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Changing One's Mind

On the last page of this issue is a book review by our good friend, Deaconess Louise Williams. When I picked it up from the box on my office door, it had been torn in pieces, and shoved back into the box for me to find. Prominent at the top of the first page was the name of the book, a title which had the word "WomanChrist" in it. Perhaps this was just a random piece of vandalism, but I have never had anything in that box disturbed before. Seeing Louise's pages ripped up like that made me angry. Like all people who have experienced an assault on their property, I had to work hard to calm my feelings of having been personally violated. It was only two pieces of paper, after all, I told myself. Don't make too big a thing out of it.

But when I reflected on the incident in the following days, and even more as I typed the review into the typesetting program of our computer, I sensed that someone had responded to the review, or maybe even to the strange word in its title, with a predictable and even an understandable rage. For the challenge to change our minds about some fundamental belief or value confronts us with life at its most difficult. We may experience the challenge as a result of our children's or our students' behaviors, reflecting a worldview different from our own. Or from reading the account of another person's thought, or from a moment in our own life when, suddenly, what we thought was true no longer will make sense of the condition we find ourselves facing. A few souls may seek out those moments, as there are some people who like to climb rock faces attached to safety by slender ropes. But most of us, I suspect, will do almost anything to avoid that heart-stopping moment of recognition: I must change my mind.

Because, of course, that phrase is misleading. Putting the matter in terms of the mind makes it cool, intellectual, logical and objective. And so it may be if you are deciding that after years of being a Ford person you are going to buy a Honda. (Though no conversation I have ever had with people about cars could be described with any of those adjectives.) Changing one's mind may indeed mean something closer to changing the heart, the gut—the very silent, spinning, quivering center of the self.

We often tell each other history in terms of these changes that other people have undergone, and no doubt history happens when enough people change their minds. I often think with sympathy of the reluctant citizen of Boston, or Charleston, or Montpelier, changing his mind about being an obedient British colonist to become, next morning, a rebel and an alien. Changing one's mind may mean losing what you had firmly grasped, even before there is any certainty about the outcome of what you have now taken hold of.

I had planned an issue of The Cresset devoted to some ways in which new thinking brings about new behaviors. I had Ken Klein's contribution to the philosophy department's gathering of articles on doing philosophy in the context of Christian living, and it seemed to be about some new thinking that might very well lead to new living. I asked Mel Piehl to write about one of those histories of changed minds and changed lives. I asked John Gehm to write about new means of doing good, welfare as sharing rather than giving. Jim Moore and I had talked about the changing ideas in curriculum as globalization becomes the big word, and he wrote about that. And, by a combination of editorial insight and dumb luck, I had Bill Marion's letter from the Soviet Union, about computer education, and Linda Ferguson's commentary on the changes in musical thinking happening before our very ears. So, I thought, what an interesting issue. Many Cresset readers will find these thought-filled pieces good reading, and perhaps even sense encouragement for the challenges their own minds are facing.

But then Louise's review was torn up. And I knew that talking about new ideas and writing about the challenges of changing one's mind is risky, no matter where you do it. For one response may be the exhilaration of the rock climber—free and secure, and looking at a world only guessed at before—but another response is the frightened screech of the person who senses only the threat of losing hold.

The seasons of Lent and Eastertide are good for reminding us of how we ought to act and giving us the courage to do it. May we who sometimes trust the exhilaration and the risk of new ideas call out comforting words to the others. We have the best possible example.

Peace,

GME
THINKING ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Kenneth H. Klein

The question about nuclear weapons that I most want answered is this: Are we human beings better off with our atomic bombs, on balance, over time, than we would be without them? That question, I suggest, is one that we cannot answer until we settle our minds about quite a large number of issues that go with the territory.

For myself and for those of you who also want an answer to that question, I shall try to state what I think the issues are, at least the more important ones. Along the way I shall also say where I stand on some of them and where I come out, at least so far, on the big question. My list of issues may not quite coincide with yours; similarly, the stand that I take on these issues may not persuade you, particularly the conclusion that I come to at the end. Well and good. The point of this piece is not to get you to think as I do. It is to encourage you to join me in identifying the very complex issues that are involved in this crucial area of social philosophy-national defense—and to invite you to think about them. Eventually, I suggest, we shall have to reevaluate the widespread presumption that atomic bombs are acceptable military weapons. If you conclude that they are not, as I have, then we are still only halfway home; we shall then have to decide what to do about them, which is a much harder question. But one step at a time. Join me, in what follows, in trying to get halfway home.

Here are some of the issues that I think about when I contemplate the globe’s current arsenal of atomic bombs and delivery systems.

Let me pause at the outset to recall, not in any detail, but in general shape and size, the configurations of our current military nuclear arsenal: roughly 16,000 megatons overall, stockpiled and growing. In WW II we detonated six megatons of conventional explosives. Today’s capacities look like this: on the land, ICBM’s, one to nine megatons each, in the 100s on both sides, and growing. We have many. Russia has more. One hundred brand new MX “Peacekeepers” are coming on line in the U.S.; each carries ten independently targetable warheads, 350 kt each, for a total of 1000 strategic warheads in that weapons-system alone. In the sea, over and above the ordnance of the surface fleet and the conventional nuclear submarines, a growing fleet of Trident-class submarines—eight operational, six under construction. Each submarine carries 24 Trident-II MIRV-ed missiles, each bearing nine warheads, 350 kt apiece, which totals 216 independently targetable warheads per submarine. Roughly two dozen Trident submarines are projected, they say; that’s five 184 SLBM warheads for the U.S. Trident fleet alone. Russia’s equivalent submarine fleet, we believe, nearly matches ours, as does its surface fleet. In the air, on our side, old but serviceable B-52’s; a spate of supersonic tactical fighter-bombers and interceptors; 100 B-1’s on line or on order. B-2’s and Stealth bombers are coming, too, on current Pentagon projections. The eastern skies are filled with Russian counterparts: Tu-16 Badgers, Tu-22 M Backfires, Blackjacks. Everywhere, Cruise Missiles, already in the thousands, launchable from every land, sea, and air “weapons-platform.” Last, what are called small, tactical nuclear weapons, “battlefield” weapons, in the

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alarmists' banner words: they name conceivable, ingly unlikely real world consequences of our current nuclear arsenals, strategies and political behavior.

Moreover, even if nuclear warfighting does which a plenitude of atomic bombs makes possible, with that ordnance: anthropological, technological, moral, and ideological. Here are some of the issues, as I see them, that have to do with technology and human nature.

1. Whether the opponents of nuclear weapons exaggerate both the likelihood and the dangers of nuclear war fighting.

If we continue on our current course, anti-nuclearists say, nuclear warfighting will certainly come, somewhere, somehow, sometime. Because there would be neither way nor will to stop it, it will escalate uncontrollably, and in the end it will mean, in the best case, the end of civilization; in the worse case, “anthropocide,” “omnicide,” “ecocide.”

Not so, others reply. Nuclear warfighting is neither inevitable nor catastrophic for humankind were it to occur. First of all, it need not happen, and there is good reason to think that it will not happen. Deterrence strategy has worked for nearly half a century. It has made for very stable relationships between nuclear-capable countries. “Mutually Assured Destruction,” which a plenitude of atomic bombs makes possible, provides a reliable and effective strategy that serves to deter armed conflict of any kind between nuclear-capable countries. And if it does not, military conflict need not be disastrous: it is possible for nuclear-capable countries to fight a major “conventional” war without using nuclear weapons. It is even possible, some military strategists contend, to fight a “limited nuclear war.” Moreover, even if nuclear warfighting does occur, and even if it were to occur on a very large scale, the environmental consequences, however disruptive to life as we know it, are not likely to be catastrophic to all sentient life on earth, not in our resilient ecosphere, not thru ozone depletion, nor radioactive contamination, nor genetic mutations, nor nuclear winter. “Anthropocide,” “omnicide,” “ecocide.” . . . those are alarmists’ banner words: they name conceivable, though very remote empirical contingencies, exceedingly unlikely real world consequences of our current nuclear arsenals, strategies and political behavior.

No! insist the Caldicotts, the Schells and the Sagans. These are not remote contingencies at all! They are just around the corner! But you have read their books. You have heard their voices, pondered their grave tones. Who in this emotionally charged scene calculates future probabilities more correctly? Do anti-nuclear voices exaggerate? In terms of rhetoric, perhaps yes, but what about the substance of their scenarios? Are anti-nuclear activists out of touch with reality about what will happen, eventually, if current trends continue? Are their worries fair to the facts? Who has the better arguments? Let’s look at some specific issues.

2. Whether conventional warfighting between nuclear-capable countries, if initiated, is likely to lead to nuclear warfighting.

Assuredly not, military strategists say. That’s just the point of nuclear deterrence theory: it works. The stunning fact is that the threat of nuclear retaliation has deterred the superpowers from both nuclear and conventional military conflict for half a century. Deterrence works. And it takes something militarily titanic, such as atomic bombs, many of them, to achieve deterrence force structures; these are ruinously destructive gadgets that kill in five ways: neutron burst, light, heat, concussion, and fallout. Assured destruction awaits a nuclear aggressor because no matter how powerful his first strike, conventional or nuclear, his adversary retains a crushing second-strike capacity and the means to deliver it. That means nobody will ever use them. It’s like pointing a single-triggered double-barreled shotgun at your enemy, and then noticing that while one barrel points at him, the other points at you. Who would ever pull the trigger? Nuclear weapons are like that. They’ll never be used, even between nuclear-capable countries who fall into conventional conflict. Thomas Clancy, than whose war-fancies none could be fancier, can imagine (as he did in his 1986 novel, Red Storm Rising) a full-scale, believable war in Western Europe between NATO Pact and the Soviet block countries without a single atomic bomb being exploded. That’s the way the next big war will be; it will be a Clancy war.

But that’s fiction, comes the reply. Open your eyes: it is our declared intent to use tactical atomic weapons straightaway in Western Europe if we need them to prevent Soviet military expansion. We have both implied and said that we will use them. The U. S. has not and will not commit itself (so far) to a “no first strike” policy. If the stakes are high enough, we shall not only strut with them; we shall deliberately explode them on our enemies, as we have done once before. Moreover, there are other ways that nuclear warfighting might begin: by intentional or mindless escalation of conven-

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tional hostilities, by accident, by computer or radar error, by "use-them-or-lose-them" thinking when the battle is going badly, by hostilities between increasing numbers of nuclear-capable minor powers—proliferation is a serious worry in the nuclear scene—by entanglement of the superpowers in hostilities of their client states, by conspiracy, terrorism, madness. Nuclear warfighting might begin in a dozen different ways.

Might, yes, but will, no, it is said. None of these eventualities need occur; and if we’re careful, they will not occur. And even if nuclear warfighting between nuclear-capable countries does occur, it would not necessarily tumble us into the nuclear holocaust that alarmists fear. First of all, there is a compelling rational inducement to not use nuclear weapons at all, ever, since anyone’s first-use, however effective, will be met with punishing reply; a second-strike force sufficiently immune from first strike damage will remain to return “unacceptable damage” to the one who uses them at all. That’s how nuclear deterrence works. But don’t you see? The very same inducement, should anyone say no? Yes. But would you?

**Q 3.** Whether nuclear warfighting, once initiated, could be contained.

Yes, of course, say the military. We can fight a limited nuclear war. Why not?

Here’s why not. Consider the following line of reasoning. People have limited stress tolerance; normal rational restraints sometimes break down, particularly under conditions of disaster. Nuclear weapons bring instant disaster. To those who had not yet been hit, they would bring terror, panic, and rage. Command and communications structures would be so disrupted—consider the “EMP effect” alone—and the losses would be so enormous and staggering to the survivors that there would be no humanly achievable way to contain the conflict once it began. The technology and the command structures would take over, and even if communications hold, there might well be no good reason to oppose our natural desire to retaliate “with everything we’ve got” (as we’d say) for the inconceivably punishing losses we have already experienced, whole battalions, divisions, fleets, cities. . . . Just one or two such losses would do it, wouldn’t it? Yes, nuclear war could be contained, but would it? Once it began, would human beings have the will to contain it?

Yes, of course we would, comes the reply: don’t be silly. Why not? Think about it. Wouldn’t rational considerations—a cost-benefit analysis—prevent us from allowing a “measured,” “limited,” “tactical,” “surgical” nuclear “strike” to escalate into an unlimited, all-out exchange? That wouldn’t be in our best interest; just thinking ahead would stop us from doing that, wouldn’t it?

Maybe. Maybe not. People would be using these weapons and responding to their use against them, people with values and beliefs and needs and wants, only one of which is survival. Consider the importance of other things we also care about, some of them more than survival: the moral values we cherish, the ideological commitments we prize, the religious beliefs we hold sacred. We live for these values and by these values; we intend to preserve them, whatever the cost. Consider the magnitude of the losses to the sources of those values once nuclear exchange begins. Consider what people with standard military reflexes might do under those special circumstances, with the availability of the power to retaliate and the will to retaliate, and, if not to retaliate, at least “to give it all we’ve got,” even if all we’ve got—the keys to the switches to the missiles—means certain terrestrial ruin for ourselves and our way of life. If you were Emperor Hirohito in 1945, and if your defense minister disclosed to you, say, on the evening of August 9, that Japan is sure to lose the war but you have one atomic bomb and the means to explode it over the skies of, say, San Francisco, what would you do? Could you just say no? Yes. But would you?

**Q 4.** Whether deterrence theory (Mutually Assured Destruction) is a stable enough motivational structure to count on.

Deterrence theory provides powerful inducement to avoid battle with a nuclear-equipped adversary. But consider: deterrence strategy is not only unstable; it is morally disquieting as well. First of all, as already pointed out, it presumes unflappable rationality on the part of ourselves and our adversaries. And rationality—the cognitive and behavioral reflexes characteristic of normal self-interest—might fail us under stress, fear, rage, or panic. But this is only part of the problem: Deterrence theory also presumes our resolute will not merely to threaten to use but to actually use our atomic bombs against our enemies if they do such and such. Now everything is stable if deterrence deters, but if it does not, here is the situation we face. Let’s say that our adversary has gravely aggressed in some way and we have said in advance that if they do that, we shall blow them away (“measuredly”). Apparently they didn’t believe that we’d do what we said we’d do. So
we arm our bombs, switch our keys to "ready" and, just before we fire, we think: if we go ahead and do this, the force levels are such that they're sure to blow us away with a second-strike. So either we let them aggress, which doesn't seem quite right, or we try to stop them from further aggression with nuclear bombs, with the sure and certain knowledge that, now taking the forbidden step into nuclear warfighting, we shall probably not live past next Tuesday. Which doesn't seem quite right either. "We" lose either way. And "they" lose too, of course, unless we let them have their way with us, which we've told them we won't. Well, we're not going to let them have their way with us. So we'll launch. Yet, if we launch, what will we gain, other than keeping our word, since we too will either die or make life on earth uninhabitable for human beings on civilized terms? If deterrence holds, fine; if it fails, it places us and our adversary in a no-win situation: either give up or blow up. We don't want to do either, but we might have to do one or the other if our adversary decides to step over the lines we draw. Think of how close we came during the Cuban missile crisis.

Will deterrence hold us all in check? Arguments on the one side stress the intelligence of our top political leaders, the reliability of key military personnel—to obey orders, for example—and the assurance that people in power will be motivated by informed, rational self-interest, including a robust survival instinct. Arguments on the other side stress accidents, miscalculation, willful escalation, communications failures, and human factors such as disobedience, irrationality, malevolence, homicidal and/or suicidal behavior under crisis, and the temptation that many human beings have—military men and athletes seem particularly prone to this—to "give it our best shot," to retaliate against injury and wrongdoing even when by doing so they are not likely to improve their human condition.

5. Whether there is any effective defense against nuclear weapons.

None that we know of, except the envisioned "Strategic Defense Initiative," which is still being planned, at least officially, to provide a "shield," an "umbrella" against strategic nuclear weapons. Would it do that, and would it be a good thing if it did?

Advocates of SDI are not one whit deterred by the arguments against it: that SDI, even if partially effective against strategic weapons (ICBM's), would provide so porous a shield, so leaky an umbrella, as to be laughable. As conceived, the system could not be properly tested until it is used; it is vulnerable to attack, jamming, software errors, hardware failure, and a variety of easily achievable offensive countermeasures—chaff, decoys, hardened, reflective warheads, fast-burn boosters, and saturation attack to overload the system. Moreover, it would be totally ineffective against short range weapons: SLBM's, cruise missiles, and the whole range of nuclear field-weapons. Moreover, SDI, if unaccompanied by deep cuts in offensive delivery systems, would dangerously destabilize the fragile balance of deterrence since SDI would also bring a first-strike advantage to the one who has it first; it would provide at least some defense against a second strike. Hence, it would make preemptive attack against the country installing it more tempting. At the very least, SDI would powerfully augment the arms race.

Against such considerations, defenders urge that military contracts strengthen the economy, that SDI research is promising for the development of new weapons—laser and particle-beam devices—which might eventually replace nuclear bombs, and that SDI research and development gives us something to "bargain away" in negotiations. Besides, perhaps SDI technology might eventually be made sufficiently sophisticated as to leave no porosity at all; if sufficiently target-specific, it might make us 100 per cent defendable against all missiles, SLBM's and Cruise missiles as battlefield weapons as well as ICBM's. Just think of it: focussed on individual ships, aircraft, tanks, trucks, field pieces, soldiers. Powerful, invincible zappers from the sky! Atomic crossbows hurling red-bolts of light with incredible accuracy at anything that moves to attack us!

Would it be a good thing if we had that? David Hoekema reminds us that there is no worry in giving, say, Albert Schweitzer a Teflon suit, a protective garment that nothing could penetrate. But would we want to give one to Jesse James? (Hoekema, 164) Teflon suits which make aggressive people safe from harm thereby make them more dangerous. So if SDI can be made to work big, it gives us what we might instinctively want, immunity from harm. This power would undercut the stability achieved by deterrence, for the reason that what we need for deterrence is mutually-assured-destroyability, vulnerability to attack, not invulnerability. Of course, if SDI worked perfectly, we would no longer need deterrence; we could defend ourselves straightforwardly without relying upon threats. But then the worry that Hoekema arises about countries in Teflon Suits: if we become immune from harm, what shall protect others from our aggressiveness? So, if SDI works pretty well, that's not good enough, considering the numbers of missiles that will get through anyway. And if SDI works perfectly, it makes aggression of those who have it, even if it be we ourselves, safer, hence more dangerous.
At this point, let me move toward conclusion by mentioning, though not opening up, the really difficult issues on my list, the moral and ideological ones. These issues deserve extended discussion and they are being actively addressed nowadays by, among others, philosophers. A few references will be given along the way, and more are easily found by those who care to look at the philosophical literature. (See, for example, William Gay, 279-317) I hope that it shall be obvious in each case just why these are issues that go with this territory and just what sort of argument is mounted, at least for openers, on both sides. On these points, join your own minds to the issues.

6. Whether nuclear warfighting, at current levels of armament, could ever satisfy either of the "just-means" conditions of a "just war": (a) "the harm resulting from belligerent means employed should not be disproportionate to the military objective to be attained. (b) the harm to innocents should not be directly intended as an end or as a means" (Sterba 156).

7. Whether nuclear weapons are intrinsically immoral weapons. Because of their size, the indiscriminateness of their reach, the longevity of their killing power, and the damage they do to the environment, are nuclear bombs, in their very nature, immoral weapons, unacceptable even in warfighting, like some kinds of chemical and biological weapons are commonly thought to be? Or is it that "anything goes" in war?

8. Whether nuclear weapons are necessary for national and international security. Would conventional weapons, suitably souped-up, suffice? Some form of civilian defense? International government? Pacifism? (For an excellent recent discussion of pacifism as a pragmatic alternative to warism, see Duane Cady's new book, From Warism to Pacifism: A Moral Continuum.)

9. Whether the use of nuclear weapons would always be morally unjustifiable. Might improvements in miniaturization, targeting accuracy, and "cleanliness" be envisioned which would overcome the objections fueled by concern for escalation and damage to innocents, the ecosphere, our successors, and other living species? What's wrong with using a small nuclear bomb to destroy a single carrier, in wartime, in the middle of an ocean?

10. Whether a sizeable nuclear first strike, or even a nuclear reply to one (carrying out our announced promise of retaliation), would ever be morally justifiable. John Somerville argues that no circumstance, however grave, "gives this government or any government the moral right to bring its people, and possibly all people, under the shadow of nuclear destruction" (Somerville 25). Is that true?

11. Whether we have any responsibility toward other species, toward nature, toward future generations, toward the unborn (of all kinds) that argues against our willingness to harbor weapons which imperil them. In The Fate of the Earth, Jonathan Schell has argued that we do. Is that true?

12. Whether it is morally irresponsible to criticize nuclear-deterrence strategy, and atomic weapons themselves, unless we can come up with something better. Jonathan Schonsheck argues that "it is both philosophically and politically irresponsible to urge the rejection of current public policy unless one, in conjunction, argues for the moral superiority of some alternative policy" (Schonsheck 56). Is that true?

13. Whether the geopolitical scene really does consist, as Schonsheck contends, of irredeemably mutually suspicious and hostile groups (Schonsheck 58), or whether human nature, "nasty and brutish" in Hobbes' view, might grow amicable enough to induce us to "expand the circle" of those we love and care for so as to include all humanity. Peter Singer argues that such growth is within our reach (Singer 59). Schonsheck claims that Singer just does not understand human nature. Who is right?

14. Whether atomic weapons, on balance, facilitate the nationalistic premise more than they imperil it? The nationalistic premise could be stated as follows: "Each nation has both a right and a duty to protect its people and territory against military attack, subject to reasonable constraints of cost, absence of corollary harm to the innocents, and fulfillment of other duties" (Hoeckema 159). The italicized words, of course, locate the problem areas. Do atomic weapons, on balance, more serve that goal than they threaten it?

15. Whether nuclear weapons policy is being made in a manner consistent with the principles of democratic and constitutional government. R. Paul Churchill argues that the linkage between the electorate and those who make nuclear weapons policies is too remote for issues of such commanding importance (Churchill 256-64). Is that a serious worry?

16. Whether the by and large Christian worldview of our western political leaders is itself worrisome. Ronald Hirschbein contends that there is a millenarian strain which touches our by-and-large theistic political leaders (Hirschbein 38). Is that true? If so, is it comforting as
we think of them, in time of crisis, faced with a launch-no-launch decision? Would not eschatologically inclined fingers be ever so slightly more inclined, rather than less inclined, to push the buttons that carry us all to judgment and justice?

### Question 17

17. Whether the status of our moral, ideological, and religious claims is such that we should be emboldened to kill for them. Are they certifiably “objective truths”? Are they, rather, democratically chosen bases for our political constitution? Are they only the evolved traditions of western society? Are they, perhaps, shared private preferences, heterogeneous and cross-culturally idiosyncratic? Are our ethical and ideological commitments best construed as ultimately “subjective,” as Leo Groarke contends (Groarke 108); if so, while we might individually choose to die for them, are we justified in collectively killing for them?

### Question 18

18. Whether there is any connection between gender and how human beings think, feel, and behave with respect to war and the human environment. Some contend that working to end all wars is a realistic, justified, moral goal, and that nuclear weapons have made a contribution to our reach for that eventual objective. Nuclear weapons, they argue, have so altered the whole war system, entailing, and they do, the risk of omnicide, that war must now be abandoned as a way of settling national and ideological conflicts (Cady 208-215). About this view, detractors use such phrases as “idle gibberish,” “otherworldly piousness,” “whistling in the dark,” “an infant’s dream,” “a childish hope far beyond human power to make happen.” Who, among those contenders, is right? Have nuclear weapons, as ubiquitous as they have become, made war in some sense “obsolete”?

### Question 19

19. Whether warism (the doctrine that war is morally justifiable in principle and sometimes justifiable in fact) is a morally acceptable doctrine for adult human beings. Some contend that working to end all wars is a realistic, justified, moral goal, and that nuclear weapons have made a contribution to our reach for that eventual objective. Nuclear weapons, they argue, have so altered the whole war system, entailing, and they do, the risk of omnicide, that war must now be abandoned as a way of settling national and ideological conflicts (Cady 208-215). About this view, detractors use such phrases as “idle gibberish,” “otherworldly piousness,” “whistling in the dark,” “an infant’s dream,” “a childish hope far beyond human power to make happen.” Who, among those contenders, is right? Have nuclear weapons, as ubiquitous as they have become, made war in some sense “obsolete”?

### Question 20

20. Whether President Truman’s choice of a policy option to end World War II and President Kennedy’s choice of a policy option to end the Cuban Missile Crisis did us more long-term harm than short-term good. If you want to be frightened this weekend, read Robert Kennedy’s Thirteen Days and ponder what President Kennedy may have really expected to happen, as contrasted with what he hoped for, in consequence of his decision to blockade Cuba; for a frightening interpretation of President Kennedy’s expectation, see John Sommerville’s “War, Omnicide, and Sanity,” (Sommerville 23). We remember President Kennedy as being willing to risk nuclear war with the USSR to keep Russian missiles out of Cuba. Has that memory and that image set a paradigm for what we expect of our presidents and what they expect of themselves? Kennedy won that round. But at what cost to the future? John Sommerville reports that “it is now universal doctrine in the USSR that Kennedy’s policy in the Cuban Missile Crisis was really nuclear blackmail, and they are firmly resolved never to give in to it again” (Sommerville 32).

We remember, too, President Truman as being willing to use atomic bombs in warfare. With the military use of the atomic bombs in August of 1946—Truman might have “exhibited” them, and many have argued after the fact that he should have done just that—Truman succeeded in extracting unconditional surrender from Japan. But, at what cost to our future? These events, Kennedy’s and Truman’s political behavior, linger in our memory as what was permitted in the past and inform our fragile sense of what is, hence, permissible now.

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I have tried to keep my own views out of my statement of the issues as much as possible. May I close with a blunt, quick statement of my own dark beliefs. First, a military confrontation between nuclear capable countries stands a good chance of “going nuclear”; second, even a limited use of nuclear weapons—and dear God, they really do intend to use them!—carries an unacceptable risk, on current military inventories, of leading us into unlimited nuclear war, which would have disastrous consequences for the human race; third, deterrence theory is fatally flawed by the character of human beings, whose continued earthly survival, given extant nuclear arsenals, requires us to be better than we in fact are.

Given the encouraging political developments in the Gorbachev years, we seem no longer to be at a flashpoint of nuclear danger. May his tribe increase. Nevertheless, contrary the thesis of the Harvard Study Group’s book which is expressed in its title—Living with Nuclear Weapons—I continue to believe that human beings are too imperfect a life form to entrust very long with the awesome power of atomic bombs. Do not be lulled into a false sense of comfort by the US/USSR thaw. It is the power, the numbers, and the ubiquity of atomic bombs, coupled with the tendencies of human beings, which generates the worry. There is

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nothing lastingly comforting in the passing parade of changeable nations who flop back and forth between enmity and amity, all the while proudly fondling their nuclear weapons and relying upon them for defense against their next chosen enemy. I do not know how history would have unfolded in Western Europe had atomic bombs never been made. But my own thinking moves toward the conclusion that we are all worse off, very much worse off, with atomic bombs than we would be, or would have been, without them. If we find no way to change course, I share Einstein's dark conjecture that we—and if not we, then our children—drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.

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The Cresset
FOOTWASHING AND LEADERSHIP:
The Catholic Worker Movement

In a narrative with many dramatic moments, this one continues to puzzle and compel us: Peter rejects Jesus' attempt to wash his disciples' feet after the Last Supper with the words, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus then says, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me," and Peter almost comically replies, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" John recounts the sermonic lesson a few verses later: "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

"Foot-washing" here obviously refers not simply to first-century Palestinian hygienic practice, but to a transformed relationship among authority and service, leadership and community. The polemical dart is fired at Peter because he imagines that authority and teaching come from "above," and that only inferiors stoop to serve. Jesus teaches the opposite: true authority comes not from domination but from service, not from giving orders to others from above but by fulfilling their needs from below. And true community, we might further conclude, arises only where that kind of inverted authority is practiced.

The great reversal of values proclaimed in John 13 certainly has relevance for some of our contemporary dilemmas about leadership, authority, and community. While most of our society continues to look upward to find leadership among its celebrities, entrepreneurs, sports figures, and politicians, it has not gone unnoticed among a minority that these figures—many absorbed in their own efforts to get to the top and stay there—seem increasingly disconnected and irrelevant to the real issues and problems we face. Those interested in confronting those problems, then, might consider looking in the opposite direction for leadership: "down" to those who have stooped to serve.

One such group with which I am familiar is the Catholic Worker movement, founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933. For nearly sixty years the Catholic Worker and its penny paper, The Catholic Worker, have attempted to explore fundamental questions of social justice, hospitality, work, and peace from a Christian perspective. Many of the movement's positions—for example, its absolute pacifism—have been highly controversial. But one of its undeniable achievements—its ability to form genuine communities of service to those members of society most afflicted by poverty and despair—is recognized even by those who disagree with some of the movement's particular ideas. And the Catholic Worker's ability to create and sustain genuine communities of service may have special lessons to teach in a time when so many communities of all kinds have broken down.

The Catholic Worker communities, called "Houses of Hospitality," began rather inadvertently in 1933 when Peter Maurin, Day's French-born peasant collaborator, began bringing two hungry transients, Dolan and Egan, to her Fifteenth Street Manhattan apartment, where she had begun editing the tabloid Catholic Worker. At first Day was annoyed by the intrusion. "All the while Peter was in the country I was visited by the pair of them," she later wrote. "They always announced themselves before I opened the door: 'Dolan and Egan here again.'" However unwelcome at first, Dolan and Egan had found the right place. Day quickly realized that the movement calling for social reform on Catholic principles could not promote Christian social teachings without practicing them, and soon, she rented the barber shop below her apartment and transformed it into the first House of Hospitality. Before long the Workers were serving daily bread and soup to as many as could be accomodated, and beds for the homeless...
became part of the operation as well. By 1938 the soup lines at the House of Hospitality on Mott Street were serving twelve hundred people mornings and evenings, and over thirty other Houses of Hospitality were operating in cities around the United States.

In the postscript to her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, Day conveyed her sense of what had happened:

We were just sitting there talking when lines of people began to form saying, "We need bread." We could not say, "Go, be thou filled." If there were six small loaves and a few fishes, we had to divide them. There was always bread. We were just sitting there talking and people moved in on us. Let those who can take it, take it. Some moved out and that made room for more. And somehow the walls expanded.... The most significant thing about the Catholic Worker is poverty, some say.

The most significant thing is community, others say. We are not alone any more.

This vision of creating a community of service to the poor had strong roots in Christian and Roman Catholic tradition. As Day and her followers deepened and reflected upon their enterprise, they consciously drew inspiration and practical wisdom from the long tradition of religious communitarianism, stretching from the practices of the early church described in Acts 2, through the religious orders of the Benedictines and Franciscans, to lay movements like the Brethren of the Common Life. Yet far more than most of these earlier models, the Catholic Workers refused to institutionalize and regularize their communities, preferring to rely on the voluntary commitment and the freely practiced spiritual discipline of those who came to live and work in them. They also insisted that the purpose of the community must never become the welfare of its own members, but service to those most in need, a goal guaranteed by the practice of voluntary poverty.

From their beginning to the present, Day and her followers were frequently charged with romanticism in establishing their Houses of Hospitality, and with failing to convey just how desperate were the conditions and people where they lived. Yet any careful reading of *The Catholic Worker* makes it plain how aware the Workers were that life among the poor, whom Peter Maurin called "Ambassadors of God," was anything but uplifting from the standpoint of "natural virtue." There was frequently drinking, conflict, even violence in the Houses of Hospitality. "We soon learned that one must never expect gratitude from the poor," wrote one Catholic Worker. "We learned (and it was painful) that if you gave the poor man your coat he was just as likely to hit you on the head and steal your pants. The poor are often poor in everything, including kindness, gratitude, and charity."

Yet Day continued to insist that that was not the whole story, and that one must continue to seek Christ in even the most unappealing people.

You can look at all the people in the houses and see them as pretty rotten... That, of course, is one way we should look at things, to see men as dust. But from the standpoint of the supernatural they are a little lower than the angels, and we could only keep that attitude toward them. When we are in love with people we see the best that is in them, and understand very clearly their failures and lapses. And the love continues strong and works wonders.

The attitude that the Catholic Worker cultivated was thus not one of sentimentality about human nature or social problems, but a willingness to persist in serving people—not "reforming" them—despite their intractability. The Workers interpreted Christ's saying that "the poor you have always with you" not as an excuse for inaction, but as a promise that there would always be opportunity to serve.

Those drawn to the Catholic Worker by the romance of performing noble deeds for the down-and-out were quickly disabused. Veteran Catholic Workers eventually became skilled at knowing what kind of newcomers would adapt to their communities. "Usually if a person came who was a bit indifferent or even skeptical of the work then we could count on having him or her stay with us for a reasonable period of time. But if they arrived full of enthusiasm and gushing about our beautiful way of life then it was a foregone conclusion they would not last long." While the Houses of Hospitality sometimes appeared to be "living hells," many Catholic Workers continued to insist that they also created for those who lived in them a deeper sense of community than that available in the larger society.

"The Worker provided for many of us a signal and very special experience of Christian community, and of community pure and simple," one former Catholic Worker said. And that depth of community derived fundamentally from the insistence that the Houses of Hospitality not become places of withdrawal or retreat, but places of service to those most in need.

We can immediately perceive the striking difference between this sense of how to build a workable society and many currently prevalent social values. Large sectors of twentieth century society have worked primarily for individual achievement, or to build communities of affluence and sophistication that require great resources to enter and maintain. But those who labor on the bottom of society, like the Catholic Worker, frequently point out how such values have tended to exclude the poor, the troubled, and the retarded from the Cresset.
such communities, or at best to regard marginalized people only as "problems" or afterthoughts to be considered when serious work has concluded. Such values, they suggest, make true community impossible.

Similarly, the Catholic Worker has stressed that true leadership in community arises not from power or assertiveness but from service itself. Dorothy Day's leadership of the Catholic Worker movement had exactly such a character. Historian Debra Campbell has pointed out how Day's "maternal" style of leadership through service represented a sharp alternative to hierarchical or "patriarchal" models:

Typically, Dorothy Day sought to bring her readers into the kitchen with her, to share her work and her community and to help them stave off 'the long loneliness.' Strictly speaking, Day did not administer or lead the Catholic Worker; she mothered it in the best, most profound sense of the term....[Day] shows that it is at least possible for a woman to form and lead a movement for peace and justice and still remain a faithful, even a devout Roman Catholic. It indicates that the hierarchical model of authority does not exhaust the possibilities.

It is debatable whether our social problems today are any worse than in the past. But a strong case can be made, I think, that the sense of communal identification with other members of the society—a prerequisite to confronting those problems—is considerably less prevalent than it was even thirty years ago. May part of that loss of community not be a result of following leaders who have not themselves practiced the discipline of service essential to true leadership? And may it be that only those who gather around such leadership can create true community?

When Dorothy Day died in 1980, historian David J. O'Brien called her "the most significant, interesting, and influential person in the history of American Catholicism." This was a remarkable statement, considering that she was a lay woman who had never held an institutional position of any kind, and had frequently been scorned as a dangerous radical. In the mid-80s, the American Catholic bishops began citing her in their official documents as a model of service and peacemaking. Today, some Catholic religious communities use Day's writings as fundamental components of their teaching and formation of new members. The continuing interest in Day and her movement on the part of social thinkers and writers of many persuasions also suggests that some of the ideas of the Catholic Worker have outlived their founder. The movement itself remains small but vigorous: there are at present about one hundred Houses of Hospitality in the United States—though many today are thoroughly ecumenical and often do not use the name "Catholic Worker."

The particular features of the movement and its houses may not be appropriate for other people or situations. But it does seem noteworthy that even some middle class churches, communities, and colleges have started to recognize that their communities become more healthy when they reach beyond themselves to serve those most in need—the poor, the homeless, the hungry. And we may expect that from such endeavors new kinds of leaders will begin to emerge. Perhaps we have just begun to discover—through the Catholic Worker and similar ventures—that it is only those places where people wash each others' feet that can really become home.
WHAT KIND OF REVOLUTION?

"The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will be—live!"
—Gil Scott-Heron

Within hours live television was being broadcast from the foot of the crumbling Berlin wall last November and network anchors were scrambling to see who would be the first to employ the symbol as a live prop. Scenes of West Berliners uncorking champagne, dancing joyously atop the wall, hugging, laughing, attacking the graffiti-decorated concrete with pickaxes and chisels while urging compatriot soldiers still on the Other Side to join in the fun blend with other televised images: the mass exodus across the freshly-opened Hungarian border, the packed freedom trains departing East Germany, the swift death of the Old Regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, culminating in the bloody Christmas Day executions in Romania.

More than a few observers have cited the role of television for much of the swiftness with which one regime after another has fallen as the goal of the revolution—to "put a human face on socialism"—moves forward. We stand (or sit with our remote, as the case may be) in solidarity with our fellow freedom lovers as we watch the evening news. Ich bin Berliner! We cheer the demonstrators in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Berlin and even in Beijing (until CNN loses its live feed). We watch with a certain smugness as the "people's revolution" topples the Evil Empire of Communism. As Levis become legal tender. As Ronald McDonald sets up shop in Red Square. As polls wonder aloud on CNN whether Gorbachev is a really working undercover for A.F.S.C. Editorial writers in Moscow, Idaho, gloat.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, a whole generation of children grow up "in the shadow of the American dream," trapped in The ghettos of substandard housing and schools, gang-infested highrises, crack houses, non-existent health care services, and limited employment opportunities—in short, in a world with few options for breaking out of the seemingly perpetual cycle of hopelessness, with little reason to think that things might be different for their own children (Greenstein, 1988). We cheer the crumbling of one wall and ignore the others being built in the very backyards of our cities. We rejoice for the children of the Eastern Bloc, yet hear the trapped cries of our own only when they have fallen down a Texas well.

There are more poor Americans today than there were 25 years ago. The poorest group are children—both in actual numbers and as a proportion: nearly one in five (Moynihan, 1988). In 1964 a national poverty rate of 20 percent prompted a "war" on poverty. Sheldon Danziger (1986) reports that today rates for white children in single parent families, minority elderly persons, and all minority children all exceed 20 percent. Unfortunately, neither South Chicago, the South Bronx, Freedom City, East St. Louis, nor Appalachia has a satellite uplink.

The case of Minneapolis, as reported recently in the national press, presents a glimpse of the larger picture. For the past eight years while the economy has been surging, Minneapolis has experienced an increase in rates of infant mortality, crime, teen-age pregnancy and welfare dependency. Some believe that the persistence of such poverty despite the economic boom underscores the failure of traditional government approaches to the problems of poverty. Others suggest...
that while the number of poor is not growing dramatically, the problems of those who are already poor are worsening (New York Times, 9/15/88).

W. J. Wilson's observations on this subject (1985 and 1987) have been widely publicized. An increasingly impoverished, isolated, and immobile underclass inhabits America's central cities. Indeed, Wilson goes so far as to suggest that a new class structure is emerging. Those with a modicum of mobility have left, leaving behind pockets of abject poverty, dependency, and worsened conditions for those who cannot. As the press has reported, "Black professional and middle-class people began leaving the neighborhoods some 20 years ago, and they have become virtual prisons of poverty, ruled by gangs and ridden with drugs (New York Times, 12/4/89).

While sociologists question the extent of the "underclass phenomenon," or argue about the best ways to measure it, few would deny either its existence or its increasing impaction (Nathan and Adams, 1976). For despite our best efforts to solve the problem of poverty, a growing number of studies suggest that we are in many ways worse off today than we were when Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty in 1964 (Nowak, 1988).

Classification schemes have improved since then. We know more today about who is poor, about the nature and frequency of poverty's onset and departure (Duncan, 1984), about the increasing significance of female-headed households and the tragic implications for children (Moynihan, 1988). We have also learned that what we do is less important, sometimes, than how we do it.

The failed policies of massive high-rise public housing, a welfare system which fosters dependency rather than independence, cross-town busing, and other well-intentioned attempts to ameliorate or mitigate the conditions of poverty have foundered recently not only on the conservative backlash of The Reagan Years but on the reality of unintended consequences; bad things can happen as a result of good programs. That is the nature of the beast. How well those lessons have been learned remains an open question. There is no dearth of new suggestions. Yet there is a crisis of confidence in policymakers and social scientists to solve our problems.

"Sociology, which once could give us intelligent reportage, today has narrowed into minute quantitative research with little resonance or capacity for generalization." Yet, as Daniel Bell (1987) suggests, the traditional social structure of the United States is breaking up, and we have little mapping of the present and few guides for the future.

Todd Gitlin, echoing Bell, also criticizes sociology for "giving us a vision of the present order, but one that is abstracted from any general ideas about society" (Winkler, 1988).

Ken Auletta (1983), among the first to argue the existence of a distinct and excluded segment of America—mostly young, mostly minority, mostly female—agrees that it is difficult to reach a consensus about what to do about the underclass when the very name has pejorative connotations. Solutions range from welfare reform to economic policies to encourage urban growth, to the focussing of greater attention on strengthening families, to tax reform, child support reforms, employment and training programs, to educational reforms, and have come from dozens of sources.

Auletta describes the proposed solutions as falling into three main categories: "wholesale options" on both the left (government money, compassion, and effort) and the right (tax reductions, economic growth, get-tough policies towards welfare and crime); "laissez-faire options" (nothing works); and combinations which have limited goals and propose incremental solutions. Of these last, Auletta remarks, "Though wary of grandiose rhetoric, they do wish to communicate hope." (298)

Hope is nurtured by choice—not experts, not programming, not legislation. Providing choice has indeed characterized some of the more innovative programs attempting to address the problem of poverty. Rather than proposing new methods of amelioration, they focus on mobility, options which the rest of the country takes for granted.

In Chicago, for example, Susan Popkin and her associates (1989) describe a program which helps low-income black families move into better housing in the city areas and in middle-class suburbs throughout the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. Participants in the program who had moved to better neighborhoods reported a higher degree of satisfaction with the progress their children were making in schools than a control group of families who had not moved. However, they also reported feelings of cultural alienation and loneliness.

There is a modest effort currently underway in Valparaiso, Indiana, which is also focussing on mobility and choice. (This is not the first attempt at engendering social change in Valparaiso. See Gehm, Bringing It Home.) "Project Neighbors" is a group of individuals representing different religious denominations and economic backgrounds struggling to respond to Christ's charge to "Love your neighbor as your self" and the questions such a call raises for everyone: "Who is my neighbor?" And "What is love?"

The goal of the program is to provide children—
primarily those who are currently living in conditions of extreme poverty in Chicago's inner city areas—with good schools, safe neighborhoods, and choices for the future while their parents are assisted in exploring and fulfilling their own potential through the help of a caring, supportive community of "neighbors."

People hope to accomplish these goals simply—linking one family with one church support group which assists the family in relocating to Valparaiso is the key step. Church members work with the families to identify educational, employment, and other opportunities. Through income-sharing, church members provide assistance to the family to enable them to become independent while helping out in other ways as neighbors.

The program places emphasis on the creation of a caring community of neighbors who can provide material and emotional assistance while children and parents explore real options for the future. Support groups work with the families to find suitable housing, and meaningful employment, or by helping them to obtain necessary education to break out of the cycle of poverty. Basically, church members form the primary support network which provides assistance in securing adequate housing and meeting other basic needs for a period of 24 to 36 months. Other types of assistance may include contributions of furniture and supplies, child care, tutoring, or meeting any of a dozen other identified needs.

The project, which began in August 1988, worked initially with a group based in Chicago's South Shore Community, identifying families with children committed to the opportunity to participate as equal partners in this venture. Families were first asked to write a letter to a selection committee. Following this, families were interviewed, counselled and screened to identify health and economic needs, educational status, and so on. The waiting list of eligible candidate families quickly grew so long that applications were no longer taken after a few months. As church sponsor groups in Valparaiso are developed, the family is put in touch with them and the process initiated. As of this writing, four churches have sponsored a family.

In the case of one church, for example, an interest group was first formed by a few people who had heard of the program through the participation of another church. Those initial organizers invited other friends within the congregation to participate in the project. After identifying their own resources, the limited resources available from Project Neighbors itself, and the level of commitment they were able and willing to make as a group (at least initially) they met with the young mother and her small child. Subsequently, she took out a subscription to the local paper and visited the community several times, shopping its stores, asking questions about its schools, getting the "nickel tour" from a growing network of friends and acquaintances. This process of group formation took approximately nine months.

After the initial contacts in the early fall of 1989, she moved into an apartment in February, 1990. The support community is helping to subsidize a portion of her rent and is committed to helping her obtain an Associate Degree at a nearby state university. One of the members of the committee, an attorney, negotiated on her behalf with a collection agency to enable her to retire a debt that had been hanging over her head for many months. Another member, with a pickup truck, drove into Chicago to help her move. Yet another, with expertise in dealing with the local welfare system, has agreed to serve as her advocate in negotiating that and other helping bureaucracies.

The uniqueness of Project Neighbors rests on the autonomy of each church in figuring out how best to "be neighbors." Program staff provide one link between church, family, and the project. While each church group in partnership with the family is free to explore whatever options make sense, some low-cost housing has been provided to the project through the efforts of a local family foundation in the community. Houses and materials, purchased with donations and renovated with the help of volunteer labor, often students from the university, give visible proof of the desire to be a neighbor to those in need.

Project Neighbors organizers, while citing the uniqueness of their approach, also cite as a model for their actions the Indochinese refugee resettlement program. As reported by Kelly (1986), in order to deal with the exodus of refugees from South Vietnam, the U.S. government contracted with, among others, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the International Rescue Committee, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to assist in the resettlement of refugees from Vietnam. The refugee resettlement program lasted from 1975 to approximately 1981, by which time over half a million Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Hmong had been resettled, almost entirely through the efforts of individuals and small groups. Project Neighbors, while not attempting to model itself on this program directly, does acknowledge some useful similarities: the notion of sponsorship, the cultivation of a moral commitment to those less fortunate, and the concept of bridge building between cultures.

The project proceeds not without on-going critique. First, there is a built-in tension in the project based on the fundamental questions which drive it. For exam-
ple, the answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" can as easily be the rhetorical response, "Everyone" as it can be, "The woman standing next to me." The program with its limited resources must of necessity focus on a particular group to the exclusion of other equally deserving groups, raising issues of equitable and consistent selection criteria as well as questions about the process by which such questions get resolved.

Secondly, "What is love?" may be answered differently by different individuals, or translate variously in different contexts. While on the one hand each church, in full partnership with the family, decides what assistance it is capable of rendering, not establishing clear goals and objectives for what constitutes a "successful transition" may cause confusion or misunderstanding within and between support groups and the families and possibly lay the groundwork for long-term economic dependency.

Each of these tensions, of course, could be reduced through the creation of the kind of traditional administrative structure common to social service agencies. Such an approach would establish measurable program goals and objectives and guidelines. Yet organizers acknowledge that the process of institutionalizing social change can in itself be detrimental, a first step down the road to treating individuals and partners in change as clients and mere recipients of largesse. The strength, so far, of the program is quite similar to the strength of the Refugee Resettlement Programs with its emphasis on individual autonomy and decision-making resting at the level of the church sponsor group. As more families participate, however, discrepancies in terms of how each church and each family interprets Luke 10:29 may produce tensions of their own.

Additionally, programs focusing on mobility have been criticized for making matters worse for the people left behind. James P. Shenton, a professor of history at Columbia University is quoted in the Times as saying, "As conditions in the inner city worsen, the very people who could make a difference are leaving. They are abandoning any notion that they can make a difference. It reinforces the process of disintegration of those neighborhoods." And finally, turning once again to the lessons learned from the refugee resettlement model, Gail Kelly (1986) reports that for many refugees, resettlement meant either welfare dependency or the perception that they were coming in and taking "our" jobs and resources. Their presence often raised spectres of racism that had lain dormant in communities before their arrival. A significant portion of program participants have experienced increased alienation, mental illness and family disruptions, a conclusion similar to those found in the Chicago experiment reported by Popkin. (The effect of the alternative—remaining immobilized—is, of course, unmeasurable and therefore unmentioned).

The refugee resettlement model demonstrated how private individuals and churches might work cooperatively with the public sector to achieve a social good. Charles Murray, (1984) among others, suggests that such joint ventures might represent a real way out of the bureaucratic miasma of increasing dependency. Jack Rothman, who analyzed hundreds of empirical studies on social change in an effort to identify correlates of positive outcomes, concludes that

It is likely that social progress will be propelled best through a convergence of formal-technical and informal-lay elements of society—in other words, through the blending of "experts" and "people." "Experts" may contribute substantive factual information regarding a particular problem or situation... techniques and processes... "People" may contribute at least a sense of their peculiar desires, aspirations, and special interests... and an assessment of what procedures or processes might be uniquely appropriate to deal with it in their special contexts. (5)

Perhaps we might stretch Rothman's conclusion so far as to include also the "haves" and the "have nots" (materially speaking), linking up two communities who each have something to contribute to a common end. Attention to the future outcomes of Project Neighbors would seem to fit with the multi-level research agenda suggested by Daniel Weinberg (1986) who argues that for sociology to regain a more complete understanding of poverty and its solutions requires an analysis which can encompass racial discrimination, "the significance of social networks (personal contacts, friends, relatives and community), the effect of cultural conditioning, education, and experience in facilitating or hindering economic mobility." (355) In short, sociologists might benefit from a renewed appreciation of what the ecologists have known for years—everything is connected to everything else.

Of course, if that is in fact so, we get into dangerous territory. We have opened up the possibility that even the smallest act—of kindness, of defiance, of dignity, of human freedom—can have repercussions far beyond what can be seen or touched or televised. And small acts in Valparaiso or in Prague might not be swallowed up in the void of non-television (that place, we are taught from an early age, where nothing really counts). Is there a "collective spirit" going forth today that flows beyond the borders of Eastern Europe? A playwright and poet, scribbling on the unaccustomed stationery of the state prison, years yet from the warmth of revolution or the harsh light of publicity or fame observed:
Here and there, the continuity and integrity of the order of the spirit are generally easy to discern; elsewhere they are disputable, even well hidden, and sometimes, try as we might to perceive them, they simply seem nonexistent. I am simply convinced that every means by which man has tried to give expression to this spirit leaves its imprint . . . . That through all this, the order of the spirit, with antlike diligence, probes and tests the limits, the possibilities and the dimensions of humanity's freedom and responsibility. . . . Doesn't the fact that one has managed to create something—though it may seem to have no other impact—mean something in itself? Does not that alone say something and promise something? Does it not thus expand the range of what can be done, and of how far one may go? Every work of the spirit is a small reenactment of the miracle of Being, a small recreation of the world— (Havel, 273)

It is through those small recreations that the second half of the revolution—putting the human face, this time, on capitalism—may proceed. The revolution will not be televised; the revolution will be lived.

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MULTI-CULTURALISM: A Subversive Movement?

James F. Moore

We are on the threshold of a new wave in higher education and curricular reform. Our basic cynicism leads many of us to grit our teeth in the face of new waves and wag our heads at curricular reform. Yet, we are told, this new wave is the wave of the future; we cannot avoid the aftermath so why not ride in on the crest? The wave is the now quite trendy move toward multicultural diversity and global awareness. The wave has so taken hold that there is a host of code words and jargon already associated with the trend. Such things are part of being involved in an academic world, but they may also mask a legitimate educational concern, strange educational motivations or a very central challenge to our entire style of Western higher education. This article will address both the fearful, even distortive, motivations for this new trend and the critical challenge to American higher education that this new movement toward multicultural studies suggests.

Haven't The Missionaries Taught Us Anything?

Universities will need to add multi-cultural concerns to the mix that determines courses, curriculums, faculty hiring practices, and program development in the future. The specific phenomena that bring multi-cultural concerns to the fore will not go away either through neglect or some way of absorbing them into the present curriculum. Nevertheless, the various rationales already offered for changes in curriculum designed to account for cultural diversity and new global awareness are at odds with one another. Which of these rationales we choose to accept will radically shape the nature of our new curricular focus in strikingly different ways and for different purposes. Thus, words of caution ought to be offered at the outset.

Michael Geyer recently argued in an address to a conference on multi-cultural concerns organized by the University of Chicago that we are already confronted by a belief that global homogeneity has already covered over cultural diversity; thus the desire to retain this view of global cultural difference is archaic and obstructive in a far greater and more exciting development toward global unity of purpose. This argument is offered not as a specious dream of global utopianists but as a carefully argued position held by so-called global realists. That we are now faced with a world linked together quite literally by the presence and influence of multi-dimensional and powerful computer data bases means that no place in the world remains an undiscovered and isolated frontier. Computers in Dehli promise an equal portion in the new economic revolution for this so-called third world state as that assumed by European powers or even America. To ignore this new situation of global unity is to lose pace and lose place in the revolution. We have literally moved into the age of the speed of light.

Geyer rather poignantly illustrated this argument through the analysis of an advertisement run as a full page message in the *New York Times* by the financial empire of J.P. Morgan: “The key to global performance is the understanding of local markets.” The ad implies that diverse markets and their function are the arena for global performance. To understand local markets in their uniqueness becomes the key for enhancing the corporation’s ability to sell in these markets. We are not surprised that the study of multi-cultural diversity is so thoroughly endorsed by large corporations such as J.P. Morgan, Inc. That is, multi-cultural studies are seen as the basis for achieving

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competitive advantage, and competitive advantage is argued as a legitimate rationale for the development of global studies and cultural studies on university campuses.

There are those within the humanities who see this rationale as a new lease on life. Perhaps the image of the humanities as service disciplines leaves a bad taste in the mouths of some, but to others this disciplinary self-understanding has been a lifeline. The implication is quite clear; the humanities are now given the perfect legitimation for attaching themselves to the professional programs as a necessary loci for the future of these new studies in global awareness, thus, providing expertise for the understanding of local markets necessary to gain a “competitive edge.” Is this the tail wagging the dog? In this new world, things are different; the professional programs are the dog and the humanities are the tail.

These arguments have a pragmatic persuasive power. And, the new vision this brings to the humanities as disciplines can be justified even more by rallying the old argument that at least the humanists can supply a certain amount of “humaneness” to the conduct of the professions. Our role as the upholders of culture and values is after all re-legitimated. But if this is so (and we are told that necessity makes this so even in spite of ourselves), then what dangers lie in our path as we take this new and evidently necessary path?

Sandra Harding speaking to the same conference as Geyer identifies even more clearly the problematics that arise with this slide toward multi-cultural curricula. She argues that the danger is the likelihood that we will incorporate essentially racist perspectives into this new looking at the other. This probability seems greatly enhanced if the rationale is already that we do global studies to gain competitive advantage. We are tempted to approach the entire study of other cultures with the presumption of occupying a privileged position from which we judge the qualities of the other we seek to study. Underlying the strategy to gain a competitive edge is the presumption that everyone, after all, wants what we have and knowing more about their culture will enable us more adequately to entice them from their past toward a western capitalistic future. Everyone is a market for the West. Even if this idea is only subtle and remains hidden behind our expressed intentions, the results can be the same. We are again looking for a way to convert the world to our ways if only through the buying of our products. This post-modern evangelism may include others out there who might be just as capable in promoting the local market as we are. If many fear losing competitive control the strategy to discover new ways to use cultures in order to manipulate them to our advantage becomes even more pressing. According to Harding, to allay these fears, then, we study other cultures to show how much alike we are, to incorporate their cultural distinctiveness into our own (imperialism), or to incorporate our projects into their cultures. The entire enterprise is engaged for the sake of protecting Western privilege, especially in the marketplace.

The presumption of common global vision based on economic needs may benefit many within the nations of even the third world (perhaps our speaking of a “third” world ought also be challenged) but still, as Geyer argues, leave massive wastelands that will inevitably be ignored and necessarily condemned to lose ground in a world moved by technologies at the speed of light. These wastelands no longer will be found only in “underdeveloped” countries but in our backyards. A recent article in a Chicago newspaper spoke of a reference to the state of Vermont as a third world nation (not surprisingly used by state officials as publicity aimed at regaining a competitive edge). We cannot deny that using education to support economic privilege leaves us with an enormous moral challenge on both fronts.

There is something basic to the view of competitive edge that assures the continuing presence of such wastelands. If our intention really were to extend the capitalistic revolution to the disadvantaged, then how can we sustain a practice that emphasizes competitive advantage? Doesn’t this perspective arise from a necessity to secure our position of privilege? And if this is the implicit goal of a new interest in global awareness and cultural diversity, then how can a university ally itself with such goals?

We should have learned from the painful yet hopeful experience of the missionary. The missionary did immerse him/herself in a culture to gain a competitive edge (to witness to the faith, perhaps a nobler goal?). That this strategy brought resistance and even some notable failures has been a lesson learned by the mission movement. To make people into our image does not mean that we have discarded all difference. Even if we are as likely to see three piece suits in Nairobi, Lima, or Dehli as in Frankfurt, London or New York, we surely must know that the surface image has not destroyed indigenous culture. J.P. Morgan knows that fact, but do we know the ultimate end of this story?

The missionaries know that the indigenous churches retained cultural uniqueness in many places, and they have become the fastest growing churches in the world with increasing authority in the world church. We know in the church that the time is now here when Africa and Latin America Christians are challenging the assimilation of Christianity into capital-
ism so often found in the West. What does it mean to have a competitive advantage? We certainly don’t mean that we can silence the voices of other cultures. We have to admit that the time is coming and may already long have been here when nations of the “third world” are taking the podium and claiming a right to participate in the shaping of values in this new world, whatever it may become.

Curricular Response

All judgments we make on these matters will have striking impact on our curriculum. We enter this realm of curricular reform with caution; there is a considerable difference between constructing a curriculum that sustains the perspective of privileged position and constructing a curriculum that creates the opportunity for hearing the voices of the other. We may have little choice in the long run; the other is already one of us and their voices are being heard even if we are not listening. The question is not whether but how we choose to allow those voices a platform in our curriculum.

We, therefore, suggest a curricular reform based on the principle of allowing the other a platform to speak rather than around the hidden agenda of gaining competitive edge. Many of those whose agendas are fairly pragmatic, e.g., in the professional schools, are actually motivated by the desire for hearing the other more than or even instead of by the desire to exploit the other. J.P. Morgan does not really represent their interest in multi-cultural studies. However, the style of thinking implied by the plan to provide a platform for the other to speak will necessarily lead to a re-thinking of curricula and our philosophy of higher education that protects Western privilege of setting the agenda for what is learned and taught.

This challenge to the tradition of Western higher education already confronts us when we look at areas of curricular reform. Almost universally, universities see the adaptation of traditional courses in Western cultural history (History of Western Civilization, History of Western Philosophy, Western Religious History, Art History, etc.) as the way to incorporate multi-cultural studies into the curriculum. Yet, revision of such courses requires both a new look at neglected sub-cultures in Western cultural history as well as adding components on other cultures (e.g., Asian or African history). However, resources from within Western cultural history that are outside of the mainstream of culture are difficult to uncover precisely because the academy has been so successful in defining what counts as classics of the tradition so as to have almost completely erased literatures from sub-cultures. We have little or no way to produce a representative list of texts written by women from the ancient world or from black cultures in Europe or America, for example.

The actual identifying of what counts as a classic (and the standards have been variously understood) also colors our judgment on texts from sub-cultures or other cultures so that our standards become barriers to letting the other voice in. Literatures from the West Indies or from African nations may not look impressive beside Shakespeare or Dickens and our willingness to relinquish time to study other cultures will always be hampered by the driving “necessity” of finding time to study the “classics.” The problem of bias is not limited to questions of canon. We are, familiar with the refrain that American education has a built-in bias that shuts out minorities, targets them for failure. Our catalog of experience may lead us to retort that we certainly know many minorities who have succeeded in the system. We can and have become jaded by arguments that our educational style is responsible for sustaining racist inequalities. Still if this belief becomes a rigidity that blocks real openness to the other, then we produce an academic rationale that sustains even more the system in a stubbornness of wills. Why should we change when the real issues of life can be encountered by the classics we all know and in the way we always have raised them? Why indeed change?

This controversy has reached new levels in the last several years with the countless reactions to Alan Bloom and others like him who fear that the causes that motivate the curricular swing toward multi-culturalism and global awareness can result in the same debilitating of real education that resulted from “liberal” curricular changes in the ‘60’s and 70’s. Reason, and the recovery of a tradition of reason, is the cry of Bloom and Alasdair MacIntyre (note the critique of their views by Robert Jensen writing in this journal nearly two years ago). Any effort to open up the curriculum to the voice of the other would seem to water down true education in yet another morass of bewildering pluralism.

The concern is legitimate but the solution is wrongheaded and especially devastating for those interested in multi-cultural education and internationalizing the curriculum. We need to provide the possibility for real learning to be sure. Nothing could be more fruitless than to patch together a quilt of multi-cultural sampling that does little more than use the voice of the other to add another illustration for what we were going to say anyway or presume that merely in minimal exposure we are actually engaging our students in learning about other cultures.

However, the suggestion that we return to liberal education along the lines of the Enlightenment
educating our students to be good thinkers in any field of study is more than just naively ideal. The notion is an expression of Western imperialism in education that is little better than the desire to seek competitive edge in business. The problem of Western ignorance of other cultures and/or sub-cultures in the West is not simply a matter of information not learned but also of how our "system" delegitimizes the views of others by appealing to proper reason and form. Our educational system does more than create roadblocks for minorities in the learning process; it also causes other cultures and traditions to disappear and be silenced.

The Whole Idea of Choosing the Classic

We must be clear. Both Bloom and MacIntyre regard our present situation as a crisis of values requiring a radical response by the academic community. Bloom's desire to reconstruct the university as a community of reason and MacIntyre's search for an academic community of reasoned discourse (a modern day order of St. Benedict) aims precisely at recovering the effective status of the Western classic as a necessary measure for staving off a future lost in pluralistic and moralistic drivel and utilitarianism. Thus, the call for curricular reform in the direction of creating space for globalization and multi-cultural diversity (if Bloom and MacIntyre are correct, and that, at least Jensen admits) will be stiffly challenged by those who perceive that ignorance of our generation, ignorance of the classics of Western tradition, is precisely the problem.

Jensen's argument is subtle and presents one form of critique of this drive toward a re-institution of the humanist ideal. Jensen argues rather for a university closer to the Medieval ideal, far more influenced by the sensitivities of the Christian tradition, of disciplines in conversation. Jensen, the theologian, might be excused this obvious bias as he attempts to construct another route of curricular reform based not on a mere retrieval of the classics of Western thought but rather on an open dialogue between disciplines that he argues will enable us to "reinvent the Western tradition." The point is not a retrieval of the classics but a retrieval of the character of education—most especially the inter-linking of values and reason in discourse that once again thrusts the "humanities" to the fore as the model of the educational process.

On the surface, Jensen's argument seems more congenial to allowing a platform for the other. Indeed—Jensen opens the door to a complete re-structuring of the curriculum (not the Medieval curriculum, just Medieval style education). The model of dialogue (which MacIntyre also suggests in quite another way) can allow for the creativity necessary for fully integrating multi-cultural studies into the curriculum rather than wishing for integration sometime while attempting only a patchwork approach. Perhaps, then, we could expect a re-inventing of the Western tradition.

This language of re-inventing was precisely the vocabulary for change suggested by Sandra Harding at the Chicago conference. Could the Medieval model of discourse that thrusts the humanities into the center of the re-inventing process be a rationale for just that sort of program that Harding proposes? I suspect that apparently similar vocabulary does not signal similar concerns. Above all, an attempt to open up the curriculum by retrieving Medieval models of discourse does not account for the long history in which precisely this way of understanding education has led us to lose the voice of the many others in our own culture. Plato's Socrates may be a more inviting light for us (especially when sifted through Anselm and Thomas) than Aristotle's philosopher king, but these two models, so long the basic options before us in education, are themselves partly responsible for the bias.

There is little reason to assume that the humanities are more humane in their ability to listen to the other than are the professions. Even the humanities softened by a dose of values discovered in dialogue have been the principal architects of what we call the "Classical Tradition." The humanist is and has long been the keeper of the tradition, the bearer and champion of the past. To assume that humanists, even enriched again by the possibilities of discourse, will seek openly a new type of curriculum that welcomes the other as full partner is to ignore the record of history. In the end, humanists may be far more resistant to the study of other cultures as living cultures than are the so-called pragmatic professions. Two important issues arise from this admitted skepticism. First, the idea of curricular reform in the direction of multicultural diversity challenges the heart and soul of what we have perceived education to be even for us. Second, curricular reform that truly accounts for the other anticipating both a new world and a "new university" rooted in this cultural diversity requires not only a retooling of the curriculum but also a change in the professors who teach in that curriculum. No curricular change so radical as Harding suggests—re-inventing the Western tradition can be accomplished without thorough re-education of our educators.

The curricular reform we anticipate, therefore, is one that challenges the notion that education is in any way a passing on and thereby a preserving of the tradition. This means not only a challenge to the normal canon of classics but also a radical challenge to the classical notions of education. We do not suggest completely abandoning these notions as if we believe rather
naively that the new is always better than the old. But we are also not so naive as to believe that what has been the tradition will easily accept new voices given our record. Across the curriculum, we will be challenged not to think of being part of a cohesive tradition but a culture of traditions each of which have shaped our present in significant ways. The whole process is one of discovery in which this link between living traditions and our cultural identity is ever more widened and sharpened.

Given this challenge, we then openly deny that the university is the protector and preserver of just one tradition, or that our students become trained in doing and leading others to do that. Whether we can identify actual canons of our culture or not, we are led in a very new way to perceive the educational task as an ever widening engaging of new voices that are invited in to our universe of study. In fact, we are actually challenged not to seek classics (how can we avoid a selection of representative texts altogether?) but rather to encounter living and changing subcultures that are always producing new candidates for classics. Teaching toward this discovery requires us, then, to be immersed in these living traditions in a way that allows us to guide students toward this encounter.

But, of course, we are on the threshold of this work. Few of us are prepared to encounter living traditions other than the classical tradition we have educationally inherited. Any viable move toward legitimate multi-cultural education will require some re-education for faculty. The shape of the future university is not just a staffing of people more broadly educated or re-tooling present staff but an ongoing effort to release faculty to the experiencing first-hand of the living cultures that are or will be ours. Many already find themselves enveloped in the process and we have models of inter-cultural programs designed with the kind of curricular openness suggested here. However, the process is young and the present university contains many resistant to the process even while recognizing the inevitability of it. Our temptation will always be stop-gap measures that forego real reinventing and effective retraining.

Moving Forward?

Any institution that aims to move forward on a project of effective curricular review in this area will face a legitimizing task. The arguments from both the professional schools and from the humanists presented in this article will continue to be forcefully advanced and defended as the legitimate rationale for university curriculae. Even more, any effort to undertake a radical restructuring of the curriculum and retooling of faculty may be such a daunting task that we will settle for less in mere exhaustion (of energy and/or resources). Thus, the fight to legitimize a curriculum that honestly allows a platform for other cultures to speak as well as fosters a commitment to multicultural studies throughout the faculty will require determination and endurance, resisting all the while the temptation to accept less as at least a partial victory.

A more reasonable strategy will be a long-term project of introducing models for multicultural studies in the present curriculum that will allow for some testing of the effectiveness of our efforts. The experience of programs in women’s studies, gender studies, and Afro-American studies, can already present a track record of achievement and failure that will assist greatly in our gauging what is necessary for a full review of the curriculum. The point is not that such separate programs can be the locus for multicultural studies, but that they can be models to assist in expanding such studies into the wider curriculum.

Because the struggle to initiate programs in multicultural studies will be intense, we will look for allies along the way. Allies might emerge from corners of the campus quite unexpectedly. While other supposed allies will be, in the end, the most persistent resisters. Or we may attempt to hire allies as a strategy to win the battle. No such struggle can be won, however, unless we can all become allies in a task that encompasses all that we do. The real challenge to our whole conception of education and to the trendiness of the day is so profound that the goal of a curriculum accounting for multicultural diversity will require the effort of the whole community.
Letter from the Soviet Union

Bill Marion

Beginning in the 1985-86 academic year, computing was introduced in the Soviet Union as part of the general high school curriculum. The new computer course, “Principles of Informatics and Computer Technology,” was approved by the Communist Party leadership in the preceding March, as a course to be taught to all Soviet children in the last two years of senior secondary school. (Grades 9 and 10) This decision came at the start of Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure as First Secretary of the Communist Party and had his personal stamp of approval. To the Soviets the word informatics stands for the principles underlying the operations of computer hardware and software. It means much more than the term “computer literacy” does in the United States, implying an algorithmic way of thinking, tied to the Soviets' understanding of cognition. The study of mathematics, which has been a fundamental part of the Soviet educational system, forms the theoretical framework for the study of computing.

The course was developed under the guidance of Dr. Andrei Ershov, head of the Computer Center at the Siberian Division of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk. A pioneer in Soviet computer science education research, he directed the development of a national two-year computer curriculum and a single textbook for use throughout the entire country. (It is estimated that there are over 142,000 general schools, 7,700 voc/tech schools, and 4,500 specialized secondary schools in the Soviet Union.) In order to have this course introduced during the 1985-86 year, over 60,000 math and physics teachers were given one or two-week short courses during that summer. Though this initial informatics curriculum has been revised, it still has a more theoretical than practical focus.

At the highest level of educational decision-making, there has been a great deal of discussion about integrating computers in the classroom in all pre-college grades. Since the Soviets' approach to computerization in the classroom attempts to integrate technology, research and pedagogy, scholars at Research Institutes and Institutes of Pedagogy are working with classroom teachers and children to find ways to use the computer effectively in the study of science, history, languages and literature as well as mathematics. They want to develop good educational and cognitive models in which the student, teacher, and computer become partners in learning. The idea of using the computer as an intelligent tutor is one on which they and we can readily agree. We saw some wonderful demonstration projects of how this might work, especially at the nursery school and kindergarten level.

At the colleges and universities we visited, we learned that computers are being used most often in mathematics, science and foreign language classrooms. As might be expected, computer science as a discipline is seen as a theoretical one rooted in mathematics, with little emphasis on the engineering and application side of the discipline except when it comes to the development of hardware. Few courses in software design as a methodology exist.

What are we to make of this furious leap into the computer age in education? On the positive side there is a clear recognition by the current political and education leadership that modernization and reform and, perhaps, survival of the Soviet State are dependent upon a technologically-educated citizenry, and in 1990 that means a computer-literate populace. At the same time, in some quarters, there is a healthy skepticism about the efficacy of placing computers in schools without much thought given to how they might be used. The Soviets have learned a great deal from the U.S. and Western Europe regarding the use of poorly-conceived software for computer assisted instruction. Another positive aspect is the emphasis, even at the secondary level, on some of the fundamental principles underlying computing as a discipline. Programming, algorithmic thinking and mathematics play a fundamental role in the development of computer science as a science. A curriculum which seeks to educate a society to be literate in computing must include the theoretical as well as the practical.

Editor's note: In the summer of 1989, Professor Marion, chair of VU's Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, visited the Soviet Union for a two-week study trip with a delegation of American computer science educators. We print here a part of his account, as a contribution to our Letters column.
On the down side, the Soviet Union has a long way to go before she can claim to have developed a sound educational curriculum in computing. Serious shortages of computers for classroom use, even for teaching the two-year course in informatics, hamper the work. Estimates guess at about 100,000 computers, including personal computers and terminals connected to a minicomputer, in the schools, for use by almost 5 million 9th and 10th grade students. These machines are unevenly distributed, and most, Soviet-made, are not very reliable. In addition, maintaining the hardware, once it has been built, is a serious problem. The capacity to produce workable peripheral devices like printers, disk drives and floppy disks seems almost non-existent. Moreover, the telecommunications network within the Soviet Union is of poor quality; satellite transmission and the use of fiber optic cables for transmitting data seem irrelevant when it is difficult to make a phone connection from one place to another within the same city.

A software industry within the Soviet Union really does not exist. There are a few hundred thousand programmers, but many of them are producing software for various industries, ministries and state agencies with little communication among them. The idea of designing software for commercial purposes is practically unheard of. Hence, there is a scarcity of quality software for educational use, as well as for simple applications such as word-processing, data base management and spread sheets. And since Soviet computers are not very compatible with computers made in Western Europe, the United States or Japan, and have small memory and few working peripherals, the import of software from the more advanced computing countries will not solve their software crisis.

In addition to these problems, the educational community faces a severe shortage of well-trained teachers in informatics. As we have learned in the United States, even with hands-on training programs, it takes much more than a two-week crash course in computing to develop expertise.

This rather dismal picture of the state of educational computing in the Soviet Union at present nevertheless shows some encouraging signs. First, the Soviet leadership itself acknowledges the seriousness of their economic problems and the effect this has on the production of quality hardware and software. (Much of what I have said here comes either from reading Soviet-written material or from discussion with various individuals while we were in the Soviet Union.) Such openness is very refreshing, and leads to a more realistic assessment of how far the Soviets have to go to enter the computer age. Second, although bureaucratic forces both inside and outside the Soviet educational establishment are allied against the computerization of the curriculum, there are many strong forces in high leadership positions pushing these plans forward.

Finally, a computer culture is developing. Children are forming computer clubs, participating in programming contests, playing video games in little shops and arcades, and writing their own educational software for classroom use. Adults are forming computer cooperatives, exploring joint ventures with companies and individuals in other countries, being exposed to computers through articles in the popular press and by programs on television. An educated elite which is indeed computer literate is emerging.

Three observations in closing. One, the world, especially the West and Japan, has entered a new era, an Information Age propelled by computer technology. Though the Soviet Union may still be called a super power in view of her military and space achievements, in terms of this new age she is, in reality, a third world country. Her economy in a shambles, she is not capable at this time of producing the means by which she can enter and compete in this emerging world. (Even feeding and clothing her citizens adequately is a difficult job.) Yet, I would argue that the realization that she can’t compete in this new world is what is pushing the Soviet Union to reform her system and her economy. Over the long haul Soviet leadership sees the education of her youth, especially its computer education, as a means to becoming competitive. As Ershov said in an address to the Sixth International Congress on Mathematical Education held in Budapest in August of 1988, "In a sense, this decision [to launch the new computerization program] symbolized the beginning of perestroika."

Second, there is a connection between perestroika and a computer society on one hand, and glasnost on the other. Ershov and others within the Soviet Union believe that reform in the Information Age is not consistent with a closed society. Information processing develops and flourishes best in an open society. With this view I agree. Openness is a sine qua non for entry into this new era. Though some in the West may believe that computerization of Soviet society will only lead to an even more centralized state, I would argue that as the Soviets reform their system and compete successfully in the computer age, decentralization of information within the Soviet society will
become part of and will be nourished by this reform. Many years from now, when and if the Soviet Union becomes an advanced information society, we in the West might have to be concerned about the bureaucratized and centralized use of computing. In 1990 we have more to fear about how our own society uses computer information than about the Soviet Union’s ability to use it against her own citizens and against us.

Third, because of a trade embargo on strategic goods by the United States, Western Europe and Japan, the Soviet Union has not been able legally to import many different types of quality computers. This restriction has had a devastating effect on the Soviets’ ability to put their plans for school reform to work. Since there appears to be genuine reform taking place within the society, it is time to loosen these restrictions somewhat. The Soviet Union should be able to buy from the West and Japan personal computers, computer workstations and minicomputers that she can use to develop a computer-literate society. By selling the Soviets these types of computers we might of course be taking a chance. The reform movement could come to an abrupt halt, and the engineering technology they learn from the use of these computers could be turned against us. But, I am willing to bet on a safer world emerging by our assisting the reform movement, rather than pushing their society to the abyss. Contributing to an educated Soviet society will help all of us.

Every citizen of our country might well join me in my final words at our good-bye banquet: “We wish you good luck, and we sincerely hope that the reforms you have embarked upon really do succeed!”

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John Gidmark

The three of them were short, they wrapped their heads in rags of bundled words and only knew what they could see and bumbled day to day in stuff that most of us would yawn beside. But what they watched the day they packed their camels lit the sky at night and left their stupid spirits cracked and set them driven for the sight of something lithe and full—the bride of empty men who’d grown too tough. So when they found the glowing child among the low and common herds in makeshift bed and slightly chapped, they turned and went another way toward home, and laughed and sang and smiled because they didn’t want him trapped.

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John Gidmark
Each Now Is The Time

Linda Ferguson

In a way, I wish that the members of Kronos Quartet didn't dress so hip, didn't have spiked haircuts, didn't hawk themselves as if they were really a rock band. Their artistry seems too refined and some of the works they perform too important to be hyped in so frankly commercial a package. Kronos Quartet originated in Seattle in 1973 under the leadership of violinist David Harrington, the only founding member still with the group. Born in 1949, Harrington is also the only member older than thirtysomething.

Since 1978 the quartet has included Harrington; John Sherba, violin; Hank Dutt, viola; and Joan Jeanreaud, cello. They are not from New York and they did not serve apprenticeships in the trade school conservatories of the east coast musical establishment. They play only new music. While they program and record some modernist works, their repertoire is essentially postmodern. Hundreds of compositions and arrangements have been prepared specifically for them. They have made a remarkable impact on the compositional world, enlivening a genre in which little remarkable had happened since Bartok's death in 1945.

The string quartet has traditionally been the genre of the elite. Participation in the quartet enterprise, whether as player, or composer, or even as listener, has been a mark of accomplishment: a privilege of station, a ritual but not a right. The string quartet as compositional field has been the arena of only the most advanced thought and skill. Mozart, who composed operas in his teens, did not turn to quartet writing until he was 27. Beethoven, likewise, at 27 embarked on his first quartets after having first conquered the piano sonata. Joseph Kerman provides a useful explanation of the central problem of the classical string quartet:

A musical conception for four string instruments demands more contrapuntal control than one for piano or for piano and instruments...The four instruments of the quartet...are always individuals, always sensitive, always exposed. They are limited in coloristic or even dynamic variety, and feeble in grand vertical effects; all they have is their relentless mutual confrontation. If...they are to be used with any sense of their true potentiality, the problem of linear integrity has to be met head on" (The Beethoven Quartets, Norton, 1979, 1218).

The extraordinary popular success of Kronos Quartet among audiences not usually associated with string quartets has generated, naturally, a skepticism among conservators of traditional culture: if a string quartet is this popular, how good can it be? We arbiters of cultivated taste do not want to equate the excellent with the merely exciting. Typical of this worry is Samuel Lipman's critique of Kronos and their ilk ("American Quartet Music, Old and New," published last year in The New Criterion (March 1989: 1521). Lipman's essay was no simple yearning for quartet music of the 18th century, but rather a call for reclaiming the values which gave the string quartet as compositional form, its definition:

an aesthetic of private rather than public expression; an emphasis on the thematic and motivic interest of the musical material rather than on the effects of instrumental color and virtuosity; a related concentration on structure, development, and variation rather than on the mere alternation of contrasting large statements; and the treatment of each instrument as an independent linear partner rather than as a cog in a harmonic wheel.
In trying to factor Kronos Quartet into the string quartet framework and to determine if we guardians of culture can endorse them, it is also useful to recall that in the late 18th century when the string quartet established itself as the epitome of musical refinement, compositions called string quartets existed alongside divertimenti, chamber works for various ensembles with a frankly entertaining agenda. Haydn wrote 162 works entitled “Divertimento,” and Mozart wrote 37. While string quartets were fixed in terms of instrumentation and compositional procedures, divertimenti varied widely, both in instrumentation and musical content. The same ensembles with a frankly entertaining agenda. Haydn wrote 162 works entitled “Divertimento,” and Mozart wrote 37. While string quartets were fixed in terms of instrumentation and compositional procedures, divertimenti varied widely, both in instrumentation and musical content. The same players might play either quartets or divertimenti, or both on a single occasion.

Similarly, the Kronos’ 1988 album Winter Was Hard (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 791812) might be said to contain both a string quartet (Schnittke’s Quartet No. 3, which clearly meets the conditions of both Kerman and Lipman) and divertimenti, some of which are played by the string quartet ensemble (Lurie’s bland “Bella by Barlight” and Piazzolla’s spicy “Four, for Tango”) and others which vary the instrumentation (the most radical departure heard in John Zorn’s “Forbidden Fruit,” variations for voice, string quartet, and turntables). The 1987 album White Man Sleeps (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 791632) retains the quartet ensemble but mixes quartet compositions (Bartok’s Quartet No. 3 and Ben Johnston’s Amazing Grace) with divertimenti (including a Scherzo by Charles Ives and an arrangement of Ornette Coleman’s “Lonely Woman”). So what does Lipman (and by extension, the cultivated tradition) reject in the music of Kronos Quartet? Not simply that they are new. Even traditionalists no longer take seriously a categorical discrimination against music of our time in favor of the more comfortable and familiar music of the 18th century. Rather, Lipman’s concern, which is not unreasonable, is that Kronos (or at least their advocates) take such joy in “radical discontinuity” with traditions of both concert hall and composition. What Lipman really dislikes about them, I sometimes dislike as well: they are fashionable and hence, vulgar, and they have the audacity to be a string quartet, that least vulgar of ensembles.

They invite and attract listeners into the concert hall who may not have earned the right to listen to string quartet literature, who probably do not know or care to know what invertible counterpoint is. The music they program may not require the same listening skills that we cultivated for appreciating quartets of Beethoven and Brahms. Or if such perceptual skills are necessary, they may not be sufficient.

At a Kronos concert at the Pabst Theater in Milwaukee last spring I sat with a group of fellow academics; we seemed to constitute a little island surrounded entirely by yuppies and younger people with surprising haircuts. As we entered, a colleague commented, “It must be unusual for some of these folks to attend a classical concert,” but if anyone was “outside” it was us. The second half of that program, devoted entirely to Steve Reich’s holocaust piece, Different Trains, seemed to me no more nor less accessible to us as musical specialists, no more nor less meaningful, than to other members of the audience.

This does not suggest that the Reich piece is either inaccessible or meaningless, but rather that “expert” equipment doesn’t automatically qualify the listener to “get it.” (Subsequent use of the work in two of my courses for undergraduates has borne this out.) Earlier on the program, Arvo Pärt’s exquisitely beautiful “Fratres” impressed me similarly, that as a study in classical control, restraint, and expressive repetition of line its meaning was surely as evident to each attentive listener in the audience as it was to the sixtyish professor of violin, a nun, who sat to my left and gasped audibly in sheer awe and delight at the end of every single phrase in the ten minute composition. I have since decided that the “radical discontinuity” charge mistakes the superficial for the essential. Every review or feature article about Kronos, including this one, begins or ends with notice of the group’s visual impact.

Some reviews spend more time describing the players’ attire than their playing. These reviews are the work of “professional ears,” classical music critics skilled at listening and at saying what they hear. Music critics have seemed distracted by the visual components, including dress, stage lighting, dramatic gesture, and album art, assuming them to be the essential rather than cosmetic. But Kronos, for all their trappings, do not offer performance art. They are musicians, performing musical compositions.

When speaking of “popular appeal” it is also important to distinguish Kronos from usual attempts to bring culture to the masses. This is not a “light classics” affair which entices the listener with a little pleasure mixed in with a little self-improvement, nor a “Pops” approach, which strives, above all, not to challenge or threaten its audience. Kronos does both. They do not popularize. They are, in fact, highly elite, highly refined, and coolly detached from their listen-
ers. Recordings are packaged with little or no program note information.

The traditional method of establishing distance involved white tie and tails; the method has been updated and it involves attire as well as humor, irony and mystery, but the distance is about the same. At the concert I attended Kronos performed (on demand of a vocal audience) an encore signature piece, their arrangement of Jimi Hendrix' "Purple Haze." It seemed to stand in the same relationship to the announced program as a classical singer's "Some Enchanted Evening" at the end of an art song recital. It sounded like a string quartet imitating an acid rock band, but it didn't sound like acid rock.

As to the complaint that Kronos has not distinguished itself as distinctly American, we must note that their aim is neither to carry forward the Eurocentric quartet aesthetic nor to carve out an American version of it. They neither shun nor champion American composers.

They are especially known for their performances of works by the Americans Glass, Riley, and Reich but are equally associated with the music of South African Kevin Volans, Argentinian Astor Piazzolla, Estonian Arvo Pärt, and Australian Peter Sculthorpe. It is not news that practicing musicians of the late 20th century think in terms of music, not music. For musicians, postmodernism is not a style, in the sense that modernism and impressionism were styles, nor is it a technique, like Schoenberg's serialism or Cage's chance operations which were compositional procedures. It is an attitude, overtly embodied at present in the phenomenon of Kronos Quartet, and existing in less aggressive ways in the myriad compositional, performance, and perceptual practices of a lot of the rest of us. It has been called "transcultural," this conscious interaction between musics of different cultures and also between musics of various types within the same culture.

The packaging of Kronos Quartet is one of many commonalities with music of mass appeal culture; their playing, while more involved with improvisatory techniques than, say, Stravinsky, is clearly embedded in the tradition of notated scores. For "cultivated" musicians to strive for and achieve commercial success is unusual but not necessarily indication of crossing over to an inferior style. Once we accept these conditions, we can get on with listening to the music. Lipman heard only "rough performances, alternately dreamy and violent, of definitely trivial and often very nasty sounding music." The alternation of the dreamy and the violent aptly describes much of their playing, insofar as the works demand this alternation. And even when they play "dreamily" the sound would rarely be described as lush.

Their quiet and gentle playing sounds distant, sometimes melancholic, other times like ancient murmurs, not soothing. They play aggressively, sometimes savagely, and often as if engaged in a struggle with their instruments or with the music itself (a characterization which appears in the recollections of Beethoven by people who knew him). The music they play requires a wider spectrum of coloristic effects (glissandi, percussive pizzicati, muted strings, use of open strings, and various applications of the bow to the string, for examples) than do the quartets of the 18th and 19th centuries, but the same could be said of Bartok's quartets of the 1920s and most other music of the 20th century. Kronos inclusion of standard repertoire works, including Bartok's 3rd Quartet on White Man Sleeps and Barber's "Adagio" on Winter Was Hard, validates their identity as String Quartet and allows the listener to place in them perspective as viable interpreters as well as definers and inventors of new expressions. Steve Reich's 1988 Different Trains, not acknowledged by Lipman, and perhaps not known to him at the time of his writing, has since become the centerpiece of their repertoire.

As it is a minimalist work, Lipman would surely not embrace it as significant quartet literature, but it requires a serious response. More in the tradition of Harry Partch's U.S. Highball than of Honegger's Pacific 231, it ups the ante from the droning of hobo graffiti over train sounds (Partch's material) to the playing of "voices" from the Holocaust on the electronically charged instruments of the quartet.

Different Trains does not simply imitate the sounds of a train; rather it transforms recorded sounds of actual trains (both American and European), bells, and sirens, into musical resources. These are woven into a fabric of natural and electronically manipulated string sounds and materials derived, through digital sampling, from testimonies of Holocaust survivors into a multidimensional and multidirectional sonic journey. The recording (Elektra/None such 9791762), which received a Grammy award this year, is packaged with another Reich work, Electric Counterpoint, composed for guitarist Pat Metheny. The "jacket art" pictures train tracks on one side and multiple guitar necks on the other; a visual allusion to the metaphorical transformations
accomplished in the music. Other nontrivial Kronos repertoire includes Alfred Schnittke's Quartet No. 3, composed in 1983, which does not rely on visual impact, irony, verbal cues, or wit; rather it relies on the listener's ability to process an array of musical materials exposed, developed, and resolved in fairly traditional ways. But instead of two or three themes being set into conflict the work seems to use whole musical styles as its components.

The result is coherent collage. Each of the three movements incorporates tonal "chorale" sections, each displays thematic material in contrapuntal treatments (the requisite "linear integrity" is maintained), each evokes the ancient and transports us to the present. Coloristic effects are present, including Bartokian "buzzes" which fly forward, then recede to serve as accompaniment to melodies which accrue in the foreground; open muted strings give the effect of hollow voices. Throughout it all, reminiscences of Beethoven's Grosse Fuge are heard. Kevin Volans' The Songlines (1988) after Bruce Chatwin's book of the same name, would have at least a philosophical claim to being nontrivial, although it does not meet any of the technical expectations of quartet composition.

Songlines are musical maps employed by the Aboriginal people of Australia, mental records of geographic details which are expressed musically. (Chatwin's own enthusiastic response to the Volans work appeared in The New York Review of Books, January 19, 1989.)

Using additive rhythms, ostinato techniques, and other "primitive" musical materials, Volans' expression of nomadic experience never attempts to live inside the static architecture of classical quartet forms. It is disqualifed, thus, from being a "string quartet," but it aspires to more than diversion. The concept of the "transcultural" is embodied here at multiple levels.

Some Kronos pieces are indeed "nasty sounding." If there was a way to delete John Zorn's Forbidden Fruit from my CD copy of the Winter Was Hard album, I would surely do it. With its scratchy record effects (performed by turntable artist Christian Marclay, who is more satisfying to watch than to listen to) and its sultry but cynical lyrics (spoken in Japanese), it intrudes on the pristine clarity and perfection of Webern's Op. 9 Bagatelles which it follows on the recording. But to bridge the distance between musical intention and listener, to be an insider, one must "get the jokes," whether they are being cracked by Mozart, P.D.Q. Bach, or John Zorn.

Kronos plays Zorn. Of course Mozart's and P.D.Q.'s jokes are ultimately jokes about music, whereas Zorn's music tells jokes about other things. At the Milwaukee concert, Zorn's "Cat O'Nine Tails" was clearly funny musically, with pratfalls and swoops and sounds leaping out in impertinent gestures at unexpected junctures; but it was apparently even funnier to those with a mental repertoire of the sadistic Warner Brothers cartoons to which Zorn's piece refers. (I was an outsider on this one, insofar as video references were required, but I was enough of an insider to know it was funny.)

The Winter Was Hard album concludes with "A door is ajar" (Traditional, arr. Kronos), comprised of the following events: thirty seconds of silence, an electronically generated sound effect of wind, a radio voice announcing "A door is ajar," a slamming door sound, and a satisfied "Thank you." It stands as a John Cageian benediction on a transcultural listening experience, complete with the obligatory negation of silence. It resembles fragments from Cage's nonlinear essay, "2 Pages, 122 Words on Music and Dance" (1957): "A bird flies." "Slavery is abolished." "A sound has no legs to stand on." "The world is teeming: anything can happen." "Each person is in the best seat." "Each now is the time." John Cage has never been criticized for being too popular; his self selected role has been to be ahead of time.

Kronos Quartet, on the other hand, have taken their name from time and their time is now. But like Cage they open doors and ears and close them only in jest.
Review Essay:
Help Yourself

Thomas A. Droege


C.S. Lewis. A Grief Observed. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 89 pp. $10.95

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April, 1990

Eric Butterworth. Life is for Living. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 100 pp. $7.95.


Recently the editor of this journal asked if I would be willing to supply brief notices of nine books she had recently received (all from the same publisher) under the broad category of self-help literature. She suggested that perhaps people might be well served by some guidelines for evaluating books of this kind.

I found the idea intriguing. Rather than selecting my own sample of self-help books (Where would one begin?), why not take a sample of books that come across the desk of an editor and make an assessment of their value? That's what I propose to do, and with no apology for my perspective as a Lutheran pastor teaching theology at Valparaiso University.

There are some similarities among the books in this sample. All of them are explicitly religious in that they identify religion as a primary resource which is recommended for those who are seeking help. Five of the books are explicitly Christian, though they represent strikingly different interpretations of the Christian message. Four of the eight books are written for people in different programs of recovery from alcohol and other drug dependencies, overeating, and codependency. Four of the books deal with specific themes or topics (love, freedom, grief, and dreams) from a Christian perspective.

Using this random sample of self-help books, all of which take seriously the importance of spirituality for recovery (healing) and living a fully human life, I am going to risk some broad generalizations about this type of literature. First, and most obvious, is the lack of scholarship in all but one of the nine books reviewed. Four of the nine have no endnotes, and in all but one the references are few. We have come to expect that of self-help literature, but I'm not sure the reasons given for the superficial treatment of most themes are justified. The assumption is that those who buy these books are limited in their academic training and interest, and so we need to keep it simple. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said he wouldn't give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity, but that he'd give his right arm for the simplicity on the other side of complexity. I think that applies to self-help literature as well as the law, and unfortunately most of what I read in this sample falls on this side of complexity.

That leads me to my second generalization. Though the spirituality in these books is, for the most part, not self-grounded, as it is in the vast majority of secular self-help literature, I was struck by the superficiality and vagueness of references to spiritual resources for healing and wellness. Three of the four books written for people in recovery programs can be so characterized. The references to a "higher power" are abundant, but there is no specificity in the references, no faith tradition in which the spirituality is rooted. The same generalization, though less so, can be made about the books on specific themes or topics. Each of these books is written by a Christian author and out of the Christian tradition, but the spirituality is informed much more by psychological than theological categories.

My third generalization follows on the heels of this observation

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about the influence of psychology. Psychological categories are heav­ily used by most of the authors in the positions they take on a norma­tive view of human nature, defining the human predicament, and suggest­ing therapeutic (saving) interventions. This will come as no surprise to anyone who is familiar with the history of past­oral care in this century, especially pastoral counseling. The same could be said of the anthropological underpinnings of much of modern systematic theol­ogy. I do not number myself among those who are critical of this development (given my training in an inter­disciplinary field relating psychology to theology), except when the psychological cate­gories become so dominant that the result is reductionism. Instances of that will be noted in commentary on specific books.

A fourth generalization is that two-thirds of these books will likely be out of print within two to five years. The shelf-life of any book is very short these days, especially self-help books, so I would guess that this sample is typical of the genre. Three of the books are reprints (original copyrights: 1961, 1968, 1973), though I would regard none of them as classics. This says something about the quality of the books, especially their lack of depth, but also the fickleness of the public who assume that newer is better, that some new insight or recovery pro­gram will be the way of salvation. So authors churn out new books and publishers herald their new publications as the latest and presumably best word on the subject.

What follows is a very brief review of each of these books, with all of the limitations and dangers inherent in such brevity. My con­cern is not to give the reader a comprehensive grasp, much less a full critique of the content and method, but rather to note exam­ples of some of the generalizations that I have mentioned and to pro­vide a basis for offering some criteria for evaluation of such liter­ature at the close of this review.

I begin with the four books related to recovery programs. The best of the lot, in terms of creativi­ty and practicality, is Journey Notes by Richard Solly & Roseann Lloyd. It is written for those in recovery programs who want to use writing as a tool for self-discovery and spiritual growth. “Journals and diaries can be workshops for the soul, laboratories where we can investigate and examine our lives, our secrets, hurts, resentments, memories, and joys.” The purpose of the book is to provide a resource for self-help rather than a set of guidelines or goals for a recovery program. That is its strength. The authors explore many forms of writing and provide exercises that focus on each step of the Twelve Step program. The subtitle of the book is “Writing for Recovery and Spiritual Growth,” but the spirituality is superficial at best. There are references to a Higher Power, but they are few and somewhat contrived. For example, there is a section on writing a letter to your Higher Power, but the impersonality of the con­struct and the lack of a frame of reference militates against the directive.

Beyond Codependency by Melody Beattie, author of the #1 New York Times best seller, Codependent No More, is clear, engaging, practical, and full of good insight about the self-destructive behavior of code­pendency and how to move beyond it. Codependency, as defined by Beattie, describes the behavior of those who can’t say no, who will fight for the rights of others but not for themselves, who have an insatiable need to be needed. There is much in her analysis that can be used as a cri­tique of the codependency that is fostered in many Christians who have grown up with a “doormat” view of themselves. Too much of the church’s preaching and teach­ing makes people feel bad about themselves while stressing the need to love and serve others. The spirituality which the author encourages, however, is worse than what it replaces; it is self­grounded, narcissistic, and frothy. Hope lies in the Twelve Step pro­gram, which is touted as the way of salvation. Having a Higher Power is important, not to ground your spirituality, but because it meets a human need. Spirituality is surren­der to the Higher Power, but there is no substance behind the con­cept. We are to believe that the Higher Power has unconditional love, but why should we believe that? There is no context for this affirmation, no story to give it meaning. There is no com­munity other than those who are engaged in recovery programs, and the belief/value system that is implicit in the spirituality that the author encourages exists in a cos­mic vacuum. Like so many self-help books, the critique is good, but the remedy is dis­turbingly inadequate.

Keep Coming Back has all of the weaknesses of Beyond Codependency but few of its redeeming qualities. Written for people with eating dis­orders by a long-time member of Overeaters Anonymous, the author is a true believer in the religion of O.A. The recovery group is the community of faith, and the Twelve Step program is not so much the way of salvation as the set of commandments that must be kept for life to be possible. Beyond Codependency has a liberation motif, but this is straight law. At the center is the Higher Power, but bereft of concrete meaning and tradition outside the
narrow limits of the recovery program. Spirituality is a dimension of the two previous books on recovery, but here it is at the center, clearly functioning as a religion in the functional sense of that term. People with eating disorders may find some aspects of this book to be helpful in their recovery program, though I think there has to be something better, but the spirituality it offers is inadequate by almost any standard.

Compared to the three previous books on recovery, Paul Keller's *God Grant* is refreshing. So much of the spirituality in recovery programs is form without substance, like a dry riverbed waiting for a stream of living water to bring new life to an arid landscape. The stream of living water which Keller taps is the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. *God Grant* consists of 365 Christ-centered daily meditations for recovery. What distinguishes this book from other devotional literature is that it is directed to people who admit that they are powerless over alcohol or other drugs. The devotions are brief and not terribly profound, but Keller does a masterful job of relating two rich traditions: the Gospels and the Twelve Steps. What is refreshing about this devotional book is that the spirituality is rooted so deeply in a specific faith tradition. It's hard for me to imagine how one of the three previous authors could write a book of daily meditations. What might Higher Power mean apart from some story, some message, some faith tradition?

The four books on various themes or topics are a diverse lot in both content and method. *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis is something of a classic in the field of bereavement. The help that it offers is not a set of guidelines on how to grieve but rather a person with whom to identify if you are experiencing heart-wrenching grief. Written after the death of his wife, the book shares some of Lewis' journal writing in the "mad midnight moments" of his mourning when he questioned what he had previously believed about life and death, marriage, and even God. This is not Lewis the apologist, offering careful arguments in defense of the faith, but Lewis the doubter, yelling and kicking at God in angry violence. I have given this book to people who felt their sanity was threatened by their grieving. They have been comforted, not by answers to their anguished questions about why this happened (there are none), but by finding a kindred spirit who could allow his grief full expression precisely because he could count on the faithfulness of God in the midst of his feeling of forsakenness. This book stands out in this sample of self-help literature as an honest expression of spirituality under extreme duress. It is much more helpful than a self-help book which outlines stages of grief or lists Bible passages that are intended as consolation but fall on ears that can hear only their own anguished cries.

Standing in sharp contrast to *A Grief Observed* is *The Freedom Factor* by R. Scott Walker. The subtitle is: "Overcoming Barriers to Being Yourself." This is one more book on self-realization, popularized by psychologists like Karen Horney and Erich Fromm. Though Walker is a prominent Baptist pastor claiming to write out of the Christian tradition, he uses pop-psychology as his primary resource for spiritual direction. Apart from a chapter on "Forgiveness and Grace," the source of insight and language (life-scripts, drivenness, self-destructive behavior, self-esteem) comes almost exclusively from psychology. The spirituality is self-grounded, the help coming from one's self after being freed by counseling from self-destructiveness. This book fits my definition of psychological reductionism. References to Scripture or the Christian tradition are used to sacralize psychological insights and directives.

Eric Butterworth's *Life is for Loving* was first published in 1973. Well-known for his religious broadcasts and his ministry at the Unity Center of Practical Christianity, Butterworth has a message and style closely akin to Norman Vincent Peale. It is a grade above other self-help books, both in spirituality and in depth of insight. Far from being self-grounded, the spirituality of Butterworth is centered in a transcendent source of love. Though Butterworth uses Christian symbols to talk about this, supported by frequent biblical quotations, he makes few references to Christ and none to his death and resurrection. God is love, and God's love is like a well-spring in the life of every human being. Love is not defined in relational terms, but as divine energy or force within a person. The message of the book is, in Meister Eckhart's words, "Let God be God in you," which Butterfield paraphrases as "Let love be love in you." The strength of the book is that love is understood as a disposition rather than an emotion, and that its power and vitality comes from beyond humanity. Its weakness is that Butterfield so blatantly distorts the Christian tradition which he claims to represent. How can you talk about love from a Christian point of view without any reference to the death and resurrection of Christ? According to Butterfield, the only difference between Jesus and us is that Jesus acted more fully and consistently.
at the level of his divinity than we do. Though there are marvelous insights along the way, the underlying psychology and theology of love are both misguided.

The best of the four theme books is by John Sanford: Dreams: God’s Forgotten Language. First published twenty years ago, this revised edition of Sanford’s exploration of the psychological and spiritual significance of dreams draws on the work of C.G. Jung to show how dreams can help us find healing and wholeness and reconnect us to a living spiritual world. Sanford traces the role of dreams in the Bible, analyzing their spiritual significance of dreams lying psychology and theology of insights along the way, the under­

ation of the psychological and nature and examining how Christians, through fear and the constraints of dogma, have come to reject the visions through which God speaks to humanity, making dreams “God’s forgotten lan­guage.” The book is more Jungian than biblical, closer to psychology of religion than spiritual direction. Sanford, a Jungian analyst and Episcopal priest, is a prolific and popular author. He is certainly not guilty of psychological reductionism, but neither is the spirituality that he seeks to nurture rooted deeply in the story of Christ, dead and risen.

The only book among the nine in this sample that fully expresses what I regard as the deepest and most enduring spirituality within the Christian tradition is Passion for Pilgrimage, by Alan Jones. As Desmond Tutu says in a review, “[Jones] is a consummate story­teller and his stories illuminate our human condition as they speak of God’s passion for us meeting our passion for God and how we are driven to new levels of honesty, impatience with humbug and sham, and long to get home . . . home with God, with our­selves, with our fellows, and with the rest of God’s creation.” The pilgrimage is the Lenten journey, the week of Crucifixion, and the Easter Mystery. That is the master story in the light of which we are to understand our own stories, our own pilgrimage. This is what Christian spirituality is all about; it begins here (in our baptism) and it ends here (in our death and res­urrection). Reading this book after reading some of the other self-help books, especially the three “Higher Power” recovery books, is like hearing Bach’s B Minor Mass after listening to some New Age music.

I conclude with a listing of questions which I found myself asking as I read this random sam­ple of self-help books.

1. What is the source of the spirituality that is being recom­mended? Is it psychology? Is it a definable faith tradition, e.g., Christianity? Is it the common experience of people with a particular kind of need, e.g. recovery? Is the spirituality self-grounded?

2. If the author claims the Christian tradition as the source of her or his spirituality, are the traditional themes of the Chris­tian faith (sin, grace, Christ, cross, resurrection, Holy Spirit, etc.) fully represented?

3. What is the view of human nature? How is the self grounded? How is the human predicament defined and described, and how is the restoration of the self made possible?

4. What communal structures, if any, nurture the spirituality which is being recommended?

5. What are the chances that this book will be around in five years?

I make no claims for objectivity in the way in which I have evaluat­ed these books, and I remind the reader that the questions which I have asked about them evolved in the process of my reviewing this particular sample. Perhaps other questions would have occurred to me if the sample had been larger or different. The use which you might make of them is to test them on whatever self-help litera­ture that may be of interest to you. All of us, I think, ought to become more discriminating in our use of this literature, and on the basis of our own evaluative criteria. As a reader of this journal, I would suspect that you are already quite discriminating. In fact, some of you may be wondering why The Cresset would dignify most of these books with a review at all. Because self-help literature is at the heart of popular culture, and we ignore it at our peril. Perhaps in a future review it would be a good idea to try to single out the best of such literature.

Thomas Droege


Blessings is not a usual commen­tary on the beatitudes. It is not linear, logical, or analytical. It gives no definitions of Greek words, and it provides no excer­sions into Bible times. Blessings is one woman’s reflection on the Beatitudes, a masterful weaving of personal experiences, dreams, sto­ries, poetry, passages from the scriptures, scenes from nature and evocative images. It was not a book I could read quickly; rather it asked to be pondered. Some­times on first reading, the sections of the book seemed to be discon­nected—from each other and from the beatitudes they sought to reflect. Still I had an inkling that if I stayed with it long enough they would come together.

One of Weber’s previous books, WomanChrist: An New Vision of Fem-
init Spirituality (which I have not read) evidently gives detail about her concept of "WomanChrist." In the introduction to Blessings she describes the concept as the reconciliation of opposites and the union of "Woman with the Christ...[which brings] healing of the many dualisms that have torn at our lives for centuries." Dualistic thinking, she believes, is rooted in patriarchal culture which views opposites as standing against each other in contradiction. WomanChrist spirituality sees in opposites not contradiction but paradox.

The Matthean beatitudes, according to Weber, are filled with opposites. She sees in them paradox, which cannot be explained, only received as the seed is received and held within until it bears fruit in our lives.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the fullness of heaven." Weber reflects on this first blessing in terms of befriending the stranger—the neighbor who is different from us, the future that is unknown, and the stranger within. To receive and welcome the stranger requires an empty space, a poverty.

Welcoming the stranger is a good place to begin this book, because I suspect that almost every reader will find in it something strange, something which that reader has not experienced, has not thought, and cannot at first glance reconcile with old beliefs. Some will find her reflections untenable, and that is not surprising, for as Weber herself writes, "Those of us who tenaciously cling both to the Christian Gospels and to our experience of women's mysteries, we who want to reconcile these two visions, are confronted with a profound task. Both the militant Christians and the militant feminists reject us as heretical" (192). Still, I suspect that those who are able to welcome, to befriend Weber's reflections, will find in them deep truth.

Louise Williams

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In spring the skies clap with wonder

In spring the skies clap with wonder
But, rebel, I refuse their God-bent gaze
And run my way into winter,
Seeking refuge in a taciturn haze.

I run from the crush of this green glory grass,
From the heave of summer's singing hay,
From the unexpected surge of sun in trees,
Deep into the branch-cracked gray.

But, though the words feel frozen,
The thoughts clamped in frost-bitten ways,
The creature can't deny its creation,
So, forced at last, I scream my snows of praise.

Tim Bascom

April, 1990