight with the principal fathers of the church: our life together is constantly threatened by the forces of tyranny and idolatry. Human power tends to corrupt and struggle for absolute human power tends to corrupt absolutely. To be a loyal American Christian means to guard against the denial of Jesus as the only Saviour and against the corruption of constitutional freedom. In the words of Jesus, "Many will come in my name saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and fool many people" (Matthew 24:5). Or in the words attributed

to Thomas Jefferson, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." In this sense, the combination of Christian and patriotic vigilance constitutes the best of and only "civil religion."

It is questionable whether this nation is still morally guided by a "civil religion" nourished by the two sources of freedom which have been the life-blood of the American body politic: the constitutional freedom to debate the proper balance of power between the government and the people; and the Judeo-Christian freedom to distinguish between penultimate human and ultimate divine powers. The complexity of technological data about arms, the secrecy of national defense strategy, and the lack of clear moral goals in United States arms policy have seduced many citizens to adopt simplistic moral attitudes such as pacifism, apolitical moralism, fascistic patriotism, or sheer apathy. There are, for example, Christians in the United States who refuse to participate in any debate involving governmental decisions. Others practice responsible *individual* membership in church and state (they are active members of congregations and vote in political elections), but they refuse to accept any *communal* interaction between church and state. Many share the conviction that religion and politics don't mix—meaning that their church should never make any diagnosis or engage in any critique of United States policy. There is the common assertion that religion is an "internal, personal, highly individualistic affair," not to be confused in any way with "dirty politics." These attitudes make a mockery of constitutional freedom and of the Judeo-Christian mandate to live out a historically embodied faith in the midst of the world's struggles.

Case in Point: U.S. Army Policy

The experts have demonstrated that the production, sale, and transfer of various conventional arms are intimately linked to foreign and domestic policy. Nuclear weapons (especially those delivered through missile systems) have created an unprecedented situation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The probability of a nuclear holocaust, and the fact that American weapons assist in creating and maintaining tyrannical governments, violate both the American dream of man's "inalienable rights" and the Judeo-Christian vision of neighbourly love. American power must be more than a desire for profit and fear of communism. American Christianity must be more than a voluntary association of individuals who believe whatever they want to believe, with sincerity. There is a power beyond gun and

dollar. When we can balance our fears with our faith in the inner strength of our nation our politics will reflect the freedom which was the source of our forefathers' attempt to build a nation with liberty and justice for all.

There is no easy solution to the problem created by our arms policy. Christians might close ranks and suggest some realistic moves to curb the tyranny of arms.

An all-out effort must be made, on the part of those responsible for the United States "defense" policy and the constituency they represent, to demythologize arms and war. In 6,000 years of human history, weapons of war have become the subject of religious and sacral devotion. Arms have been blessed, religious vows to them have been made, and soldiers have often become a religious caste. War as a holy crusade against enemies of God have been conducted for millenia. Jews and Christians and "pagans" have conducted such wars. "The Lord is a man of war," says Exodus 15:3, exercising His power through human armies. The Constantinian Christian state banned military deserters from citizenship, and medieval and modern crusades disclose the religious character of arms and war. Hebrew prophets rejected the sacralization of the state and the ritualization of its armies. Early Christians refused to take military vows for this would violate the vow to follow the Palestinian Jesus in love to God and the neighbour.

War must be regarded as the last and worst instrument any nation can use to attain political goals. Individual and communal violence has never been or will ever be abolished. But this violence must be recognized as the end of civility and the beginning of man's inhumanity to man. War is simply not beautiful. A political choice between war and peace is no longer possible. Peace is the *must*, and those who govern us must learn to recognize it as their only option. This is not pacifist, if by "pacifism" is meant the prejudgment of any situation in the name of uninvolvedness. Rather, it is the realistic conclusion, based on constant analysis of armaments and war, that war is the embodiment of human frustration and despair in a fallen world.

There must be communication of the power of arms. Those who are entrusted with national defense must disclose, in public debate, their objectives and attitudes to the weapons they control. To let those in charge of collective death remain immune from our surveillance is a grave error. If weapons are my life, I will be tempted to believe in them. *Here the church has a monumental pastoral task: to call on those who have lost their faith in justice, love, God, Christ, and believe that arms and war will solve the human condition.* The Christian ministry has the task of standing guard against the most original of all sins: the

deification of human power and achievement—and nuclear weapons are our most powerful achievement.

Whether in East Germany or in the United States, Christians, unlike Jews, have not been persecuted enough to be forced to consider the essentials of their faith in a consistent framework of time. Nevertheless these essentials belong to the mandate of Christian witness in the world. They are not clearly discernable in the absence of pressure such as persecution, poverty, war. They are manifest in the Scriptures and in Christian tradition: to be faithful disciples of the risen Lord; to testify to his lordship in the conflict areas of the world; and to labor, through the self-evident means of love and justice, for the maintenance of universal fellowship. To be with Christ means to lead a cruciform life—to experience, along with God's humanity in Christ, the death-

pangs of this world and birth-pangs of a new world to come. It means to struggle against the temptation of the luxuries of toleration, good middle-class American life, and the chance to get away from the foxholes of the world's struggles. Penance—to change our minds and lives for the sake of a better witness. Otherwise, the judgment of Jeremiah (6:14-15) will be appropriate for our time:

They [prophets and priests] have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, "Peace, peace" when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; "at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the Lord.



The Silent Gift: August 1984

Rachelle Linner

...the silence in the grove by the river, where hundreds of gruesomely wounded suffered together, was one of the most dreadful and awesome phenomena of his whole experience. The hurt ones were quiet: no one wept, much less screamed in pain; no one complained: none of the many who died did so noisily; not even the children cried; very few people even spoke. And when Father Kleinsorge gave water to some whose faces had been almost blotted out by flash burns, they took their share and then raised themselves a little and bowed to him, in thanks.

John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

August 6 was the day that Hiroshima was transfigured. The legacy of the cargo of the Enola Gay affects all of us now, physically, spiritually and psychologically; but most of all it has affected *hibakusha*, the survivors of *Gembaku*, the atom bomb, for the invisible radiation that assaulted their bodies that morning has continued to claim victims, year after year after year.

Symbol of the horror of nuclear war, Hiroshima is also the symbol of human growth and creativity because "like a Phoenix risen from the ashes" that which was once an atomic desert is now the comfortable and attractive home of 900,000 people (and one great professional baseball team, the Hiroshima Toyo Carp).

Some knock on cloister doors, seeking entrance to a life of sacrifice and service. The communal life of the vowed religious includes silence, a discipline that imparts clarity of vision and focuses prayer that is a hymn of praise for creation and an act of penance for a world that is fractured and in need of healing.

Some know that vocation after long years of preparation, of wandering through the wilderness of doubt. To some it is singular, a call heard and assented to with the certainty of inner wisdom. For all of them, knocking on cloister doors is a beginning not an end.

I went to Hiroshima thinking it would end the need I had long known, to make a pilgrimage to the city that was the first to know the destructive power of the atom bomb. I know now it was a beginning, a deepening of many other beginnings hidden in the years of my life.

The most dramatic of those beginnings was with my conversion experience in 1977, not on an "ordinary" day (which no day is) but on August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration, that day which affirms that God can transfigure our lives, turn mourning into joy, and bitterness into fruitful, creative and loving living.

Although born after Hiroshima and Nagasaki I am a child of the nuclear age and the stories of those two cities are part of my history, stories which haunt me more than any other in this bloody time of hundreds of thousands made homeless refugees, deserts created by "conventional" war, this time of mass murder and the silence and obedience to nation states that perpetuate the cycle of violence.

People in Hiroshima asked when I first heard their story; I could not answer because I do not know, but what I heard and read was made real in 1973 when I first met *hibakusha* and listened to their stories of *Pika-don* (flash-boom)—it's a Japanese name, because everyone remembers the penetrating light and the blast so deep it was as if the earth had shattered.

Perhaps I already knew, lessons from early school years interrupted by air raid drills, marching to a basement "shelter," kneeling against the brick wall with eyes covered, a strange silence descending on that crowded room. Perhaps the shrill sound of those sirens entered by childhood dreams and grew as I did to adulthood. But if fear was there it was not made manifest until the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, old enough then to hold my breath while two power intoxicated men toyed with the fate of the world.

RACHELLE LINNER spent six weeks in Japan in April and May, 1984. Presently she lives and works at the Alderson Hospitality House, Alderson, West Virginia, which provides room and board to visitors at the Federal Women's Prison there. She worked with *Katallagete* in Berea, Kentucky, for six years and does so now from Alderson.

All beginnings; but most remarkable was meeting *hibakusha*, not only for their stories and their eloquent statements for peace, but because they were in the United States. It amazed me then, and does still, that they would harbor no hatred for citizens of the nation that had nursed the killing cargo from its inception at the University of Chicago, growth at Oakridge, maturation at Los Alamos, and finally to the culmination—the battleship *Indiana*, to Tinian Island, and then Ground Zero, Hiroshima, the target beneath the clear blue, not summer skies. In all the years since 1945 it has never rained in Hiroshima on August 6.

In 1973 I could not imagine how *hibakusha* could say “We do not hate Americans: we hate war,” but in Hiroshima I learned that was true, and there it was more remarkable, surrounded by evidence of the massive destruction wrought by one bomb. Their desire for peace, called the “spirit of Hiroshima,” is not simplistic nor is it an intellectual abstraction. It results from years of individual and collective effort to give meaning to their inexplicable suffering, an effort to overcome initial responses of loathing and a desire for revenge. That loathing (which is more than hatred) softened with time, and became anger—anger towards those who dropped the bomb, towards those who started the Pacific War; anger over the misuse of science; anger, finally, at a world that continues the suicidal madness of the nuclear arms race.

The religious traditions and histories of Buddhist Hiroshima and Christian Nagasaki (a city that had known centuries of persecution) led to different responses to the bombing they suffered, summarized in the saying “the rage of Hiroshima and the prayers of Nagasaki.” Many combine both qualities, but the rage of Hiroshima is focused, rage that has found voice as a magnificent peace witness. (Commenting on the difference between the Japanese and American peace movements, one Japanese writer defined the latter as a “collective expression of fear” rather than a political force, and so lacking a clear voice.)

In February, 1981, Pope John Paul II became the first pontiff to visit both cities, and at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park he spoke of Hiroshima's role: “To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future. To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace.”

To remember the past, not to call forth guilt in the listener or the always present, vivid images of suffering for the speaker, but because Hiroshima, in the words of one organization, “belongs to the world.” Once a military city with the slogan “For the prosperity of the nation and the strengthening of its defenses” it is now a mecca that annually attracts

thousands of tourists, who in reality are pilgrims, to an “International City of Culture and Peace.”

Like those who knock at cloister doors I sought entrance to the community of Hiroshima. It was in Tokyo, a city of eleven million, once three-fourths destroyed by “conventional” saturation bombing, its casualties greater than that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined (yet few walk those streets and remember the terror of those days and I was no different).

It was in Tokyo that I met an American resident in Japan for more than two decades, a man, both scientist and theologian, who knows, perhaps more than anyone, the effects of “Little Boy” and “Fat Man.” His is not a sterile knowledge, but is enlivened by compassion. He has sought to be a servant of *hibakusha* through his writing, editing, translating and research, but mostly (to use a too-often debased word) as friend. His talk is void of sentimentality or pity, for in Hiroshima and Nagasaki he has found dignity, authenticity, and courage in the midst of despair.

Hibakusha testimonies consistently stress the “if's”—if I had been on the ninth floor where I usually worked, and not the fourth; if I had left home ten minutes later; if that stranger had not stopped to drag me from the rubble; if my mother had not searched for hours at her own peril...That meeting was my “if,” for I almost did not write his name and address on a list sent by friends of friends. If I had not met him my time in Hiroshima would have been much poorer; his introductions opened doors that might have remained closed, his ideas opened my mind to connections I might have missed. Over four hours of coffee and cigarettes we shared ideas and stories—but it was not until much later that I realized he had bestowed upon the novice that inestimable gift of taking my commitment seriously. In the name of those who have been steadfast in standing with Hiroshima he bade me enter that community, and in their name he received my *amen*.

It was only weeks later that I knew I had made that *amen*, for like those who knock on cloister doors the next day I entered a city of silence.

I met a woman that day, an American citizen now, but Chinese by birth, raised in Manchuria during its years of Japanese occupation. Two years ago she received, and accepted, an offer to teach in Tokyo. Living and working in that city is an act of

personal reconciliation and discipline, for she harbored distrust, anger and fear toward those who were historical and personal enemies. Once the nameless and faceless enemy, now they are known colleagues, students and friends. This private act, so hidden, anonymous, so heroic, is a silent witness to hope, an echo of the courage of Hiroshima.

I thought of her when I rode the ferry across the Seto Inland Sea to Etijima, the island-academy of the Japanese Naval Self-Defense Forces (formerly the Imperial Navy). An English speaking lieutenant graciously gave me a guided tour of their museum, a two hour immersion into Japanese military history: the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the invasions that were wars into Korea, Manchuria, Shanghai, the Phillipines, the Pacific War with the United States. Then Hiroshima, then Nagasaki.

The museum houses large oil paintings of past Japanese naval victories and their heroes, torpedoes used at Pearl Harbor, portraits of, and last letters from, those honored young, the suicide pilots of battles commemorated by large maps of vast water. There are flags and photographs, uniforms and diaries, relics of an idolatrous Emperor worship that birthed such an excess of violence; yet at the same time it is an exhibition of heroism that is both incomprehensible and moving.

The silence that ignores the past or attempts to rewrite history does not belong to Hiroshima. On August 6, 1946 when Christian *hibakusha* of Hiroshima gathered to pray for peace, to appeal for peace, they began with a confession of sorrow for the violence their nation had inflicted on others.

To remember the past. Of approximately 320,000 *hibakusha*, 30-40,000 are Koreans. They were in Japan as forced labor, among the one and a half million Koreans who worked in military camps and deep mines, built roads and tunnels, did the hard and dangerous work shunned by others in a nation whose “able-bodied” citizens were soldiers at war.

The Koreans are *hibakusha* not only because of the United States government, but as the direct result of Japanese militarism. Their story began, not in 1945, but in 1904, when their nation was brutally invaded, their land appropriated, their names, clothing, religion and customs changed. For the many who emigrated to Japan for economic reasons there was, and still is, discrimination and poverty. Korean *hibakusha* are those “hidden in the valleys,” their plight (especially for those who returned to Korea), far worse than that, certainly distressing, of Japanese *hibakusha*, who at least have a measure of financial security and most important, a comprehensive, excellent and compassionate system of medical diagnosis and treatment.

The first *hibakusha* medical relief law was not passed until 1957, a complicated system of benefits,

which have increased over the years, administered by the central government as a “special social security measure.” For many years *hibakusha* groups, along with the city governments of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have called for the “completion of A-bomb relief measures” under the national indemnity clause. The distinction is critical: present measures are “charity” for “victim”; changing the source of funding would recognize that *hibakusha* have suffered because their government started a war in 1941.

The United States, under the terms of the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan, is exempt from financial liability. By then American physicians and researchers at the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) were aware of the delayed effects of radiation. By then they had seen acute and subacute radiation sickness and the blood disorders that decreased resistance to infection. They had heard the complaints of fatigue and weakness. They had seen keloids form on healed radiation burns, scars so thick that muscles contracted and severe deformities resulted, scars that recurred after surgical removal. By then they had seen leukemia begin its scourge through the *hibakusha* population. They had not yet seen the cataracts (which at least were operable) or the solid tumors, for they did not appear until 1960, cancers of the thyroid, breast, lung, salivary gland, and most recently, of the stomach. They had seen but told no one of the microcephalic children, the youngest *hibakusha*, those exposed in utero, born with physical and mental retardation.

Recently American survivors of the Japanese prison camps of Bataan and Corregidor petitioned Congress to allow them to sue Japan and the now prosperous industries that profited from their labor. After hearing testimony, Rep. Manuel Lujan (R., N.M.), perhaps forgetting the terms of the Peace Treaty, remarked that “it is incomprehensible to think that these survivors have never been allowed to take their case to court—a right inherent to American citizens.”

Indeed. But there are other survivors, also American citizens but of Japanese ancestry, who followed the custom of receiving education in Japan and were residing there when World War II started; unable to return to the United States they were exposed to the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. An estimated 500 *hibakusha* currently live in the United States (predominantly in major West Coast cities) and they too have not been allowed their inherent right to sue.

But how does one sue for elderly orphans, those who, in the normal course of Japanese family life would be cared for by their children? But those children are dead.

How does one sue for the woman scarred by keloids, unable to marry in a society forged on family lines? How does one sue for her loneliness or the years when she hid from unkind eyes a face distorted by thermal burns?

How does one sue for those who see in their minds that day frozen in time, what they did and did not do?

How does one sue for depression and despair?

How does one sue for the memories of orphans who lived in the ashes of the destroyed cities?

How does one sue for the anxiety of *hibakusha* parents awaiting the birth of a child and wondering if this son or daughter will be one more victim of *Gembaku*?

How does one sue for the fear of cancer that any day could become the reality?

If one cannot sue one becomes a servant.

As the Shinkansen bore me to Hiroshima I thought of presenting myself at the Atom Bomb Hospital, its 170 beds reserved for *hibakusha*, and asking to be an aide. It would have been a silent month, without common speech; but with touch and eyes we would have communicated, as I fed, washed, turned and cared for a person whose life was shattered in one moment, unseen from 31,600 feet. But I would see that face and know of its textures, and kneeling at the side of a bed, as others kneel at the foot of the cross, I would have entered the mystery of suffering.

There was not that silence; for ironically my novitiate was a time of many words; and as I listened to those of my translator, or the cadences of the Japanese I did not understand but for the word *Gembaku*, I wished for the eyes of the saint or the eyes of history, to see what they saw and heard that day and see and hear still.

The crowds of people naked or with ragged, scorched clothing walking with arms outstretched "like ghosts" to protect the flesh hanging in strips from their bones. Faces bloody from cuts inflicted by flying glass. People escaping to nearby mountains and suburbs, their massed, panicked steps "like a silent movie." The cries, of children begging for parents, of pleas for water, the screams of those trapped beneath the rubble of buildings collapsed by the force of the blast.

The rivers of Hiroshima are again clear and beautiful, and I walked along the beautifully manicured banks of the six branches of the Ota River which offered respite from urban confusion. But once those rivers were filled with bloody corpses "swelled like dead fish," the bodies of those who

plunged into them seeking relief from pain and thirst.

Horror, confusion, stark terror—the suddenness of the bomb, the flash and boom that cannot be described, the fires that raged, and then the black rain, its cold, heavy drops falling on the destroyed city, spreading the invisible death of radiation to those untouched by the blast, widening the circle of casualties.

And always, apologies, for the inadequacy of language to explain those scenes.

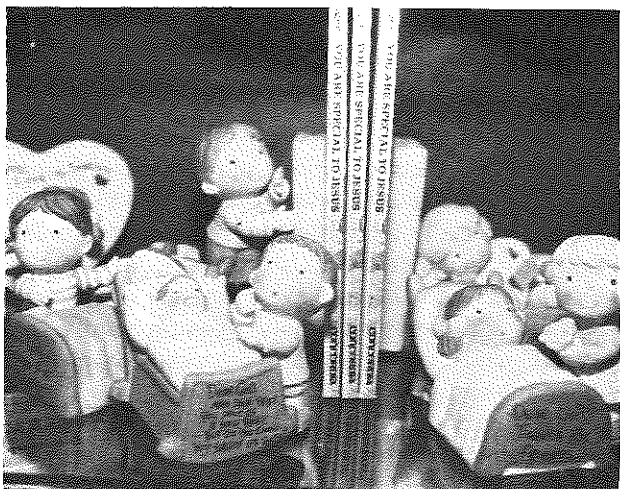
And always, "No one except *hibakusha* can know *hibakusha*," spoken as an apology and a warning, given not to dissuade me from my task, but to remain humble and be modest in my expectations.

And always, silence.

The dead of Hiroshima are silent and what is said is in remembrance of them.

Most *hibakusha* are silent. Those I spoke with are activists who have found meaning by participating in the peace community. (Ironically another American incident galvanized the Japanese peace movement, the 1954 Bikinia Atoll atmospheric testing of the hydrogen bomb. A Japanese fishing vessel, Lucky Dragon #5, was 80 nautical miles from the site, outside of U.S.-set limits, but its 23-man crew, and large tuna cargo were contaminated by radioactive fallout. Several men were hospitalized for acute radiation sickness, and one man died. The resulting anger and fear, fed by the callous American response, broke years of silence for many *hibakusha*.)

Thirty-nine years have passed and *hibakusha* are getting older, some nearing and reaching the average life expectancy of ordinary Japanese. As they age even *hibakusha* who have been silent feel the need to write of their experiences, to commit, at least on paper, what they have carried in their hearts for so



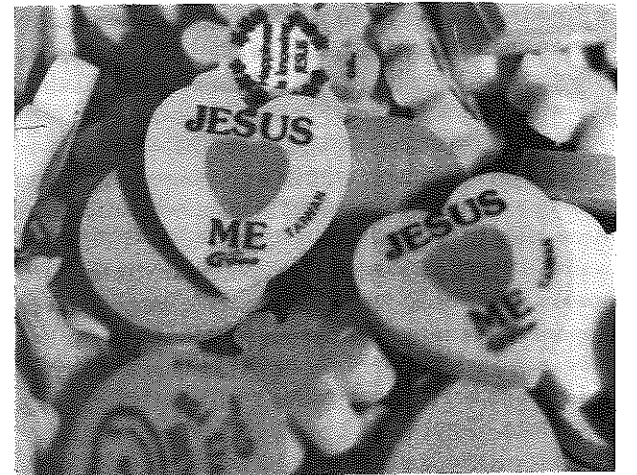
many years. They are witnesses, alive when so many are not, to the dead who are remembered in the over one hundred monuments seen throughout Hiroshima, and their suffering is intertwined with the reality of the 140,000 who died that day and in the weeks that followed.

Some *hibakusha* have been silent because their years have been a struggle for survival, poverty in the midst of a nation and city that prospered in an economic "miracle" (that received its first "boost" from the Korean War). Large corporations (which offer the much discussed "lifetime employment") have been reluctant to hire *hibakusha* because of fears that medical complications would lead to excessive absenteeism and poor work habits. Many *hibakusha* have worked at low-paying menial jobs to support themselves and their families, long hours of tedious labor that have contributed to their silence because quite simply there was no time or energy to do more than sustain life.

Even silent *hibakusha* have a deep yearning for peace. Tomin Harada is a Hiroshima surgeon and peace worker. He was the physician that accompanied the twenty-five "Hiroshima Maidens" to the United States in 1955, a project led by Norman Cousins (then editor of the *Saturday Review*), an eighteen month undertaking of Jewish and Quaker groups during which time the young, severely scarred women received free plastic surgery, and an outpouring of love and concern from ordinary Americans that was as restorative as the surgery.

Dr Harada tells a story about his friend, the British composer Malcolm Williamson who visited Hiroshima in preparation for writing a score based on the Edmund Blunden poem, "Hiroshima, A Song for August 6, 1949". Two *hibakusha* spoke with him; one, "Miss A," has been active in the peace movement, traveling and speaking widely. "Miss B" has been silent, a silence imposed by her long years of illness. Keloid scars remain as visible reminders of the bomb, but invisible radiation caused breast cancer that necessitated first a right, then a left mastectomy, followed by extensive radiation treatment that caused deterioration of the skin of her chest wall, so severely that at times bone fragments have protruded. She told Mr. Williamson that she envied "Miss A," wished she were able to be an activist, but all she could do was relate her story and show her chest wall. After a brief glance the composer flinched and said it was enough.

Dr. Harada has no patience with those who romanticize *hibakusha*; they are unique individuals, some good, some not. "Most are very good natured, very humble. Some are next to God." The complexity of a human life cannot be defined by their sharing one moment of history. Like all of us they are that fragile mingling of flesh and spirit, good and evil,



hope and despair, but they happened to be in Hiroshima or Nagasaki on August 6 or 9, 1945 and became the objects of a scientific experiment, pawns with which to make a political statement, not only to the Japanese government but to the Soviet Union, thus setting the tone for the cold war that has deepened these past 39 years.

Theirs is a powerful witness for peace, for their knowledge of war is imprinted on their flesh. Theirs is an eloquent witness for peace, told in written and oral testimonies, in novels, essays, poetry, photography, film. Theirs is the offering of time and energy and compassion to warn us of a reality too terrible to contemplate. Theirs is a truth that speaks beyond the specifics of August 6, 1945 for Hiroshima is a human, not only a *hibakusha*, experience.

Theirs is a witness that has encountered the other side of silence, deafness. There is deafness even in Japan, with sixty percent of its population born after the war, and so unaware of the loss and privation and suffering of those years, a nation which enjoys peace and affluence in a congenial and comfortable society. (Last year 50,000 students from 3,500 Japanese schools visited Hiroshima and toured the Peace Park as part of peace education studies. No one who goes there can leave unchanged.)

There is deafness in the United States, partly from "residual guilt" (someone asked me, before my departure, if I feared "residual radiation") and partly from cultural differences and that Western desire to "understand" in a "rational" manner which creates neat (but ultimately false) categories. Hiroshima belongs to no categories. Hiroshima can not be studied or understood. Hiroshima is to be approached not with the callous silence of apathy or the false silence of rewritten history but with the respectful silence of a reverent bowing in face of the suffering of others.

There is deafness in the world that continues to test weapons, develop more deadly systems, cease negotiations before they start and no matter how eloquent the pleas of Hiroshima all of the evidence tells them the world does not hear.

There is deafness (perhaps most tragically) in good and concerned people, those who pour energy, time and money into cause after cause, war after war, issue after issue but largely forget *hibakusha*, whose war will never be over. If they remember them it is to speak the words "Hiroshima and Nagasaki" as slogans of warning, words part of a litany of horror: *hibakusha* exhibit number one in political arguments.

Let them be. Let them speak their words free of the distortion of our fear. Listen to their words but also to their silence, a discipline that imparts clarity of vision. In Hiroshima, as in other communities, the novice has to learn the symbols and the language they speak.

One symbol of Hiroshima is its rooftiles. In 1977, looking for bomb-related materials, high school students discovered melted roof tiles along the banks of the Ota River, near the Peace Park. They dug for more of them and soon a "roof tile campaign" had begun, and quickly spread. Science classes experimented on other tiles to determine the heat necessary for them to burn (2000° F); offered to teachers throughout the country they became silent witnesses to the rivers of Hiroshima that had received the bodies of those offered up on the altar of science and military expediency.

Hiroshima city officials announced plans to clean the riverbed, despite the pleas of students that they wait until all bomb-related evidence had been gathered. The city did build a monument, constructed with the roof tiles, commemorating the peace concerns of high school students. The tiles that remained were sent around the country to "pass on the atomic bomb experience."

"We ask you to show your friends these tiles and think of peace together. Please look at them, see those who were burnt on that day. Please listen to the cry of the tile, the cry of the people. We must not let the tile sleep. The things which tell us of that day are disappearing one by one. The tile must speak."

Of all the permutations of Hiroshima's silence the most destructive was that imposed by the Occupation's Press Code, a systemic barrier to knowing about *hibakusha*, planned to hide the effects of

radiation, an atmosphere that allowed the nuclear priesthood the secrecy necessary to develop a new generation of weapons.

Issued with the "objective of establishing freedom of the press in Japan" on September 19, 1945, it had, among its components:

- (2) Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb the public tranquility.
- (3) There shall be no false or destructive criticism of the Allied Powers.
- (4) There shall be no destructive criticism of the Allied Forces of Occupation and nothing which might invite mistrust or resentment of those troops.
- (8) Minor details of a news story must not be overemphasized to stress or develop any propaganda line.

"Designed to educate the press of the Japanese in the responsibilities and meaning of a free press" it emphasized "the truth of news and the elimination of propaganda." (Japan, under its totalitarian military government, had censorship during the War, but visible blanks indicated censored material. The Occupation Press Code was more subtle, hypocritical and thorough.) The Press Code applied to "news, editorials and advertisements of all newspapers and will cover, in addition, all publications printed in Japan." That meant: poetry, essays, novels, photographs, medical information, and *hibakusha* testimonies. A most effective silence.

Dr. Ichiro Moritaki was forty-five at the time of the bombing and a professor of philosophy at Hiroshima University. Since it, like other educational facilities, was closed during the war, he supervised students, mobilized to work at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, and although 4 km from the hypocenter he was blinded by a shard of broken glass that pierced the center of his right eye. (Colleagues and students told him of the city's devastation as they took turns caring for him; he dictated their words for his diary, one of the few records of the immediate aftermath of the bombing, reflections interspersed with treatment schedules, his temperature curve, and the name of the students who cared for him in two hour shifts.)

In 1962 the worsening international situation, signaled by both the United States and Soviet Union's atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, led Dr. Moritaki to a significant protest. He decided to sit in front of the Memorial Cenotaph (its black stone coffin containing the names of all who have died from *Gembaku*) 24 hours a day, in silence, in classic Zen posture. (Thinking his action would disturb the University he submitted his resignation which was rescinded twelve days later at the insistence of friends and colleagues.)

One day a small child asked him "Can you abolish nuclear weapons by sitting?" It was, he said, the "great question of my life" and he formulated his answer in the phrase "the chain reaction of spiritual

atoms will overcome the chain reaction of material atoms."

Dr. Moritaki believes that Hiroshima ushered in more than the nuclear age; it also began the new morality of universalism. That which was a "good" before (tribe, nation, community) Hiroshima is insufficient; now we must identify with humanity, not with acts of philanthropy, but by actualizing the knowledge that we are one community with one destiny and our sole loyalty must be to that community.

Hospitalized for six months for treatment of his eye injury, Dr. Moritaki used that time of enforced inactivity to meditate on the direction of modern civilization, one of power that could only be combated by a civilization of love, of agape.

Rejecting the dichotomy of philosophy and activism, Dr. Moritaki is a man who, like Gandhi (whose autobiography sits on the tall bookshelves that line his study wall) has used his life as an experiment in truth. Thoroughly rooted in Japanese culture and philosophy, Dr. Moritaki is also a true universalist, a man who, in any time or nation, would be recognized and called great.

Earlier that day I saw Dr. Moritaki when I sat with him and others in front of the Cenotaph. The sitting he began twenty-two years ago continues, one hour of silent sitting "with the dead of Hiroshima" the day following the testing of a nuclear device. At once simple and powerful, the silence of that hour was broken only by the haunting rhythm of the drums carried by three Buddhist monks. Our late afternoon visit was only commentary on that hour which itself was commentary on the stark inscription of the Cenotaph, "Let All the Souls Here Rest in Peace: For We Shall Not Repeat the Evil."

When he visited Hiroshima in 1981 Swedish diplomat Olof Palme said "for all peoples in the world, Hiroshima, is, today, already both myth and reality." A friend, who had been to Hiroshima during the August 6 commemoration, wrote me before my trip and said that it was "holy ground."

Myth, reality, holy ground, I no longer know what the words mean, but I believe they are true. Apathy, too, is a word for Hiroshima, not in those streets, but in this country, and I ached when I returned to see that apathy and in response I felt anger and an evangelical intensity to shake people into awareness, but that would be a betrayal of all I learned in that remarkable month. I did not learn what I expected to, and I know now it was arrogance to think I would discover the "truth" of Hiroshima.

I did discover hope, for despair had been my "keloid of the heart," but those with keloids of the skin believe they have survived to warn, but also to transform the world's idolatrous assent to war as a means of solving conflict.

Hiromu Morishita was fourteen when he was exposed to *Gembaku*, a student working to create fire lanes in the center of the city; 1.5 km. from the hypocenter, the skin of his face and hands was "pulled off" due to the heat of the bomb. The resulting scars are noticeable at first, but they seem to fade, overcome by his gentleness and the deliberate patience with which this poet chooses his words. A teacher and activist who has traveled throughout the world he is a master calligrapher and he invited me to an exhibition of his students' work. One student I met explained that when she sees a poem she thinks before writing, but Mr. Morishita "looks at a poem and does not think, because his heart moves his hand." More than a student honoring a master it expresses the discipline that brings spontaneity and freedom, a goal for the novice and writer who is surrounded by the silent symbols of Hiroshima.

From my ceiling hang one thousand folded cranes, Japanese symbol of happiness and longevity, symbol of Hiroshima since 1955 when Sadako Sasaki, twelve years old, died of leukemia, a manifestation of A-bomb disease, and she tried to complete one thousand cranes, for Japanese tradition teaches that they will bring the fulfillment of one's wish. They are found all over the city, not only at the monument called "The Tower of a Thousand Cranes," but in doorways and offices. On the wall is a smaller lei of one hundred, presented to me by a young student member of *Orizuru no kai*, the paper crane group, a gift that joined me to the community I had entered. It was that night I heard Mr. Ichiri Kawamoto speak to 160 Osaka students, simple and gentle words telling them, and me, that it is not enough to have sentimentality or "just feel sad" but that compassion begins with being attentive to, and learning the true feelings of others. *Hibakusha* do not want sentimentality or pity; to offer them that obscures the restraint with which they speak of their experience.

On the wall is my Carp hat, one of Hiroshima's surprises; for although I know and care nothing about professional sports, I found myself joining those most fanatical of fans in a nation of baseball fanatics. (I sometimes think that I would "understand" Hiroshima if I could understand my singular devotion to the Carp.) They represent the rebuilding

of Hiroshima. City funds were used to build the municipal stadium, and in 1950 a large drum was placed in front of City Hall, to which individual citizens donated funds to organize a team. Since then it has been purchased by the Toyo Kogyo Company (Mazda), but in its early years it was the only professional baseball team in Japan owned by individual citizens. Like the mid-1960's New York Mets, the Carp were consistently at the bottom of their league, not winning the Pennant until 1975, a victory the city celebrated with justifiable exuberance, and quantities of free sake.

On the desk are two *hibakusha* medical certificate books, samples given me at Hiroshima's City Hall; holding them in my hand I am connected to the hundreds of thousands who carry those books, not as samples, but as daily reminders that unlike the victims of "conventional" war their lives can never be as once they were.

On one wall is the calligraphy Mr. Morishita gave me in its simple frame, Japanese characters that say "The mind is pure and deep like spring water." Near it is the photograph given me by Mr. Yoshito Matsushige, taken at 11:00 a.m. that day, showing a group of partially clothed or naked people gathering near a bridge; one sees collapsed buildings and in the distance, fire. It was Mr. Matsushige who reminded me of the difference between imagining and feeling what others suffered, as he showed me photographs and told stories of wandering the city, camera in hand, recording for history the destruction of Hiroshima, unable to offer more than words of encouragement and tears to those who walked or lay in stunned silence.

That photograph was taken 2.3 km from the hypocenter, near a bridge I crossed twice daily, as I went around Hiroshima from my temporary home at the World Friendship Center. Twenty years after Barbara Reynolds began it, with a vision and a belief that *hibakusha* had a special role to play in the world, I shared the fruits of her work and that of countless others, who believe that friendship, which destroys the stereotypes of propaganda on which wars are based, is one way to contribute to peace. Because of her vision Hiroshima became, not a month-long interlude, but a home, a time of somber thought, and more often, of laughter and friendship.

Of all the gifts I received the ones most special are in my mind and heart, the stories of pain and courage narrated by *hibakusha*, the steadfast, faithful work of doctors, social workers, and ordinary people who care about them, who seek them out, listen to their pain and do what is incumbent on us all, pay attention.

And to Hiroshima I took the gift of a story told by a young woman in California, of her childhood in a small Oregon farming community, "a hospitable mix of cultures and religions." When her paternal grandfather died, her family inherited an old, beautiful Japanese porcelain vase, much loved and treasured. One day her father gave it to a Japanese family in the community, explaining only "They will appreciate it more than we ever could," an excuse she felt totally inadequate to the loss.

During her childhood she was ignorant of the "relocation" of Japanese families during the War, and when finally told, those facts were accompanied by stories of how neighbors protected their land and possessions. She wonders now if those "gentle heroics" were idealized in the telling, but thinks they must have carried truth because "otherwise the aftermath of the war could not have been so full of sweet communion."

While telling the story she realized, for the first time, that her father's gift was "an act of reparation, of regret, of restoration, of repentance. The words are inadequate. They speak too loudly, too consciously, of a gesture which perhaps came from all of them but, then again, certainly from none of them. The gift was a gift of recognition and reverence...his was a racial gesture. Racial reverence replacing, reversing racial paranoia. The gift was a simple and spontaneous act reflecting an honest movement of the heart. I also know that it was an act of reconciliation. Innocent and gratuitous. No longer needed for healing in their time. Perhaps its gentle force can help us now."

A silent gift, as is Hiroshima.

Faith and Hope in the Nuclear Age

A Reflection on the United States Bishops'

Pastoral Letter on War and Peace

Michael J. Baxter

1. The Problem with the Pastoral

This pastoral letter is more of an invitation to continue the new appraisal of war and peace than a final synthesis of the results of such an appraisal. We have some sense of the characteristics of a theology of peace, but not a systematic statement of their relationships.

The Challenge of Peace, No. 24

Anyone with more than a passing interest in the Christian response to the present nuclear crisis recognizes the importance of the U.S. Catholic bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*. (Passages and reference numbers in *The Challenge of Peace* are taken from the text carried in the Appendix to Jim Castellini, *The Bishops and the Bomb*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983) The bishops have certainly not been without their critics, but the moral framework and analysis they provide has been widely accepted. That the bishops recognize the complexity involved in formulating a response to the arms race is evident from the cautious quality of the Letter itself. It is, as they hasten to point out, only one part of the 'fresh appraisal of war' mandated by the Second Vatican Council. It is not a set of fixed conclusions about the morality of nuclear weapons, but a framework within which moral discourse can and must continue. It is designed to promote the kind of reflection that will eventually lead to comprehensive, coherent "theology of peace."

Seen in this light, the Letter has been judged a success. The literature published in the past year on nuclear weapons, and on the Pastoral itself, indicates that theologians and ethicists have continued to work toward developing a "theology of peace." More-

MICHAEL J. BAXTER is a Holy Cross religious presently serving as a deacon and starting a house of hospitality in Phoenix, Arizona. He has a B.A. in Political Science and History from Allegheny College, and recently completed the M. Div. at the University of Notre Dame.

over, a vast array of educational resources has emerged since May, 1983 from the United States Catholic Conference, from diocesan justice and peace centers, and from social justice commissions in the parishes. Consciousness of the meaning and danger of the arms race has begun to grow among people in the pews. Throughout the country, Catholics at all levels are toiling over what to do about nuclear weapons. For entering squarely into the national debate on nuclear weapons and for bringing the present crisis to bear upon Catholic consciences, the bishops have received resounding praise from many quarters of American public life, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

But there is something troubling about all the praise the Pastoral has received over the past year. The importance of the Pastoral has been viewed primarily in terms of public policy. The bishops have been credited with making wise, prudent judgments on which nuclear strategies are most likely to avert nuclear war, which elements in deterrence strategy are morally flawed, which approaches will best sustain meaningful disarmament talks, and so on. These are public policy issues, issues having to do with statecraft. Of course, the assumption in taking up these issues is a valid one. The church is always obliged to concern itself with the affairs of the state. The troubling aspect of this genuine concern, however, is that the bishops, in writing the Pastoral, have become preoccupied with the perplexities of statecraft.

Herein lies the problem. This heavy concern with statecraft has left the Pastoral lacking an adequate evangelical understanding of the present nuclear crisis. The Letter is couched in Christian language. Its unswerving concern for the welfare of humanity is borne out of a deep commitment to Christ. And the hope offered in the Letter, that one day the dread weapons will be abolished and humanity will survive, is drawn from a religiously inspired optimism. But the overall shape of the Pastoral, its leading emphasis, and its overriding moral concerns, usher forth only a partial and fragmented Christian vision. The bishops have presented a careful and noteworthy moral analysis, at the heart of which is a well-crafted, public policy statement. But this agenda has distracted the bishops from issuing a distinctive, unmistakable confession of Christian hope.

In this article, I will suggest how the response to the nuclear crisis in the Pastoral has been overly informed by the larger, more secular understanding of the arms race ("Our Response"). The general search for a deliberate policy solution is appropriated by the bishops into a progressive eschatology, one that places great hope in the ability of nation-states to order themselves along the lines of some form of international government. The problem with this expectation is that their version of Christian hope becomes tied to the precarious quest for world government, making it vulnerable to the same doubt and despair about the future which prevails in society generally, and which obscures the true nature of Christian hope. Then I will show how this secular view has been translated into a disconcerting theological presumption, namely, that the arms race threatens the sovereignty of God. A distinction between church and state is suggested as a way to understand the arms race more in keeping with the Christian belief about God's providence and about the kingdom of God ("God's Promise"). Finally, I will suggest how a proper understanding of God's sovereignty can serve to reorient the way in which the church relates to the state, and in doing so can bring to light both pastoral and political concerns often overlooked when the first agenda of the Christian response to the nuclear crisis is directed to public policy-making for the nation-states.

The bishops state that their theology of peace and peacemaking is as yet undeveloped. It is important to note this admission. It would be a mistake to criticize the Pastoral as if it were a fixed, doctrinal statement; it is not. The reflections I make are a partial commentary focussing on what I perceive to be a deep theological and pastoral need in this time, namely, a confident and unapologetic Christian faith vision. We live in a time of fear. Talk of global demise is commonplace. For Christians the present crisis is ultimately a spiritual crisis. It challenges the faith that the crucified and risen Lord has in fact conquered sin and division and death. It tests the hope that Christ will indeed come again. The extent to which the bishops' Letter does not address this present crisis with full Christian conviction is the extent to which the Pastoral is not pastoral.

2. Our Response

We see with increasing clarity the political folly of a system which threatens mutual suicide....But it is much less clear how we translate a "no" to nuclear war into the personal and public choices which can

move us in a new direction, toward a national policy and an international system which more adequately reflects the values and vision of the kingdom of God.

The Challenge of Peace, No. 134

Early in the Pastoral Letter, the bishops refer to a statement made in 1981 by Pope John Paul II at Hiroshima: "From now on it is only through a conscious choice and through a deliberate policy that humanity can survive" (No. 3). The first step in this two-fold agenda is a relatively uncomplicated "conscious choice" to survive, which for the bishops means not using nuclear weapons. (A case is made against the concept of limited nuclear war later in the Pastoral, Nos. 157-161.) The second step, the "deliberate policy," is a far more complex moral matter. As the bishops explain, "the danger of the situation is clear, but how to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, how to assess deterrence, and how to delineate moral responsibility in the nuclear age are less clearly seen or stated" (No. 138). The main body of the Pastoral, parts two and three, is given to this task.

The bishops make several specific recommendations designed to reduce tensions between the superpowers. Deterrence strategy is tolerated, but only insofar as it enables general disarmament to occur. Linked to this tentative moral framework is a longer range program for international stability. It requires continued arms control talks and reductions. Yet it also entails a host of creative responses to the challenges along the road to peace, including development of civilian-based defense systems, methods for nonviolent conflict resolution, programs for achieving economic equity among nations, and so on. In the hope of addressing the root causes of friction among nation-states, the bishops call for an increased spirit of interdependence in the international community and for stronger world governmental organizations such as the United Nations.

The bishops' guidelines for a deliberate policy has drawn much praise from both religious and secular commentators. One of the clearest articulations of the importance of the Pastoral has come from Jonathan Schell, author of *The Fate of the Earth*, a series of articles that became a leading statement of anti-nuclear sentiment shortly after being published in *The New Yorker*, January, February, 1982. In a recent sequel to that article, entitled "Reflections: The Abolition," Schell offers a critical analysis of what he calls the "new movement" to abolish nuclear weapons. The Pastoral receives highest commendation. "The American bishops' pastoral letter," he writes,

exemplifies both the spirit and the substance of the new movement. It subjects the nuclear policies of the great powers to searching moral and intellectual scrutiny....Like the peace movement as a whole, the bishops are not diagnostic radicals but prescriptive moderates. They reserve judgment on the deeper political questions, perhaps because they believe (as I do) that it is only on the prior foundation of a sound moral and intellectual understanding of the predicament that a political solution can be built.... Seen in this light, the political hesitancy of the bishops and of the movement as a whole must be judged a strength, not a weakness. It bespeaks a wise open-mindedness, not a fatal impracticality or a neglect of the realities of political life. It means only that the bishops are addressing the issue in the two stages mentioned by the Pope: first the "conscious choice," then the "deliberate policy" (Jonathan Schell, *The New Yorker*, Jan. 2, 1984, p. 66).

Schell finds great hope in the bishops' work because they share his presupposition that the nuclear dilemma is basically an issue of public policy. While there are no ready solutions to the dilemma, the "searching moral and intellectual scrutiny" of the bishops seems to be on the right track. Moreover the Pastoral has drawn widespread appeal from supporters of the new movement because of the promise it holds out for increasing public support for the anti-nuclear movement at large. The bishops conceive "their role as moral teachers precisely in terms of helping to form public opinion with a clear determination to resist resort to nuclear weapons as an instrument of national policy" (No. 139). The Letter seeks to deliver "both an invitation and a challenge to Catholics in the United States to join with others in shaping the conscious choices and deliberate policies required in this 'moment of supreme crisis.'" Predictably this agenda would be received favorably in the secular peace movement such as Schell describes. The bishops have, as Schell puts it, successfully "reopened" the forty year old problem and brought it before the public.

By no means is the nuclear dilemma on the verge of being solved however. The problem of formulating a deliberate policy is perplexing, as everyone is aware, especially as regards deterrence. The heart of the problem is deceptively simple. The weapons that risk a nuclear catastrophe are the very ones that ward it off. A serious, openly stated intention to use the weapons is necessary to prevent their use. Ethicists have come to label deterrence as paradoxical, resigning themselves to the fact that for the moment there are no good solutions (Cf. Richard McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology: 1983," *Theological Studies*: VI: 1; pp. 122-137). As for recourse to international cooperation and world government, it is impractical at least until the superpowers manage to extricate themselves from deter-

rence strategy and begin to disarm. Yet disentangling deterrence strategy and disarming is inconceivable without the level of mutual trust that would accompany world government. Without moral access to the Soviet Union the option of unilateral disarmament, which some propose as the only solution, could actually destabilize relations and encourage the use of nuclear weapons rather than discourage it. The task of translating humanity's conscious choice into concrete, viable policy is thus frustrated by persistent political constraints. It is in this context that many analysts credit the bishops with adding reason and substance to the national debate. They are particularly enheartened that the Pastoral is marked by a measure of expertise and prudence that peace movements often lack.

There is a political danger, however, in taking up this agenda. For the new movement could backfire, or peter out. Placing so much confidence in the possibility of coming up with a deliberate policy could, at length, give way to widespread disillusion among this new constituency. This means that some political solutions had better appear on the horizon, soon. "Beyond a certain point," Schell warns,

a failure to follow up the choice with a policy will breed discouragement. The peace movement, like the world as a whole, is in need of proposals for action commensurate with the hopes that it has raised, and are answerable to the moral standards it uses to measure present policies. If no such proposals are forthcoming, the peace movement seems to dissipate, just as peace movements in the past have dissipated. In that event, a yet more profound atmosphere of fatalism than people have felt so far seems likely to descend over the world, because people will be convinced that even popular action—previously their one untried hope—is helpless in the face of the nuclear peril....(Jonathan Schell, "Reflections: The Abolition," *The New Yorker*, Jan. 2, 1984, pp. 65-66).

Formulating a deliberate policy is an ultimate political and existential necessity for Schell: political, because there is no conceivable solution without popular support for a general program of disarmament and abolition; and existential, because if such a program fails all human existence, indeed all meaning to human existence, is held dangling over the nuclear abyss. The struggle to come through with the right public policy is nothing less than the struggle to preserve the very meaning to our lives, personal and collective, past and future.

Such an understanding of the present crisis is symptomatic of what Stanley Hauerwas calls "humanistic eschatology." It is a conception of the end times that "allows for no temporal end, no signal of the finite character of our existence" ("Eschatology and Nuclear Disarmament," *New Catholic World*, Nov./Dec., 1983, p. 250). Guided by the assumption that all value is at stake in the search for a deliberate policy, he argues,

the anti-nuclear movement draws on the profound eschatological assumption about the continued necessity of our survival if the world is to have meaning. The possibility of eliminating or at least controlling nuclear weapons thus seems to depend on our willingness to exploit politically this deep conviction. It is our task to insure that the history of the world comes out all right. And at the very least that means we must act to ensure the continued survival of the species (p. 251).

Ironically, a position such as Schell's is guided by the same understanding as those who contend that a more realistic hope lies in the smart strategic use of nuclear weapons rather than in eliminating them (p. 250).

It is hardly surprising in this context that the policy debate has been drawn along the familiar lines of realism and idealism, with the realists underscoring the limits of power politics in the international arena and the idealists insisting that there exists the human potential for renovating political systems. Many analysts, such as Schell, suggest that the arms race has brought with it a new possibility in international relations. Since the dangers pertain to the entire globe, the self-interest of nation-states can be employed to arrive at a new unity which in turn supply the political will needed to dispense with the dread weapons. But it is just as likely, as Reinhold Niebuhr observed two decades ago, that nuclear weapons heighten mutual apprehension and fear among nation-states as it is that they provide the basis for a newfound unity. (Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Atomic Bomb," D.B. Robertson, ed., *Love and Justice: Selections from the Shorter Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr*) This is why the national debate, in which all parties claim to have the welfare of humanity as the priority, has reached such a fixed impasse on the matter of deliberate policy. As a result, the movement is marked, in Reinhold Niebuhr's words, with a medley of hope and despair. It alternates between fear for human survival and hope for human progress. These moods are only exacerbated by considering the abolitionist movement of the early 1980's to be a last ditch effort.

Consequently, Schell's political caveat about the future of the new movement suggests the problem with the Pastoral. Its leading emphasis is geared for generating exactly the kind of prodigious popular resolve that may fail and therefore dissipate into general despair. This is a clearly pastoral problem in that Catholics are apt to fall prey to this mood of helplessness and hopelessness. The problem is not that the Pastoral has contributed to the search for a deliberate policy, but that it misstates how much hope we should have in actually arriving at one and then in implementing it. The Pastoral is replete with hope, but it is a displaced hope, one that concentrates

on how nation-states can resolve the nuclear dilemma and that therefore must reckon with political constraints involved. Furthermore, the Pastoral is informed by the claim that a deliberate policy must preserve our collective survival: "Either we shall learn to resolve these problems together or we shall destroy one another. Mutual security and survival require a new vision of the world as one interdependent planet" (No. 244). Thus it succumbs to the general secular assumption that our primary ethical task is to find a deliberate policy that can work to secure our survival.

On this score, the hope conveyed in the Pastoral is too ambivalent for a coherent Christian vision of the present crisis. Time and again there is reference to our need to have faith in God.

But that need is consistently stated in terms of its function of aiding us in resolving the nuclear dilemma, "in living with danger without being overwhelmed by it; hope is the will to struggle against the obstacles even when they appear insuperable" (No. 3). While the bishops are clear that God will not fail us, they also write that we must not fail him, which means that "we must subordinate the power of the nuclear age to human control and direct it to human benefit" (No. 339). Faith and hope in this sense are pragmatic in substance, for the bishops, in that their function is to bring forth results, a policy that can work. Accordingly, the peace to which God calls us "has an objective basis and is capable of progressive realization." For the bishops, "the realization of the kingdom is a continuing work, progressively accomplished, precariously maintained, and meeting constant effort to preserve the peace achieved and expand its scope in personal and political life" (Nos. 20-21). The peace of the kingdom, in other words, must be built into national and international political structure. The task of implementing a deliberate policy is seen as a crucial part of this overall progressive eschatology.

The kingdom thus serves as a means of sustaining hope while we attempt to secure peace among sovereign states. Both just war theory and pacifism are understood within this pragmatic vision. While the traditions differ on how peace can be defended most effectively (Nos. 73-74), "each contribute to the full moral vision we need in pursuit of a human peace" (No. 121). The reduced worth given to pacifism in the Pastoral, valid only "so long as the rights and duties of others or of the community are not injured" (No. 118), is reflective of this pragmatic understanding of Christian peacemaking. Predictably, just war theory is given far more weight since it is an ethic that is more likely to be of use in regulating war among nation-states. Both traditions are judged primarily in terms of their practical import in mitigating international conflict rather than their in-

herent truthfulness to Christian convictions. Overall, peacemaking is seen as a vocation that must approximate the kingdom by reform of national and international policies.

This eye for pragmatic results is what makes the discussion of the nuclear crisis within the church barely indistinguishable from the general secular discussion. The realists emphasize the prohibiting force of sin in the world. The idealists emphasize the power of human goodness affirmed in the incarnation. But both positions are forged as much by political as theological convictions. And both presuppose a public policy agenda that offers little more than the hope offered in the secular discussion, and many of the same fears.

The Pastoral Letter has raised hopes about solving the nuclear crisis. It has presented a framework for deliberate policy that commands respect. But by construing that deliberate policy as an ingredient of Christian hope, it has in fact placed too high a stake in the ethics of statecraft. Moreover, by linking human progress so closely to eschatology the idea of the kingdom of God becomes what James M. Gustafson calls "a utility device for the fulfillment of human aims" (*Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 41). That national opinion is so divided on which public policies will best serve to avert nuclear war and foster human progress only points up the precarious and incoherent nature of this kind of hope. If the present crisis has shown us anything, it has shown us that our capacity to overcome our own conflicts is limited, even when our darkest fears of annihilation or our most enlightened aspirations are seen as the motivating forces. The bishops are right to resist the fear that prevails in these anxious times. But what is proclaimed in its place is a hope that transcends our own limited ability to bring order to a divided world preparing for nuclear war. What must be proclaimed is a distinctively and unapologetically Christian hope, a hope already guaranteed, through faith, in the victory of the Cross. Our response must not be shaped by the search for a workable solution to the present crisis, but by God's promise.

3. God's Promise

Why do we address these matters fraught with much complexity, controversy and passion? We speak as pastors, not politicians. We are teachers, not technicians. We cannot avoid our responsibility to life up

the moral choices before our world and nation. The nuclear age is an era of moral as well as physical danger. We are the first generation since Genesis with the power virtually to destroy God's creation.

The Challenge of Peace, No. 331

A trend has emerged in theological reflection on the arms race that assumes nuclear weapons are a threat to divine sovereignty. In a remarkably candid speculation on the frightening number of weapons presently poised for delivery, Theodore M. Hesburgh writes that "we would, in the span of a few moments, reverse God's good creation and our own, by wiping out for all time all that is good and beautiful on Planet Earth." Humanity is confronted with a choice: "we may continue creation or utterly destroy it. What sin could be greater? To reverse creation must be the worst blasphemy imaginable." For Hesburgh, this means that "we do what we can," though "we are not assured of success" ("Introduction," Philip Murnion, Ed., *Catholics and Nuclear War*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983, pp. xii-xiii). Krister Stendahl, for three decades the Lutheran New Testament Scholar at Harvard Divinity School, now Bishop of Sweden, has made what amounts to the identical claim in a sermon on the covenant made by God with Noah. God's will is for peace and the avoidance of catastrophe.

But what about us? The ancient teller of the Noah story could not fathom that one day it would be possible for human beings utterly to destroy the earth...But fear, greed, and technology have now created just such a possibility by lethal chain reaction. There has been this quantum leap: nuclear weapons are not just bigger guns. Today's unconditional rainbow covenant is threatened—by us! (Ronald J. Sider and Darrel J. Brubaker, editors, *Preaching on Peace*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982, p. 52).

(That the rainbow covenant, were we able to destroy it, would then be conditional, not unconditional is not taken up.) This presumption is even more startling when stated in Christological terms. Archbishop Oscar Limpscome has been quoted as saying, "Should this world and our species remain in such a way that life in the Father is not possible to generations that would follow, then we have threatened not just the sovereignty of God over the world, but the victory of Christ over sin and death" (Jim Castelli, *The Bishops and the Bomb*, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983, p. 123). Needless to say, the logic, or illogic, of this reasoning is disconcerting.

It is one thing to decry the destructive potential of nuclear weapons along with Jonathon Schell, Helen Caldicott, and others. While that is problematic theologically when used to argue that we must therefore act out of self-preservation, the claim itself

is legitimate on empirical grounds. But it is quite another thing when these ptolemaic speculations on the earth's fate are expanded theologically to presume that we creatures are able to undo the work of the Creator. If this is true, what was started by the group of scientists commissioned by the Pentagon to work at Los Alamos has ended up usurping the sovereignty of God. God's promise to the Church and to the world, it must apparently be supposed, depends on whether or not military and political leaders decide to push the button.

That we now possess "the power virtually to destroy God's creation," as the bishops put it, is a disturbing theological theme because it is at such fundamental odds with the Christian conviction that God's providential care for his creatures is the only constant in a changing, precarious, often chaotic world. It is even more disturbing since it comes from bishops speaking "as pastors and teachers." It can be the result only of a deep presumptuousness implying that humanity in the nuclear age has replaced God in establishing order in the universe, or of a sharply attenuated understanding of what creation is. The claim is reflective of a theology that fails to attend sufficiently, in the words of James Gustafson,

to strands in the biblical and Christian traditions which indicate that the purposes of God are not necessarily coincident with our perceptions of them; which take seriously those intimations of a sovereign power that not only sustains human life and well-being but sets the limits of human pursuits; which tell of a God who not only has enabled human achievements and actions but requires "consent to being," to what is right and good for human beings as they confront their awesome challenges and their inexorable limitations (Gustafson, pp. 96-97).

This failure to appreciate the inevitable disparity between our own limited purposes amid the present crisis and the purposes of God is due to an anthropocentrism that cannot conceive of divine governance except as it serves human well-being humanly understood. The fact that nuclear weapons appear to be such an ultimate challenge weakens or at least distorts an account of faith and hope in God's rule. St. Paul obviously did not have the modern outlook we have acquired, nor did he have any inkling of what a world at war with nuclear weapons would be like. But if he did, the gospel he preached and lived would leave him nevertheless convinced "that neither death, nor life, no angel nor any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love God made visible in Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). For the hope of the gospel is exactly the hope that God will perform for his creation what his creatures are unable to accomplish.

In taking up the mandate of *Gaudium et spes* "to bring the light of the gospel to bear upon 'the signs of

the times'" (No. 13), the bishops have misconstrued this hope. By placing so much credence in the current anxiety over the fate of the earth and how to control it, the importance of the scriptures is seen only in terms of its capacity to "provide us with urgent direction when we look at today's concrete realities." The Scriptures are found wanting because "they do not speak specifically of nuclear war or nuclear weapons, for these were beyond the imagination of the communities in which the scriptures were formed." The bishops are looking for "detailed answers to the specifics of the questions which we face today" (No. 55). But on this basis, there is no ethical utility in scripture regarding any of the issues we face today. As the bishops rightly point out, we inhabit a different world. Yet the "urgent direction" the Scriptures provide remains vague, except as a basically extraneous additive for the sake of inspiration. The problem is that the Scriptures are not merely a technical guide to be applied to our modern dilemmas. Rather, Scripture provides "an experience which has the power to transform us in the encounter between the text and the interpreter," (Sandra Schneiders, "New Testament Reflections on Peace and Nuclear Arms," Ed. Philip Murnion, *Catholics and Nuclear War*, p. 94). It functions, in other words, as a means of interpretation, not application. The deeper meaning of Scripture in ethical reflection is epistemological in that it enables Christians to see, understand, and interpret our world in a way that is consistent with who we are as a people claimed by God. Methodologically speaking, then, the task amid the nuclear crisis of reading the signs of the times in the light of the gospel can be misleading unless we recognize that we need the gospel in order to read the signs of the times rightly. And reading the signs of our times rightly entails subordinating our frustrated attempts to overcome the nuclear crisis to an abiding trust in the sovereignty of God.

The recognition of God's sovereignty established through Christ can free Christians "to see the world accurately and without illusions. Because they are confident that Jesus' cross and resurrection are the final words concerning God's rule, they have the courage to see the world as it is" (Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, p. 50). The most prevalent of these illusions is that God's peace can be wrought through international politics. An agenda that seeks the right policies in international affairs obscures the fact that the nation-state system facilitates the pursuit of worldly power among interest groups. Failure to recognize this indites the public policy agenda with the marks of naivete and false hope. Moreover, by attempting to adjudicate the pursuits of competing nation-states, public policy efforts serve only to underwrite the false ideologies

linked with national security, national defense, political sovereignty, and their associate surrogates. Indeed, the public policy agenda gives nationalistic loyalties and values a veil of legitimacy, even as it seeks to mitigate conflicts among nation-states. For Christians, the catholicity of the community of disciples, the church, enables Christians to understand the nation-state system for what it is: a convention of purely human design that divides rather than unites, even to the point of bringing the world to the brink of disaster.

This distinction between church and state is crucial for a Christian response to the arms race. Efforts to secure a relative peace through a balance of power among nation-states can be only a secondary concern to the peace that is of God. And that peace cannot be built, nor is it within the church's vocation to place its hope in such endeavors. For it is a peace that can only be received. The purpose of the Church and its ministry is to proclaim a peace the world cannot give, to live in a way that acknowledges and reflects the Lord who gives it. As a *light* to the nations, not one of the nations, the peacemaking of the church is distinct set alongside attempts to secure its own survival. Christians are freed from the presumption that it is our responsibility

to make history come out right—either through the possession or dispossession of nuclear arms. Rather, we believe that history has already come out right and just because it has we can take the time, in a world threatened by its own pretensions of control, to seek patiently a truthful peace. Such a peace derives not from our fears but is based on the profound confidence that God has shown us the way he would have his world governed (Stanley Hauerwas, "Eschatology and Nuclear Disarmament," p. 252).

From this eschatological perspective, it is wrong to view pacifism and just war theory pragmatically. Neither are effective as military or political means for securing our survival; they complicate an already complicated struggle to resolve international tensions. Rather both are intelligible only on the grounds that a reverence for life is more important than arriving solutions that are at odds with that reverence: The just war position insofar as it is will lose rather than employ just means for preserving peace, and the pacifist position in that it considers all means that involve taking life to be unjust (Cf. Hauerwas, "Eschatology and Nuclear Disarmament," p. 253). Both traditions are grounded on an eschatological hope that runs counter to the kind of deliberate policies that nation-states can live with.

Peacemaking for Christians is strange indeed. Based not on our need to survive but on our trust in living justly whether we survive or not, it is intelligible only by virtue of God's promise. The gospel provides us with the wisdom to learn how God cares for

his creation in this strange way. The presumption that humanity is now in a position to threaten God's creation only shows how easily God's creation can be misunderstood and manipulated for our own devices. The Christian response to the nuclear crisis is distinct among the conventional responses. For we live not by "a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began" (I Corinthians 2:6a-7).

4. The Challenge of Peace

Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus. The content and context of our peacemaking is set, not by some political agenda or ideological program, but by the teaching of his Church.

The Challenge of Peace, No. 333

Living according to the hidden wisdom that God is sovereign over the world, as Paul did, may appear useless as we stand under the nuclear threat. Proclaiming that the establishment of the kingdom is God's business and not the business of international politics may be considered politically complacent in a world that cannot tolerate more complacency. It has been suggested that the entry into the public policy debate over what to do about nuclear weapons has given the Catholic Church a new kind of political importance and that it is irresponsible not to take advantage of it, particularly on an issue such as the arms race. For decades Catholics, especially of the liberal tradition in America, sought to bring religion out from the purely private realm, out from the sacristy. The fact that the Pastoral dispels the mistaken and all too familiar adage "politics and religion do not mix" (No. 282) should be welcomed, not slighted.

But the virtue of becoming involved in politics depends on the kind of politics involved. The bishops reveal a healthy instinct in this regard when they include the qualifying clauses ("not by some movement of the moment," "not by some political agenda or ideological program") in an otherwise straightforward description of peace and peacemaking. Christ was not a politician; the Church is not merely one political institution among others and Christians are

called to be more than just enlightened members of political coalitions and parties. Alas, the larger portion of the Pastoral does not heed this healthy instinct. Rather it has appropriated an understanding of politics informed by the assumptions of the American political mainstream, the most prominent of which is that politics is public policy.

Historically this is ironic. The Pastoral marks a long awaited break with the past and delivers a challenge to this nation's nuclear policies the likes of which the immigrant church of an earlier era would have recoiled from for fear of being labeled un-American. But the challenge is presented largely on the government's policymaking terms. As a result, the moral dilemma and the moral response is shaped by the problem of how to dismantle nuclear weapons without undermining the political sovereignty and national defense posture of the United States. The most disturbing manifestation of shaping the agenda in this way is the judgment that deterrence is "morally acceptable" (No. 173). Only in terms of a policymaking perspective, with the premium given to national sovereignty and defense, can this judgment be justified. The bishops attempt to relativise the primacy of this agenda by stressing that they and American Catholics are also citizens of the world and that their national loyalty and allegiance must be qualified accordingly. That attempt fails because disarmament and national defense remain in such profound conflict. Consequently, the moral response is similar to that of any number of policy analysts who likewise share a commitment to United States sovereignty and defense. In this sense the "politics" endorsed by the bishops is little more than the politics of the American mainstream.

This is not to say that policymaking of this sort is irrelevant. Certain policies may bring a measure of modesty and restraint to international affairs; may give birth to diplomatic alternatives that can mitigate the inevitable conflicts among nation-states, may even forestall the use of nuclear weapons for an indefinite period of time. While the present state of discussion on these matters indicates that experts are not certain which policies can create the intended results nor of how they may be implemented in the international arena, the search for such policies are important and relevant. It is to say that the terms of the policymaking agenda provide for a moral response to the arms race that is now inadequate, not to say intolerable, in terms of Christian peacemaking. On this score, public policymaking and Christian peacemaking are quite different. They have different loyalties, different priorities, and different perceptions of the arms race. The Pastoral fails to differentiate between the two and is therefore distracted from doing exactly what is necessary for the Church to live out its peacemaking vocation,

namely, to determine its response to the nuclear crisis on its own terms, with its own agenda.

The critical difference between the policymaking and peacemaking agendas hinges on the distinction between church and state. This is not a mere theoretical distinction. With the focus of the Pastoral so heavily directed to the policymaking concerns of the nation-state, Catholics receive the impression that there is little more to do beyond the townhall, the ballot box, and the congressional lobbyingroom. Yet these efforts only intensify the sense of frustration and helplessness among Catholics because, after all is said and done, the fact still remains that there is no foreseeable policy solution. Meanwhile the arms build up continues. The Pastoral has certainly aided Catholics in seeing the arms race for the brutal travesty that it is. But the question is how to respond to it, what to do about it.

Here a distinctive, unmistakable faith in God's sovereignty can reorient the relation of the Church to the state in a way that is meaningful in terms of peacemaking and is by no means politically complacent. For the peace wrought on the Cross calls Christians to extricate themselves from the very divisions that fragment humanity and have brought it to the verge of nuclear disaster. Peacemaking in this sense exacts a cost, a sacrifice on the part of the Church. It calls Christians to renounce the familiar accommodations we make to the nation-state.

Several pastoral concerns raised in the conclusion of the bishops' Letter are pertinent here, Catholics serving in the military, working in defense industries, conducting defense-related scientific research, among others. The bishops ask people to discern carefully the ethical implications of their working lives. This is one of the most meaningful sections in the Pastoral, for it brings peacemaking down to the concrete. Yet the Pastoral does not draw out its full implication. A broader, more detailed set of guidelines is needed, taking up issues such as the morality of paying taxes used for preparing for nuclear war, complying to military induction if, according to just war theory, it will mean participating in unjust war, hosting R.O.T.C. at Catholic campuses, to name but a few. While these kinds of concerns are given brief mention or notes implicitly in the Pastoral, they come as an afterthought. Their importance is deflected by a preoccupation with policymaking.

Take for example selective conscientious objection, which continues to go unrecognized in both civil and military law. The Pastoral calls upon the state to provide "legislative protection" of the rights of Selective Conscientious Objectors, even though lawmakers and the courts have consistently and ex-

plicitly denied its legitimacy. In this case the concrete, pastoral concern is very clear. What should a person conscientiously opposed to a particular war do when the option is either to consent to conscription (or in the case of service personnel, remain in the military) or face possible prosecution and a possible jail sentence? Whether or not it is state policy to allow selective conscientious objection is secondary to the more primary concern of what Christians should do in circumstances where compliance to the state's demands runs contrary to their consciences. R.O.T.C. on Catholic campuses is a similar issue on the institutional level. Should Catholic campuses continue to host R.O.T.C. detachments that prove unwilling or unable, out of responsibility to the state, to reform their curricula in keeping with, say, the just war principle of non-combatant immunity? The leading focus here should be concentrated on the decision that must be made by the religious institution rather than on reforming the military through public policy. These are pastoral questions to which much closer attention should be given in calling Christians to be peacemakers. The ethics of counterforce strategy, hard target kills, or whether or not to use the word "halt" or "curb" in calling for an end to the arms race (a matter that was awarded great attention after the second draft of the Pastoral was released) are secondary to the ethics of bringing peacemaking more concretely into our personal and institutional lives. Not only are policy issues predicated on a form of coercion and power incommensurate with Christian peacemaking. They are also simply abstract and removed from our daily lives. The convoluted logic of deterrence strategy is marginal concern to someone deciding whether or not to work at the Rocky Flats munitions factory.

"Let peacemakers remember," Eric Gill wrote, "let them above all remember that it is no manner of good preaching peace unless we preach the things that make for peace." (*Essays by Eric Gill*, Mary Gill, Ed., London: Jonathon Cape, 1947, p. 52). The concrete pastoral concerns about where we work, the kinds of schools we run, the conflicting responsibilities we have in military service—these are the pastoral concerns that make for peace, and they should be the overriding concern of a Church that preaches peacemaking. The fact that the United States government is unwilling to tolerate the political dissent implied in selective conscientious objection indicates how costly peacemaking is likely to be. The fact that Catholic institutions of higher learning are unwilling to give serious moral scrutiny to the idea of expelling, at least in part, the R.O.T.C. programs they host only shows how reluctant we are to pay (quite literally in this case) such a price. But

these are the pastoral concerns of a people whose allegiance to the kingdom of God overrides the allegiance claimed by the nation-state they happen to inhabit. These are the issues involved in being the disciples of a Master whose peace was wrought on the Cross.

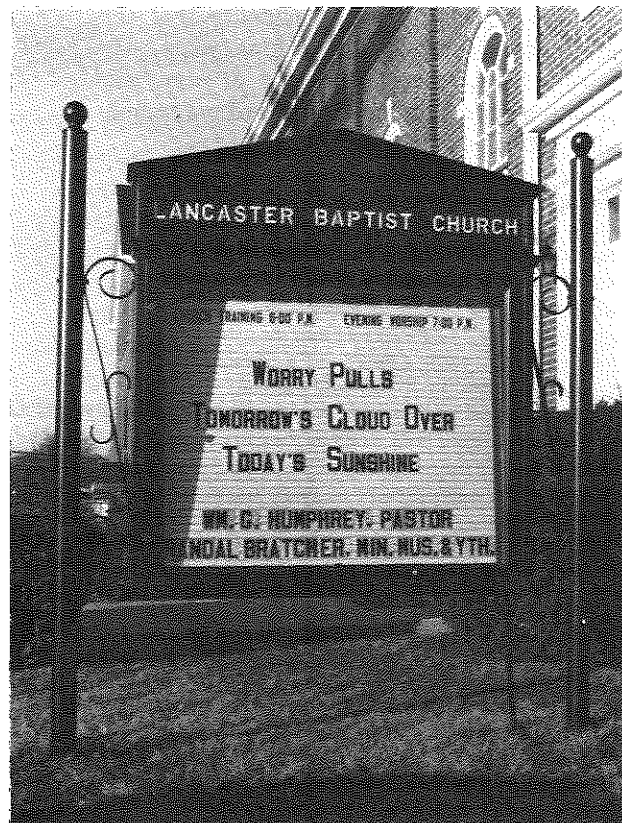
The Pastoral Letter is not shaped very deeply by this understanding. Survival, world government, the sovereignty of nation-states, and how these concerns can be adjudicated through national and international policy comprise the bulk of its content. Nor is it attentive to the pastoral cares that derive from such an understanding. How to remain a good citizen while the government replenishes its nuclear arsenal and insists on preparing to use them is given more careful treatment. But there is evidence that this direction might change in the coming years. The makings of a truly coherent theology of peace and peacemaking are presented in a couple of paragraphs in the final section of the Pastoral:

It is clear today, perhaps more than in previous generations, that Christians are in a minority in nearly every country of the world—including nominally Christian and Catholic nations. In our own country we are coming to a fuller awareness that a response to the call of Jesus is both personal and demanding. As believers we can identify rather easily with the early Church as a company of witnesses engaged in a difficult mission. To be disciples of Jesus requires that we continually go beyond where we are now. To obey the call of Jesus means separating ourselves from all attachments and affiliation that could prevent us from hearing and following our authentic vocation. To set out on the road to discipleship is to dispose oneself for a share in the Cross (cf. Jn. 16:20). To be a Christian, according to the New Testament, is not simply to believe with one's mind, but also to become a doer of the word, a wayfarer with and a witness to Jesus. This means, of course, that we never expect complete success within history and that we must regard as normal even the path of persecution and the possibility of martyrdom (No. 276).

We readily recognize that we live in a world that is becoming increasingly estranged from Christian values. In order to remain a Christian, one must take a resolute stand against many commonly accepted axioms of the world. To become true disciples, we must undergo a demanding course of induction into the adult Christian community. We must continually equip ourselves to profess the full faith of the Church in an increasingly secularized society. We must develop a sense of solidarity, cemented by relationships with mature and exemplary Christians who represent Christ and his way of life (No. 277).

This is the kind of faith vision to serve a coherent basis for understanding and responding to the present nuclear crisis. To bring it about, it is the challenge of peace and peacemaking.

Peacemaking forged on the lordship of Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God is vindicated through faith and hope. The prayer and penance recommended in the bishops' Pastoral (cf. Nos. 290-300) are thus central responses to the present nuclear crisis. As Dale Auckerman has suggested, "our Lord does not wish that we stare heroically into the nuclear abyss; he wishes that we look toward him and let our sight become aligned with his" (*Darkening Valley*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1981, p. 191). But this by no means implies that Christians are



free to resign themselves to the fate of the earth and dismiss the cares of the world. Rather the peace of Christ frees us from the preoccupation with the public policies of nation-states and the power struggles that shape them in order to see and care for those in God's creation for whom the world seems to have no room, the hungry, the imprisoned, the stranger, the refugees of war. The power of the Cross can only be understood as foolishness from the perspective of worldly power. Christians have no ultimate stake in the conventions and allegiances of worldly power; they are more disposed to care for its victims.

Editions cited (page numbers in parenthesis) are: Dale Auckerman, *Darkening Valley*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1981. Jim Castelli, *The Bishops and the Bomb*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983. Mary Gill, Ed., *Essays by Eric Gill*. London: Jonathon Cape, 1947. James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981. Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. Stanley Hauerwas, "Eschatology and Nuclear Weapons," *New Catholic World*, Vol. CCXXVI, 1356 (Nov.-Dec., 1983): 249-253. Richard McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology: 1983," *Theological Studies*, Vol. VL, 1 (March, 1983): 80-138. Philip J. Murnion, Ed., *Catholics and Nuclear War*. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983. D.B. Robertson, Ed., *Love and Justice: Selections from the Shorter Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr*. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1976. Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*. New York: Avon Books. Jonathan Schell, "Reflections: The Abolition," *The New Yorker*, Jan. 2, 9, 1984. Ronald J. Sider and Dorrel J. Brubaker, *Preaching on Peace*. Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1982.

Faith's Social Relevance: Reflections on Kelly Miller Smith's Life and Ministry

Robert C. Williams

"Thank God I done done, I done done
a-what ya' tol' me to do...."
—Black Spiritual

Many confidently draw upon faith in moments of crisis. Faith is employed when we cannot see solutions to problems or perceive the meaning of a crisis; we regard faith as a special disposition to be used in the place of natural sight. Whenever we are privileged to meet folk of genuine faith, we begin the process of learning what faith is and how to exercise it. An appeal to faith is a resolve to live with an attitude of trust and acceptance.

It has been my good fortune to know several persons of resolute faith. The Reverend Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. (October 28, 1920-June 3, 1984) was such a person.

Through religious commitment and caring insight into people and their lives, he triumphed over time, circumstance, and meaninglessness. Moral authority and a determination to struggle evidenced in his life are not easily explained. An endeavor to live the Christian faith was the *modus vivendi* of his activity as pastor and social reformer.

His faith enabled him to be steady in the handling of aspirations, troubles, and fears. Perhaps the most poignant expression of his personal qualities occurred when he lived a courageous faith and fought the onslaught of cancer.

In early September, 1983, while routinely teaching social and religious philosophy courses, I learned that my pastor, also my friend and esteemed academic colleague, had been told he had terminal cancer. Summoning me to his bedside, he discussed frankly his illness and how he, with the aid of faith, intended to cope with it as well as his on-going pro-

fessional responsibilities. I marveled at his percipient courage, at his faith-determination and religious convictions. In him, and especially by means of his candor, I was experiencing a remarkable person who had lived a responsible and humane life exemplified by charm, verve, and wit.

Needless to say, upon hearing about Kelly's illness, I was saddened even as I was overwhelmed by my admiration for him. I had always admired his creative preaching, his work as a social reformer as well as his moral energy and his willingness to serve the church. Now I was admiring his courage and extraordinary faith.

Initially, neither he nor his doctors knew that cancer had already damaged some of his vital organs. He underwent surgery, received medical therapy, and love and care from his family, friends, and congregation. He died ten months later.

During his illness he did not surrender nor did he write himself off. Rather, when facing cancer and death he remained intact as a person.

He communicated with others; he continued to believe in God and to affirm life; he fought against cancer while fulfilling many of the duties at his church; he extended and shared of himself; he hammered out meaning. In life and death he was triumphant, for he did not allow himself to be pressured into retreat, helplessness, or silence.

When he learned that he had cancer, initially he wanted to resist the fact. But he soon accepted it and resolved to live with it. His resolve was to continue to live fully, courageously, and responsibly. Within that resolve came power and a sense of usefulness. He ceased feeling trapped and began to make decisions and to reflect rationally upon choices.

His commitment to the faith and mastery of self are worthy of admiration because he remained active in the struggle to hold fast. He continued to manage his affairs, contributed to his family and household and ministered to members of his congregation and the hospital staff. Through those troubling times I believe he rediscovered the most fundamental and rewarding aspects of living and dying.

What he passed on to me and to others, particularly over the last ten months of his life, enriched me and brought a sober clarity to my understanding of Christian existence and social problems.

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS is associate professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt University, where he teaches philosophy of religion, American and African philosophy and the relationship of philosophy and literature. He is the author of many articles and is completing a book, *Survival and Symbol: An Essay in Philosophy of Religion*.

Born in the deep south—in Mound Bayou, Mississippi—he was educated in the southern region and pastored churches in the south. He was the first black person to teach at Vanderbilt University and, early in his career, he became a leader in the struggle for human rights. In fact, he assumed a major leadership role in the sit-in demonstrations and the desegregation of the south's public schools. He preached in various third world countries, lectured and preached at some of our nation's leading churches and universities, was a founding member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, served with distinction as President of the National Conference of Black Christians, and was National Chairman of the International Freedom Mobilization. In addition to serving on numerous boards and committees of national church and civic organizations he was honored for his peace work by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. When the Committee of Southern Churchmen founded the journal *Katallagete* in 1964, Kelly Smith was active as an articulate voice and forceful presence. He published in that journal as well as in other media of public, ecclesiastical, and scholarly opinion.

Mentally and morally armed, Kelly Smith worked assiduously for social change. *Time* magazine, in the early 1960's reported his key role in negotiating an acceptable peace between the races in Nashville when that city was torn asunder by strife and hatred. To Kelly Smith, moral power, black power, and economic power were important forces for change. Each of these required a trained mind.

The moral-spiritual pilgrimage of thinking and action is complex, disclosing humankind's involvement in the reality of collective evil. Kelly Smith was amply aware of human foibles and limitations, including his own. Many times he talked with me about the human condition, exercising his mind in relation to issues in moral philosophy, problems in theology, and conflicts in contemporary social affairs. He was the most learned pastor-theologian I have known. His knowledge of the body of literature on theology was striking. At a dinner in Nashville, Kelly and theologian Paul Lehmann engagingly discussed the creative and enigmatic role of theology in the ecumenical movement.

Theologically, Smith was an independent thinker in the Baptist tradition who was nurtured in the social gospel, mystical, and neo-orthodox traditions. His theology, however, was firmly grounded in the black religious experience. By temperament he was a pacifist committed to the power of nonviolence in group conflicts. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as easily as he quoted the Bible and Dr. Howard Thurman. "No methodology

for change, including the work of the law courts, can do more about bringing integration than non-violent movements—so from here, we can go to chaos or to community," he said. But his religious journey was centered on an activism shaped by the moral counsel of God and the command to preach the Gospel.

Kelly Miller Smith was my colleague and friend. He tutored my spirit and taught me how to live more creatively and calmly. He taught me by example in the context of enchantingly humorous conversations.

He taught me how to assuage depression and defeat. He taught me how to preach and how to handle conflict. I know some of the times he patiently listened to the minute details of wrongs voiced by some despondent person only to respond by invoking pride, teaching dignity or the virtue of resisting injustice. There were times, also, when he expressed his own anger, fear, and rage at a universe which seemed absurd. He was a great teacher. His wit, wisdom, and love were shared fully and unpretentiously.

Kelly Smith was vital, open and optimistic during his illness. These qualities had been used by him to inspire thousands to reach out emotionally and to struggle to attain purpose in hope and dignity. He will continue to live as a moral and spiritual force within the many, many lives that he touched and by the numerous humanitarian causes which he championed.

Kelly Smith kept the faith and demonstrated its relevance by the forcefulness of his ministry. The black spiritual song—"I done done a-what ya' tol' me to do"—could not be sung in his honor if his faith had not been essential. In fact, his twentieth century faith sang, as it were, the soul of the black spiritual songs without abandoning their religious authenticity, poetry, or plaintive voice.

A few times Kelly Smith was accused of "moderation" in social action. What he was doing, while seeming slow to act, was putting the strategy to the test of his best thinking. When pressed to resolve a social conflict or to intervene by negotiation, he wanted to be assured that any group action already taken was a result of having weighed viable alternatives. A moral restlessness infused Kelly Smith's thinking and his vision of higher possibilities.

Many of his teachers at Howard University, including the Reverends Benjamin E. Mays, Howard

Thurman, and W. Stuart Nelson, were clear and effective thinkers. Like his mentor Benjamin Mays, Kelly Smith often quoted the prophet Micah: "...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" This moral imperative, even when woven in to the knotty fabric of southern politics and religious practice, would suffice to keep an intelligent parson mentally alert and sensitive to the follies of the human predicament.

Kelly Smith wrote a good and provocative book with *Social Crisis Preaching*. It is a scholarly and sensitive work. It embodies the dimension of faith structured within the context of contemporary preaching. It demonstrates the relation of critical social issues to the mission of the church and the venture of Christian witness. The book is a distillation of theological ideas shared with students at the Vanderbilt Divinity School and a product of preaching over thirty years to the challenging congregation of Nashville's historic First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. *Social Crisis Preaching* investigates the theological basis of social awareness.

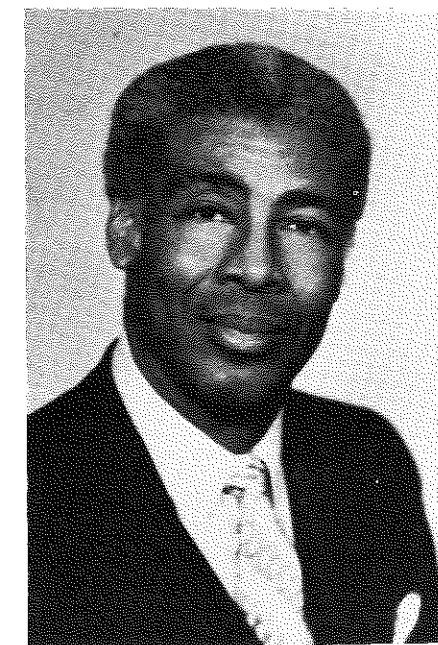
The style of the book is straightforward and readable; the analysis is both biblical and social in intent, the content is pertinent to the concerns of both clergy and laity. Anyone interested in sermons relevant to social-political events and the theological issues of life in the twentieth century will find Kelly Smith's book a valuable one. Reading it most preachers will say "I wish I had written this book."

Those who knew the author will discern that his reflections on the sermon were written with love and insight.

Specifically, Kelly Smith encompassed effective preaching for twentieth century America. He discussed change, conflict, and response. His analysis of religion and social crisis points to the word of God present in the sermon. When the searching "power inherent in that word" is "conjoined with the perceptiveness, commitment, and faithfulness of the preacher who proclaims the word and the people who hear it" the word of God is proclaimed and heard. The sermon rightly delivered, transforms the congregation.

An introduction to the orderly steps of sermon construction is given in the book: locating the biblical text, exploring the existential-theological theme, analyzing the social situation and meshing of form and content. Kelly's intimate account of the making of sermons is a tribute to prophetic preaching. The teachings found in *Social Crisis Preaching* make a compellingly modest proposal: the possibility of a preaching ministry free of both ahistorical spiritualism and sermons without social comment.

Kelly Smith's book complements Charles V. Hamilton's *The Black Preacher in America* and Henry Mitchell's *Black Preaching*. These books make eloquent witness to that preaching forged out of the social matrix of Christianity.



Kelly Miller Smith, Sr.

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