The Torch is Passed....

Two former editors of the Torch, the student newspaper of Valparaiso University, turned up with alumni contributions to IN LUCE TUA this month, proving the University finally does graduate its editors out of publication without graduating publication out of its editors. Now the Cresset is pleased to publish their alumni editorials.

"My Mother and I and the Race Problem" reflects on the relationship between a person's social experience and that person's capacity for social ethics, the painful gap between one's private and public morality, and the difficulty in moving from a politically informed position to its appropriate moral stance. To carry on this reflection, the author tells a part of his history and lets the reader draw his own moral from the story.

"A Personal Commitment to Public Relations" also tells part of the history of an alumnus, in this case of the alumnus whose vocation became informing all the alumni of the news of the University as editor of its alumni publications. The author reflects on the abiding spirit of the University which aroused his personal commitment, and then he reflects upon his task of communicating the new characteristics of the University to its graduates in his public relations role. This is no easy task, for many alumni may wish that their university would hang in suspended animation after they graduate and remain that one fixed point in the world where they are forever young and life is always just beginning. But, as the author notes, universities too grow and have histories, and the task of the alumni correspondent is to keep its changing alumni in touch with a changing university.

James Nuechterlein graduated with government and history majors in 1960 and took his Coe and Woodrow Wilson Fellowships to Yale University where he earned his M.A. in American Studies. He now professes history at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Since his graduation Mr. Nuechterlein has twice returned to the campus to reside in Valparaiso during his sabbaticals; in those years especially he pursued his prolific writing career in scholarly and popular journals, often happily as an occasional public affairs pundit for the Cresset.

The second Torch editor, a decade earlier in 1950, is Melvin H. Doering, presently the Director of Publications in the Office of Public and Alumni Affairs of the University. Mr. Doering spent eight years on campus as student and staff member from 1947 to 1955 and has been back on the staff since 1970. He edits the Alumni News-Bulletin, Parents Newsletters, VIEW, and other occasional and official publications of the University.

The Cresset welcomes alumni Nuechterlein and Doering to IN LUCE TUA.

The Editor

IN LUCE TUA

My Mother and I and The Race Problem

A Fifties Remembrance

James Nuechterlein

Mother was a racist. A benign and gentle racist, to be sure, but a racist nonetheless. So far as I know, the word "nigger" never passed her lips— it certainly never did in the presence of her children—and her comments on racial matters were neither frequent nor emotional, but it was always clear that her attitude toward blacks in the generality was one of distaste and disapproval. Mother did not often think of blacks, but when she did, she did not think well of them.

It would have been remarkable had her views been other than they were. She grew up in an isolated German Lutheran community in the Saginaw valley of Michigan. The degree of separation of that community from the larger American context is difficult to exaggerate. One measure is that as late as the 1950's, well over 100 years after the first German settlers had arrived, children born in towns like Frankenmuth (mother actually lived in Frankenlust) learned German at least as soon as they learned English and spoke their English with a distinct German accent. The residents have in recent years made their concessions to modernity— Frankenmuth now stages an annual and highly lucrative Bavarian festival for the tourists from Detroit—but at the time of mother's childhood early in the century these villages and rural settlements constituted a cultural universe virtually impervious to outside influences.

There were of course no blacks in the area (anyone not a German Lutheran was an exotic); it is possible that mother never saw a black much before she was twenty. When she was 24, she married my father, who had grown up in a house across the road from hers: his father was minister at St. Paul's Lutheran church, her father teacher and principal at St. Paul's Lutheran school. They lived for the next ten years in a very small town in Wisconsin in which again there were no blacks. It was not until the family moved to Detroit when mother was in her mid-thirties that she encountered blacks regularly or in numbers.
Even then, those encounters occurred at a considerable distance. None of the various neighborhoods we lived in— I was born after the family moved to Detroit— was integrated; they were usually ethnically diverse, but they were not racially mixed. We always got out before the blacks moved in. One’s knowledge of black people came mostly from reading, rumor, and casual observation through the windows of streetcars or automobiles moving at the edge of or occasionally through black areas. (Once when I was thirteen, I took the wrong streetcar on Gratiot Avenue and wound up deep in a black neighborhood; it was broad daylight and no one challenged me as I walked, swiftly as I could, back to “safety,” but I was terrified the entire time.) Blacks and whites saw each other in certain stores and sometimes worked in the same places, but with rare exceptions social intimacy of any kind was carefully avoided.

**We Always Got Out Before Blacks Got In**

What mother knew—or thought she knew— of life in black Detroit formed her racial attitudes. By report she learned of high crime rates, chronic drunkenness, loose sexual habits, weak family structures, and disinclination to steady employment. The little she had of personal knowledge of the black community did not cause her to question the received wisdom. A couple of the neighborhoods we lived in were at or close to the edge of the racial dividing line. It was for mother an observable fact that as the blacks edged closer conditions deteriorated: the stores became bleaker and dirtier, the streets were more littered and less safe, schools declined in quality and standard of behavior, houses and lawns displayed evidence of neglect.

At one time we lived near a low-cost housing project. It had always been a grim and unattractive place, but as its racial composition gradually shifted from white to black, it became what it had not been before: a thoroughly filthy, depressing, and dangerous slum.

Nothing in mother’s background or experience taught her to interpret these social facts at other than face value. Her education was limited: typical of young women of her time and place she left school after the eighth grade. Mother was a highly intelligent woman but she read little beyond her newspaper, her prayer books, and her Bible. Also like others of her generation and particular origins, she had virtually no interest in politics or social conditions. One of the few political comments I can recall from her concerned her uncertainty as to how to vote in the 1956 presidential election: would it be Stevenson, the Democrats, and war, or Eisenhower, the Republicans, and a depression? The whole community out of which she came seemed largely apolitical. I quite literally cannot remember any of my Frankenmuth area aunts or uncles ever making a political observation. The family passion was religion, not politics.

With her unsophisticated social views and her limited experience of life, mother took the world beyond family and church as it appeared on the surface. People, singly or collectively, were what they made of themselves. If blacks in general seemed to live in ways that by the only standards she knew were immoral or irresponsible, then they deserved to be judged accordingly. Those judgments might be tempered by Christian charity or compassion, but they were in themselves surely right and even unavoidable.

By the time I was ready for college in the mid-1950s, I of course knew better than mother— about race and about everything else. She nonetheless stubbornly resisted the logical and often impassioned arguments I mustered to advance her sociological and moral education. She would simply smile and turn willfully to another subject. (Father resisted too, but in different ways; and that is another story.)

Not that my own relations with blacks were either extensive or unproblematic. Some of the schools I attended enrolled a small number of blacks, and I had occasionally played with or against them in baseball or basketball leagues. One of them, Howard Boyd, was the most graceful basketball player I had ever seen and the only black I had ever envied. (I am aware such references have ambiguous overtones, but that is the way it was: he did have natural rhythm.) I had never known any black well. Race relations were already beginning to press so painfully on the nation’s consciousness that straightforward and untroubled black/white friendships were rare occurrences. I was acutely aware of skin color, and on the few occasions when I found myself in a predominantly black gathering, I felt distinctly uncomfortable. Blacks in groups frightened me. But I had at least absorbed the liberal understanding of black American history, and my civil rights sympathies were genuine if not particularly intense.

It happened that Detroit in the late fifties endured a continuing economic recession, which made it difficult for college students to find summer employment. The summer after my junior year was particularly tight. I could find nothing on a regular basis, and when mother, who was the secretary for our congregation, suggested that I might be able to fill in for the church janitor while he was on another extended vacation, I was eager to accept. Our church was located near downtown Detroit in a magnificent neo-gothic cathedral surrounded by two breweries and a decaying assortment of bars, pawn shops, and cheap clothing stores. The few residents in the area were black. The congregation, whose members all lived a considerable distance away, was exclusively white. On the few occasions when blacks appeared at worship services, they were politely informed of the location of Detroit’s black Lutheran churches.

Working with mother turned out to be pleasant. At work she seemed different, more relaxed and more capable, than she did at home. We took breaks and lunch together and both enjoyed it. Most often we brought our lunches from home, but occasionally we went out. The only decent place to eat was a nearby farmer’s market, which featured a number of fruit and vegetable stalls, several meat counters, and a small short-order restaurant.

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The Cresset
Mother, I discovered, was extremely well-known at the market. Everywhere she exchanged warm and familiar greetings with owners, clerks, and attendants. The owners were white, but most of the clerks and attendants were black. To my considerable surprise, the character and enthusiasm of the exchanges had not a hint of condescension or reserve in mother’s responses to her black acquaintances, including the middle-aged woman who regularly joined us at our table in the restaurant: the two of them talked easily, swapping family news, general gossip, and gentle banter. It was clear that mother viewed people at the market not as generalized blacks but as discrete individuals with particular names, identities, and stories which she reacted to on a personal basis. What struck me above all was her entirely natural manner; I knew mother well enough to know when she was performing, and here, with these people, she was not.

Our Passion Was Religion, Not Politics

Clearly it was time for some reassessment. Even in my post-adolescent insensitivity, I could not avoid comparing mother’s combination in racial matters of atavistic social views and personal warmth with my own awkward matching of liberal analysis and private unease. The problem was more than personal; I thought, for example, of the case of Clarence. Clarence was one of the handful of blacks in my college class. Proud, sensitive, somewhat reserved, he was not an easy man to know. Most of us respected Clarence but did not know quite what to make of him; Willy Loman might have said of him that he was liked, but not well-liked. Yet when he ran for vice-president of student council, he not only won, but won by what must have been the largest margin in the school’s history. The size of the victory was embarrassing. I ran into Clarence at a party the night of his election: perhaps I imagined more than was there, but I thought I saw in his always ironic expression an uncertain combination of amusement and pain. We had all voted for Clarence because we did not know how not to; perhaps mother, encumbered neither with knowledge nor false guilt, could have cast an honest ballot for or against him.

I did not know then and am not sure yet just what the moral of this story might be. Mother’s failure—or better, her inadequacy—was clear. Whatever her personal responsibility for her faults may have been, in social terms she did not know what she should have known and she should have had a more vivid social imagination than she did. The standard liberal analysis of race relations might have been awash in sentimental evasions, but it at least recognized that the issue went beyond questions of personal morality. Mother should have been able to extrapolate some lessons from her friends at the market to broader social conditions; she ought to have been a better sociologist than she was.

Yet the issue, particularly in its moral dimensions, was not so simple. I learned from mother that private and public moralities are not always consonant. Correct political positions do not translate automatically into moral stances. And if mother was wrong to jump too quickly to moral judgments about the way blacks lived, her moral reactions were no more simplistic than those associated with that version of liberalism which told her to assume guilt for the social deterioration endemic in black neighborhoods. It further seemed evident to me on reflection that mother—and millions like her—did not despise blacks as such; what they despised were certain social pathologies which they mistakenly identified with racial characteristics. What I saw at the market convinced me that it was not impossible for mother to think well of blacks. For that to happen, she had to be made to understand the complex and socially-sown roots of behavior she had not wrongly judged to be destructive. It has never seemed to me that the best means to that end would consist in blanket charges of white racism.

Beyond that, as I say, I am not sure what moral lessons might be drawn from all this. Perhaps none at all. Perhaps the best lesson might be that we should, in the absence of overwhelming reasons to the contrary, avoid making of our politics a moral vehicle. Racism is, to be sure, a moral evil, but it involves more than a bad pun to suggest that it is not normally appropriate to reduce racial conflict to the dimensions of black and white.

The O.P. Kretzmann Memorial Lecture in Christian Ethics

Perceiving God’s Will in the World Today

H. C. N. Williams

By a special arrangement with the directors of the Kretzmann Memorial Lectureship Fund, a limited supply of free copies of the first lecture in the series is available to interested Cresset readers.

Dr. O. P. Kretzmann was the founding editor of the Cresset and for nearly four decades wrote its most popular column, “The Pilgrim.”

A reader wishing a free copy of Dr. H. C. N. Williams’ lecture may obtain it by sending the Cresset a (15¢) stamped and self-addressed (9½ x 4¼” business envelope. Sorry, only one copy to each envelope.

The Editor
A Personal Commitment to Public Relations

Mel Doering

In 1950, as editor of the Torch, the Valparaiso University student newspaper, I had chosen to reduce my academic load by half. The late Herbert W. Knopp, then Director of Development, asked me to remain a part-time student in order to work half-time as press secretary for the University. It was a flattering offer which required no second thought.

What little preparation I had for the job started with an interest in journalism which had been nurtured by an unlikely incident during a brief naval career. Shortly after the Japanese surrender in World War II, the little amphibious ship on which I served was caught in a typhoon off Okinawa. It was a terrifying experience; many men and ships were lost, and mine was marooned high and dry on a sand reef in the bay. For days it sat there while more urgent rescue operations were carried out elsewhere. During those days of grateful waiting I wrote a letter home describing the incident. Some time later a shipmate brought me a newspaper clipping. It was my letter word for word. Without my knowledge my friend had watched over my shoulder as I was writing it, temporarily sneakedit from the ship's mail box, made a copy, and sent it to his grandmother who was a newspaper publisher. It had my byline, and I was hooked.

The following year while I was finishing high school (having dropped out for two fortuitous years' experience as an apprentice printer before joining the Navy), I visited the offices of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and brashly asked to see the editor. Amazingly, I was ushered right in. "What can I do for you, young man?" he asked. "I'd like to go into journalism," I stammered. "What do you advise?" "Whatever you do," he shouted, "don't go to journalism school! We can teach you in three months everything you'll learn there in four years, and then you won't have so much to unlearn." Is that what he thinks of our educational system, I wondered. But he continued, "Get yourself a good general education, and then come back and see us." "I've been accepted at Valparaiso University," I told him. "Excellent," he said. "Good luck to you."

Valparaiso University then had no journalism department, nor major, nor minor, just a few courses offered through the English department. But—unofficially—I majored in journalism anyway, pretty much along the lines of the interdisciplinary curriculum designed by the University's journalism department today. During three years' part-time and two more years full-time employment as University press secretary, Herb Knopp and President O. P. Kretzmann provided excellent in-service training, support, and encouragement. When a chance came to return to the University after fifteen years with the Aid Association for Lutherans, the Lutheran Laymen's League, and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (I never did get back to the Post-Dispatch), I did so out of a sense of loyalty and challenge. The University was being tried by passions inflamed by the Indochina War, divisions in the church, and an inflationary economy. Now, eight years later, some of the storms have been weathered while others are gathering on the horizon. The sense of challenge has grown, as well as the loyalty. The University remains an institution that gives more than it takes.

It remains also, as the Post-Dispatch editor told me in 1947, an "excellent" university. That's an overworked word, especially in university public relations offices, and its interpretation is subjective. But in the aspects of the University retrospectively considered most important by the majority of alumni I know from all periods in its history, I believe Valparaiso University remains an excellent university.

How Many Lutherans Make Us Lutheran?

Concern for people as individuals remains the hallmark of the University. I know every school can and does make that claim because the nature of the teaching-learning process requires that concern for the individual, and I know there are instances when Valparaiso falls short in this concern. But I doubt if any school more conscientiously promotes an attitude of concern for persons and reinforces it through corporate worship. (I remember Dr. O. P. Kretzmann used to say Valparaiso University was the best place he knew to get into trouble. It still is—because of the concern others here have for the individual.) The Christian message pervades the experience which the University affords its students, and today the magnificent Chapel of the Resurrection towering above the center of the campus witnesses to that message and the University's concern for the individual. One can reject it, but one cannot be unaware of it.

Furthermore, teaching and learning are seriously pursued at Valparaiso in its atmosphere of concern for the individual. The University merits and enjoys a fine reputation academically, and its growth is partly attributable to its fine academic reputation outside the Lutheran church. Thereby hangs a dilemma. More and more of its students are not Lutheran, or at least do not identify themselves with that church institutionally. Many of the non-Lutherans, of course, belong to other Christian denominations. But, as the proportion of identifying Lutheran students dwindles to approximately half, it raises the question: What effect, if any, does this have on
the Lutheran character of the school? What makes a university Lutheran? In my public relations work especially, how shall the growing number of non-Lutherans be represented in alumni organizations and publications? There has been no slackening of commitment to the Lutheran heritage on the part of the faculty and administration of the University, but perhaps paradoxically it is this very commitment, and the pursuit of academic excellence proceeding from it, which gives the University its strong appeal to non-Lutherans. The University has always welcomed them as full members of the community (and gladly does so without the coercion of government regulations), and thus it also welcomes a new constituency for our public relations program.

The growth of the University, however, brings not only new opportunities for service but new problems, and representing these problems to its constituencies is also one of the tasks of public relations. The acknowledged number one problem in my student days was low faculty-staff salaries. It still is. Despite substantial improvement in both salary scales and so-called fringe benefits, inflation has eroded the gains. This problem must be solved before it becomes seriously detrimental to the quality of the University's educational program. Other problems also seem to have accrued with growth and inflation. The building up of the new East Campus has nearly eliminated the need for the old West Campus, but not the sentimental attachment to it. We must see how it can be effectively used economically. More important than the growth of the campus in steel and stone is the growth in the scale of the University's activities. Keeping up with that growth necessitated the development of an administrative structure that is strong and efficient and, unfortunately, also a bit remote and insulated from faculty and student input. We need to see how collegiality can be strengthened in the governance of the University.

One committed to public relations knows that higher education and educational institutions are not subjects well handled by national media—except for certain intercollegiate sports, which therefore always present a tempting shortcut to public recognition. The everyday work of Valparaiso University can produce sharp shocks of insight in young minds, but rarely the kind of news that gains the attention of NBC-TV or Time or even the Post-Dispatch. Since Valparaiso doesn't have the media recognition status of a Harvard or a Notre Dame, the University's own publications must carry the brunt of the burden of communicating its news to its scattered alumni and friends.

As Publications Director within the public relations program of the University, my task as I have come to define it is to portray the qualities which justify, as well as the challenges which jeopardize, my and others' love affair with the University. By reporting the activities and accomplishments and aspirations of the University family to the extent time, ability, and budget permit, our public relations publications serve as partners in the University's life and work.

January, 1979

The Lord said truly giving thanks is an art given from the center of the heart, the imagination. I will create a dream for the soul for the silent who rock all night in chairs, the strong, who are always leaving for work, the weak who wait peering out windows—

During times of grief, joy, farewell it will travel like a thread through laughter of the young, memories of the old after love, before it and during it at the center of the voice a sound will arise

and arise....
Charles Wesley's 8,989 hymns preserve not only the memory of doctrinal struggles surrounding Methodism in eighteenth-century England, but also capture familiar human reactions to natural phenomena and national problems.

The Occasional Hymns of Charles Wesley

Their Historic Viewpoint

"Everything has its day," wrote Johnson in the Life of Prior. "Through the reigns of William and Anne, no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry." Johnson had in mind, no doubt, such events as the death of Queen Mary in 1695—mourned in verse by at least fifteen poets—and the War of the Succession (1701-1714), with its hero, John Churchill, and his victories at Blenheim (1704), Ramillies (1706), Oudenarde (1708), and Malplaquet (1709). England's efforts against France to determine a monarch for Spain provided considerable fuel for the poetic kilns of no less than fifty versifiers, as Whigs and Tories explored every means possible for achieving some degree of credit for Marlborough's triumphs.

Not surprisingly, the cascade of poetic tears shed for Mary has long evaporated, while the forced metaphors in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. In support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion. in support of British arms have passed, practically, into oblivion.

Consider, for example, Addison's The Campaign, a Poem. To His Grace the Duke of Marlborough (1704). One editor of Addison's works informs us that "When this poem was written all the incidents of the campaign of 1704 were as familiar as Quatre Bras and Waterloo." Yet, Addison chose to conceal the realities of Marlborough's engagements with the French in Flanders behind a screen of fantastic flights by gods and heroes. The poet closes his eyes and beholds "River of blood . . .


Samuel J. Rogal

and hills of slain, An Iliad rising out of one campaign." This vision sets the tone for the remaining 464 lines of the effort. With one eye upon the Moselle and the other toward heaven, Addison introduces the hero of his piece as "Our godlike leader" whose "bosom glow'd with battles yet unfought" (63, 66). The actual combat, comprising the major portion of the poem, comes forward on the heavy vehicles of heroic convention: "Batt'ries on batt'ries," "rows of hollow brass," "flames of sulphur," "slaughter'd legions," "show'rs of bullets," "seas of blood," "the trumpet, terrible from far," "long-extended squadrons," "the drum's tumultuous sound," "the dreadful burst of cannon." When Addison exhausts his supply of such phrases, he falls back upon the standard images of maimed men and animals in the aftermath of the conflict; all is "Floating in gore . . . Midst heaps of spears and standards driv'n round" (318-319).

A serious problem with The Campaign is that Addison, in his role as political propagandist, sacrifices accuracy and even honest enthusiasm for unnatural elevation. He appears unconcerned for his reader's familiarity, as well as his own unfamiliarity, with the subject. Lord Godolphin wanted a poetic tribute to John Churchill, and Addison went three steps further and delivered an epic. For adorning Anne's general with angels' wings, the poet himself rose toward political heaven: from a commissionship of appeals in excise to the position of Under-Secretary of State to Sir Charles Hedges. The effort certainly did more to secure Addison's immediate political reputation then it did to establish his posture as a legitimate poet.

After struggling with the forced figures of Anne's ambitious poets, one may find some relief by moving out of the early eighteenth century and into the reigns of the last two Georges. From about 1750 onward, the versifiers found higher subjects upon which to construct their themes, leaving the exploits of cabinet ministers and soldiers to the imaginations of prose writers. This does not mean, however, that occasional verse disappeared from British letters; to the contrary, certain poets realized their readers' willingness to accept verse related to matters of national concern, provided that the subjects received honest treatment. Thus, Charles Wesley's 8,989 hymns preserve not only the memory of doctrinal struggles surrounding Methodism in eighteenth-century England,


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Unlike the earlier poets who strived to dignify their own reputations, Wesley was beholden to no government minister or political faction; his hymns on all subjects reflect . . . the feelings of his heart.

but also capture familiar human reactions to natural phenomena and national problems existing between 1744 and 1788.

Unlike the earlier poets who strived to dignify their own reputations, Wesley was beholden to no government minister or political faction; his hymns on all subjects reflect an authentic desire to record the beliefs of his own mind and the feelings of his own heart. Certainly, he became identified as the bard of Methodism, and he clearly complemented the work of his older brother; yet, as did his brother, Charles Wesley remained loyal to his nation, to his sovereign, and even to the Church of England. His emotions, not his ambitions, found their best outlet in the hymn. Earthquakes, panics, rumors of foreign invasion, the triumphs and defeats of British arms, the domestic riots: all came within Charles Wesley’s view and furnished legitimate occasions for the sincere exercise of his poetic talent.

One of the earliest opportunities for such exercise presented itself in March 1744, when an expedition of 15,000 French, headed by Maurice, Comte de Saxe, and Prince Charles Edward, the twenty-four-year-old Young Pretender, sailed from Dunkirk for Scotland. The intended invasion never materialized, however, for the ships were driven back by storms. In July 1745, against the advice of the French, the Pretender landed in Scotland, accompanied by only seven attendants, and raised his standard at Glen Finnan. The government, caught unprepared, could muster but 1500 men against the Jacobites; the Prince quickly occupied Edinburgh, and on September 21 defeated Sir John Cope at Prestonpans. By then, Charles Edward had raised 5500 supporters, whom he directed toward England; December found him as far south as Derby. Agitated by reports in the news-sheets, his nation and sovereign:

- Secure us of his royal race
- A man to stand before Thy face,
- and exercise Thy power;
- With wealth, prosperity and peace,
- Our nation and our church to bless,
- Till time shall be no more. (PW, IV, 26)

Here, the poet’s loyalty to Britain, George II, and the Church of England rings forth on the notes of simple but direct language, while the tone remains steady and confident. He appeals directly to God in behalf of his king; he appeals to God as protector and preserver of the monarch and the nation. Yet, in the face of threatened Popish invasion, the tone is obviously militant, defiant instead of fearful:

- Defeat, confound, oppress
- The troubles of his peace;
- Blast their every vain design;
- ‘Stablish Thou his quiet throne;
- Tell his foes—“This soul is Mine,
- Touch not Mine appointed one.” (PW, IV, 23)

These lines come forth almost as a sermon in rhyme, directed to an audience of common men and women who would need to perceive the strength and will of God, who would need to recognize the “Fountain of power, from whom descends/The regal dignity divine!” (PW, IV, 23) Thus, the language of the hymnodist, as familiar to its readers and singers as the words from the Bible, seeks to rally a nation almost paralyzed with fear from rumored invasion.

Wesley wrote seven hymns following the Battle of Culloden, all published as Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving-Day, October 9, 1746 (1746). The tone of the pieces is one of exuberance—at least at the outset:

- Britons, rejoice, the Lord is King!
- The Lord of Hosts and nations sing,
- Whose arm hath now your foes o’erthrown;
- (PW, IV, 93)

But Wesley quickly directs his readers to the realization that Culloden was not simply the triumph of one human force over another; rather,

- Ascribe the praise to God alone,
- The Giver of success proclaim,
- And shout your thanks in Jesus’ name! (PW, IV, 93)

Unlike Addison’s Marlborough, “Our godlike leader,” the hymnodist’s Duke of Cumberland derives his courage from God:

- O let him thankfully submit
- To lay his laurels at Thy feet,
- By faith a Christian hero stand,
- And hang on Thine all-ruling hand,
- Supporter of his father’s throne,
- Upheld himself by Thee alone! (PW, IV, 98)
More than a Christian hero, William exists as a defender of Protestantism; Wesley views the 1745 uprising as a project undertaken by traitors and Papists (actually one and the same), supported by “Spanish gold, and Gallic pride./And Holy Church is on their side” (PW, IV, 97). Through the intervention of a Protestant God, “Lo! the audacious hopes of Rome/Rush headlong to their instant doom” (PW, IV, 97). Again, the poet clings to clear and direct language, re-enforced by the obvious imagery of the Bible. With God always in his sight, he easily reduces the generalizations of historical events to quick and decisive divine acts. Little remains for inquiry, since the “lightning from His eye” (PW, IV, 97)—the only legitimate force—is absolute.

Fifteen years later, in the autumn of 1759, England once more faced the prospect of invasion. On November 14, Admiral Hubert de Brienne, Comte de Conflans, headed the main French fleet of twenty-two vessels out of Brest harbor in an attempt to release his transports at Rochefort and then push on for England. He was pursued almost immediately by Admiral Edward Hawke, in command of twenty-three ships of the Channel Fleet, and overtaken at the entrance to Quiberon Bay. On the night of November 20, Hawke hurled his force upon the French; six of Conflans’ ships were either taken, sunk, or wrecked, while the remainder fled. The British victory resulted in the end of French invasion plans and in the termination of the French fleet as an effective offensive force. The engagement prompted two series of hymns from Charles Wesley: Hymns on the Expected Invasion (1759) and Hymns To Be Used on the Thanksgiving-Day, November 29, and After It (1759).

Both content and language of the 1759 volumes bear obvious similarities to the pieces on the Jacobite invasion of 1745. Wesley draws to a Protestant God to “quell Thy church’s foe” (PW, VI, 150); he never mentions the French by name, but alludes to “Ye murderers of Rome” and to “the Romish wolf” (PW, VI, 152). Two hymns in the collection are Biblical paraphrases; the first (Jeremiah 47:6-7) chastises a nation that would spurn, mock, and despise God:

Supinely negligent and proud,
The noble and ignoble crowd
In deadly slumber sleep:
The nation sleeps, of conquest sure,
Stands on a precipice secure,
Nor dreads the yawning deep. (PW, VI, 157)

In the second paraphrase (Revelation 19:11-21), Wesley calls for God to “Stablish Thy dominion here” (PW, VI, 160), to

Let the heathen fall before Thee,
Let the isle Thy power declare;
Judge and conquer
All mankind in righteous war. (PW, VI, 160)

In both hymns, note the advantage of updating Scriptures to a specific occasion, the ease by which the language of the Bible, carefully chosen, applies to contexts that generally parallel the original. And, of course, the familiarity of readers with the original makes the new versions meaningful and effective. The two major eighteenth­century British hymnologists, Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, remained fixed to the ideas and language from Scriptures in the majority of their divine poems.

In sixteen Hymns . . . on the Thanksgiving-Day for Hawke’s victory, Wesley further cautions the British nation away from faith in the deeds of mortals; rather, “Our whole miraculous success/Ascribe to God alone” (PW, VI, 163). He realizes that Britons have perhaps forgotten December 1745, when Charles Edward’s force reached Derby; they have also forgotten that Jehovah then pronounced the word,

And lo! at Thy supreme command
The blasted savages of Rome
Recoiled—and sunk unto the tomb. (PW, VI, 171)

Yet, he questions if the defeat of the Jacobites gave rise to a new faith in God, or if the nation has only been “lull’d in more profound repose/Abused, and forfeited our peace?” (PW, VI, 171). Throughout the volume, Wesley assumes the collective conscience of all who have neglected God, and he becomes a spokesman for those who continue to have faith in the Divine power. The real value of the thanksgiving hymns, however, lies in the poet’s understanding of what the recent conflict has cost in terms of human life. Despite his own personal fear and detestation of Catholic France, he realizes that whatever her differences with Britain, both are Christian nations; thus, he can reduce the entire Seven Years’ War to a single line: “This waste of Christian blood” (PW, VI, 184). In the end, he cannot really ask God for vengeance upon England’s enemies; instead,

We mourn the slaughter’d sons of Gaul,
We tremble, while Thy judgments fall
On our invaders’ head:
Their lives to ransom ours are given,
And crowds out of the body driven
Have perish’d in our stead. (PW, VI, 185)

And so, he terminates the poem celebrating an English victory not in terms or upon a tone of triumph, but upon a note of hope and harmony:

Repentance upon us both bestow,
Our foes and us; that each may know
Their sins through faith forgiven,
That all may cordially embrace,
And sweetly reconciled by grace,
Go hand in hand to heaven. (PW, VI, 186)

Such are the thoughts of a religious poet, one free from political influence and ambition. Integrity, if it does not...
always produce great poetry, at least gives rise to clear religious expression.

Perhaps the saddest occasion prompting Wesley's hymnody was the loss of Britain's American colonies. The final defeat of the British at Yorktown marked both a victory for rebellious colonists and a triumph for America's ally, Catholic France. In 1781, Wesley published Hymns for the Nation, a collection of sixteen poems in two parts; he followed this with a companion volume, Hymns for the National Fast, Feb. 8, 1782, containing fifteen selections. We now realize, almost two hundred years later, that the loss of the thirteen American colonies damaged little the overall might of England. In fact, the uprising, "by providing . . . useful lessons in naval and military administration, and a healthful shock to it complacency . . . probably strengthened Britain in the struggle that was to come with Revolutionary France and Napoleon." At the time, however, British morale descended to considerable depth; anarchy and Popery had won the day over heretofore invincible God, King, and Anglican Church. Thus, we might expect verse reflecting utter despair, language lacking hope for and in the future.

At age seventy-four, Charles Wesley had abandoned his hope for his faith; in fact, his commitment to Methodism had hardened the latter. He was prepared for "Thy severe decree" upon a nation that had forsaken God; unless Britons "to our Smiter turn,. . . And leave the Sins for which we mourn," nothing could be salvaged from the loss (PW, VIII, 283-284). As Christians must give thanks to God for victories, they must also seek His forgiveness for defeats; whatever the results, all of His judgments are just. Thus, Charles Wesley established a tone for Hymns for the Nation. Taking his cue from Amos 7:2—"O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob rise? for he is small"—the poet resolves the issue by proclaiming

Th' intrepid man of virtuous zeal,
Resolved and incorruptible,
Who seeks our nation's good:
Our nation's good, and not his own;
While listening to the plaintive moan,
Of loyalty oppress'd,
He serves his king's and God's designs,
America and Britain joins,
And blends them in his breast. (PW, VIII, 187)

From the fragments of the American Revolution have emerged, for Wesley, a lesson in political concord and peace, as well as two nations united in their praise of God through Christ. Hopefully, no longer will the British monarch "By factious demagogues gainsaid,/By fawning sycophants betray'd" (PW, VIII, 290); hopefully, God will "The authors of our woes forgive,/And snatch their souls from endless woes" (PW, VIII, 295); hopefully, all the despair and strife will end through the people's deliverance, "Because we trust in Jesu's blood,/And ask the grace in Jesu's name" (PW, VIII, 299). Wesley simply and forcefully places complete faith in and directs his language to "God, who wouldst a world forgive" (PW, VIII, 305). In his own mind, he can relieve the pain from the most shocking setback suffered by his nation during his lifetime.

The Hymns for the National Fast (1782) generalizes upon the ideas of the earlier volume: the sin of an entire nation—a nation guilty of "Profane, extreme ungodliness" (PW, VIII, 311). Wesley emphasizes that the loss of the American colonies—or the defeat of English arms—cannot be blamed alone upon the King, his ministers, or his generals. Instead, the entire nation had turned from God: "The poor and rich, the low and high,/Alike disdain their God to dread" (PW, VIII, 311). Each of the fifteen hymns alludes to or repeats directly that accusation. Rebellion, anarchy, French intervention, dismembered empire, tyranny, and demagoguery: such terms move freely through Wesley's verse upon the familiar echoes of sin, insolence, crime, denial, evil, and shame.

There is bitterness in his language and chastisement in his heart; but there also exist simple alternatives: renewed faith in God, complemented by fervent prayer. Otherwise, there will be merely an England wallowing in misery, a kingdom "wasted and o'erthrown," a nation writhing under "showers of vengeance" from God's "destructive work" (PW, VIII, 319). Should Britons choose to return to faith and prayer, then the entire outlook for the nation will blossom forth into what the poet terms "the joy un-speakable" (PW, VIII, 325). What makes it all so possible, all so simple, is the existence of a God "who art always the same, Whose nature is still to forgive" (PW, VIII, 336).

How easily does the younger Wesley, once the shackles of human sin have been cut away, fuse the political with the theological and point the way to the fundamentals of human existence:

Concord, on a distant shore,
To our countrymen restore;
Every obstacle remove,
Melt our hatred into love.
Gospel grace to each extend,
Every foe and every friend,
Then in Thee we sweetly find
Peace with God and all mankind. (PW, VIII, 335)

The loss of thirteen British colonies some three thousand miles away diminishes once the great peace has been established, both in Britain and throughout the world. Almost a full year previous to the news of the defeat of...
Yorktown having reached England, an event of more immediate significance occurred in London that personally affected both Wesleys. As a result of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778, religious intolerance intensified; in 1779, Lord George Gordon assumed the presidency of the Protestant Association, formed primarily to combat the recent act. On June 2, 1780, nearly 60,000 persons massed in St. George's Fields, Southwark, to petition against the Relief Act. After presenting their document to Parliament, the agitators went off to burn Roman Catholic chapels. The days following brought further violence: prisons attacked and prisoners freed, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield's house and his vast library destroyed, the Bank of England stormed. Not until June 9 did the military manage to restore order, after arresting 450 persons and hanging at least another twenty-five. Lord Gordon, tried for high treason, gained an acquittal through the efforts of his lawyer, Thomas Erskine.

The events of 1780 moved Wesley to publish thirteen Hymns Written in the Times of the Tumults (1780). Certainly, he felt the close ties with those days of trouble. Gordon resided in Welbeck Street, and thus was a near neighbor. Lord Mansfield, a classmate of the poet at Westminster School, would often walk from his house in Bloomsbury Square to Chesterfield Street, Marylebone, where Wesley resided. The loss of the Chief Justice's library, containing the works of Pope and Bolingbroke, with the writers' own marginal comments, must have been a severe blow to the scholarly Wesley, who lashed out,

Havoc, th' infernal leader cries!
Havoc, th' associate host replies!
The rabble shouts, the torrent pours,
The city sinks, the flame devours! (PW, VIII, 267)
The new chapel established by John Wesley in City Road just two years earlier appeared in danger, since, periodically, the Wesleys and their Methodist followers were forced to withstand accusations of Papist sympathies. Possibly, Charles Wesley's own life was threatened, as evidenced by one hymn in the collection entitled "Upon Notice Sent One That His House Was Marked":

In vain doth the assassin dark
This house for desolation mark,
Protected by the scarlet sign,
Already mark'd with blood Divine;
His idle threatenings we defy,
For the destroyer must pass by. (PW, VIII, 272)

When the riots finally subsided, Wesley, as usual, turned to give his thanks to God on behalf of the entire nation. The whole series of events he ascribed to devils, men, traitors, and profligates whose "ravaging fires" were ultimately "quench'd" by God's word. In the end, "Rebellion expires and peace is restored" (PW, VIII, 280).

Examples cited throughout this discussion are from six volumes of hymns wherein Wesley gathered, from the important events of his day, material for public praise, thanksgiving, and lament. The lines reflect the poet's sincere faith rising from his far-ranging loyalties and his desire to relate matters of state to Christian experience. He succeeded in communicating that faith because he sought a wide audience; he relied upon what people, especially those who embraced Methodism, knew and felt, upon the essence of their own values. And he knew their prejudices and fears—traditional and immediate, political and theological.

Culturally superior to the majority of persons whom he addressed in his verse, Wesley intentionally held back the knowledge stored in his mind and, instead, filtered his reactions to national concerns through Scripture. In hymnody, at least, he turned away from learning and focused upon the most familiar concentration of ideas in all of western literature—the Bible. The difference between the occasional hymns of Charles Wesley and the verse of Addison and his War of the Spanish Succession contemporaries is, simply, that the bard of Methodism attempted to familiarize, to educate his readers with the essential theological lessons connected with historical occasions, while Anne's political poets chose to elevate important persons and events above the level of common man.

There exists little doubt of Wesley's concern for the fortunes of his nation. Both triumph and defeat aroused his muse to action. He realized that the success of Methodism depended upon something more concrete, more familiar, than the sermons and the tracts penned by himself and his brother. There had to be a means whereby the enthusiasm from personal commitment to God and to Christ might be easily conveyed from one individual to another. He left the intellectual contemplation of abstract themes to others and rallied to the standard of the militant Christian believer. He did more than observe life: he worked, he struggled, he suffered, and he sought complete redemption for himself and for his fellow men.

Charles Wesley wrote nearly 9,000 hymns; not all are of equal merit, and only less than three per cent of this number are sung today by British and American congregations. Yet, all of his poetry, regardless of quality, points to one basic idea that will allow him to be termed—in addition to the "Poet of Methodism" and the "Poet of the Evangelical Revival"—the voice of those eighteenth-century Britons who remained loyal to King, to Church, to nation, and who sought God in times of trouble:

Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,
To Thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught, at last, I fly,
With Thee, and Thine to live, and die.

(PW, VI, 71)
On Falling from the Scaffold

Sunlight was in one corner and rain in another.
Snow curved overhead.
The music was from the New World
And we danced blasphemingly
On the edge of our lovely gibbet.

Trees of the fall season, all brown with blue ribbons
Where the holes should be hung over us
Wanting to be finished—
Asking to be fastened to the wall.
(Trees shouldn’t float long and their cry
To be wedded to a wall should be answered.)

Such a delicate edge between summer and fall—
Drybrushing the gentle contour,
Patting the powder blue and stretching
To the ultimate length of brush and arm together—
And together we fell from there.

We let go of the New World, but held on to the brush
And floated abruptly in a most singular direction,
Marking the landing with powder blue
On an unremarkable ochre.
And the floor became the ceiling—
Two floating heavens with an aching fool between—
Catching breath and sucking in the importance
That made the fall worth more than the falling.

So this poor Icarus of fifteen feet
Beholds creation’s King become his brother
By falling from his Father—
Past the years of all created light
Past the pieces of hurting history
Past the prophets and the sceptics
Past his chosen family
Past the belly of his Mother
To the cave of earth—
To share with me a landing place.

What was your falling like, baby brother?
How soon did you adjust to the damp cave’s glow?
Did it hurt much
To have your throne become a feed box?
Was it such a come-down, being the image now
And not the image maker?

Such glory you left behind—creating seasons—
Gently patting the difference
Between winter and spring
So that hard edges wouldn’t shock us
Into disbelief.

While Painting

"The Seasons" on the Ceiling
of the Holden Village Center

And now your little girl-Mother
Grunts you into the straw.
Are those baby bawlings an early “Eli, Eli!”
Or did you tumble from the throne
Because the weight of love became lop-sided
And overpowered you?

Mauve was the mantle of mountains—
Now it must be the cope of your passion.
Red was sun and pillar before your people—
Now it oozes from under the thorns
And washes us bloody.
Black was gentle cool
And velvet speckled evening—
Now it hangs from the gibbet and marks you gone
Away.

Was it hard to climb your scaffold God?
Could you really dance there
A lamb damned to wood—
Vinegar buckets up and down
All under a dirty ceiling—
Business below as usual save for the thunder,
A torn curtain and tombstones helter-skelter?
And was this coming down easier than the first time?
Gentler, quieter, no announcing angels,
Ropes leaving no burning trail
And Mother whimpering in a cave again,
Her son in her gut and no way to push him out,
No way to push at all. For rebirth is a pulling—
A summons from the throne.

With us we hammer and forget.
As we paint and blaspheme, as we converse and die,
And wait beneath your scaffold to be pulled
Through the grill—unshredded.

Fourteen hundred sparrows today
In this territory alone.
We have not spawn or reaped or gathered into barns.
We have simply fallen and have been recalled—
To mount the gibbet.

Praise God!

Richard R. Caemmerer, Jr.

January, 1979
Paintings from an Artist’s Journal

There are many moments when smearing stuff around on paper and canvas seems a childlike, even silly thing for an adult to be doing. Those moments of childlikeness are delightfully humbling for the self-obsessed artist when she takes herself too seriously.

Most of the time, however, painting seems to me a magical activity. In many cultures, the making of images was thought to be the making of magic. The image was thought to acquire the power or spirit of the object it imaged. The painters of those beautiful pictures on the cave walls at Lascaux were certainly magicians. When the painting works, it’s a magical image for me and transforms my old way of seeing.

In the last few years I have become interested in imaging my environment and the objects, shapes, colors, and the particular arrangement of all of these that surround me. But when I paint, I am also trying to listen to myself. My work thus becomes more parochial. The subjects become the house across the street, the local park, the view from the front window. When I take a trip somewhere, I usually do a series of paintings about the journey. My work, then, is in some respects a journal.

Realism obviously works well for my descriptive interests, but I am not sure I will be a realist painter in five years. Right now, the actual observed objects are as important as the formal relationship of colors and shapes. My interest in those recognizable objects for my journal may wane, and I may desire to simplify the image, pare it down to the bones. I can imagine my work going in many different directions, but I cannot imagine not working.
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RIGHT: Country Road, 1978. Oil on Paper, 30 x 22'.

BELOW: Skagit Valley, 1977. Oil on Paper, 26 x 19'.

BELOW LEFT: Two Houses, 1977. Oil on Paper, 28 x 21'.
Part II/The Question of the Ordination of Women

In discussing the topic of the ordination of women to the pastoral office we have much company, as an extensive and growing bibliography testifies. I do not preside so sovereignty over this field that I can give the expert's annotated recommendations. But one must begin somewhere. And I began by inquiring of the traditionally liturgical/sacramental churches—the Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran churches—all of whom have been drawn into the debate.

The Episcopal church debate came to public attention when on July 29, 1974, eleven women were ordained into the Episcopal priesthood. This “Philadelphia Event,” as it is delicately referred to, became the focus for the agenda of the Conference of Anglican Theologians in April, 1975. The papers from that meeting appear as the articles in a special joint issue of the Saint Luke’s Journal of Theology (September, 1975) and the Nashotah Review (Fall, 1975). These provide a good introduction to Episcopal thinking on the pros and cons of the question.

Roman Catholic thought is conveniently summarized in a 1978 monograph of the Catholic Theological Society of America entitled “Research Report: Women in Church and Society.” This report is particularly useful because it catalogs the arguments advanced both for and against the ordination of women to the pastoral office. And although the list is drawn from recent Roman Catholic literature, it is comprehensive enough to include those arguments that are frequently employed in the Lutheran debate. Since our Valparaiso University Alumni Symposium for Theology Majors was titled “The Pros and Cons of Women’s Ordination,” I discharge my obligation to be descriptive by relaying to you this catalog. I offer them without comment, confident that you will recognize that not each of them carries equal weight. Thereafter I try to make the case for women’s ordination.

Eleven Arguments For Women’s Ordination

1. It is unjust to exclude women from the pastoral office when this office is denied to them as a class and on principle, without regard to their personal qualifications.

2. The demands of mission and needs of the church require that any competent person (woman or man) be eligible for pastoral office.

3. Through baptism, all Christians participate in the priesthood of the faithful. All should likewise be eligible to test their vocation for pastoral office.

4. Many women experience a desire to serve in capacities of spiritual leadership and sacramental service not open to them at present; they look on their attraction to this work as a call from the Spirit.

5. There is a growing consensus among Anglican and Protestant churches in favor of the ordination of women. This experience of other Christian churches needs to be weighed seriously and the theological reasoning which supports their admission of women to pastoral office ought to be given due consideration.

6. The official ministry of the church should represent the variety of persons to whom the church ministers. This is recognized for minority groups; a fortiori, it should be recognized for women.

7. Ordination of women would prevent further alienation of modern women from the church and would, in general, give the church credibility on justice issues.

8. The mutability of tradition in other areas of church life (e.g., ecumenism, episcopal powers) provides a precedent for change in this one.

9. Women have a special experience of life to bring to the ministry. Their ministry, publicly instituted, will enrich the church in new ways.

10. It is time to actualize the full implications of Galatians 3:28 and other scriptural passages that teach the equality of male and female in Christ Jesus.

11. The ancient tradition of the church provided a liturgy of ordination to the order of deaconess for women, and this give precedent for their ordination to the priesthood.

Eleven Arguments Against Women’s Ordination

1. In the Catholic Church there is a constant tradition and practice, judged to be of divine law, of excluding women from episcopal and priestly office. “Though not formally defined, this is Catholic doctrine.”

2. Women are complementary to men. Men and women should bring their proper riches and dynamism to the building of a world that is not levelled and uniform but harmonious and unified. This justifies reserving the priesthood to men.

3. Of special significance is the fact that although Jesus challenged many customs of his day, he did not call women to the apostolate of the Twelve. His practice is normative for the church today. This means that women cannot be admitted to the pastoral office.

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Walter E. Keller
At the recent Homecoming Symposium for Valparaiso University graduates who majored in theology, two theology faculty members led the Symposium in its discussion of the question of the ordination of women. Theodore Jungkuntz took the “con” position, arguing against the ordination of women, and Walter E. Keller took the “pro” position, arguing for the ordination of women. The Cresset published a summary of Professor Jungkuntz’s position in the December issue and publishes a summary of Professor Keller’s position below.

4. The New Testament doctrine on headship as reflected in the order of creation justifies the leadership of men and the subordination of women in the church. This also explains the ineligibility of women for ordination.

5. The ordained priest must act officially in the person of Christ; it follows that a male priest is required to represent and act in the person of the male Christ.

6. The apostles did not invite a woman to fill the place of Judas, nor is there any evidence that they ordained women. In this they were faithful to the examples of Jesus, which remains normative for the church today.

7. There is no right to ordination. Ordination is a call to service, rather than to power; it involves the mystery of God’s free election, and no Christian, man or woman, has a right to it.

8. It is not clear that those women who are called deaconesses in the New Testament and in the early church were ordained, or whether any ordination they received was sacramental.

9. Mary was not called to be an apostle, nor to fill the place of Judas, though no one could equal her sanctity and perfection. This indicates that it was not in God’s plan for women to be priests.

10. Nuptial imagery used in the Old Testament to illustrate the covenant between God and his people is fulfilled in the New where Christ is likened to the bridegroom of the church. According to this imagery, it is fitting for a man to represent Christ in those actions which demand the character of ordination.

11. In the Old Testament, authentic priesthood was limited to males. This was clearly God’s will, for the Law is invested with divine authority.

After subjecting all these arguments to their analysis the members of the CTSA Task Force conclude: “The Task Force does not, in sum, find that the arguments adduced on the question present any serious grounds to justify the exclusion of women from ordination to the pastoral office in the Catholic Church.” They do, however, urge further research on two principal topics. The first is theological anthropology. What from a theological point of view constitutes humanness? Is human nature a unity, of which male and female are merely different manifestations? Or is human nature a duality, such that male and female are both required for its full and complementary expression? The second topic requiring further study is the nature of the pastoral office. Do the duties of the office, understood as acting in the person of Christ, necessarily require a male?

When we turn now to Lutheranism we come to a divided camp. Two-thirds of Lutheranism permits women’s ordination, the one-third which maintains the ancient tradition being led by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Two bibliographical references will suffice to document the two alternatives. The first is Krister Stendahl, The Bible and the Role of Women (Fortress Press, 1966), which shapes the thinking of those who permit the ordination of women. The second is Fritz Zerbst, The Office of Women in the Church (Concordia Publishing House, 1955), which Stendahl calls “the best exegetical statement against the ordination of women.”

In trying to make the case for the ordination of women we take as our point of departure the latter volume, for Zerbst draws an important definition of the issue. After having examined the pertinent passages in the Lutheran Confessions, Zerbst comes to two important conclusions. First, “the Lutheran Confessions do not give answer to the question whether or not the office of preaching and of administering the Sacraments may be conferred upon women.” That conclusion is obvious and quite predictable, since the question had not been raised at the time. The second conclusion of his Confessional study is more far-reaching. He states that a “woman’s exclusion from this (pastoral) office cannot be based on the nature of this office.” In other words, there is nothing about the pastoral office, as the Lutheran Confessions understand it, which poses a barrier to a woman’s bearing it.

There is nothing about the pastoral office, as the Lutheran Confessions understand it, which poses a barrier to a woman’s bearing it.

When describing the pastoral office the Confessions maintain clearly and throughout the idea of the universal priesthood and do not bind the office to any place or person. When the discussion does center on the person, then the only restriction is that the office-bearer may obviously not be a false teacher. What Zerbst therefore is saying is that the theological basis for excluding women from ordination lies not in the nature of the office, but elsewhere. For Zerbst, as for Lutheran traditionalists generally, the single sufficient basis for barring women from the pastoral office lies in the theological concept of the orders of creation. It is to that theological concept, therefore, that we now turn.

The concept of the order of creation denotes the way in which God as Creator has arranged life in His Creation, how He has ordered and structured it. This concept generally includes four provisions. First, the order of creation is relatively fixed and unchangeable, at least on this side of the Resurrection. Second, the structures in this order of creation provide for superordination and subordination. Third, inherent in such structures lie corollary ethical imperatives. The subordinate children,
for example, must obey the superordinate parents. And fourth, this order of creation does not confront us in its pristine purity, since we live in a fallen creation.

The order of creation therefore contrasts with the order of redemption. The concept of the order of redemption denotes the way in which God as Redeemer has redeemed the fallen order of creation, how He has arranged and ordered the redeemed life. Now it is obvious that our understanding of the order of creation and our understanding of the order of redemption will mutually condition one another. And in that mutual conditioning the basic condition is this: Is the order of redemption merely a restoration of the original order of creation, or does the order of redemption instead transform and thereby render obsolete the order of creation? To put the same question in slightly different language, when the New Testament teaches that, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation, how new is that new creation? Is this new creation to be understood simply as a repaired Adam and Eve, as a restoration to the original Edenic blissful estate, such that the gains of redemption are exactly equal to the losses in the fall? Or is this new creation perhaps better understood in such a way that its gains more than compensate for the losses in the order of the fallen creation, a creation so new that it ranks as far above the order and structure of the old creation as our present creation stands above the primeval chaos?

Is the order of redemption merely a restoration of the original order of creation, or does the order of redemption instead transform . . . the order of creation?

So to nuance the question is already to suggest our answer. The New Testament gives ample warrant for thinking of the new creation and its life as far surpassing anything that we can now even imagine. The readiest example is that of human life and corporeality. In the order of creation Adam and Eve and all their progeny enjoy a body and a life that are finite, subject to time and space, and since the fall also to death. The new creation as displayed in the resurrected Jesus appears in a body which stands in continuity with the old, but which is now not only no longer mortal, but also lives in a dimension no longer bound to our time and space.

Now note the appearance of the new creation, while not necessarily abrogating the structures in the order of creation, has broken their absolute validity and relativized their binding force. So, for example, the highest good and greatest value in the order of creation attaches to human life. Even Jesus posed the rhetorical question what a person could give in exchange for his life. But in the order of redemption or, as we have been calling it, in the new creation the highest good of the old creation no longer holds such an absolute value. It is of course true that this side of the resurrection we cannot “play resurrection” or simulate its conditions. But in Christ, and for His sake and the Gospel’s, we are free from the restraints and the sanctions of the order of creation. Created life is no longer the highest good, nor is death the absolute ultimate threat. For if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This insight has implications not only for our understanding, but also and especially for Christian ethics and Christian behavior. Basic to the latter is the recognition that we may be asked to lose our life, the greatest good the order of creation can offer, for the sake of that new creation which has dethroned the old as an absolute value. And if we do so, than what appears as contempt and disregard for the strictures of the old creation may well be the fruit and sign of deepest faith in God’s promises for a new order.

To get closer to our subject, let us examine the relation between the sexes. A fundamental tenet of biblical faith regarding the order of creation, according to Genesis 1:27 is that, when God created the human being in His image, He created them “male and female.” Among the conditions that obtain in the order of redemption is the dissolution of that relation, as St. Paul teaches in Galatians 3:28. In Christ there is no longer the order of “male and female,” but all the baptized are one in Christ. A corollary observation is that, according to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 22:29 ff., whereas in the order of creation the normal relation between the sexes is governed by marriage, in the resurrection there is no more marriage. We are not left to conjecture about the implications for those of us who live between the original order of creation and the as yet unconsummated new creation. In Matthew 19:10 ff. Jesus recognizes that there are many reasons for being a eunuch, that is, for remaining unmarried. But among those reasons there is the option of remaining unmarried voluntarily for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven, or what we have been calling the new creation. To remain unmarried of course undermines the orders of creation; for by its very nature it cannot create, nor can it last longer than a single generation. Therefore, to practice such celibacy must either appear absurd or self-defeating by the canons of the order of creation, or it is the fruit and sign of deepest faith in God’s promise for a new order, a faithful response to the call of the coming new creation.

We can now address ourselves to the topic of women’s ordination. The principle argument against the admittedly novel practice is that according to 1 Cor. 11:3-23 and 1 Tim. 2:9-15 a woman must be subordinate to the man, that she must therefore not speak in public, and that she is consequently excluded from the pastoral office in the Church. And this exclusion is grounded in the order of creation. To ordain women would therefore constitute a violation of the order of creation.

Presupposed in this argument is that the order of creation is inviolable and sacrosanct this side of the resurrection. Yet we have been able to indicate how the New Testament does not regard the order of creation inviolable when it is met by the order of redemption. Christians, like their Lord before them, indeed live and die in the order of creation, but they live and die for the
new. And in the name of the new creation we are free to act in disregard of the constraints, restrictions, and sanctions of the old creation. To do so means of course that there is a price to pay; it may mean that we are accused of deep folly. But it may also mean that we act in highest faith. And it may mean that there is a bit of both, at least for anyone for whom all the trumpets sound on the other side. Such freedom is obviously not license. To say that we are free to ordain women is not yet to say that it is wise to do so. But we have transferred the basic question from the realm of law and legislation to the realm where it more properly belongs, namely, in the realm of freedom where wisdom and charity are the governing principles.

*In the name of the new creation we are free to act in disregard of the constraints, restrictions, and sanctions of the old creation.*

This is indeed a merely negative case; there is no insuperable, no absolute obstacle to prevent the ordination of women. Whether the promised positive advantages of ordaining women will indeed eventuate we cannot yet ascertain. For obvious reasons the practice does not enjoy a long track record in the history of the church. In the nature of the case it must be a venture of faith, animated by hope, and supported by charity. But we may in good conscience test the movement in the crucible of our common life under God by committing the issue to the test of God’s time.

A second theme in the traditional Lutheran arguments against the ordination of women is the appeal to Biblical authority. The basic argument states that, since St. Paul forbade church office to women in his day by divine inspiration, such inspiration secures the binding force of his apostolic veto also for our day. To this type of argumentation Kristian Stendahl addresses himself in his little book referred to above. Here it suffices to cite a choice passage from Martin Luther appropriate to this type of argument. It comes from his famous sermon, *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (American Edition, Vol. 35):

One must handle and deal with Scripture soberly. The Word originally came into being in many different ways. One must not only observe if it is God’s Word, if God has spoken it, but also to whom it is spoken. . . . God said many things to David, he commanded him to do this and that. But it does not apply to me, it has not been spoken to me. . . . The false prophets come and say, Dear people, this is the Word of God! That is true, we cannot deny it, but we are not that people to which He speaks.

We ought to be the last to deny cogency to St. Paul’s argumentation for his day in his time. Whether the wisdom for his day is also wisdom for our day is quite another matter. It might prove to be. But a doctrine of inspiration can neither guarantee that it is wisdom for our time nor spare the church the arduous necessity of reviewing the issue under our altered circumstances.

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**Bird Watcher on Long Island**  
Sister Maura

On the wintry vines along Wantagh Causeway,  
portents:  
catbird, brown thrasher,  
robin, a winter finch,  
an oriole.

On a cold Christmas  
we found them among us—  
unexpectedly  
expected  
like our young God.

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**The Bald Cardinal**  
Carl Ficken

A bald-headed cardinal flits around my summer-green backyard.  
Featherless from his neck upward and robbed of dignity, he sits upon my fence and glares.  

Like a crone in an evening dress, he wears his scarlet robe beneath a gray and spectral crown.  

Unsuited to his office, he does not sing his due—ill-fitted finch who haunts my August day.

Some disease, I suppose, not knowing his story;  
Some warning, I fear, knowing well my own.  
Or, perhaps, a mere transition to new glory.
From the Chapel

The Economy of Forgiveness

Edward H. Schroeder

Text:

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.
If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.
Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:15-20

Context:

Scott
Please come home or call.
We love you. Mom & Dad

Dr. Edward H. Schroeder is Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis, Missouri, and currently on leave to study at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, where he is learning from his African, Asian, and Latin American Christian colleagues how the gospel, as the power of God for salvation, reaches expression in non-European histories, philosophies, and cultures.

1. Why is it that we lose one another in human relationships? At the bottom of all such losses is one brother who sins against another brother. Then the “family” relationship falls into a “commercial” relationship or a “legal” relationship. Debtor/creditor is what the relationship becomes. When a brother sins against you, you lose the brother. In addition, by some cosmic order, you do not just wind up with nothing, but you have a debtor replacing the brother. Bad as that is, it wouldn’t be so bad if we did not make such a “big deal” out of it.

I’M OK, You’RE OK, God Covers Our IOUs

2. But that, of course, is what we chronically do. Fact is, we even cling to the debtor/creditor relationship and hold others there day in and day out. That applies not only to the creditors who hold the debtors (“You did me wrong, and I want my pound of flesh!”), but also to debtors who have a perverse love/hate ambivalence about their debtor situation. Why do we persist in this debtor/creditor relationship? Because it seems to offer the tempting promise of saving our lives. If I am a creditor, to get my pound of flesh is what I seem to need to save face, self-esteem, finally my life. And the posture of the permanent debtor is but the mirror image of the posture of the creditor. My permanent debt guarantees me constant attention from my creditor. If she hates me, she at least pays attention to me. I count. I’m worth someone else’s attention. I even get a part of her life in this deficit accounting game. Through my indebtedness, I control her. She’s not “free” of me.

3. Alas, however, the sister and brother stay lost in such transactions. Even worse, we ourselves are the losers in our attempts to save ourselves in that way. First, I am the one who has lost my brother. It’s my loss too, not just his. Second, and still worse, my attempt to save myself by keeping the debtor/creditor relationship permanent will guarantee that I finally lose out totally. It seems to be a trap, this debtor/creditor relationship. But as today’s epistle lesson (Romans 13) makes clear, obligations, accountability, authority, debts and credits are not of themselves demonic. They are the Creator’s way of caring for His fractured world, and as such they are to be honored. But these debts and credits are not
able to save us. So, how can we live in them without trying to live from them?

Jesus offers us new insight into this problem by upsetting the ledger books of gains and losses we normally keep and count on. "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." That's upsetting. Life is not a win-or-lose situation. Nor is life a situation where everybody wins. It is initially always a losing situation. The central issue, then, in the ledger of life is how do you do your losing? There is no way for sinners to escape losing their lives. But there is one way for losing your life in which you gain your life. Even better, it is a way of gaining your life full of brothers and free of debtors. That is the way of the cross.

4. The first use of the gospel is to open the trap of our self-inflicted debtor/creditor salvation. God in Christ opens the cosmic debtor's trap by bearing in his body on the cross the debts of all of us whose accounts are so mortally overdrawn. On Easter morning with the opening of the tomb, he offers us the escape passage from the dead end of our debtor's prison. The good news of his death and resurrection gives us here and now an alternate source to draw on for gaining our lives. The daily debit/credit data of the old creation continue, but we don't have to try to gain our lives from that. Instead, we gain our lives by "losing them for his sake." How? By holding on to Christ in faith as he holds on to us. By trusting him when he takes our debtor's page and says, "I'll sign for that."

5. That is where we get back to gaining our brother who gets lost as Scott got lost. The second use of the Gospel is to open the trap of our debtor/creditor relationships. How do you lose a debtor and gain a daughter or mother, a husband or wife, a brother or sister? You do it the same way it was done to you. How did you get out of the debtor relationship with your Creator and become God's child and the brother of His only-begotten Son? By forgiveness, of course. "Forgive us our debts" is the way we once became and now stay free of the commercial/legal trap with "Our Father who art in heaven." And the prayer continues "... as we forgive our debtors."

You can terminate a debtor/creditor relationship by demanding and forcing full payment. But that would not gain you a brother. Forgiveness is the only way to lose a debtor/creditor relationship and regain the family relationship. That is precisely what Christ is calling and encouraging us to do when "the brother sins against us." Go and confront him "between you and him alone." We are not encouraged to grab him by the neck and boldly say, "Pay me what you owe!" The parable following our text for today traces the deadly consequence of such a confrontation—deadly, that is, for the creditor!

No, the Christian—the already-forgiven former debtor—brings the word of forgiveness into the conversation when the two of them get together "between you and him alone." That is what is behind the winsome sentence: "If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." Given what the gospel is all about, it is only forgiveness which has the power to "gain" brothers. That is what the Creator created as the power for salvation. As God Himself well knows, forgiveness does not always work. Debtors and creditors can and do refuse to become sisters and brothers. Scotts do refuse to come home to Moms and Dads. But nothing else will work at all! Isn't that the punch line in Jesus' counsel that if all attempts at forgiveness fail, "let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector." Gentiles and tax-collectors are not the folks whom Jesus wrote off as bad debts. No, in Jesus' ledger, they are on-going candidates for forgiveness. Nothing more. Not really different from us, if we too are instructed to pray "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"—daily.

6. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." These final words are the Lord's final promise that our forgiving in order to gain the brother is worth risking. Why? Because He himself is on the scene when it transpires. When we make no bones about it that we are pursuing forgiveness to gain someone we have lost, he promises to be in on the consultation. And why not? The business we are pursuing is after all his business—and, of course, His Father's as well.

Were it not for His pioneering such forgiveness economics with God's debtors in his body on the cross, we should have no light (and, worse, no right) to settle accounts except by debts and credits. God as Father and Christ as Brother have become that deathly debit/credit business for us by way of the cross and save us from the sure-loser business of claims and counter-claims. And that firstborn Son and our Brother continues to pursue his business right "in the midst" of us when two or three of us "gather in His name," which means nothing less than "living with one another in the forgiveness of sins."

**You Can Go Home Again, Scott, Free**

The classified ad about Scott was in the "Personals" column. It could just as well have been placed in the preceding category—you guessed it—"Lost and Found." The good news is that forgiveness is God's own way of going after lost people, and he commends it to us for finding our own lost ones. If Scott listens to Mom and Dad's words of forgiving love, they have gained their son. The key is forgiveness. It must be there—explicitly, concretely palpably—to offset the debit/credit claims that will be there willy-nilly, or else everybody stays lost.

Of course that is hard for credit managers like us. It is a kind of death, indeed. The alternative is easier, but it is even surer death and it is only death, a guaranteed loss. The death for us when we live by forgiveness is a "dying with the Lord," a losing "for my sake and the gospel's." It carries the heartening conclusion: "you will gain your life... and your brother as well." Amen.

January, 1979
Theatre

Getting the Word

Nelvin Vos

The whole thing seems a bit incongruous.

On a recent Saturday evening, I joined the crowds milling and rushing to theatres on some of the most expensive real estate in this country, the west side of New York City known as Broadway. With a $10 ticket purchased some months ago, I enter the theatre, and after a few minutes of introductory comments, a man on almost bare stage begins speaking: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God . . .”

The man is Alec McCowen; the script, in case you did not recognize it, is St. Mark’s Gospel. In the language of show biz, the hottest ticket in New York theatre is to an evening of one man reciting the King James version of the Gospel of Mark in its entirety. And at the same time, very few in the audience would not say that they have heard the Word ever before so powerfully direct. The Word lives. That’s the truth; that’s the Gospel truth.

McCowen strolls casually on stage, a slightly built man dressed in a bright sports jacket, slacks, an open shirt, and suede shoes. The mood is informal, conversational. It seems as if it were the beginning of a pleasant evening of anecdotal chatter. He tells us that he once met Ruth Draper, whom he describes as the greatest solo performer of all time, and who told him that she viewed all she did on stage as though it were through the eyes of a child. McCowen’s hint is helpful, for he does something quite similar. The entire evening he conveys a sense of childlike wonder and awe that is inherent in the eye-witness Good News of the first Gospel. Through McCowen’s widened eyes, the listeners enter the story, the greatest story ever lived.

The writer of Mark is a journalist working far less thematically than the other gospel writers and spilling one narrative after another in rapid succession. John the Baptist, his voice crying in the wilderness, followed by the action of baptizing Jesus, is present only a brief space, and straightforwardly we hear that “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel’” (1:14-15). “Straightway,” another much-used word of the gospel writer, the calling of the disciples takes place. McCowen, pointing directly at us each time a follower is called, summons each of these people to our imagination. Soon the space is filled not only with disciples but also with the press of the crowds. I knew the fact, of course, that crowds followed Jesus, but as I listened to McCowen recite the familiar words “they came to him from every quarter,” I felt and sensed the burden Jesus carried. People kept on coming, some to be healed and others to ask him sticky questions. And the response of Jesus, the Son of God, to each is to fill the personal needs beyond what was requested.
Gradually, McCowen as we, just as the writer and the followers of Jesus, become caught up in the story. The pace quickens even more; the amazement, another one of the Gospel's key words, is contagious. Miracles happen in astonishing succession; we can hardly keep up with the intensity of the way Jesus worked and taught. The disciples can't either. Their frequent blindness to the purpose of the Master therefore comforts us as much as it disturbs us. And Christ's patience with them is always there. After the parable of the sower and the seed, McCowen says in excruciating slowness: "The sower soweth the word" (4:14), and spells out, as if they and we were school children, the four kinds of seeds. We sense the patience, the rebuke, the wisdom all at once, and most of all, the point is now clear. We have been taught. "He that hath ears to hear [and we do], let him hear."

People came alive:
—the four men who had the wit to lower their palsied friend from the roof
—the deep distress of Jairus about his daughter's fatal illness
—Salome, devious, caught between her father and her mother, asks her mother in a petulant childish whine, "What shall I ask?" Her mother hesitates not at all, and then when the head of John the Baptist is brought in a charger, Herod gives it to the damsel, and the damsel (what else?) gave it to her mother.

What I am saying is that one of the reasons I go to plays even though I know the text well or have seen the play several times is that, as in music, a new performance helps me hear lines I had never heard before. And McCowen takes one of the world's most well-known scripts, the Scriptures themselves, and he helps me hear and see what I should have heard and seen years ago.

The rich young ruler, for example. His mask of smugness is exposed: "Master, all these [commandments] have I observed from my youth" (10:20). I had always missed a verb in the next verse: "Then Jesus be-

holding him loved him . . ." The Gospel of acceptance and forgiveness is there, and he, like I, allows the things of the world to drown out the love Christ is pouring forth.

Or, the simple fact that Jesus almost always sent his disciples on missions, both small and large, in twos. Christ knew the need for support to sustain one another.

Or, the audacity and the directness with which Jesus said to his friends the night before he died: "Take, eat: this is my body" (14:22). Again I confess that I have heard those words spoken countless times, but they struck with a power I had not sensed before.

God's glory and man's frailties are both presented to us. The emotions of joy and anger, jealousy and fear (another common word of the book is "afraid"), and many more ring true. We know the story; it is the story of Jesus giving himself to us, and we hesitate, quarrel, and often blind our eyes and shut our ears, just as the disciples did. Yet, when we arrive at Peter's "Thou art the Christ" (8:29), the climax of the first movement, we have been moved, as the disciples were, to confess our adoration and worship to the Lord. Everything has led up to these words, and we need an intermission, if for nothing else than to recover from the crescendo to which we have been lifted.

The second half keeps its impetus. We are in Jerusalem, and the strange fig tree haunts us more than once as we become part of his following. The temple too is omnipresent, both as a space which is profaned by buying and selling, but also as an image to convey both the destruction of the city and the resurrection in three days. Imperceptively, I have moved in more closely. A part of the crowd at the beginning, I am now someone who is with Jesus, not understanding it all, but nevertheless experiencing his passion, his suffering love.

The accounts of the trial and of the crucifixion are muted. McCowen stands absolutely still during this time after a frenzy of mime and movement in the middle section. This is not the quietness of death, but rather the force of restrained power which is waiting to burst forth once more. Wisely, in these narratives, McCowen emptied himself.

But the power is still there. Like the stone rolled away, the Good News breaks open the tomb, and we see the resurrected Lord. We too are amazed and afraid. We are given instructions: "Go ye into all the world," and after the Lord again speaks, he is received up into heaven. What else can we do? "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (16:20). As if in litany, I quietly say "Amen" before the din of applause takes over.

III

And what has been experienced? The usual vocabulary of theatre criticism seems inappropriate. It is not a play and not really a performance, although I and others have used that term. More than a reading, the most accurate word I would suggest is recital: a telling of facts and events in detail, an account, a story.

McCowen came on as if the author of Mark's Gospel were an inspired story-teller which of course he was. With extraordinary confidentiality in his telling, McCowen, both in manner and method, conveys that he has good news, and wants to share it. He has a great story, and he is excited about telling it.

How do you and I come to believe, to trust, to accept as true? One answer, and an important one, is: we believe in and through stories. The ways of God in his Word are not revealed through philosophy nor a doctrine, nor in a painting or a sculpture, but through action. The action of God
in the Exodus and the action of God in the cross and empty tomb are central to the understanding of God in his work in the drama of history. And Jewish believers and Christian believers are to remember these actions and re-tell these stories. The story is the meaning. There is no way around the story, or underneath it, as if we could peel it down to what is "really" meant. The story is what penetrates and moves it. It is not simply that we have gotten the point, but that we have been interpreted by the story itself. We have been grasped by the story.

A child senses that truth. The drama of God's action in David as he stands before the mighty Goliath, or in Daniel surrounded by those lions, or in a baby born on a star-lit night--these capture the imaginative faith of the child, no matter what his chronological age.

Yet, one knows the ghost of Rousseau and romanticism may lurk in such statements, and certainly, the adult in each of us must wrestle with the complexity of the story as well as its child-like simplicity. Elie Wiesel is right: God made man because he loved stories.

The theatre that evening became, in the root sense of that word, the theatron, "the place of seeing."

I suspect neither Alec McCowen nor his producers have read extensively in the theology of story or in the narrative dimension of Scriptures, especially in parable. But in presenting the Gospel, not in the simulated guise of Godspell or Jesus Christ Superstar, but in the studied simplicity of the Word coming through the ear and the eye of the imagination, McCowen has reminded us that the Word is not only good but new and refreshing.

The whole thing was really not so incongruous after all, for the theatre that evening became, in the root sense of that word, the theatron, "the place of seeing."

Frankenstein is near the top of the horror film list and the The Blob near the bottom. Economically, The Exorcist has tremendous significance and Val Lewton's RKO thrillers relatively little. All the same, those many distinct thrillers achieve in retrospect a numbing simultaneity. For the horror film addict there is always a first-rate nightmare in the workings. This nightmare might very well take the form of one of those unfortunate Abbott and Costello parodies, where we get not one but many monsters running around in the same stretched plot.

The difficulty of separating out horror films from the mass, of seeing them as individual works and so being able to evaluate them critically, is reflected in the reception of two recent efforts in the genre: Magic and Halloween. Andrew Sarris notes of Magic that "the plot may strike some viewers and reviewers as a cross between Psycho and the ventriloquist episode with Michael Redgrave in Dead of Night." Tom Allen--writing, like Sarris, in the Village Voice--attempts to link Halloween with Psycho on the rather feeble ground that "Carpenter has attempted to stretch the shower sequence [of Psycho] into as much of a feature film as the traffic will allow." He goes on to cite five or six other films (even Vincente Minelli's musical Meet Me in St. Louis is cited!) until we have lost all sense of what Halloween, in and of itself, could possibly offer us. Apparently this movie exists only to confirm the generative power of the horror genre, whose masterpieces, if there are any, produce countless variations on themselves... with no end in sight.¹

I do not mean to be complaining about the learnedness of Sarris or Allen, however; this swapping of the individual work with references to its predecessors seems one natural way to solve the difficulties of evaluating horror movies. We can see why by glancing at Psycho, which is indeed a presence in many subsequent cinematic genres, but it seems to be strongest in horror movies—for reasons described below.

¹The same rule no doubt applies to other popular cinematic genres, but it seems to be strongest in horror movies—for reasons described below.
Films. Most moviegoers will remember the sensation Psycho made when it first came out. I recall it most vividly because my mother would not let me go see it. There were good reasons for this aura of taboo, one of the most important being Alfred Hitchcock's reputation up to that point. Hitchcock was—and is, for that matter—a witty, detached, intellectual director. Consequently, the gut terror of the shower scene and many other sequences came as a special shock. What had wit to do with all that blood running so sickeningly down the drain? Quite a bit, as it happens. The effective horror films have always dealt with a void: an unknowable blankness, a kind of anonymous evil. Just because this darkness cannot be defined, the creator of the horror film must become a virtuoso, an artist committed before anything else to tricks, sleight-of-hand, magic. To the extent that it is successful, the horror film ends up surrounding the void with a great variety of ingenuities and manipulations. Eventually—by a miracle of sorts—trickery must shade back into art.

Tricks may differ from film to film: horror, the most depersonalized of emotions, is always the same. The impact of Psycho depends largely on Hitchcock's ability to play the two things off against one another. The complexity of technique in the film makes the schizophrenic killer all the more threatening—our consciousness that we are being manipulated infiltrates our unequivocal horror at the murders. Previous films had attempted something like this synthesis but Hitchcock was the first to make a film so frightening and so interesting too.

Since 1960, a number of directors have tried to match the accomplishment of Psycho. Most conspicuous in the last few years was Brian DePalma's Sisters, which alternated between slavish imitation and attempts to outdo Hitchcock by way of sheer excessive-ness (the opening scene, where a key character wins a set of knives on a quiz show, is still very funny). Now come Magic and Halloween. Magic is a respectable movie, the sort of thing that could win an academy award. Such an award would not be wholly inappropriate, since the film is a showcase for a brilliant performance by Anthony Hopkins. Hopkins plays a magician who has made it big by adding a ventriloquist's dummy to his show. The dummy assumes a life of its own, driving the shy and self-deprecating Hopkins character to murder. The most important relationship in the film is, of course, the one between Hopkins ("Corky") and the dummy ("Fats"); the plot comes to its crisis-points because Burgess Meredith and Ann-Margaret make their various demands on the newly-famous magician, and Fats, who is always talking back to his owner, finds reason for jealousy. All this is spooky enough, most spooky when we are not yet sure that the dummy has assumed control over his master.

The creator of the horror film must become a virtuoso, an artist committed before anything else to tricks, sleight-of-hand, magic.

After the question of power is resolved, perhaps a third of the way into the film, the plot works itself out with a rigorous inevitability—a neatness almost too perfect. There is one good, low-key surprise near the end; nonetheless, the film is essentially a bore. The blame, I think, must lie primarily with the writer. Neither in William Goldman's original novel nor in his adaptation of it for the screen are we allowed to understand much about Corky; Goldman lacks the skill to show the process by which the dummy takes over, which leaves us with a fait accompli: a starting-point that (as Sarris points out) leads nowhere. Lurking somewhere at the back of the script is one last interesting idea—we could possibly see the story as a conflict in interpretation whereby magic is a metaphor either for love or for power. Goldman starts to develop this notion but loses the thread halfway through. The director, as a consequence, has little to work with. A craftsmanlike movie finally flops.

Unlike Magic, Halloween has no outstanding performance. Donald Pleasence is hustled on and off screen a few times; during each appearance, he speaks poorly-written lines about a psychopathic killer he is tracking. Apart from Pleasance, the significant characters are two children, three high school girls, and the killer. The latter—who never speaks and whom we never see clearly—has returned to the midwestern town where, as a Halloween trick-or-treater, he murdered his sister. Now, after years of incarceration, he is back on the job. It is once again Halloween night. Amid often funny vignettes about small-town midwestern life, the killer dispatches one victim after another until our heroine, with the assistance of Pleasance, dispatches him (more or less).

Halloween is furthest from Magic in that it prompts no questions about motivation whatsoever. The movie exploits our expectation that a shadowy, sinister figure who has been typed as a homicidal maniac will eventually kill some people. He does precisely this, with a calm insatiability. We are not allowed to ask ourselves where his mania comes from; we simply confront it as a fact. Despite this apparent limitation, Halloween is a great success. Director John Carpenter really has managed to rival Psycho—not because he extends Hitchcock's famous shower scene but because he has grasped the peculiar relationship in the horror movie of tricks and out-and-out evil. Goldman fails to develop the magic metaphor to any meaningful extent; Carpenter uses the tradition of Halloween as an insidiously brilliant metaphor. This is the clearest in the climactic scene of the movie where—by a means that I hesitate to reveal—murder is presented as a ghastly kind of trick-or-treat prank. This identification sounds absurd on paper; on film it perfectly highlights the horrifying malignity of the killer. There may be something else of importance in the scene too. What the heroine experiences is irrational in terms of the plot thus far. We almost feel that it is the director rather than the killer who wants to frighten her. Again, this ambiguity could be a weakness but turns out to be a strength. Halloween acknowledges its own trickeries as well as those of the killer;
Carpenter is raising the most intriguing problems about the moral status of a film whose main purpose is to scare us. *Halloween* has no profound answers but the questions are asked effectively enough to elicit admiration.

I have focussed on the one central scene; the film as a whole is in much the same mode. Throughout, Carpenter is interested in a dialectic between childish fears and murderous reality, phenomena which illuminate one another by appearing to merge, then suddenly separating, and then merging again. As we watch the film we are never permitted to forget that the killer is out there in the dark somewhere. Simultaneously, *Halloween* manages to surround its villain with the doubts, fears, trickeries, and evasions that ordinarily accompany the human recognition of evil. Even Pleasure—the most humorless character in a movie full of odd quirks—cannot resist a bit of Halloween trickery. He crouches behind a bush and scares some small boys who are bravely in the local haunted house—the scene of that murder which sent the killer to an asylum in the first place.

Ultimately, this film gives us a rather striking idea of how fear develops in people as they grow up. Carpenter, for the purposes of *Halloween* anyway, is interested in children more than in adults, in teenagers more than in children. 2 Teenagers, after all, are neither adults nor children; in this film they play both roles with a striking effect. *Halloween*, like other films in the genre, may recede into that vast mythology of early TV. The movie deserves to survive in some form. Carpenter’s effort to define the undefinable—to play with horror even as he unleashes it—has a nearly heroic breadth in a tradition not noted for its panoramic ambitions.

1 This is not true of another Carpenter film, *Someone is Watching Me*, made for and shown on NBC in November, 1978; this second film shows further striking aspects of Carpenter’s way with the horror movie.

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### Books

**Truthfulness and Tragedy**


In this volume of collected essays, Stanley Hauerwas explores the significance of the Christian story for constructive Christian ethics. Building on the discovery of the significance of narrative and metaphor in the biblical account of the Christian faith, contemporary theologians have begun to unfold their implications for a vital and relevant presentation of the Christian message. While explicitly avoiding any faddish tendency to reduce all theology to the themes of a new insight, Hauerwas exploits the meaning of this study for developing further his ethics of character. (See the review of his earlier works in *The Cresset*, March, 1976.)

In the first section of the book, Hauerwas, together with his Notre Dame colleague David Burrell, details the significance of story in general and of the Christian story in particular. In the original narrative character of the Christian faith, Hauerwas finds a portrayal of the moral life which contrasts sharply with prevailing efforts to ground ethics in a narrowly-defined human rationality. And the narrative provides a context for critical reflection that avoids the sub-rational intuitionism often evidenced in situational ethics.

Hauerwas argues that narrative captures the meaning of the contingent quality of human actions that escapes a simple deductive logic. It is the story by which a person lives that provides the understanding of self and life that guides the actions which form an individual’s character. Hence, it is an error to think that narrative can be replaced by another mode of discourse without a loss of the depth and breadth life contains.

Out of this perspective, Hauerwas opens a critical conversation with the work of William Frankena, whose work *Ethics* provides a model for contemporary work in philosophical ethics. And it provides the foundation for his own constructive position in a critical review of the natural law tradition. A case study of Albert Speer, the architect of the industrial machine that maintained the Third Reich, illustrates how the notion of story functions as an analytical tool.

Moving beyond the use of story for purposes of analysis, Hauerwas outlines the criteria which measure the adequacy of a story for a humane life. The story must have the power to release us from destructive alternatives, provide ways of seeing through current distortions, give room to keep us from resorting to violence, and create a sense for the tragic. And finally, the story must provide the power which enables a person to go on.

In the second section of the volume, Hauerwas treats a variety of loosely related issues. The essay on the issue of suicide stands out as exceptional treatment of this subject by relating the life of the individual to the community. And the brief essay on the patient as a person seeks to show how the concept of person, which was introduced into ethical discussion to protect the rights of the patient, has been used to justify excluding some people from the realm of caring.

In the final section, Hauerwas demonstrates forcefully how story can function for ethics in dealing with the question of care for the retarded. It enables him to step back from the common question of what is human life and what is a life worth living to ask the more basic question why we have children in the first place. And the awareness of the tragic elements of life perceived in the Christian story is held to liberate medicine from its often self-imposed requirement that
only a cure in every case can be the norm of success.

Hauerwas holds that Christian ethics has frequently been ignored not because it is wrong, but because it is uninteresting. This volume seeks to remedy that malady not simply by the vitality of its style, but by the liveliness of ideas and the pertinence of its arguments to contemporary issues. The perceptions stem both from the insights provided by the use of story and the mind of a gifted thinker. The reader may still be left with the question, however, why many people who seek to live the same Christian story end up with quite different moral convictions than those of the author. More work needs to be done to demonstrate why the interpretation here offered stands closest to the real point of the story. This reviewer looks forward to the works yet to come that will enable us to grasp more fully Hauerwas’ own story.

Dale G. Lasky

The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism


Richard Sennett’s The Fall of Public Man is in the tradition of speculative, historical sociology, with an elaborate, broad-gauge thesis and sweeping perspective. The book attempts to pull together an awesome array of theoretical and historical materials to demonstrate, in short, the decline of “the public” as part of modern man’s life. The author develops this thesis in a convoluted although provocative book. The work is ambitious, indeed too much so; he understands something, but he tries to understand everything.

Sennett begins the work by making an analogy of America with ancient Rome; as the problems of Rome mounted, the Romans turned away from the tradition of civitas to private, mystical worlds, ignoring rather than addressing their public problems. Today, he maintains, something of the same response obtains in America.

As our problems mount, we turn away from them into “privatism” and what he terms the “radical subjectivity” of the present. We see this impulse manifest in a variety of ways, one being the plethora of self-help books. Our absorption in the dynamics of self has been called “the new narcissism,” and the 1970s has been named “The Me Decade.” There are endless public confessions, exposes, kissing and telling, and people coming out of every closet.

The result of this “radical subjectivity,” Sennett argues, has been the destruction of the “public realm” by people either withdrawing into private esoteric worlds or by visiting those esoteric worlds on the rest of us. The warmth of private relations and fantasies has become our “god,” leading us into a kind of schizoid unreality and making us unable to cope with the risks of the public world. For most that means a retreat into the cocoon of intimacy; for a few it has meant displaying their narcissism for the rest of us. This latter can be seen at its simplest level in the decline of public manners and at it most harmful with assassins and terrorists.

Similarly, perhaps, it is observable in those politicians and other public figures who insist on treating us to their feelings and thoughts as if they were of monumental import and we were really interested (though it must be admitted that some of us are). Richard Nixon and Jack Paar were similar in this respect. Thus modern life has been robbed of its civility, people don’t know how to act in public. Public roles are threatening, and spectatorship is more comfortable. We are experiencing psychological and political disintegration because of the loss of a civic culture.

Sennett’s book is speculative and bold, if sometimes wild in making connections. His terminology is often imprecise, and exactly why he chooses to discuss some subject—often at tedious length—is puzzling. He tends to romanticize institutions of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Sometimes it is not clear whether he is attempting to validate a philosophical argument by historical illustration, or a historical thesis by philosophical argument. Nevertheless, the work is a real contribution to the study of the decline of community and urban life in the contemporary world. In that sense, this book is similar to the work of Daniel Bell and others who decried the loss of a “public philosophy” which asserts basic norms of public behavior and civic responsibility to accompany, indeed make “civil,” the exercise of public freedom.

James E. Combs

The Child’s Story Bible


The new edition of The Child’s Story Bible has been revised and somewhat shortened by Marianne Vos Radisus, daughter of Catherine Vos, the original author of The Child’s Story Bible.

She has preserved her mother’s style and has made every effort to remain faithful to the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God.

One feature which has this reviewer’s approval is that the Bible text, where it is directly quoted, is the King James Version. The translators were more poets than translators. Some of the newer versions may have sacrificed melody for simplicity.

The artist, Betty Beeby, has portrayed the people as real, identifiable persons. Her many one-color and four-color maps, pictures, and designs are aids to an understanding of Biblical times, places, persons, and events. Pictures included on the maps are numbered to correspond to the numbers of the illustrations facing the text.

One small regret is that the title has been retained. The book does serve as an overview, review, or fresh view for all ages. The word “Child’s” may keep adults from reading the book. The well-informed, as well as those with little background in the Bible, would discover new vistas of God’s loving plans for His creatures—great and small.

E. H. Ruprecht
Up Against Big Medicine

Sometimes city living jams us up against huge institutions harder than we'd like. Take medicine, for instance. Cities are where much of the high technology and specialization which characterize modern medicine is concentrated. Here too are the major battlegrounds in the war for both the control and definition of health care.

For about forty percent of the urban population the problems the health care system presents are simply ones of access. Many city folk now use only the emergency rooms at their primary health care facility. This presents problems: it took an acquaintance of ours nine hours to be treated for a bad cold at Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

But even for the other sixty percent of us—and for many living outside cities as well—encounters with the health care system raise some hard questions. In our experience, two of the most important are (1) its burgeoning technology and (2) its tendency to create dependency in its clients. Particularly for those of us engaged in the business of having and raising children (and we must be legion, judging from this journal's continuing exploration of family issues), these become very immediate concerns.

Most of us in the urban middle class face the imperial medical system as isolated individuals. Traditional ethnic ties and tradition have been broken—including those which would tell us how having and raising kids is "always" done. (Some pockets of tradition remain: a dear friend of ours has had all thirteen of her children at home in her four-room apartment, as her mother had done similarly before her. Predictably, however, her twenty-odd grandchildren have all been born in hospitals.)

But the advice my partner and I received from our obstetrician when we were expecting our first child was to "leave everything to me." Feeling that having a baby was cause for slightly more consideration than that, we behaved quite predictably and began to devour literature on the subject.

The more we read, the more we approached the frightening realization that we were responsible for the health of our family—and that this meant much more than arranging regular check-ups and recording immunizations. In fact, we began to think that by simply "obeying orders" from most doctors and hospitals we were likely to be doing real harm. Informed critics of the health care system tell us that up to one third of all disease in this country is iatrogenic, or physician-caused. As Senator Kennedy barnstorms the nation these days pushing his own version of semi-public health insurance, he tells the tale of doctors in Canada who went on strike only to watch mortality rates go down. They rose again when the doctors returned to work.

In citing stories like this, one runs the risk of sounding like a 60s flower child or an advocate of "throwing out the baby with the bathwater." On the contrary, we don't want to do anything special, or to have to become so well informed as to be obstetricians and pediatricians ourselves. We simply want to do the reasonable and safe things to provide optimal health care for our children.

For us and many others, the perils of both the dependency syndrome and the overuse of drugs and technology hit home during the birthing process. Following routine hospital procedures would have exposed us and our baby to an internal and external fetal heart monitor, depressant drugs, pain killers, hormones to counteract the depressants and speed up labor, an episiotomy and the use of forceps. Each of these items has possible negative side effects, many of them very serious and even life threatening for the fetus. They are all difficult to turn down, particularly when the parents are told that they are "for the good of the baby." (Critics of the system maintain that these are some of the major factors in the USA's dismal ranking [eighteenth] in infant mortality rates, as well as in the rising incidence of minimal brain dysfunction and behavioral problems in American children.) Only a determined effort to take charge of our own childbirth—to persuade, cajole, argue, and demand—allowed us to avoid these pitfalls.

More recently, when our daughter broke her clavicle, the medical system struck again. I waited for nearly two hours before taking her to the emergency room. I didn't want to put her into "professional" hands until I had myself under control, my partner was available to support me in whatever resistance was going to be necessary, and I had a clear idea about what was wrong with her. I recall feeling very angry indeed that I had to depend on myself for the restraint I wanted the hospital to use. The waiting did, in fact, pay off. For one example, we reduced their orders for four X-rays to one. These seem like minor victories, but maybe they will begin to add up.

In fact, around our city today one sees more and more signs of this spreading mood of resistance. Increasing numbers of home births, the various dimensions of the "health and body" fads, the increasing receptability of formerly "kooky" treatment systems—all of these are signs that Big Medicine is in trouble with its clients, and the trouble reaches even deeper than the pocketbook. Insignificant and scattered though these signals still are, they may soon begin to point us more clearly toward a healthier future.