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Valparaiso University

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Cover and above: Weaving and sculpture are among the various art forms which the residents of Bethel, Bielefeld, West Germany, use as essential elements of therapy to help themselves become aware of their abilities to do useful and creative work with their hands.

Over 7000 people live and work together at Bethel. About 2500 of the residents are sick, disabled, or socially unaccepted. The remaining population consists of doctors, psychologists, pastors, teachers, deacons, deaconesses, as well as many other Bethel workers and their families.

The exhibit from Bethel entitled "Creating—Working—Helping" was displayed on VU campus at Deaconess Hall last spring and is touring in the US through 1987.

IN LUCE TUA

Comment on Contemporary Affairs by the Editor

Christians and Political Debate

Few aspects of religious life in America are less edifying than the mutual bashing that regularly takes place between Christians on the political Right and the political Left. Politics is serious and often nasty business, and it becomes notably the more so when ideological differences get compounded by doctrinal intensities.

The political confusion that results from this matters less than does the damage it inflicts on the general Christian witness. We should not be surprised when Christians disagree with each other about the political implications of their faith. They have done so throughout history and there is no plausible reason to expect that situation to change. There *is* cause for dismay, however, when Christians turn their disagreements with each other about politics into charges of bad faith and moral inadequacy.

Much of the time political differences between Christians follow theological lines. Liberal Christians are often liberal in general, and conservative Christians more often than not take a consistently conservative approach to the whole of life. Ideas cluster, and so do people.

But not always: consider the Evangelicals. Evangelical Christians share a commitment to historic Christianity as commonly understood among orthodox believers (at least those in the Calvinist tradition) and they are all dedicated to an intensive and complete grounding of faith and life in the biblical witness. Evangelicals lead integrated lives: all thought and action is submitted unconditionally to the lordship of Christ and the test of scripture.

Yet in recent years, deep political divisions have arisen within the Evangelical community. Surveys indicate that most Evangelicals tend to conservatism in their political views (though many display a populist streak on economic issues); Jerry Falwell cannot be said to speak politically for the entire Evangelical community, but he does represent the dominant trend within it. Yet Falwell hardly goes unopposed. Evangelicals of a liberal or radical political persuasion may still be a minority, but they are increasingly visible and vocal. Through groups such as Evangelicals for Social Action and journals such as *Sojourners* the Evangelical Left has made itself a significant force.

All this represents a marked break from the American Evangelical past, which has, in this century at least, had a distinctively apolitical, or even anti-political, tinge. Most Evangelicals have apparently now changed their minds and decided that faith does, in fact, have political implications, but they have not found it possible to agree as to the specifics of those implications. This has led to increasingly heated exchanges between Evangelicals of differing political views.

The situation has grown serious enough that Ronald Sider, a professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has publicly proposed that something be done about it ("A Plea for Conservative Radicals and Radical Conservatives," *The Christian Century*, October 1, 1986). Profesor Sider himself is on the political Left—he is chairman of Evangelicals for Social Action and a contributing editor of *Sojourners*—but he is attempting to appeal to his fellow Evangelicals above their partisan or ideological loyalties. He deplores the attacks and name-calling on all sides and urges the contending parties to listen more openly and sympathetically to each other, to locate their points of disagreement more precisely, and to covenant together to conduct their political debates "civilly, honestly, fairly, and biblically."

Professor Sider's is an admirable and positive enterprise. He is surely right in urging Christians to conduct their political debates with each other in ways that reflect and honor their common calling. The church should be a zone of decency and integrity in debate about public affairs, a place where political opponents transcend distortions, stereotypes, and exchanges of insults and instead attempt honestly to engage the issues in discussions that, in Professor Sider's words, are "vigorous but not vicious."

Professor Sider is also right to suggest that the Christion Right and Left have much to learn from each other: radicals can teach conservatives that the need for social justice is urgent and that pleas for greater economic equality are not necessarily expressions of crypto-Marxism; and conservatives, for their part, can usefully remind radicals that religious and political liberty are essential to any decent politics and that Leftist governments generally have wretched records in these areas.

Yet while applauding Professor Sider's initiative, we also have to recognize its limits. Professor Sider is not so naive as to believe that integrity and openness among Christians in debate will eliminate deep disagreements and he is not suggesting some sentimentalized version of Christian fellowship whereby we refrain from plain speaking with each other, but he does

appear rather more hopeful than is warranted about the degree of common ground that is likely to be staked out.

His problem stems precisely from his Evangelical perspective. Throughout his essay, Sider returns regularly to the point that Evangelicals contending about their politics must submit their differing views to the test of scripture. He considers it "a farce" that both he and Jerry Falwell "continue forever telling the American public that our contradictory public policy stands are thoroughly biblical." The way out of this scandal is for Evangelicals of all political persectives to sit down together and "test the biblical validity" of their conflicting views. That advice follows from Sider's view that Christians must strive "to submit their total lives to biblical revelation," but it unfortunately expects of scripture other than what it can reasonably be expected to provide.

Most Christians have long since learned not to regard the Bible as a textbook on science; one wonders why so many continue to look upon it as a primer on politics. The Bible tells us what is necessary to make us wise unto salvation, but it ought not be read as a prime source on economics, sociology, or political philosophy. The Old Testament contains many eloquent passages on justice and equity, but general moral exhortations addressed to a tribal theocracy can hardly be expected to provide any sort of blueprint for political behavior in the modern world. And the New Testament simply does not address itself in any concentrated way to the manner in which we ought to make our political arrangements. Sider deplores the habit of Christians bombarding each other with selective proof-texts, but for those determined to base their politics in scripture, there is no alternative. Random proof-texts are all they have.

The awkward reality is that there is no simple way to translate general moral imperatives into public policy. We are enjoined by scripture to peace and justice, but the precise definition of those terms and the means by which they might best be achieved remains entirely problematic. Search the scriptures as we might, we are unlikely thereby to be able to sort out our political differences. The general rules of Christian morality do place certain political options off limits—we cannot be racists or fascists—but within the broad limits of the morally permissible there are endless possibilities for valid choice and perpetual debate.

Christians face the dilemma of having to apply theological and moral principles to their political lives but of disciplining themselves at the same time not to pretend to know more than has been authoritatively revealed to them. They know that they must behave decently and charitably in politics and that they must not succumb to dishonesty, self-deception, or selective moral indignation in analysis of public policy. But beyond that they have only prudence, fallible reason—and, one hopes, large doses of humility—to guide them.

All of which is to say that if Christians hope to reach common ground in political debate, they will find it not through scouring the Bible for a proper political program but through exercising the mutual love, forgiveness, and forebearance that the biblical gospel urges on them and that embodies the unity they enjoy which transcends politics. Beyond that, they are free to fight like the devil.

Day's End

The river makes its presence known
Lying back of town like a lead pipe.
Altering its face like time,
It sometimes flows backwards,
Windruffled like a bulldog's
Hair rubbed the wrong way.
But mostly it flows forward,
Still, reflecting naked
Bones of trees.
Having carried away the apple
Cores of a thousand lunches,
It circulates through
Sclerotic afternoons,
Meandering across my video screen,
Gently tugging my fingers
From their keys.
Then a whistle blows and
The wind rakes
Leaves across the asphalt.
The geese flying south
Honk overhead and
Beat back the light with
Powerful wings.
A shaft of sunlight
Stabs through the clouds.
The river gleams apocalyptic.

Eric Potter

Robert Benne

MUTUAL LOVE AND CHRISTIAN LOVE

Unresolved Tensions in Christian Ethics

In a justly famous paragraph from his *Interpretation of Christian Ethics,* Reinhold Niebuhr writes:

> The ethical fruitfulness of various types of religion is determined by the quality of their tension between the historical and the transcendent. This quality is measured by two considerations: The degree to which the transcendent truly transcends every value and achievement of history, so that no relative value of historical achievement may become the basis of moral complacency; and the degree to which the transcendent remains in organic contact with the historical, so that no degree of tension may rob the historical of its significance.[1]

In a yet relevant critique of various religious traditions of the time of his writing—the 1930s—Niebuhr showed how such creative tension might be prematurely resolved, to the detriment of that tradition's "ethical fruitfulness." In the following, I do not wish to criticize particular religious trends and groups—though it would be fun to do so. Rather, I wish to propose a more theoretical consideration of the relation between the historical (mutual love) and the transcendent (agape love), arguing for a particular kind of relation that does in fact enhance the fruitfulnesss of Christian morality.

In pursuing this skeletal argument, I will move through three steps: first, I will attempt descriptions of what I mean by mutual and agape love; second, I will analyze two common ways of prematurely resolving the "quality of tension" between mutual and agape love; third, I will illustrate a proper relation, i.e., one that does not erode the quality of the tension, by considering the relation of the notion of friendship to the ideal of Christian love. I do not claim much originality in my analysis. It involves a blending of the insights of Reinhold Niebuhr (*An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*), Richard Niebuhr ("The Center of Value"), and Gilbert Meilaender (*Friendship*).

I

The Christian ethical norm of agape arises from the central religious proclamation of the Christian Gospel. God demonstrates an incredible, discontinuous, and surprising kind of love toward humankind in the teaching, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. That kind of love—saving, forgiving, justifying—provides the "transcendent" pole in our discussion; it is the grace of God. As such it has certain discernible qualities that put it into bold relief.

It is *universal*—directed at all humans. It aims at the full redemption of the whole universe of being. God's grace is offered to the just and unjust alike. While it may give special consideration to the vulnerable, much like a parent gives special attention to a child who has special need, it nevertheless embraces all equally.

Second, God's agape love is *disinterested;* it does not love because of the "worth" of its object nor is it conditioned by a guarantee of reciprocal response. This gives it an initiating quality as well as a certain kind of heedlessness; it does not calculate a return, though it may wish one. This disinterestedness is also bound up with forgiveness, the capacity to heal the ruptures in relationships and start anew.

Third, God's agape love is *steadfastly faithful;* although all else changes, transcendent love is everlastingly trustworthy. Finally, though it may not be intrin-

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[1]Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 5.

sically a part of agape love, *sacrifice* is often involved in the exercise of agape in a fallen world. Love that is universal, disinterested, and steadfast will take into itself the wrath involved in alienated existence. The cross is a powerful symbol of the cost of expressing agape love.

So the event of Christ is the revelation and expression of the character and will of God from the Christian religious viewpoint. The difficulty for Christian ethics comes when it is supposed to make this religious norm ethically relevant. And without doubt, that task has stimulated a perennial debate within Christian history. How is God's love in Christ—agape—to be reflected in the lives of Christians enmeshed in history? How is Christ related to culture in the Christian life?

In contrast to agape love, mutual love is preferential. Persons choose those others who fit them as friends and spouses. Such "fits" are limited.

Being enmeshed in history, persons are involved in many relations characterized by mutual love—friendship and marriage are prime examples. Many other relations are characterized by mutual respect, enrichment, and usefulness that are not yet mutual love but would be open to it should circumstances and choice permit. Mutual love, to paraphrase Richard Niebuhr, arises when one being with capacities and potentialities completes, complements, and limits another being.[2] There is a symmetry involved in mutual love—a fittingness of being to being. Persons reciprocally meet the needs, fit the capacities, and correspond to the potentialities of each other. Figuratively put, we fill each other's cups. Such relations are generally sealed and shored by promises—either implicit or explicit.

In contrast to agape love, mutual love is preferential.[3] Persons choose those others who fit them as friends and spouses. These "fits" among persons are very limited in number. They require propitious circumstances, time for cultivation, and discriminate choice. The deepest friendships of one's life are few in number; the best marital bond only one. Without denying the noble hyperbole suggested in the quote, one cannot be "a friend to the world." Further in contrast to agape's disinterestedness, mutual love is very interested in reciprocal response. It recognizes that we are incomplete beings who need the delight, fascination, shared interests, struggles and values, intimacy and affection, that arise in mutual relations.

Mutual love, unlike agape, is subject to change, as the fittingness of being to being may change. Who has not looked back with some melancholy at friendships that are no more because capacities, experiences, and value choices have changed each party enough to erode the complementarity that once was present?

Finally, mutual love involves one in concrete responsibilities that lend a hard edge of particularism—perhaps even a tendency to closure—that contrasts with the open-endedness of agape. The human institutions and communities based on mutuality entail specific, responsible interests that often rest uneasily with broader responsibilities. My responsibilities to my family, for example, lead me to actions that can only be characterized as "defensive," sometimes necessarily so.

II

How then are mutual love and Christian love related? One possible response to that challenge might be to deny the relation. Except for certain perversions of the Lutheran two-kingdoms doctrine, and those applying mainly to social ethics, there is little danger of such a denial in the theory of Christian ethics. But in the practice of our lives such a danger is exceedingly real.

Jeremy Taylor once wrote that "when friendship was the noblest thing in the world, charity was little."[4] He was of course referring to historical epochs that were dominated by classical notions of friendship; but the truth of his remark cuts deeply to those of us who can be comfortable with the rich mutualities of existence and therefore adopt what Richard Niebuhr called the ethics of defense—narrowing one's circle of care and concern only to those in our bonds of mutuality.[5] Such narrowness is notoriously evident in the way many Christians separate their "Sunday" lives from their "Monday"; business is business, politics is politics, and, not least, academics is academics.

If such an approach resolves the tension by separating the historical from the transcendent, another peril is to make the transcendent (agape love) a simple possibility. Agape is prematurely claimed to be the direct

[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Center of Value," in *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 103.

[3]The characteristics of friendships are explicated in fine fashion in Gilbert Meilaender, *Friendship—A Study in Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). My conclusions about the relation of mutual and agape love are very similar to Meilaender's.

[4]Quoted by Meilaender, p. 1.

[5]H. R. Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 140.

norm for historical existence. The radical ethic of Jesus is commended as direct guidance for the Christian life. Historically this has meant at times the disparagement of mutual love (there is very little in Christian ethics on friendship) or the disparagement of ordinary earthly vocations. Samuel Johnson complained that Charles Wesley, though capable of conversation befitting friendship, never satisfactorily engaged in it because he always had to be off to do the Lord's work.[6]

Just as God's action in Christ is in a paradoxical and dialectical relationship to the fallen creation, so Christian ethics should not try to dissolve the tension between mutual and Christian love, but rather to ensure that the tension is creative.

A more likely outcome of such a premature claim is hypocrisy. One simply doesn't recognize the pressure of mutuality and particular responsibility—let alone self-interest—in one's own life. When I taught business ethics in a seminary, I often noticed the withering criticism made of the business person's quest for profit—a necessity of that earthly vocation—even while the seminarians were negotiating the right salary, pension plan, location, and parsonage for their first pastoral call. Yet they thought their lives fully expressed agape love.

Another, but more admirable, effect of taking agape as a direct norm for personal and social life is that agape demands heroic accomplishment. One examines one's involvements in reciprocal bonds and in the particular claims and counter-claims of historical existence and rejects such a compromised life. A heroic effort is made toward purity—the Mother Teresa ideal. (Incidentally, a secular illustration of this occurred in the recent BBC rendering of *Tender Is the Night,* where Dick Diver tries to ignore the asymmetrical relation with Nicole and to love her with a consistent self-sacrificial love . . . with disastrous effects). I do not wish to negate such a heroic ethic, but I also do not want to allow it to sort out Christians into first-class and second-class teams. That is just another way of dissolving the tension, leaving the majority of Christians with a paralyzing bad conscience.

There is also a perennial tendency to make agape love directly determinative for social ethics. Without going further into it at this point, let me just say that such a tendency leads to sentimentality and moralism, an occupational hazard for Protestant churches at least.

III

How, then, should the relation between mutual love and Christian love be described? My simple answer is that the relation is dialectical. Just as God's action in Christ is in a paradoxical and dialectical relationship to the fallen creation, so Christian ethics should not try to dissolve the tension between mutual and Christian love, but rather to ensure that the tension is creative.

The norm or spirit of Christian love should act as both a No and Yes to mutual love. It should serve as a constant judgment on our complacencies, a constant summons to richer moral possibilities and a standard for discriminate decisions.[7] In biblical language, agape is "the heaven that leavens the lump," although it is not the lump itself.

Thus, Christian ethics should strongly affirm the preferential bonds of friendship and marriage and family life, but insist that the exclusiveness involved in those bonds not become exclusivistic. The summons of agape should be a dynamic force that strains against narrow limits, enabling one to be open to all neighbors. Friendship should not snuff out charity.

Likewise, Christian ethics must gratefully recognize humankind as needy creatures who reciprocally give and receive, freely and equally. At the same time, they must discern that the relations of mutuality are often incapable of being created without the initiating quality of agape, for if we give only to receive, mutual relations are poisoned from the beginning. Further, mutuality cannot be sustained without the forgiving capacities of agape. In a finite and sinful world, mutuality is fragile and unstable; friendship frequently needs an element of unconditional acceptance in order to transcend the rupture of finely-honed mutualities. Again, there is a yes to the qualities of mutual love, but also a recognition that they are not sufficient.

While Christian ethics affirms mutual love as the very stuff of our lives, it also must realistically accept its changeableness. As we said earlier, the fittingness of being to being changes with altered circumstances of life. At the very least, agape encourages one to work for the other's good, even when friendship passes. At a higher level, perhaps illustrated best in a solid marriage, it adds the tenacity of steadfast commitment

[6]Cited by Meilaender, p. 87.

[7]These are developed by Reinhold Niebuhr in his *Interpretation,* pp. 97-123.

wherein persons stick with each other through a life-long conversation, allowing themselves to be changed in order to maintain the "fit."

Agape challenges the myopia and defensiveness that is such a temptation in our work and our public life. At the same time, Christian ethics must realistically recognize and affirm the particularity and tentative autonomy of our worldly tasks.

Finally a word about vocations, those earthly places of particular responsibility. Agape challenges the myopia and defensiveness that is such a temptation in our work and our public life. At the same time, Christian ethics must realistically recognize and affirm the particularity and tentative autonomy of worldly tasks. Agape cannot supplant those. But the freedom of the Christian is such that the responsible deed can be done somewhere along the continuum between defensive closure and irresponsible openness. There are no strict guidelines or rules for such responsibility, though there are supports and accountabilities in the community of brothers and sisters as they reflect on the nature of particular responsibilities.

IV

In conclusion, I am arguing that mutual and Christian love cannot be sorted out as inferior and superior types, nor can they be separated. Mutual love provides the created texture of life, but it is subject to distortion and fracture in our fallen existence. Agape is the challenging and healing element that interacts dynamically with mutuality. It is, in Anders Nygren's memorable image, the scarlet thread that runs through history, binding together that which on its own would disintegrate.[8] Or to put it another way—Richard Niebuhr's—God's sovereignity is exercised more through crosses than thrones.[9]

But the relation of mutual love and Christian love is never tidy. There is great, but creative, tension between the two that can best be borne by those who are confident that they are justified by grace rather than how well they fit the two together, either practically or theoretically.

[8]Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (London: SPCK, 1957), p. 137.

[9]H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 187.

It's a Boy!

(Matthew 1:1-17)

He came from a long line of men—
fourteen masculine generations
  from Abraham to David,
  including Judah & Bros.,
then fourteen all-male generations
  from David to the Deportation,
finally fourteen generations of men
  from the Deportation to Him.

Through forty generations
  from Abraham to Grandpa Jacob
  (patient Joseph's father),
only four women were noteworthy
  genealogical by-products:
"by Tamar," widowed Canaanite
  daughter-in-law of Judah,
  playing the prostitute,
  came Judah's incest twins;
"by Rahab," Canaanite harlot,
  came Boaz;
"by Ruth," the Moabite widow
  bought with a parcel of land,
  came Obed;
"by the wife of Uriah," the soldier
  cuckolded to death,
  came Solomon.
(These were the noteworthy women.)

Then, in the genealogy's penultimate generation,
  in non-male-chauvinist fulfillment,
comes Joseph as "husband of Mary"—
Joseph, a husband second only to the Holy Ghost,
  deterred from divorce by a dream;
Joseph, buoyed by the promise,
  "She will bear a Son,"
  one with a popular (boy's) name;
Joseph, step-father to the Christ
  who is the Son of David
  and the Son of Abraham
"by Mary," the Mother of God.

Bernhard Hillila

James Nuechterlein

FAITH AND LEARNING IN THE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

General Reflections and a Cautious Application

(Editor's Note: This essay was originally presented at a symposium held November 7-8, 1986, at Calvin College. Participants attended from Calvin, Valparaiso University, and the University of Notre Dame. The general topic considered at the symposium was "The Integration of Faith and Learning in the Disciplines as Reflected in Scholarship and Classroom Teaching.")

I have to begin these comments on a confessional note. I have been presented to you as a political scientist who will speak on the integration of faith and learning in that discipline. But both of those categorizations are somewhat misleading and require some explanation and elaboration.

I

To begin with, I am not actually a political scientist. In my undergraduate training at Valparaiso University, I acquired a double major in history and political science. I went on to graduate school in the field of American studies, where, it is true, I had a minor field in American politics—as well as one in American literature—but where my major field was American history. After graduate school, I took a teaching job in American history at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, where I remained for seventeen years. In my teaching there, I specialized in twentieth-century U.S. history. My scholarly interests focused on twentieth-century American political thought.

I returned to Valparaiso University five years ago as Editor of *The Cresset,* a Lutheran Christian journal of ideas, and also as a part-time teacher. For reasons of convenience, I wound up in the Political Science department, where I teach courses in political philosophy and in modern American political thought. I am thus technically a political scientist, in that the Political Science department is my academic home—home being here described in Robert Frost's sense as the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.

But I still bring to my teaching in political science a historian's perspective, and historians—even political historians—are not political scientists. Some years ago C. Vann Woodward, the great historian of the American South, wrote an essay encouraging historians to avail themselves of social science methods and perspectives, but he added a cautionary note that struck me then as it does today as definitive of the historian's distinct perspective: "In every true historian there is a humanist with a profound respect for the varied particularity of human experience and a jealous regard for the precise integrity of time and place in the remembrance of things past."[1] Which, being interpreted, is why a historian—at least this historian—can never truly be a social scientist.

It is a little awkward being a humanist in a social science department. As I have said to my students, I am in the embarrassing position of teaching a discipline in whose existence I do not believe. But there it is and there I am, and I thought you should be set straight as to the tenuous nature of my credentials in political science.

II

But the problem of possible misrepresentation goes

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[1]C. Vann Woodward, "The Comparability of American History," in C. Vann Woodward, ed., *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 16.

farther and deeper than that. Our general, transdisciplinary topic these two days is the integration of faith and learning, and I have to confess that for me the degree to which faith and learning can genuinely be integrated seems highly problematic. I am a Lutheran (indeed, I sometimes think of myself as the last unreconstructed Lutheran), and so you will not be surprised to hear that I instinctively think of the relationship between faith and learning—or, in H. Richard Niebuhr's classic formulation, between Christ and culture—not in terms of transformation or integration but rather in terms of paradox and tension.

The most venerable view of the Christian university sees its essential work as "the fusion of high intelligence and high religion."

Perhaps the most venerable view of the Christian university sees its essential work as "the fusion of high intelligence and high religion." (It was, indeed, precisely that vision that informed the founding of Christ College, the honors college at Valparaiso University.) But in the classical Lutheran view, that idea is one of those commonplaces that most of us give casual assent to but that do not stand up well under close analysis. In the Lutheran perspective, faith and learning, while they are not ultimately irreconcilable and while, indeed, they must for their mutual health inform each other at certain points, do exist largely on different planes and are incapable of essential fusion or integration. It is not learning that leads to or sustains faith, and learning, for its part, does not rest on faith or require it for its justification.

I will not attempt any full theological elaboration of the Lutheran position, except to note that it finds its roots in Luther's controlling image of the condition of humanity as being that of *simul justus et peccator,* that is, the sense that men and women are at once fully sinners and fully saints, and that that paradoxical condition pervades all of human nature and culture.[2] Thus Luther's ambivalent view of everything human. In that ambivalence Luther could, for example, speak harshly of reason—the basis of all learning—insofar as it exists in respect to faith and as part of a fallen and demonic existence: reason, Luther said with characteristic moderation, is "the Devil's Whore," a "beast," an "enemy of God," a "source of mischief," "carnal," and "stupid." But he truly was ambivalent, not simply condemnatory. Within its own sphere and as part of the divinely created order, Luther suggested, reason is God's greatest, indeed inestimable, gift. He in fact personified it as the "inventress and mistress of all the arts, of medicine and law, of whatever wisdom, power, virtue, and glory men possess in this life."[3]

If we would maintain the tension Luther suggests, it seems to me, we would perforce be skeptical of notions of integrating faith and learning in the academic disciplines. Thus we would look questioningly at ideas not merely of Christian physics or Christian chemistry but also of Christian economics, Christian history, or Christian political science. The tension in the very idea of a Christian university stems from the fact that such an idea suggests the union of two forms of community that operate under different imperatives.

As Alexander Miller has suggested in his useful study *Faith and Learning,* the university is involved in an endless quest for truth while Christianity, if it is to remain true to itself, must in some sense claim to *be* the truth. The university, the body of learners, is a community of inquiry, while the church, the body of the faithful, is a community of conviction. Both communities speak of truth, but they do not do so in commensurable ways: the truths of Christianity are generated from a deeper level than reflection, evidence, and logic, and they are not the same as the truths of philosophy or science.[4]

In the community of faith we speak necessarily—if, one hopes, cautiously and with humility—of orthodoxy and heresy; in the community of learning such ideas are properly anathema. In the university reason must be the only arbiter and have unlimited sway, and it cannot do so if those whose job it is to safeguard orthodoxy attempt to act on their knowledge of reason's potentially corrosive effect on faith by putting it under restraints and prohibitions. John Henry Newman, who surely understood reason's limits and dangers, nonetheless also understood that a university must live with the risks of reason let loose: ". . . if we invite reason to take its place in our schools, we must let reason have fair and full play. If we reason, we must submit to the conditions of reason. We cannot use it by halves. . . ."[5]

The tensions between the differing imperatives of faith and learning thus create perplexing dilemmas for the Christian university. Professor Miller, for example, a deeply committed Christian, is nonetheless led by the

[2]For a thoughtful explication of this idea, see Martin E. Marty, "Simul: A Lutheran Reclamation Project in the Humanities," *The Cresset* (December, 1981), 7-14.

[3]Quoted in *ibid.,* 12-13.
[4]Alexander Miller, *Faith and Learning* (New York: Association Press, 1960), pp. 82-83.
[5]Quoted in *ibid.,* p. 194.

logic of his belief in the necessary autonomy and supremacy of reason within its sphere to conclude that no university, including no Christian university, may properly impose confessional tests in hiring its faculty: ". . . faculty appointments should be made purely on scholarly merit, with due regard to wholesome variety of conviction, but without any striving after an engineered orthodoxy."[6] Miller is clearly uncomfortable with where his logic has led him—given his view, it is difficult to see how over time a Christian university could continue to remain Christian in any coherent sense of the term—and he rather lamely concedes that a church body may continue to secure control of a university under its jurisdiction by "retaining certain key positions in the hands of believing men." He implicitly acknowledges the corner he has painted himself into by immediately adding to this concession the comment that "I cannot be too thankful that I am not an Administrator responsible for deciding what these positions are."[7]

The problems encountered in the tension between faith and learning are hardly novel; those problems tell part—though by no means not all—of the story of the evolution of American higher education from its religious origins to its present secular condition. That story is too well known to require retelling here, but I do want to pass on two recent sightings by Stanley Hauerwas that dramatize just how far many American universities have travelled from where they began and how embarrassed they are by their points of origin.[8]

The first involves an incident at Duke University, where Professor Hauerwas presently teaches. Like many universities, Duke has set a bronze plaque at the center of its campus recalling the purposes of the university's founders, and that statement of purpose is read on certain high ceremonial occasions. Duke's statement is mostly unexceptionable for modern academics: it speaks of advancing learning, defending scholarship, developing a love of freedom and truth, promoting a spirit of tolerance, etc. But at the very beginning of the statement stands a distinct awkwardness. The very first aim set forth for Duke University is to "assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the son of God." At the recent inauguration of Duke's President, when the chairman of the Board of Trustees read the statement, he omitted the offending passage.

The second sign of the times Hauerwas alerts us to concerns Harvard University. Contemporary versions of the Harvard shield indicate that its motto is the simple word *Veritas.* But, Hauerwas informs us, the full motto of the university actually reads *Veritas: Christo et Ecclesia.* So at Harvard the truth that was originally to be pursued for Christ and the church now presumably exists only for its own, purely secular, sake.

Such stories may amuse us and confirm our sense of where universities have come to, but they hardly surprise us. And if the case I have been making for the problematic nature of the relationship between faith and learning has any merit, one might well argue that the path that the Dukes and the Harvards have taken is both understandable and correct, a cause for regret only to those awash in reactionary nostalgia for a vanished pre-modern past. If we do not lament the passing of the age of Christendom, why mourn the demise of the Christian university, especially if the very phrase *Christian university* constitutes, if not quite an oxymoron, at least a term with little substantive content?

Presumably those of us in this gathering would demur from that judgment. Even my own somewhat skeptical view of the integration of faith and learning, you will note, has included the escape clause that the two, for their mutual health, should inform each other at certain points. How then might a modest reconstruction of the idea of the Christian university and of the relationship between faith and learning proceed?

III

We might begin where every discussion of university affairs in America seems to begin these days, with the matter of values. We have to be very careful here, I think. There is, in some circles, a kind of creeping Christian arrogance that appears to assume that we are the only people concerned with moral values or equipped to deal with them. From that questionable assumption there easily develops the notion that Christian universities hold some sort of patent on "character formation" or concern for the "whole person." The temptation so to view ourselves is compounded by our knowledge that it is precisely these matters that currently preoccupy parents and alumni. It is embarrassing but true that significant parts of our constituency care less about our academic standing than about our capacity to insure the moral sturdiness and/or theological orthodoxy of the coming generation.

But if we must be cautious here, we need not be apologetic. If we are not unique in our concern for moral values, we do hold an advantage over secular institutions in that we operate from a more-or-less unified core of values that they either do not share or,

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 178.
[7] *Loc. cit.*
[8] Stanley Hauerwas, "How Christian Universities Contribute to the Corruption of Youth: Church and University in a Confused Age," *Katallagete* (Summer, 1986), 21-28.

even if they do, they cannot claim. Most Americans still anchor their moral values in religious beliefs. Christian universities can talk about such things and operate from them in ways that secular universities, for a whole variety of reasons, cannot.

In my view, the Christian university is perhaps not so much a place of Christian learning as it is a community of Christian learners. And a community of Christian learners should be a place where, whatever else occurs, the people involved treat each other with the distinctive love, forgiveness, and concern for the other that ought to mark the Christian life. (This idea of the Christian university as a community of Christian learners, incidentally, could have extricated Professor Miller from the awkward position he got himself into over the matter of faculty hiring.)

Here again, though, we must be careful. The Christian university will be concerned with the co-curricular life of the entire community, but that cannot be its distinctive focus. We do not exist, after all, for the purpose of running the equivalent of a post-adolescent Christian day camp. The informed heart is doubtless of greater importance in the ultimate Christian scheme of things than is the educated mind, but it is the latter which is the proper central concern of the university. A Christian university that is long on piety but short on learning can no more justify itself than can a Christian hospital where the members of the medical staff have rich devotional lives but are not quite up to snuff on recent developments in health care.

Yet the matter of values is not dissociated from the intellectual life of the university. Christian universities, because they operate within a coherent frame of values, can place learning in context and perspective in a way that students seek and that, again, secular institutions find it difficult to know even how to approach. Students, like all the rest of us, are meaning-seeking creatures; because Christian universities are openly concerned with questions of ultimate purpose and transcendent value, we can respond to student concerns about questions which public institutions, when they recognize them at all, can only relegate to the realm of the ineffable. Secular universities are inclined to talk about religion only in historical, clinical, positivist, or reductionist ways; we, on the other hand, have the great advantage of being able to talk about God without changing the subject.

Stanley Hauerwas has raised the issue of values as they relate to the intellectual life of the university in an intriguing context that might amplify our discussion here.[9] Much of the teaching life of the modern university, Hauerwas notes, proceeds according to the Socratic method of critical inquiry, which claims a moral value of its own. The task of the university, in this view, is not to provide students with answers but to make them unrelenting questioners of all unexamined assumptions or items of conventional wisdom. That process takes on moral stature as it makes students practitioners of the examined life and thus, presumably, more self-conscious and perceptive moral agents.

What is generally overlooked, Hauerwas claims (in an argument borrowed from Martha Nussbaum), is that the Socratic method can itself lead in dubious moral directions. If placed in the hands of those lacking a secure moral foundation, the Socratic dialectic can turn its practitioners into cynics adept at undermining all forms of conventional morality (insofar as they cannot be rationally justified) but with nothing to put in conventional morality's place. According to this view, Socrates was dangerously indifferent to the antecedent moral training of those he engaged in dialectic. He gave intellectual weapons to those who, lacking habituation in the moral virtues, could easily come to mistake intellectual cleverness for moral perception.

The Hauerwas/Nussbaum argument (which I have barely sketched here) certainly corresponds to much of what I experience with my better students. It is all too easy—it may, indeed, be a natural process of intellectual development—for bright students to go through a debunking, scoffing, skeptical phase, one in which they meet Oscar Wilde's definition of the cynic as the person who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. At a debased level, the Socratic style of relentless questioning may contribute to the abiding sin of most students I encounter, which is not the blind dogmatism or even bland indifference that one hears so much of, but rather the maddening, mindless relativism that debases tolerance and that manages to avoid serious engagement with substantive moral and intellectual questions by instant retreat to the impregnable fortress of "well, it all depends on your point of view."

Should not Christian universities be better positioned than secular universities to avoid or at least know how to deal with this form of corruption of youth? The point of course is not to discard the Socratic method but rather to undergird dialectical inquiry with the presumption that one is asking questions not simply in order to uncover intellectual weaknesses, expose unexamined premises, and probe traditional authority but in order finally, having done all these things, to be led to dependable answers. And one can only lead students to find answers if one believes oneself that answers do in fact exist, and exist at a level somewhat more substantial than that of

[9] *Ibid.*

"whatever works for you."

There is more that could be said here, but I want to extend the discussion a step further by borrowing the arguments of yet another scholar who has pondered the purposes of the Christian university, in this case my colleague, Mark Schwehn.[10]

Schwehn attempts to outline the distinctive perspective of the Christian scholar by setting it over against what he calls "Weberianism," a construct built on his reading of Max Weber's famous essay, "Science as a Vocation." Weber there argued that "the fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations."

The university partakes centrally in this process of intellectualization, which has at its core the assumption that we can "in principle master all things by calculation." The end of academic life for the Weberian university, then, according to Schwehn's reading, is nothing less than mastery of the world, which is effected by scholars engaged in endless efforts to extend the limits of their disciplines.

The Weberian university, existing as it does in a disenchanted scientific world, has a purely instrumental approach to knowledge and rigorously limits the kinds of questions it supposes it can or should undertake to answer.

> Thus . . . the natural scientist teaches us what we must do if we wish to master life technically, but he cannot and hence should not consider the question of whether it ultimately makes sense to do so. . . . The historical and cultural sciences teach us to understand and interpret literary and social phenomena, but they dare not ask whether any given phenomenon is worthwhile. In sum, the academician may clarify values but he dare not promulgate them within the walls of academe. . . . "Academic pleading [about ultimate questions] is meaningless in principle because the various value spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other." . . . Academics may not *qua academics* examine ultimate questions, because there can be no academic justification for any answer they might give to such questions.

Christian universities, Schwehn suggests, have the complex challenge of resisting this process of positivist Weberian intellectualization without retreating into anti-intellectualism or religious authoritarianism: "If these institutions fail to resist total intellectualization of the sort that Weber describes, they will soon cease to be Christian in any intelligible sense of the word. If, on the other hand, they fail to maintain their commitments to free and open inquiry, they will soon cease to be universities and colleges."

The Christian university's challenge to its Weberian counterpart, Schwehn argues, should begin with the Weberian claim that we can "in principle master all things by calculation." Christians, on the basis of the biblical stories that "both form and inform them," know that claim to be false. They know from their reading of the Genesis story that humanity's fallen condition stems precisely from "the repeated efforts of human creatures to usurp the place of the Creator." Any presumption of total human mastery through human reason is "diabolical." This Christian insight is central.

> The Christian school that begins with a sense of the limits of academic learning will not be tempted to construe the character of academic life as progressing *ad infinitum* toward increasing mastery of the world. Indeed, this characterization of academics should remind the Christian of the story of the tower of Babel: academics devote themselves entirely to making monographic bricks that will be superseded by other bricks and then others and then still others in an ever-ascending structure of knowledge. The Christian university, because of its constitutive convictions about the limits of human intellectual powers, will replace the Weberian image of specialized workers constructing a tower with an image of a community enriching and thereby extending a conversation. This latter image of the Christian university calls attention to its traditional character, as opposed to the anti-traditional character of the Weberian academy. . . .
>
> The Christian university feels obliged or should feel obliged to maintain a living relationship to its past. It seeks to think not only about its past but with it as well. The Weberian academy, by contrast, denies that one can do both of these things at one and the same time. . . .
>
> To think about a text *and* to think with it: this is conversation. To think *only* about a text *and* to claim that one cannot responsibly think with it as an academic: this is Weberianism. The Weberian academic asks only whether what someone says about what a text means is true or false. The Christian academic asks this question too, but he *may* also ask whether what a given text says about what we are to do and how we are to live is true or false. Christian academics may not and probably will not agree about the *answers* to these questions, but they can and should agree, against the Weberians, that such questions should be asked and answered within the academy.

I have considerably abbreviated and foreshortened Schwehn's argument, but I hope I have communicated the sense of it. It needs, I think, no further gloss. It suggests, to my mind, a picture of a Christian university as a place where Christian learners engage in lib-

[10]Mark Schwehn, "Academics as a Vocation—II: Tradition and the Individual Professor," *The Cresset* (May, 1985), 5-10.

eral learning informed by the Christian faith.

That engagement is not without tensions and complications: the Christian intellectual, while he must at certain points reject the message of modernity, has himself necessarily made the journey through modernity, and he cannot, without self-deception, suppose he has come through the journey untouched and unaffected. The Christian intellectual's mentality is postmodern, not pre-modern, and that makes the Christian intellectual life a good deal more ambiguous and equivocal than it otherwise would be. To get beyond Weber, we must first go through Weber, and even after we have passed him by, a significant part of him will forever remain with us.

IV

Some of you may be wondering by now when if ever I intend to descend from the ethereal realms of high generalization and come to grips with the topic assigned and announced: the integration of faith and learning in the disciplines, in this case, the discipline of political science. Given my confession that I am not truly a political scientist and that I am skeptical of the degree to which faith and learning can be integrated, you will perhaps understand my reluctance to get to the point.

But I do not mean to dodge entirely, and I have by now, I hope, sufficiently made clear my view that short of integration there are still things that faith and learning have to say to each other. As I reflect on the effects of my Lutheran Christian beliefs on my academic work in modern American political thought, I am led to two disparate conclusions: 1) there has never been any explicit intrusion of distinctively Christian views into anything I have ever written—at least at the scholarly level—on American political life and thought; and yet, 2) virtually everything I have ever thought or written on modern American politics has been thoroughly informed, indeed pervaded, by Lutheran presuppositions. Before I expand on that, allow me a brief excursus on some recent disputes over political thought in the field of political science.

The Weberian perspective sketched by Mark Schwehn has had its impact in political science as elsewhere. Indeed, ever since Thomas Hobbes outlined his emotive theory of value in the seventeenth century, the positivist influence has been on the advance. Hobbes was a modernist before his time: judgments of good and evil, he argued, have nothing to do with the inherent qualities of the beliefs or actions to which they are applied; they are simply expressions of our feelings about those ideas and beliefs. In Hobbes' own words: ". . . whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calls *good;* and the object of his hate and aversion, *evil;* and of his contempt, *vile* and *inconsiderable.* For these words of good, evil, and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that uses them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves."

That perspective found major reinforcement in modern times with the development of the whole idea of social *science* and the rise in its wake of empirical political analysis. As political *science* rose in esteem, political *thought* fell. Political philosophy never entirely disappeared from political science curricula, but it certainly declined in significance, and the field itself was increasingly defined in empirical, as opposed to normative, terms.

The Christian intellectual, while he must at certain points reject the message of modernity, has himself necessarily made the journey through it, and he hasn't done so untouched.

In recent years, the positivist impulse has come under increasing attack; as noted earlier, people are suddenly interested in values again. The attacks came from Leo Strauss and his disciples on the right, who expressed utter disdain for the very idea of a natural science of politics and urged in its stead a return to serious consideration of Platonic forms of the Good, as well as from groups on the left like the Caucus for a New Politics, which depicted the pretensions of scientific analysis of process and power as a form of mystification whose effect, if not always intent, was to provide support for the existing socio-political system. Criticism came as well, of course, from people with no particular ideological or disciplinary axe to grind who simply concluded that empirical political analysis left too many essential questions unanswered—or even unasked.

This rising tide of discontent helps explain the extraordinary success of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice,* which appeared in 1971. It is not too much to say that Rawls' book virtually by itself resuscitated the field of normative political theory. Much of the acclaim for the work stemmed from its intrinsic merit—Rawls' is an extraordinarily rich analysis—but it stemmed as well from Rawls' managing to raise, in intellectually respectable terms, questions of value, to reestablish an intelligible relationship between fact and value, the is

and the ought. Through the use of a device borrowed from game theory, Rawls built a bridge between analytical and normative analysis. Since the appearance of *A Theory of Justice,* normative theory has enjoyed a steady, if modest, revival.

End of excursus . . . and return to how Lutheran presuppositions have informed my own very modest attempts to think—admittedly in a normative as well as analytic manner—about modern American political thought. I propose very briefly to sketch not what I have written on the subject—that would be too self-referential an exercise—but rather the Lutheran assumptions that have led me to think the way I do. I want to outline, in other words, a Lutheran approach to politics—note, please, that I stipulate *a* Lutheran approach, not *the* Lutheran approach. Had I not so stipulated, I am sure that at least some of my Valparaiso colleagues—who for reasons that I find incomprehensible find my politics uncongenial—would have hastened to stipulate in my stead. I will not insist that my approach to politics is the only valid one from Lutheran assumptions, but I do claim it as the most venerable in the tradition.

The Lutheran understanding of politics rests on the doctrine of the two kingdoms, which in turn can be seen as the natural correlative of the characteristic Lutheran distinction between law and gospel. Two kingdoms thought, of course, is not original with Luther: he took the concept over from St. Augustine, though he modified it in ways I have not the time to spell out here. Both kingdoms, Luther said, belong to God and are answerable to him; but he rules over them under different rubrics. They exist in dialectical relationship to each other, as befits the *simul* nature of the human condition. They cannot entirely be separated because the Christian lives in both, but they can be distinguished in principle and function.

In the kingdom of the right hand, the realm of the gospel, the governing principle is love, and the kingdom lives according to grace. The kingdom of the left hand, in which politics resides, is the kingdom of law. Its governing principle is justice and it has a legitimate, indeed necessary, place for the exercise of power and coercion. The Christian magistrate need feel no bad conscience when in his official capacity he refuses to forgive seventy times seven or to turn the other cheek. The left-hand kingdom must be run according to the law because of the persistence and pervasiveness of sin. Because of sin, Luther concluded, it is neither necessary nor even possible to run the state by the gospel: ". . . a man who would venture to govern an entire country or the world with the gospel would be like a shepherd who would place in one pen wolves, lions, eagles, and sheep together and let them freely mingle with one another and say, Help yourselves, and be good and peaceful among yourselves. . . . The sheep, forsooth, would keep the peace and would allow themselves to be . . . governed in peace, but they would not live long. . . ."

We are all familiar with the charges brought against this view. Let me quickly review them and respond to them. The fundamental charge is that Lutheranism ineluctably intends to otherworldliness, quietism, excessive preoccupation with order—in a word, conservatism.

The simplest thing to say in response to the claim that two kingdoms thought conduces to political conservatism is that it's not necessarily so.[11] If we are to place the blame for German conservatism in the 1930s on Lutheran theology, what are we to say of the left-wing political cultures of the Scandinavian nations, countries whose religious traditions were more thoroughly Lutheran than was ever the case in Germany? Those inclined to draw direct lines from Luther to Hitler need to remind themselves of the uncertain relationship between religious faith and political practice as well as of the variables other than religion that enter into political choice. In any case, Lutherans have been—and still are—diverse enough in their political preferences to bring into serious question any reductionist theory of Lutheranism's necessary conservatism.

Considered without prejudice, two kingdoms thought is not essentially quietist. That charge arises from the mistaken assumption that in insisting on the integrity and supremacy of the gospel, Lutherans thereby denigrate all those areas of life that fall within the kingdom of the left hand. Yet to say that something is not of ultimate significance is not at all to deny its penultimate urgency. If Christians must of necessity love God and the gospel of forgiveness in Jesus Christ above all else, that is not to say that by that token they reduce to insignificance all those God-given gifts that provide life its sweetness and savor: family, friends, career, community. There is in fact nothing in Lutheran thought that would lead Christians to suppose that they can love God and yet despise the world in which he has placed us.

There is no way for Christians to ignore or minimize politics. Since politics is important to our lives, it will perforce be important to our lives as Christians. We must, if we take our faith seriously, apply it in a serious way to the things that make a dif-

[11]The analysis below follows closely arguments I have made elsewhere: "Luther's Thought and Lutherans' Politics," *The Cresset* (September, 1983), 19-21; and "Must Lutherans Be Political Conservatives?" *Forum Letter* (October, 1984), 7-8.

ference to us, and politics, whether we want it to or not, does make a difference. The kingdom of the left hand remains God's kingdom.

A variation on the charge of quietism brought against the two kingdoms notion involves what its critics take to be its unduly negative emphasis. Luther regularly spoke of government in the context of its duty to preserve order in a fallen world, and one can easily get from him an idea of the state as simply a necessary evil, brought into being and finding its justification solely as a device to keep peace among sinful men and women who would, in its absence, tear each other and the social fabric apart. Thus it is a temptation for Lutherans to think of secular rule almost exclusively in terms of coercion, prohibition, and restraint and to fail to appreciate its positive and creative uses.

Luther, of course, is hardly alone in his emphasis on government's role as preserver of social peace. The idea that government exists first of all to preserve order is a commonplace of political philosophy. Yet it may be that Lutherans are excessively inclined to stress this negative, if essential, function of the state and less ready than they should be to take a more expansive and generous view of its purposes. The heirs of Luther have perhaps failed adequately to translate his political prescriptions into terms appropriate to a modern and democratic political system that the reformer himself had no way of imagining or anticipating.

Here is a case where the antidote to Luther may be found in Luther himself, specifically in his doctrine of vocation. The teaching that it is the Christian's duty and joy to serve God and neighbor in the place in which God has placed him has obvious implications for the role of the modern Christian as democratic citizen. The application of the doctrine of vocation to the notion of the two kingdoms can free Lutheran political thought of negative and restrictive connotations and provide all the theological justification that any Christian activist could wish for. In the process, it can also lay to rest the idea that two kingdoms thought leads inexorably to political conservatism.

It is tempting to rest the matter there, secure in the assurance that the doctrine of the two kingdoms has been shown to be free of ideological taint. But the matter is not quite that simple. Lutherans need not be *political* conservatives, but they may naturally be inclined to be *philosophical* conservatives. The Augustinian strain of piety emphasizes that any social system will necessarily bear the marks of sin and finitude. Lutherans may be many things politically, but they cannot be utopians. They will look on promises of new political orders and new breeds of humanity with instinctive skepticism. Lutherans need in no way be inhibited from struggling for social justice, but they will never fall prey to the superstition that humanity's alienation is simply a function of inadequate social arrangements.

Even as the gospel spurs among Lutherans a response of love that will, where appropriate, take political forms, it simultaneously reminds them of the contingent and proximate nature of politics, and thus of its limits. Lutherans, even in their most intense moments of social engagement, will remain in some sense other-minded. They will never fail to distinguish their vision of the present and coming kingdom of grace from any existing or potential political order; they will refuse, in short, to immanentize the eschaton. As Luther understood, eschatological urges in politics tend to pose dangers for sheep.

If one holds to the set of views just outlined, one is predisposed along certain lines of political analysis, regardless of the particular culture, period, or political system under consideration. You should not find it difficult to guess, for example, how I came out in my analysis of New Left political thought of the 1960s. Nor should you be surprised to learn that George McGovern was, in terms of political philosophy, my least favorite presidential candidate of recent times. (McGovern traced his political ideas to what Lutherans are bound to perceive as the illusions of the social gospel.)

Yet, as already suggested, the movement from theological perceptions to political theory is not necessarily direct, unambiguous, or predetermined. One's theology does not write one's political analysis. Many who hold the kinds of views I have outlined are conservatives, but then one thinks of a Reinhold Niebuhr, who while not a Lutheran held enough Lutheran-like views to be accorded honorary fellowship, and who remained throughout his life a man of the left.

It seems to me that the forces that shape our academic thought and work are far too complex, disparate—and often rightfully secular—for us to be able to talk easily of the integration of faith and learning. As with the two kingdoms, things that can never entirely be separated can and often must be distinguished.

And yet, of course, it would be a very peculiar religious faith that had no discernible effect at all on the way we think about the world. Men and women of faith will not simply on that account agree about the condition and shape of culture, but they will agree—at least in essential terms—about the nature and destiny of humanity, and what one thinks about where the world is ultimately headed will necessarily have some effect on (even if it will not determine) one's views as to where it has been in the past and where it is now.

Glenn N. Schram

REALISM RECONSIDERED

Morgenthau, Kennan, Niebuhr, and Voegelin

The school of realism in the study of international politics reached its zenith about 1950, when the era of bipolarity and atomic power had just begun, when the basic similarities between our erstwhile totalitarian ally and our erstwhile totalitarian foe were becoming clear, and when it was common to perceive the hopes of the previous half century for perpetual peace as illusory. Today, although the conditions of international life remain very much the same, realism is not so popular as it was. It may be helpful, therefore, to recall it as it used to be.

The middle of the century was the time of a great flowering of political thought in this country. A number of the contributions were initially made during the late 1940s and early 1950s as lectures under the auspices of the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation at the University of Chicago. Included in this group were contributions to democratic theory by Jacques Maritain and Yves R. Simon, as well as analyses by Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin of the spirit of the times and how it developed.

This spirit, as defined by Voegelin, was manifested in international politics in what one major realist, Hans J. Morgenthau, called utopianism, and another, George F. Kennan, called the legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems; and Morgenthau and Kennan decried utopianism, and the legalistic-moralistic approach, in works also presented initially as Walgreen Foundation lectures.*

Morgenthau and Kennan were two of the three great American realists. The third was Reinhold Niebuhr. This article will look first at the ways in which these three defined realism, and then suggest that Morgenthau's realism rested on a too pessimistic view of human nature and Kennan's on a too optimistic view, and that the chief lesson to be learned from the three is their critique of what Voegelin would have called gnosticism in international politics.

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*Other Walgreen lectures were a second series by Strauss, on Machiavelli; a third series on democracy, by John H. Hallowell; and a series by Kurt Riezler on governmental decision-making in modern society. Except for Riezler's lectures, which were printed in January 1954 in the journal *Ethics* (Vol. 64, No. 2, Part II, pp. 1-55), the Walgreen lectures were published as books as follows: Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Yves R. Simon, *Philosophy of Democratic Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952); Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951); George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958); and John H. Hallowell, *The Moral Foundation of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954). Kennan's book was reprinted with two new chapters in 1984. (Clinton Rossiter's *The American Presidency* [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956] was also presented intially as a series of Walgreen lectures, but it lacks the philosophical interest of the other works.)

Other books referred to in this article are Edward H. Buehrig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics in the Twentieth Century* (abridged edition) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944); Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1953); Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952); and Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis* (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1966). The discussion below of Morgenthau's views on the nature of politics is based on Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil," *Ethics,* Vol. 56, No. 1 (October 1945), pp. 1-18. For further details on the problem of Kennan and the American self-interpretation, also discussed below, see my article "George F. Kennan and the Current Civil Theology," *Center Journal,* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Fall 1983), pp. 67-77.

For the clearest and most concise account of realism by Morgenthau we must turn, not to his Walgreen lectures, but to his *Politics in the Twentieth Century.* Here he speaks of the "history of modern political thought" as "the story of a contest between two schools which differ fundamentally in their conception of the nature of man, society, and politics." The schools are realism and utopianism. This characterization of modern political thought is not altogether accurate, but the contest to which Morgenthau refers does exist in the field of international politics. In examining his juxtaposition of the tenets of the two schools, we shall gain an understanding of his conception of realism.

Utopianism "believes that a rational and moral political order, derived from universally valid abstract principles, can be achieved here and now"; realism "believes that the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature." Utopianism assumes that human nature is infinitely malleable and trusts in education, reform, and the sporadic use of force to attain its ends; realism holds that one must work with human nature, not against it, "through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts." In international politics realism encourages the pursuit of the national interest, which "encompasses the integrity of the nation's territory, of its political institutions, and of its culture."

Although in the discussion just quoted Morgenthau pits realism against utopianism alone, in the book based on his Walgreen lectures, *In Defense of the National Interest,* he speaks of utopianism as but one of four interrelated errors of American foreign policy during World War II and the immediate postwar period. The other errors were legalism, which looked forward to world order through world law; sentimentalism, according to which the national interest was unworthy to be a goal of foreign policy and should be replaced by the pursuit of universal moral values; and neoisolationism, which held that America could attain its foreign-policy aims without recourse to traditional methods of diplomacy.

Turning to Kennan, we find that his realism is distinguished not so much by a set of precepts juxtaposed to the legalistic-moralistic approach as by sheer opposition to it. In the book based on his Walgreen lectures, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950,* he says of the legalistic-moralistic approach:

> It is the essence of this belief that, instead of taking the awkward conflicts of national interest and dealing with them on their merits with a view to finding the solutions least unsettling to the stability of international life, it would be better to find some formal criteria of a juridical nature by which the permissible behavior of states could be defined.

Kennan maintains that the legalistic-moralistic approach "runs like a red skein through our foreign policy" of the first half of the twentieth century. Its greatest defect, he says, is its moralism. "Whoever says there is a law must of course be indignant against the lawbreaker and feel a moral superiority to him." The result is that when a conflict leads to war there is a demand for the complete subjection or the unconditional surrender of the lawbreaker.

Kennan comes closest to offering an alternative to the legalistic-moralistic approach at the end of these deliberations, where he writes, "[I]f our own purposes and undertakings here at home are decent ones, unsullied by arrogance or hostility toward other people or delusions of superiority, then the pursuit of our national interest can never fail to be conducive to a better world." One may wonder, however, whether this aspiration is altogether realistic—a problem which brings us to Niebuhr.

Niebuhr distinguishes realism from idealism, the latter corresponding to utopianism in Morgenthau's thought and the legalistic-moralistic approach in Kennan's work. According to Niebuhr, "In political and moral theory 'realism' denotes the disposition to take all factors in a social and political situation, which offer resistance to established norms, into account, particularly the factors of self-interest and power." Idealism is disposed to ignore or be indifferent to such factors. "This disposition," he says, "is general whenever men are inclined to take the moral pretensions of themselves or their fellowmen at face value; for the disposition to hide self-interest behind the facade of pretended devotion to values, transcending self-interest, is well-nigh universal."

Although Niebuhr sometimes wrote as if he believed that any pursuit of the national interest in Morgenthau's sense was sinful, what he probably meant was that sin enters into the pursuit when a nation attaches greater weight to its interest than in justice it deserves, or when a nation overextends its capabilities in pursuing its interest. In any case Niebuhr thought sin to be frequently involved in the pursuit of the national interest, and here he departed from Kennan's apparent belief that arrogance, hostility, and a sense of superiority could be removed from foreign affairs.

As for the day-to-day conduct of these affairs, Morgenthau preferred the pursuit of the national interest through traditional methods of diplomacy, particularly the balance-of-power approach; unfortunately his use of the term "balance of power" was ambiguous, and the fact was fully exploited by his critics. Kennan espoused a high-minded conception of national pur-

pose at variance with Niebuhr's belief that the actions of all nations tend to be tainted by sin. Niebuhr was wary of a too uncritical acceptance of Morgenthau's view, arguing "that a nation that is too preoccupied with its own interests is bound to define those interests too narrowly," for "it will fail to consider those of its interests which are *bound up in a web of mutual interests* with other nations" (the emphasis is Niebuhr's).

The chief objects of realist criticism at midcentury were the foreign policies of Woodrow Wilson and Cordell Hull. An admirer of Wilson's, Edward H. Buehrig, said thirty years ago in an unusually well-written book on Wilson's foreign policy that the work of Morgenthau and Kennan had had a beneficial effect in stimulating a reassessment of American diplomacy during World War I. Buehrig referred specifically to the realist view that the correct policy for Wilson "would have been calculation and restraint aimed at ending the war as soon as possible without catastrophe to either side, thereby preserving a balance in Europe which would least disturb the outside world and contribute most to the future stability and pacification of Europe itself."

When we look at the assumptions underlying the realists' works, we find that Morgenthau had a more pessimistic view of human nature than even Niebuhr had. Morgenthau believed that politics is evil to the degree to which its essence and aim are "power over man," because it thereby degrades man to a means for other men; that "[t]he test of a morally good action is the degree to which it is capable of treating others not as means to the actor's ends but as ends in themselves"; and that politics at best involves the choice of the least evil among several possible actions.

Surely it cannot be true that every attempt to impose one human will on another is evil. One need think only of the wise exercise of parental authority or the attempt to prevent a tyranny from expanding its area of domination. The means by which an attempt of this kind is undertaken may be unwise and tainted by sin, but the attempt need not be inherently evil. Even Kant, whose thought Morgenthau's views so very much resemble, believed human dignity to be violated only when one person treats another solely as a means to attaining the first person's end, and not simultaneously as an end in himself.

Niebuhr did not believe international politics to be inherently sinful, although he did believe that at times nations have to choose the lesser of evils. Though he saw through the moral pretensions by which nations seek to mask their interests, he tended to be more understanding of these pretensions than Morgenthau, maintaining that man has "so strong a sense of obligation to his fellows that he cannot pursue his own interests without pretending to serve his fellowman"—a fact which, in Niebuhr's judgment, belied the concept of total human depravity.

Yet Niebuhr would have had reservations about Kennan's admonition to his countrymen to pursue ends unsullied by such things as arrogance, not because the advice is ignoble but because it is even more difficult for nations than for individuals to follow. That Kennan could expect Americans to follow such advice in pursuing their national interest, conducive to a better world, was due to his retention of aspects of the American self-interpretation which he had expressed in 1947 in his famous, pseudonymous article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." In its analysis of the aims of Soviet foreign policy this article is a model of realism. It is reprinted as an appendix to *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950.*

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In the article Kennan maintains that the Soviet challenge is a providential test of American virtue and that our meeting the challenge depends on our fulfilling our destiny to exercise moral and political leadership in the world. These assertions are a variation on two aspects of the American self-interpretation as examined by Niebuhr in *The Irony of American History,* which apeared in 1952, one year after Kennan published his Walgreen lectures. According to Niebuhr, Americans believed, at the time he wrote, that a special American Providence would reward or punish them according to the degree of their virtue, and that they were destined to lead the world, chiefly though not exclusively by example, in preserving and extending democracy. These beliefs are reflected not only in Kennan's article but also in the optimistic assessment of American potential in the body of his book. (In the light of his recent writings, one may question whether Kennan is currently as realistic in his appraisal of the Soviet Union as he was in 1947, and whether he still believes the parts of the American self-interpretation to which he once adhered.)

It should be noted that the idea of American destiny as discussed by Niebuhr is not without illusions of the kind which beset utopianism, the legalistic-moralistic approach, and idealism; all these ways of thinking are mild variants of what Voegelin called gnosticism. Voegelin, who died in 1985, was the first and greatest of

a group of émigré political thinkers which included Maritain, Simon, Strauss, and Morgenthau and which, along with Niebuhr and Kennan, sought to come to terms with the immense spiritual and political disorder of the twentieth century and with the threat to the West posed by Soviet Russia.

The shadow of Hitler and Stalin hung over almost everything Voegelin wrote from the 1930s onward, including his seemingly unrelated, four-volume magnum opus, *Order and History*. His most important ideas, like those of most of the other writers just mentioned, coalesced in highly compact form in his Walgreen lectures. But because Voegelin, who was a moralist despite himself, refused to engage in conventional moralizing and to indulge shrill denunciations of totalitarianism, preferring to analyze the spiritual states of the thinkers who set the stage for it, his own morality is sometimes questioned.

In addition, he made people uncomfortable by saying such things as that anyone who participates in gnostic ideologizing today, now that we know what it means, is an accomplice in the atrocities of Auschwitz and the Gulag Archipelago. Although such a statement is undoubtedly too severe, it is hard to deny that all gnostic ideologists are brothers under the skin. On top of all this, Voegelin did not think that the West was yet entirely immune to the lure of totalitarianism, owing to the growing disorder of Western society and the continued appeal of gnostic ideologies. How many world wars and revolutions might be necessary before the present extravaganza is over, he professed not to know.

Voegelin is sometimes thought to have been a dogmatic theologian, but he disliked dogma because he believed that it failed to convey the religious experience that engendered it; and he deplored the religious strife that troubled France in the sixteenth century and laid waste Germany in the Thirty Years' War. One of the few modern thinkers whom he admired, Jean Bodin, sought through mysticism to transcend the religious turmoil of sixteenth-century France, just as Voegelin sought through the same means to transcend the ideological strife of his day.

When asked his religious affiliation Voegelin would say that he was Lutheran, and some support exists in his earlier writing for this self-description. There is reason to believe, however, that as time went on he came to consider himself more and more a mystic and a philosopher in the sense of an exponent of Platonism and Aristotelianism and less and less a believer in a religious creed and the revelation on which it is based. In this respect the following paragraph from his *Anamnesis*, published in 1966, is instructive (the translation is my own):

> A neotic [Platonic-Artistotelian] interpretation does not arise independently of the conception of order of the society in which it appears; it arises rather in a critical encounter with that conception. Wherever noesis appears, it exists in a relationship of tension with the self-understanding of society. To illustrate, I would point out only the tensions, all of great significance for the history of the world, between philosophy on the one hand and myth and sophistry on the other, between philosophy and theology, and today between philosophy and [gnostic] ideology. A confrontation of this kind serves as the point of departure for the differentiation in the course of which the noetic interpretation can become a "science" which treats political reality as its "object of study." The confrontation, moreover, works both ways, so that the representatives of the current nonnoetic interpretations are not helpless against being treated as objects by their noetic critics. They do not let themselves be forced without resistance into the role of an "object of study," but rather view their noetic opponent as an object of study from within their own conception of order: from the standpoint of the cult of the polis the philosopher is seen as an atheist; from the standpoint of the theology of revelation he is seen as a heretic; from the standpoint of revolutionary ideology he is seen as a reactionary who represents a rival ideology.

Voegelin used *gnosticism* as a generic word for the belief, which can take many forms, that the anxiety of existence can be relieved and a state of bliss be achieved on earth by following a prescription, varying with the form, and calling, in effect, for the re-creation and moral perfection of man. Voegelin maintained that gnostic ideologies have existed in the West since the Renaissance, and that they arose against the background of Christian eschatology. In a well-known (if obscurely written) passage in *The New Science of Politics*, he said: "The problem of an eidos in history, hence, arises only when Christian transcendental fulfillment becomes immanentized. Such an immanentist hypostasis of the eschaton, however, is a theoretical fallacy." What this passage means, simplified slightly and rendered in plain English, is that gnostics erroneously believe it possible to create heaven on earth.

Gnosticism may occur in a religious or a secular context. Liberation theology is gnostic, but so too is old-fashioned, antireligious Marxism. Gnosticism may take an extreme form, as in Communism and National Socialism, or it may be mild, like the unrealistic ideologies of international politics which we have been examining. Utopianism and the legalistic-moralistic approach are gnostic in their faith in wars to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy, or in their belief that peace can be permanently secured through international law or international organization; idealism is gnostic in thinking that if certain unpleasant facts are ignored they will go away.

Thus the chief lesson to be learned from the realists

is their criticism of gnosticism in international politics. Also gnostic is the related idea, now virtually exhausted, that America is destined through example and action to help democratize the world. The idea is gnostic in overestimating America's ability to secure democracy at home by contributing to its preservation and extension abroad.

One might ask whether Voegelin considered the defenses of democracy by Maritain and Simon, as well as by Niebuhr in 1944 in *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness,* to be gnostic ideologies, however mild. Voegelin certainly considered some persons on the public scene in the America of his day to be gnostic "democratists." He did not comment on the works of Maritain, Simon, and Niebuhr, and what he would have said if asked is difficult to say. From the standpoint of revealed religion their works do not appear to have been gnostic. It is therefore not inevitable that the self-understanding of a democracy be gnostic.

A last word should be said about the tendency, unfortunately furthered by certain passages in Niebuhr and Voegelin, to equate realism with Machiavellianism. It is true that in a sense Machiavelli shared with the realists, and especially with Morgenthau and Niebuhr, a lack of illusion about human nature. But one has only to compare the styles of the writers to see that, whereas Machiavelli was cool and dispassionate in the advice which he gave, the realists showed deep moral sensibilities in their criticism of utopianism, legalism-moralism, and idealism as illusory and harmful.

Moreover, the realists would never have concurred with Machiavelli's assertion that a desirable end justifies any means. Finally, it is arguable that, despite the view of human nature which he expressed, Machiavelli himself was a gnostic—indeed, that he was the first great gnostic political thinker of the modern era—in his belief that the "redemption" of Italy from foreign domination could be effected by rejecting the classical philosophers' goal of virtue and wisdom in government for "new modes and orders" (these terms are his, the former occurring in the last chapter of *The Prince* and the latter at the beginning of the introduction to Book I of the *Discourses*).

Even when American politicians are being realistic they are ordinarily not being Machiavellian; or, as Leo Strauss said, "At least to the extent that the American reality is inseparable from the American aspiration, one cannot understand Americanism without understanding Machiavellianism which is its opposite."

Unrealistic thinking, in the forms which it took at midcentury and still takes today, is part of the crisis of the West, a crisis that is at bottom spiritual. In my view, Voegelin was too hard on dogmatic theology. Nonetheless, if his work helps to rekindle the spiritual side of this civilization, or to provide a spiritual basis for one which succeeds it, his achievement will obviously have been epochal. Not only Voegelin, but also the other Walgreen lecturers and Niebuhr, made a contribution which, as to both substance and style, it would be extremely difficult to match today; and those who are concerned with the future of this country could do no better than to study their works.

Christmas Day 1779

Now that the memorable day
of Christ's birth shines, may sacred light be given
To illuminate my heart and guide the way
To gracious heaven.

Christ, grant your trembling servant ease!
May proper hope quiet my fearful reason!
Grant sure belief and hear this prayer for peace.
Dear Lord, in season.

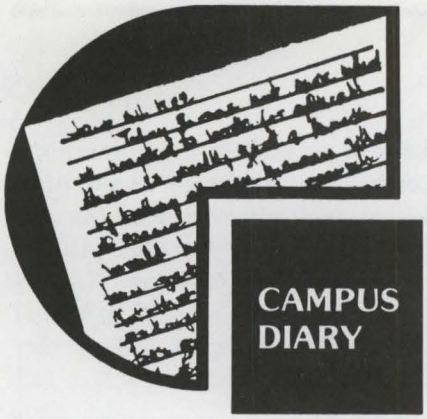
Hope

Swift hours on swift hours flee;
Day hastens past quick day!
New light brings new hope: see
Success on oath today.
Thus, man's mocked. Random, cruel,
Twilight deludes the fool.

Wasting Time

The hours for pleasure flee; wary
Of time, mind blames ennui.
The hours still flee.

—The above prayers and meditations from the Latin of Samuel Johnson are translated by R. L. Barth



The Christmas Carols

Richard Lee

Almost all holidays in America eventually become thanksgiving days, and our Day of National Thanksgiving, while delicious, now only repeats the thanksgiving theme given many other holidays. The popular punditry interpreting our holidays gradually claims them all as days to count our blessings and bless whatever has the good sense to bless us. I suppose subverting most of our holidays into days for counting our blessings should be no surprise in a wealthy, conservative country where the civil religion and popular culture celebrate a prosperous status quo, but I think I detect a sharper edge on our chronic holiday thanksgivings at Christmas. At this time Americans also seem keen to celebrate rather convulsive conversions of the ungrateful into the generous, misanthropes into philanthropes.

Probably nowhere is this Christmas preoccupation with conversions seen more clearly than in the seasonal TV screenings of the many film versions of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and especially Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life.** What these Christmas carols do so delightfully, of course, is subject their Bah-Humbugging heroes to a harrowing and hallowing supernatural experience on Christmas Eve which converts them to the "Christmas spirit." These terrorizing and tantalizing conversions may also help us make our own seasonal conversions into the American holiday spirit, namely counting our blessings and giving fresh, if now misty-eyed, thanksgiving for them.

Dickens has the easier time of it in his Christmas Eve conversion of Ebenezer Scrooge, though he nonetheless pulls out all the stops in tormenting and tempting him into charity. "As I hope to live to be another man from what I was," Scrooge cries to the last Ghost, "I am prepared to bear you company with a thankful heart." In Victorian melodrama one need only change a crabbed and stingy master into a glad and generous master for the whole community to benefit, and Dickens' Fezziwiggian presumption in *A Christmas Carol* is that the happy master is the good master.

While Scrooge is properly repelled by the appalling revelations of the Ghosts, what he repents toward is merriment. It turns out that what he needs to be good is festivity, in short, a warm, Dickensian Christmas. The admonition of *A Christmas Carol* is: he keeps Christmas best who returns to the festivities of life to give thanks for them with his own gifts.

The Capra carol takes on the harder task of converting suicidal George Bailey into seeing the graciousness of his life already heavily weighted with charity for others, and Capra thus achieves a deeper vision of the "Christmas spirit" than Dickens. When the angel Clarence horrifies George with visions of the nightmare Bedford Falls would have become had he not lived there so dutifully, George gladly rushes home on Christmas Eve to take up his duties once again, perhaps now adding an undeserved jail sentence for misappropriation of funds at his Savings and Loan.

But Capra is too wise, and possibly too Christian, to leave us with the cold comfort that the world might be worse without us and we should keep on keeping on. Rather, he subjects George to a second, more evangelical conversion in the arrival of all his neighbors to give him the money he needs to cover the lost (and stolen) Savings and Loan deposit. The dutiful do-gooder George is thus delivered from his virtues and forced to see that he is not made good or glad by them but by the love of his friends. The message of *Wonderful Life* is: he keeps Christmas best who returns to the duties of life to give thanks for them—and discovers the blessings of life which precede its duties.

To discern the blessing which precedes any counting of our blessings with any hearts readied to give thanks at all, we should, of course, need to turn to another, earlier story. But *A Christmas Carol* and, even better, *Wonderful Life* remain deservedly popular conversion stories for the American celebration of Christmas as another thanksgiving holiday.

**Wonderful Life* is now ripe with age (40 years old this year) and may seem nearly as distant from the present generation as *A Christmas Carol.* This may also be the last year TV stations will screen *Wonderful Life* in its original black and white version, thus preserving its aura of the past and its aesthetic integrity, for it is among those unhappy film classics undergoing computerized tinting into color for contemporary TV audiences. My reactionary view is that we should no more change the colors in a film than the adjectives in a novel, but I admit the cause is lost. Fellow reactionaries should put away black and white videocassettes of these film classics while there is still time.

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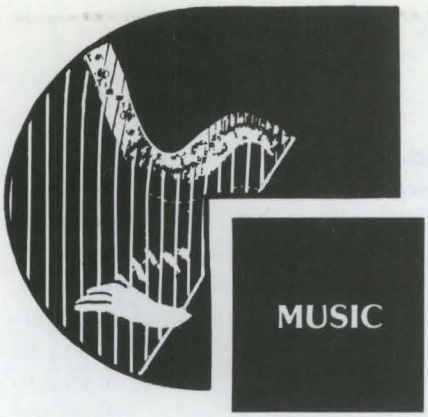

Socratic Method & Music Performance

Linda Ferguson

For many of us who are devoted to the traditional ideals of liberal undergraduate education, the prevailing pedagogical model is the Socratic method. Whether or not the historical Socrates actually taught by this method, and whether or not the Platonic dialogues actually proceed according to it, the "Socratic method" generally implies an aggressive and adversarial meeting of teacher and student in which the student formulates a position on a question raised by the teacher, and the teacher challenges that position by finding its weaknesses; once the weaknesses are systematically revealed, the student remedies them and presents a re-formulation for further testing.

When the student's formulation is sufficient to withstand the criticism of the teacher, that formulation is used in constructing a new and more advanced formulation about a more complex issue which the teacher will introduce by questioning when the student has demonstrated mastery of the simpler one. This method is distinct from the lecture and also from the discussion; sometimes it is called "tutorial." (I resist here, although I recognize, a cynical impulse to define "Socratic teaching" as a way of tricking my student into thinking as I do, or of forcing him, through word games, to say that he does.)

It has occasionally occurred to me, as I travel between the lecture classroom and the private music studio, that if "Socratic-style dialogue" is to go on in teaching these days, it might have a better chance in the studio than in the classroom. In a recent volume on higher learning *(Schooling and the Acquisition of Knowledge),* Richard C. Anderson of the University of Illinois describes Socratic teaching as the task of "[keeping] the student working until he or she has constructed a framework that will stand to criticism." At present this matches the task of the practical music teacher more exactly than it describes the usual work of the classroom lecturer.

Practical music-making (i.e., performance) is not usually viewed as a "liberal study" but as a "servile" technical and specialized pursuit, perpetuated through a series of contacts between student and teacher during which the student learns to imitate the sounds the teacher makes or to produce the sounds the teacher describes. The goal, usually vocational, is that the student will master the sound-making operations in order to enact them in public for others. (Insofar as many "liberal arts" courses have parallel practical goals, they are also "servile," technical, and specialized.)

A performance of music is not an argument in the discursive sense, but it is the taking of a position. An excellent performance is the utterance of a fully framed and persuasive formulation about the piece. The goal of the teaching is, to recall Anderson, "to keep the student working until he or she has constructed a framework that will stand to criticism"; in musical study that translates "to prepare a performance worthy of an audience."

Although the content and purpose of practical music study differ from the "liberal arts," the conditions which seem most likely to prevent "Socratic" teaching in the classroom do not impede the private music lesson. In the studio, the one-to-one teacher-student ratio, otherwise found only in the most advanced and specialized reading and research courses, is the norm. The music student makes a sustained utterance (i.e., a recitation) and is then criticized systematically. In the music lesson criticism takes place in private; since the student knows at the outset that criticism of the performance will ensue, it is not unusual and shocking, although it may still be painful. Obviously the student must actively prepare, else the lesson will have no text.

The path of the lesson necessarily follows from what the student has first posited in performance. Quoting again from Anderson, "in Socratic instruction it is the student who forges the conceptual system. The teacher is guided by an understanding of the accepted system and continuously updated diagnoses of the current status of the student's schema, but the teacher does not 'lay on' the accepted theory." Occasionally imitation ("the laying on of accepted theory") *is* the most efficient and effective way to clarify a point in a lesson, to move the instruction ahead to a more interesting and complicated question, just as occasionally lecturing is more efficient and effective than questioning in a classroom. But excellent teaching both in musical techniques and in interpreta-

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tion of scores involves more than simple imitation, the studio's version of "regurgitation" of information.

Again, I do not claim that performance studies are generically the same as liberal academic studies, or that they are better. Rather, I suggest that in looking for ways to enliven classroom teaching, perhaps we could transport something of the dynamic and rigor of the private music lesson to the lecture room or seminar. This possibility first occurred to me last summer, when Valparaiso University was host to two distinguished guests. They came here under entirely differing circumstances and to fulfill widely diverse missions. One of the visitors was Marshall Gregory of Butler University who addressed a group of V. U. faculty during a three-day workshop, "Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum"; the other was John Wustman, internationally acclaimed pianist and vocal coach, who had accepted the University's invitation to locate his two-week masterclass for singers and pianists on our campus.

Gregory's lecture defined the obligation of teaching as cultivation of the abilities to accept and respond productively to criticism. He urged that we examine students for their ability to analyze, not to memorize; that we abandon the lecture, which promotes passivity; and that we also abandon the "discussion" method in which the teacher's goal is merely to encourage participation, in favor of a pedagogy of critical dialogue: active formulation of continuous reasoning by students, subjected to constant criticism by teachers.

Gregory acknowledged the difficulties of this pedagogical model, especially in light of circumstances imposed beyond the teacher's immediate control: large class size, recalcitrant students, demand for "objective" testing and grading, expectation that large amounts of subject matter will be mastered in the course, and pressure to divert large amounts of the teacher's time and energy to work other than teaching.

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Gregory's address was not especially well-received. In theory, the method he advocated is hard to fault, but it is even harder to practice. And the line of argument seemed weakened by the fact that he lectured for an hour on why lecturing is not an effective form of teaching. But Gregory's aim had not been to demonstrate good teaching; rather he had come to challenge us to think about what good teaching should look like.

John Wustman, who had more time to make his case, did not spend a single of the sixty classroom hours in lecture, nor did he ever speak about teaching. He provided a sustained demonstration of what good teaching looks like. Wustman does not claim to teach by "a method." Yet frequently I was reminded of Gregory's rhetoric, and the method he had advocated, as when Wustman would admonish a student to consult the text, or to reject simple "canned" answers. "Look at the score," he would urge. "I am testing your thought, not your memory!"

In response to a question about the construction of a song, a student replies in a standard academic code: "ABA" (meaning, "in three sections, the first and third being identical"). "ABA! What is that? You remind me of *school!*" Wustman exclaims scornfully, though it is clearly useful to understand the ternary form as long as that understanding is the means to further thought rather than the limit of it. Although Wustman prides himself on not "being academic," it is obvious that what he means by "academic" is what Jacques Barzun calls "Hokum" ("artificial apples of knowledge").

"Masterclass," a classroom form of studio music lesson, signifies differently to different "masters." Sometimes the masterclass is an opportunity for an aspiring young performer to be discovered by a famous performer. The Pavarotti masterclasses held several years ago at the Julliard School (which were accompanied by Mr. Wustman) might be so described; the students who appeared were carefully screened, and the "classes" consisted of their polished performances, on national television.

The Wustman classes, although conducted by a famous professional, are not of the showcase variety. No competition is held to select the participants. The class is advertised nationally and performers with sufficient time, money, and confidence apply. Applicants are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Wustman limits the number of participants to forty or fifty to insure adequate attention to each one, but he does not specify any other requirements, and he accepts an unlimited number of auditors.

Simply, he takes each student's "recitation," or performance, and leads the student through the process of testing for weaknesses and of reformulation. The method is the same regardless of the level of expertise demonstrated. The classes attract professionals, students, and

amateurs from across the country. Last summer the youngest participant was an 18-year-old college student from Canada; the oldest was a retired teacher of singing from Mississippi. Two were physicians; one was a receptionist for a trucking company. Many were aspiring young professional singers and pianists, seeking to test and improve their performances (and thereby, their chances for success in their field); others were teachers of music, seeking to do the same.

The classroom routine is established early. Each of the lessons—as many as fifteen each day—follows the same format. In the presence of all members of the class, most of whom are equipped with scores, pencils, and tape recorders, a pair of performers (singer and accompanist) present their hypothesis about the song they have selected; that is, they perform it. Wustman's first response (nearly always some version of "Well, it is going to be very good!") is more often a promise than a compliment.

If the song has been sung in a language other than English, the singer then presents a translation, prepared ahead of time. Published translations, often provided in the scores, may not be consulted, in part because the teacher believes them to be unreliable, and in part because he requires that the student take full responsibility for participation in the piece. (Marshall Gregory would describe this as "earning ownership of the ideas raised by the text.")

Some interpretative comments pertaining to the literary content of the song may follow, or perhaps a piece or two of historical information may be dispensed in passing. The performance is begun again. After the first phrase, the testing of the "hypothesis" commences. Causes, rather than effects, are treated. "Legato," therefore, does not mean "smooth," but rather it means "bound, tied together, connected." "What is bound together?" "Notes." "What binds the notes?" "Sound." "What do *you* need to do to make the sounds more connected?" And the line of questioning continues until the Wustman catechism on "legato" has been discovered and articulated by the student.

Students who have attended the classes before have the advantage of having heard and practiced some of the answers, and sometimes there is the sense that true dialectic has given way to riddles and trick questions. But some of the questions that sound like riddles (such as "what is an eighth note?") have a purpose which affects the way a passage is performed. (In the case of the eighth note, Wustman argues that "two of something is more than half of something" and that an eighth note must be thought of as the time of two sixteenth notes, not as one-half the time of a quarter note; his point has to do with the need to focus on continuing the sound rather than on stopping it.)

When a student struggles to respond, but fails to connect with the line of questioning, Wustman will change directions. "Of the three or four things I can think of to say about that note, which one of them do you want me to say?" asks an exasperated young man. "That it is the point at which the phrase turns around," Wustman replies simply, and lets both teacher and student off the hook to get on with a more interesting point.

Sometimes he allows awkward silences to intrude into the dialogue. Either by accident or design these silences demonstrate the need for sounds to be "bound together," and serve to illustrate what happens to a line of singing that is not legato. Other times, a question from the floor may result in a brief, but orderly exposition on a point of general applicability (as in a spontaneous mini-lecture on the pronuncia-

Amen

With tenative probes and advances—like snow
that first feathers orchards, then stars on the window,
before it can thicken to one seamless curtain
connecting by dawn earth with heaven —
it comes.

Room by luminous room, building anthems from
brush of its hem against walls you've been watching
since waiting began.
Close now. So close, its Amen
fills space you'd reserved for undressing, for letting
at last it take charge. And while snow outside lengthens,
it bends to assist, to lift you, well-robed now.

through storm's unrelenting hosannas.

Lois Reiner

tion of the final "ch" sound in the singing of German.)

One rule of the Wustman masterclass is that once a lesson has been given on a particular song, no other students may perform that song in class. Besides assuring that varied repertoire will be covered, this policy encourages rapt attention to the treatment of "standard repertoire" pieces presented in class. The same lesson need not be given to each student individually if all students in the room are attentive to the one who is performing.

Having observed Wustman at work both in the masterclass and in the private lesson, I know that in the private lesson he moves more quickly, more by telling than by asking, more by imitation than by dialogue. There is a reason for this. Two weeks of private lessons provide at most two hours of instruction; two weeks of Wustman masterclasses provide sixty hours, if the observing students can sustain their involvement in the line of questioning and in the subsequent "reformulations." One of the miracles of the Wustman classes seems to be that for the most part, they can.

Earlier, I speculated that the private music lesson may provide the rare opportunity for true "tutorial" teaching. Yet Wustman's success in these classes seems to rely in part on the presence of an "active" audience. The dynamic process between student and teacher seems to flourish in the more exciting context of "performance." Perhaps this is because it is a performance art that is being taught; perhaps it is because Wustman is, besides being a master teacher, a master entertainer; and perhaps it is because the Socratic model of questioning an individual in a classroom setting is a good one after all.

The Wustman Masterclasses have in recent years become something of a legend among American singers and accompanists who specialize in vocal repertoire. Wustman holds a professorship at the University of Illinois, but is better known internationally for his recordings and concertizing, especially as accompanist to tenor Luciano Pavarotti. For two weeks each summer, he "retires" from his other commitments to teach in a fashion not practical in the usual workaday life of teacher and student. For a number of years, the classes were held on the campus of Eureka College in central Illinois. Desiring a change of setting, Wustman was attracted to the Valparaiso campus, a "retreat-like" atmosphere with few distractions which is also relatively convenient for those who would travel here: off the beaten path, but not too far.

If all goes as expected, the Wustman Masterclasses will return to the Valparaiso campus next June. They will provide once again on our campus a highly successful model of teaching. I can assert that the model is successful because the evidence can be *heard.* The feedback is immediate and available to everyone present. Through a process of critical testing of ideas about singing and playing a particular song, we hear increasingly convincing "reformulations."

Last year, when Marshall Gregory challenged the faculty to undertake radical and united reform of our pedagogical methods, his argument sounded like a song I had heard too many times before. In Wustman's practical application of Gregory's theory, it showed some new promise. Gregory warns that if we are unwilling to reform our teaching, we must make peace with the alternative: to do the best we can, given the intellectual passivity of our students. John Wustman's teaching does not settle for that alternative. His presence on this campus should inspire us not to settle for it either.

Hard Choices

Albert R. Trost

Nuclear weapons issues are not very prominent on our campus. This is not for want of effort by some of our faculty. I think it is fair to say that among the faculty there are several who might be characterized as anti-nuclear activists. Colleagues in such diverse departments as English, Philosophy, and Theology have offered courses on nuclear weapons and war topics.

Some of the same faculty and a few students sponsored a visit two years ago by the Australian anti-nuclear activist, Dr. Helen Caldicott. That event drew about six hundred people, a very large number for a public event on our campus. Her emotional commitment to the cause of a nuclear freeze, followed by disarmament, was contagious, and she carried the crowd along, for the most part. Yet eighteen months later there is little evidence that she was ever on the campus. There is no more debate on the question than there was before she arrived, and there is certainly no anti-nuclear movement.

This semester I had my "go" at

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the subject, believing in a spirit of true professional chauvinism that political scientists had formulated the most reasoned debate about the nuclear question and therefore that ours was the proper discipline to consider the issue. I have devoted at least one-third of the current semester in an International Relations course to a consideration of nuclear weapons, deterrence, and nuclear war. One of three required texts is also devoted to the subject. When one of the best students in the class and one of the most socially committed came forward to tell me after four weeks that this was too much, I realized that I too had failed to ignite a consuming fire of interest in the topic. I had failed to shock or stimulate my students. After several weeks they were saturated and did not want to pursue the topic further.

Valparaiso University is typical of most American campuses on this issue as well as being fairly typical of American public opinion in general. The vast majority of people are agreed that nuclear war is horrible and must be avoided. They are willing to say this to a public opinion pollster, or possibly on a referendum proposition to create a nuclear-free zone on their campus or in their city.

Beyond this few are willing to go, either in study and debate or in political commitment. The nuclear freeze movement has never caught on in our country as it has in Europe. In the United States, protests on nuclear policy tend to be well-organized, but small. The debate and the political activity are almost entirely an elite phenomenon, engaged in by some professors, medical doctors, and researchers, and especially by many clergy from the mainline religious bodies. In fact, if there is a clear opposition to national policy on nuclear weapons it comes not from the Democratic Party, but from within some of the mainline churches.

Because public opinion on nuclear issues is so uninformed and uninterested, it is easily manipulated. President Reagan was able within a few days after Reykjavik to turn what had been vague sentiment for an arms control agreement and disappointment at it not being achieved at the summit into a ringing endorsement of his Strategic Defense Initiative. He managed to accomplish this by framing SDI in simple terms, as reliable protection against a nuclear attack. Who could be against this? Few cared to pursue the relation of SDI to other aspects of the arms control agenda, to our current strategy of deterrence, or to prospects for an arms race.

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Imminence is one key to arousing a public on nuclear weapons issues. European publics are more easily aroused than ours because the possibility of nuclear war in their countries seems more of an immediate threat. New missiles are going in on their soil. Furthermore, in most of the scenarios for nuclear war, the weapons will be flying over and detonating in their air space. The one tangible border between East and West is in Europe, most particularly in Germany. The students in a classroom in Valparaiso, or anywhere else in North America, cannot visualize nuclear possibilities with the same immediacy. In fact, the discussion of nuclear war in our country seems unreal and hypothetical.

Simplicity is also essential for the arousal of interest in this topic. If one makes the avoidance of nuclear war the only goal of our national security policy, and if one begins the discussion with pictures of the devastation at Hiroshima in 1945, or sees the recent films *Threads* and *The Day After,* or maybe something popular like *War Games,* and ends up listening to Carl Sagan describe a "nuclear winter," it is a direct and easy route to the position that nuclear weapons are "obscene." And if they are obscene, then they must be disposed of, even if this means acting unilaterally.

To simplify the choice to Hiroshima in 1945 or Valparaiso in 1986 is to offer death or life. One does not have to be led to make this choice. For some people, even intellectuals and professionals, the choice may genuinely be this simple, and therefore no choice at all. It is not likely to be the position of people with governmental authority, especially those with positions in the governments of the five nuclear powers.

Almost everyone can agree that nuclear war should be avoided, and almost everyone will agree that that should be a high priority of our foreign and defense policy. However, there are other high-priority objectives that cannot be lost sight of. The defense of the borders of the United States against both a nuclear attack and a conventional invasion is an obligation every administration must attend to. Since the NATO Treaty in 1949, our government has also included the defense of Western Europe and Canada as a high-order objective, although it must be admitted that there are significant numbers of Europeans who no longer see an American role so clearly. The Russians probably follow the mirror set of these priorities, though they may weight them differently.

The difficult and complicated problem for us and the Russians is to provide for defense while at the same time avoiding nuclear war, given the fact that both sides have large inventories of nuclear weapons and see one another as the major rival in international politics. What the national leadership of the major powers face is a choice of several strategies or policies, none of which completely insures that they will be able to realize all of their priorities. Their choices are not as simple as life vs. death. They have an obligation to work out the varied and complex implications of their choices as carefully as they can.

There is certainly no lack of literature on nuclear weapons questions to help policy makers and some of the rest of us understand the dilemmas and the choices available. This literature requires time and effort to master, and it may not result in unambiguous answers. The areas of nuclear weapons, strategy, war, and arms control have been among the most fully and systematically argued in a variety of disciplines. This is clearly true of the political science contribution. If ethical questions are more the province of theology and philosophy, and weapons and their physical effects the province of the sciences and engineering, the strategic discussion has been mainly carried on in political science, more specifically international relations.

I have found that for even a basic lay understanding of strategic and policy questions in this area at least three weeks of class time and about twenty hours of reading are required. One must first of all master the technical jargon, at least to the point of understanding the two dozen or so basic concepts. Careful reading of some essential theoretical literature is also necessary. In addition, one has to know the history of American-Soviet relations, the historical development of nuclear strategy in both the United States and the Soviet Union, the state of the respective nuclear arsenals, and the national security policy-making process and the policy that results from it.

There are many who are active in the various nuclear policy movements who have not taken the time to become familiar with the strategic dimensions of the issue.

Even this basic understanding is not very widespread in the population, though one hopes it reaches the top policy-making levels. There are many who are active in the various nuclear policy movements who have not taken the time to become familiar with the strategic dimensions of the issue. They may sense that the clarity and simplicity with which they view the issues may be compromised by a jaunt through this literature. For instance, it provides almost no support for the positions of either unilateral nuclear disarmament or nuclear superiority. Even nuclear freeze does not find much support in the literature. The distances between real options narrow and blur.

The choices become more complex and ambiguous in the area of strategy because the avoidance of nuclear war is only one priority for policy-makers. Defense of the nation is another, as is defense of allies. In addition, all the national security priorities must be considered, at least on the American side, in terms of what is politically possible given our pluralistic and democratic system of decision-making.

The strategic option that both the United States and the Soviet Union have chosen since the early 1950s is that of nuclear deterrence. This option has allowed them to realize all of their major priorities for thirty years. They have avoided nuclear war and successfully prevented encroachment on their respective territories and that of their formal allies. The strategy of deterrence paradoxically threatens nuclear retaliation against a nuclear attacker. The object is to avoid ever having to use nuclear weapons by threatening to use them. It is easy to see that for those who see nuclear weapons as obscene, this strategy is unpalatable. Our strategy of deterrence, it should be noted, threatens retaliation not only against a nuclear attacker but also against a massive conventional attack on our allies in Europe.

According to the prevailing strategy of deterrence, the threatened retaliation must be both credible and stable to be effective. Credibility means simply that whatever threat is proposed, it must be believed by the adversary. The credibility of a deterrent, for example, is increased if it is invulnerable to a pre-emptive strike by an adversary. An enemy must believe that you have the will to use your retaliatory weapon. It cannot be so big and horrible that it threatens the destruction of oneself as well as the other side.

Stability is a more elusive requirement. Roughly it means preserving a balance of threats between potential adversaries. It implies that whatever is threatened as a retaliation must not be so threatening that the rival sees an advantage in a pre-emptive strike before your threatening weapons can be used. Stability is maintained if the adversary does not engage in an arms race to try to counter the threat of the retaliation.

To make matters even more dif-

ficult, stability and credibility are frequently incompatible objectives. They must be traded off against one another, making for a less than perfect deterrent. For instance, a small nuclear weapon like the neutron bomb is very credible because it is easy to believe it will be used since it would not compromise the safety of the user. On the other hand, it is very unstable. It is so small that the United States might be tempted to use it in a conventional war as a defensive weapon rather than holding it back as a deterrent. It would cross the nuclear threshold and make escalation easier for both sides. To take another example, submarine-launched ballistic missiles are credible because submarines are easily concealed and hence invulnerable. However, they are so threatening that the adversary is encouraged to discover the technology to locate the submarines, prompting a renewed arms race.

The Strategic Defense Initiative must also be seen and evaluated in light of the requirements of a strategy of deterrence. It is not the obvious choice, from the standpoint of deterrence, that President Reagan has presented. In the atmosphere of the talks in Iceland, he made it seem as if SDI would preclude the need for offensive nuclear weapons and therefore eliminate the threat of nuclear attack. At the end of its development, SDI would be effective against any offensive nuclear weapon. Only a fool, it would seem, would not be attracted to this prospect.

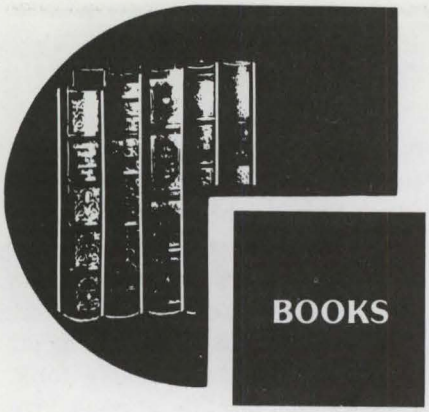
However, the road through research and development of SDI is laden with lack of credibility and stability. Right now, the technology required is hardly credible. All aspects of the system seem highly vulnerable to pre-emptive attack, even when the system is completed. To the extent that it might work, there is every incentive for the Soviet Union to strike before it is in place. And this is not the only threat to stability. The Soviet Union will be encouraged to research counters to the system, provoking a massive and expensive arms race.

Though SDI's trillion dollar price tag should provoke more debate about alternatives and strategic considerations, the opposite appears to be happening after the Iceland summit. The attraction of the simple solution offered by the President was too much of a temptation for many in Congress, as well as for a large majority of the public. The President's promise of total security from a nuclear attack, however shaky its premises, seemed preferable to the threat and ambiguities present strategies present.

The swamp of ambiguity to which one succumbs by reading the literature of strategic theory cannot be better illustrated than by the position on nuclear arms adopted by the American Catholic bishops in 1983. As one might expect from spokespersons of the mainline Christian churches, they exercised their "preference for life" by explicitly saying that the use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified. However, in preparing their statement they and their staffs had gone through the strategic literature with some thoroughness, so they felt obligated to recognize the need for a deterrent nuclear force. Yet, according to their statement, this would be a deterrent force whose actual use in a retaliatory strike could never be justified. Such a deterrent, of course, would be the ultimate in non-credibility.

A more consistent statement on the bishop's part would have omitted any reference to the need for a deterrent. To do so, however, would have been to ignore the nation's need for national security and thus not to be intellectually responsive to the strategic literature (and the strategic realities).

The way to progress on nuclear arms policy is not clear. Anxiety over the possible use of nuclear weapons is high, but any government has a duty to defend the nation as well as to avoid nuclear war, and nuclear weapons are now a given in that defense. The path of wisdom in the nuclear age is not to wish the weapons away but to attend carefully to the thinking that has gone on for thirty years on how to avoid their use.



Review Essay

A Grave Grace

Warren Rubel

Gravity and Grace: Reflections and Provocations

By Joseph Sittler. Minneapolis: Augsburg. 127 pp. $6.95.

This slight but weighty book can be tasted, swallowed, and, to alter slightly Francis Bacon's maxim, chewed and digested like a nourishing bagel. Or to put the perspective another way, if books are "speculative instruments," then Joseph Sittler's *Gravity and Grace* offers the reader at least a double delight: we get the long telescopic view of the sage and we get the microscopic view of the occasionally irate *senex* or old man.

As Martin E. Marty points out in his helpful foreword, the book can be read through from beginning to end because a number of sustaining themes give it its own coherence and direction. Yet we can read and reread isolated paragraphs because Sittler discriminately loves the world, he cares for language, and he works for the precise word. He does these things well because he has a center and he works out from that center.

In the collaboration that led to the book's publication, editor Linda-Marie Delloff has arranged the various sustaining themes in what I took to be a kind of ascending and descending curve: we begin with nature and grace in a world, Sittler reminds us, that has been around much longer than we have, a world much larger than we believed it to be just a generation ago. We move into that world with the fresh trust and risk of faith. We proceed to the grainier problems that shaped Sittler's own sense of vocation in life—ministry, theology, education, and language, to mention a few. We then curve downward to modern culture, to moral discourse in a nuclear age, and, finally, to aging itself, to "a summing up and a letting go."

The integrating element in these themes is the kind of selfhood that gradually comes clear to the reader. Grace and gravity penetrate and interpenetrate in Sittler's vision of the self both being found and finding: self to the world, self to others—a connectedness affirmed in Christian theology, brought to realization in our understanding of what it means to be a human being, "the essence or core of likeness that permits language and intelligibility, even if we have no language in common," because what we are and what we may become are founded and funded by Grace.

This sense of inner connectedness leads Sittler to some powerful claims about the ingredients and exigencies of Christian life and testimony in the contemporary world. Strongly opposed to static appeals to authority about the Word of God, Sittler writes:

> The authority of scriptural words and passages is internal, not external, and it is not automatic. The authority of scripture has to depend on the text's internal congruity with the human pathos: the reality of what it means to be a human being in this appalling time. The pathos, confusion, ambiguity, and scatteredness of life—this is the situation to which we must address the biblical Word. And that Word will be invested with authority by virtue of its liberating, enlightening, and promising congruity, not by virtue of "the Bible says." For most people, what "the Bible says" is no more authoritative than what the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* says. The authority must be uncovered as intrinsic.

I quote the paragraph in full because it discloses the kind of constructive theology the author works from and toward and because the paragraph gives us a basic orientation or grounding in the range of Sittler's concerns as speaker and writer. Because the Word of God has possessed him and because he continues to seek to possess that Word in his own evolving selfhood, he connects as human being "soaked in scripture" with both the seemingly trivial—attending a New York Yankee baseball game with Franklin Clark Fry, who puns on a Luis Aparicio error—and the crucial issues of our day—from ecology to the compelling interrelatedness of Christian love with justice.

We find a second kind of delight in attending to this work. "Green grapes gripe, and young men are not ripe," goes an old Russian proverb. Neither green in his age nor a griper, Sittler combines "reflections with provocations," as the subtitle of the book suggests. There is a wise, even crotchety testiness to his provocations.

Sensitive to the gaps between what we are and what we should be, Sittler sends out those verbal barbs that sting us into consciousness about the disturbing incongruities in our culture and in our-

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selves. But because he himself recognizes that our "interior life goes round and round and round, with deepening ambiguities," we do not feel that Sittler stands outside of our human predicament. Thus, he can speak of both the mind's need for order and the comic extremities of the aunt who saved boxes to contain all things that women can save: she even had a box labeled "pieces of string too short to save."

And even if he turns on the complacent within our common establishments, one listens carefully because Sittler has developed a kind of impersonal self-transcendence which redeems the very predicament he isolates and chastises. There is, consequently, a kind of poignancy in his watching with awe the first man landing on the moon while his teenage son never drops his feet from the table and quips to his father, "Don't worry, Pop, they'll make it."

Or he can turn on academia: "college faculty should be educated persons. This is often not the case. Many are trained—not educated. You can train dogs to jump, and you can train people to report what is going on in chemistry and transmit that information. But education means training the mind to unfold the multiple facets of human existence with some appreciation, eagerness, and joy. It is, in essence, the opposite of being dull. We've got plenty of trained, dull people on our own faculties, but not many educated people."

Or Sittler can turn on the contemporary church and congregation: "Much of the intellectual and aesthetic life within the contemporary congregation is simply contemptible. The intellectual content of the ordinary sermon is contemptible. It is often full of moral fervor and piety, but it is usually absent in the clarity of ideas that thread against the accepted norms and offer new possibilities for reflection."

I touch on these separate judgments both because they may strike home and because the context of these quotes—a teenage son more at home in a technological culture than his father, an indictment against academic dullness after a portrayal of a college teacher of literature who excited football players, a contemporary Christian church placed against the vigorous intellectual and artistic life of the early church—suggests how inclusive Sittler's perspective can be. He cauterizes to heal.

The final delight in reading this little book nests in a special paradox. Although Sittler is at his best when he argues against the turn toward subjectivity of our age, when he places before us the "timeless, high impersonality" of the church as an ancient and lively worshipping community held together by God's initiative for us and toward us in Jesus Christ, he is the kind of person one points to as a human being both full of faith and faithful.

No easy mortality and no easy immortality here. Rather a pilgrim in whom mind and spirit meet, who sees in nature the love of God, in history the grace of God, in his own life the mystery of the love and grace of God at work. His life may be curving downward to death. He has learned about letting go, one gathers, because he knows how preciously one seeks to grasp the fullness of life in the flickering and flaming light of human consciousness.

I first read selected Sittler works many years ago. I first heard him preach about thirty years ago—on love and regard for the earth. Subsequently, as he has aged and as I have heard him quote from memory large swatches of Wallace Stevens' poetry or speak about Christ as Pantocrator in a Byzantine Church in Asia Minor that he visited, I want almost to claim that I have seen about him the sacred penumbra that some believed they saw hovering around Bishop Joseph Butler toward the end of his life.

It does not matter. In this little book peace and restlessness anneal. It is the kind of book one recommends just because it is unpretentious, wise, and, yes, warm with the things of the spirit. One can keep and guard it and then regard it again.

The Note

Before leaving I write a sloppy mother note,
the electrician repaired the hall light, and I
made you a cake, slightly lopsided:
almost level, almost round
like a beginning potter's bowl. Eat.
Frosting will stick to your lips, crumbs
will fall on your lap, a chunk escape
to the floor. And if the cat continues to jump
at the drapery cord, be glad.
Chaos gives order meaning, a woman
comes alive:
her heart swings like a smokey redbird,
everything in a momentary disarray,
everything sweet to the lips.

Pat James

THE LAST WORD

Woe to You, Dear Doctors

Dot Nuechterlein

Doesn't it just frost you? Well, maybe it doesn't; maybe this is a local problem that does not appear in your community, but somehow I doubt it.

I refer to the loathsome, insensitive, abominably arrogant practice of many doctors, dentists, hospitals, and other assorted medico-types who keep their patients and clients sitting in "waiting" rooms forever before the great ones deign to show themselves and tend to business.

Once upon a time I patronized a physician who gave individual appointments to each individual patient and never kept anyone waiting more than fifteen minutes. On those occasions when he had an emergency or an unplanned baby delivery or was just running late in the office, his receptionist would call and offer to reschedule the time.

Wow, I have come to learn, was he ever a rarity. Many of the current crop seem to give a whole platoon of people the same appointment time; it is really quite a fair system, I suppose, because *everyone* sits. Even the first person in the door, first thing in the morning, is likely to face a period of solemn contemplation or a run-through of tired old magazines.

Why do we put up with it? Why don't we complain a little, or scream and holler a lot? Why do we pay them all that money and then let them squander so much of our time without a peep of protest? We gripe about it to one another a great deal, judging by the conversations I hear regularly, but what good does that do if we don't get the message across to those in charge?

I'll tell you why we don't: good old-fashioned fear. These people hold either our lives or our comforts in their hands, and we are afraid that if we displease them by expressing our own displeasure with them, they will either kick us out or make us miserable.

We would then have to go through the tedious process of finding someone else who is accepting new patients—not an easy task—not to mention the horrendous business of filling out those thousands of questions on new medical history forms and repeating the stories of our painful pasts and the variety of ailments of family members to the third and fourth generation backwards; and then it might turn out that the new guy is no better than the old one. Ah, friends and neighbors, they've got us cold.

Lest you think that I am anti-doc let me hasten to assure you that I am not. Most of the members of the health care professions that I have met over the years have been caring, competent men and women—and the few who weren't I quit seeing quickly. But they seem as a whole to have no conception of how the rest of us live.

We may not make life and death decisions by the day or play a role in turning others' sorrows into joys, but many of us feel that we do some valuable things with the hours allotted us, and it is annoying to be given to understand that obviously our time has no comparable worth.

It would not be a terrible problem if it happened only now and then. No one has total control over time, and anyone's timetable can go astray, even the most highly placed professional's. But the whole thing has become so systematic, so to-be-expected, that the day is long overdue to speak out. If we don't enjoy twiddling our thumbs in the outer office or clutching the drapes while we sit nudely in the inner sanctum, we have to let them know it.

How do doctors and dentists and chiropractors and the rest of the privileged few treat one another when they serve each other's needs, I wonder. Do they spend similar hours staring at a compeer's blank walls? Pardon my skepticism, but I seem to find that hard to believe. That would couple pretension with not very high level intelligence. No, I suspect that this unhappy treatment is reserved for us common folk.

What to do about it? I am not a revolutionary rabble-rouser by either nature or nurture (although to be truthful, I did once upon a time organize and lead a strike. No joke! Our local TV station cancelled *Sesame Street,* and I convinced a number of mothers to join me in having our toddlers and preschoolers picket the place, waving signs with messages like "Bring Back Big Bird," and "CKWS-TV Unfair to Kids." It was wonderful—I had alerted the city paper in advance, and news items and photos ran in media thousands of miles away. Need I add that the program was back on the air the following week?); but I certainly agree with the philosophy that there is power in numbers, and if enough of us protest at once, our chances are better that someone may hear.

Ladies and gentlemen, I leave it to you. You have my permission to, as the advice columnists say, "show this column to your doctor." And if there be any in this small readership who themselves perpetrate this shameful practice, oh, kind sirs and ladies, do please mend your ways, lest you find yourselves at the mercy of an aroused and irate public. One shudders to think what fate may lie in store for you then.