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THE CRESSET is published monthly September through June by the Valparaiso University Press. Valparaiso, Indiana. 46383, as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University or within the editorial board. Subscriptions rates: One year — $2.00; two years — $3.75; three years — $5.50. Single copy 20 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1968 by the Valparaiso University Press. without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part and for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.
The President-Elect

We have never found it difficult to restrain our enthusiasm for Richard Milhous Nixon. But as dawn was breaking over our town the morning after the election, we found ourself fervently hoping that he would hit the magical figure of 270 electoral votes and thus win a clear victory in the Electoral College. The alternative would have been that the election would have been thrown into the House of Representatives, and the distribution by parties of the state delegations in the House posed the very real possibility of a deadlock which might have left us with no President to inaugurate on January 20.

The necessity for a radical reordering of the process of presidential election is now so obvious that we think it safe to predict that there will be no Electoral College by the time the next President is elected. We would even suggest that there is no more urgent matter before the new Congress than the responsibility for recommending constitutional reforms which would reasonably ensure us against the hazards of the kind of close call from which we so narrowly escaped last month. It may be that the simplest remedy is direct election of the President with, if necessary, a run-off between the two candidates who poll the largest number of votes.

Meanwhile, for the country there is an even more immediate responsibility. We must unite behind this man who, under the rules of the game, has been honored and burdened with the most difficult job in the world. It is perhaps a defect of our system that there is no way of making a sharp distinction between the partisan leader and the head of state. But in our present troubles it would be well if all of us could forget the "Tricky Dick" business and give the President of the United States the support that he must have, as President of all of us, at a time when none of us can afford to see him fail.

These are, admittedly, the usual post-election cliches. But a cliche is, after all, a truth which has been repeated too often in the same words. And for us, at least, the call for a closing of the ranks after we have had the opportunity to air our differences is a valid call, even though it be cast in the form of a cliche.

It may even be that, supported by the understanding and labors and prayers of his fellow-countrymen, Mr. Nixon will serve with considerable distinction in the Presidency. Let us at least give him the chance. And (may we be permitted this one partisan jab?) let us hope that Mr. Agnew may find in the vice-presidency that same anonymity which so many of his predecessors have enjoyed.

Of Power and Authority

It seems strange to us that in all of the recent commotion over law and order no one should have raised the prior question of the distinction between power and authority. For surely in a country such as ours where the majority of people claim to be Christian one cannot discuss such matters as dissent, civil disobedience, resistance to allegedly unjust laws, and the like without at least trying to square his views with such an apparently clear and definitive statement on the matter as that of St. Paul in Romans 13. If, as the King James Version puts it, every soul is to be subject to the higher powers, it would appear to follow that the law is whatever the men at the top say it is and, subject only to the limitation that we must obey God rather than men, we are bound to obey it.

This is apparently the attitude of a great many Christian people, particularly of those whose theology is basically fundamentalistic. But it is not, we would suggest, supportable from Paul's own words. For the Greek word which Paul actually uses, exousía, is not adequately translated as "powers," if by "powers" we mean merely those who happen at a given time to
possess the physical force to compel obedience to their wills. A better translation would be "authorities" — those who have the (God-given) right to be obeyed, even though, as may sometimes happen, they do not have the power to enforce obedience.

Example: a policeman armed with a truncheon and a pistol breaks down the door of a man's house and proceeds to ransack his closets looking for stolen goods. There is no question of his power to do what he is doing. But even under the laws of the state he has no authority to do so without a warrant issued by some specified official. His status before the law, in this case, is that of a trespasser and the citizen whose property has been invaded has the authority to use whatever force may be necessary to evict him from the premises, even though he may lack the power to do so.

Carried to a higher level, this distinction between mere power and authority applies to government itself. Those who never read beyond the first verse of Romans 13 miss what, on a fair reading, would seem to be Paul's criterion for determining whether the men at the top merely possess power or actually have authority over us: Thou gar diachonos esti soi eis to agathon, "For he is God's servant to thee for the good." In this context, we do not think that Paul means anything more (and certainly not less) than what the majority of men of all times and in all places have recognized as morally right. Thus it would seem justifiable to say that Paul understands an "authority" as one who does God's work of enforcing the moral law. The corollary would then follow that if the government abandons this role or, worse still, be comes an instrument for violating the moral law, the moral law. The corollary would then follow that if the government abandons this role or, worse still, becomes an instrument for violating the moral law, it ceases to be an "authority" and forfeits its right to obedience.

Of Means and Ends

For Christian people, the distinction between authority and power, essential as it is, serves more to set a context for deciding upon their courses of action in particular situations than to prescribe what they may or should do in such situations. There is no government, actual or realistically conceivable, which always and in all circumstances carries out the will of God. And no citizen, however sensitive he may be to the will of God, can ever be wholly sure that he has not confused it with his own opinions, prejudices, or predilections.

When, therefore, it appears that government is violating the moral law, two questions must be asked: 1) Is the violation clearly and unmistakably demonstrable or is there room for reasonable doubt that it is a violation at all? and 2) If the violation is clearly established, is it disruptive enough of the moral order to justify recourse to those means which may be necessary to force a change in the government's course of action?

If both of these questions can be answered with an assured Yes (and we suspect that only rarely can they be), the time has come for resistance. But even in resistance, there needs to be some relationship between means and ends. One may have to assassinate a tyrant to prevent him from carrying out a policy of genocide. But a mere sit-down in the mayor's office may be enough to persuade him to lend his support to an open-housing ordinance.

Those who have had first-hand experience of the total breakdown of public order have something very important to say to us when they warn us to exercise the greatest restraint in even the most temperate forms of resistance or disobedience. Anarchy never lurks far below the surface of even the best-ordered society, and anarchy is the nearest approximation to hell that man can experience on this earth. One can never introduce even the smallest element of disorder into a society without taking into account the possibility of its escalating to anarchy.

There are circumstances in which the risk may be justified, either because it is itself remote or because government itself has become anarchical. We do not think that government in the United States, on any level, is yet anarchical or anything close to it. The more immediate danger seems to lie in forms of civil disobedience which could, given the temper of our times, escalate into anarchy. And so, while we fully agree with those who assign a higher priority to justice than to either law or order, we would urge that the demands of justice be pressed with the greatest possible restraint and with the awareness that violence, once let loose, may all too easily get out of the control of those who had thought to use it for their own (often idealistic) purposes.

Speaking of Hair

It has been brought to our attention that The Cresset has not spoken definitively on the subject of hair, a subject which seems to generate much the same sort of controversy within our constituency as contraception generates among our Roman Catholic brethren. We would like to get at this matter by proposing an interim application of the Second Table of the Law to a wide variety of casuistic questions, of which this matter of hair is only one. We are told on the highest authority that the commands of the Second Table are briefly comprehended in this saying: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Most of us have assumed that means doing things with, for, and to other people. May we suggest that it could equally well mean, at certain times and in certain situations, simply letting other people alone? We think that a sound theological argument could be advanced for such a suggestion, for if the demands of the Second Table are subordinate to the imperatives of the First Table, one could very well argue that
in all of our dealings with our neighbor we are bound to resist, at all costs, the temptation to play God by laying upon men's consciences, as matters of morality, all sorts of prescriptions for grooming, dress, etiquette, and life style which actually lie within the category of mores rather than morals.

We have a personal aversion to unkempt hair, camp spectacles, unisex clothing, bare feet, guitar music, psychedelic colors, and a great many other fads of the younger generation. But we find the warrant for these aversions neither in Scripture nor in the Confessions nor in natural law but in certain values which we learned to cherish as the result of a particular kind of upbringing in a particular cultural setting at a particular moment in history. We would be more than happy to try to explain to anyone who is interested why we cherish these values. But we claim no right to resist, at all costs, the temptation to play God by cramming them down anybody else's throat, least of all on the claim that they are divinely sanctioned.

So let the beards flourish, we say; perhaps behind one of them lurks some new Tennyson or Whitman. Let the hair overflow the collar; perhaps it warms the brain of some budding Einstein. 

**The Proud Salute**

In Chicago, on St. Patrick's Day, the Chicago River runs green and the sons and daughters of the ould sod march proudly down State Street in the middle of the noontime rush. And the few times we have watched that parade go by the thought has struck us that when Irish eyes are smiling all the world does, indeed, seem bright and gay. The Irish do have a great deal to be proud of, and why shouldn't they show it?

Perhaps one reason why we can understand this pride is that every fall we have occasion to join our voice to those of a couple of thousand of our fellow Lutherans in bellowing out *Ein' Feste Burg*, which is not only a magnificent statement of faith in God but also, we must confess, an ancestral voice reminding us of the great deeds which God has worked through successive generations of our fathers.

And we have known moments — some of the most profoundly moving of our life — when the simple, dignified strains of "The Queen" made us glad that for a little while we were Shakespeare's countrymen and an heir of all that England has given the world.

So we have some understanding of what the black man means by Black Power and "Black is Beautiful," and we could easily identify with those black athletes who, having proved their excellence against the best competition the world had to offer in Mexico City, chose to celebrate it with a salute to their blackness. There are such things as chauvinism and jingoism, and they are ugly businesses. But there is also the pride, which is really a form of humility, which a man takes in recognizing himself as a part, however small, of something great and good and enduring.

For centuries, in this country, the black man was denied this pride. He was taught to be ashamed of his blackness. He was persuaded to accept the lie that his people had no heritage to be proud of, no accomplishments in which they could legitimately rejoice. But now he know better, and he glories in the rediscovery of his manhood. And we should be glad with him. For genuine friendship is possible only between those who perceive each other as equals.

The International Olympic Committee apparently understands none of these things — which is not surprising in view of the fact that it has such a capacity for self-delusion that it can contend (we suppose honestly) that it is running an apolitical, purely amateur competition. But for us, those black fists lifted high in pride were a symbol of a victory — already theirs and ultimately ours — which could go far toward achieving that international understanding for the sake of which the games were revived by Baron de Coubertin in 1896.

**The Hope of Peace**

Writing four weeks before publication, at a time when the Paris talks seem on the verge of some kind of promising breakthrough, we can only hope that by the time these words appear in print there will be at least an armistice in Vietnam. Whether there is or is not, the nation is already very much indebted to Mr. Averell Harriman and Mr. Cyrus Vance and their colleagues for the hard, patient, often irritating job they have done on our behalf in attempting to negotiate the terms of a successful settlement of this war. And while it is not at the moment the "in" thing to say anything good about President Johnson, we are prepared to say that his efforts toward peace since at least last winter deserve some recognition by all of us, even those of us who feel that by his escalation of the war he betrayed the confidence which we gave him on the basis of his campaign promises in 1964.

Assuming that hostilities will have ended by December, the question is: What are the prospects for a more peaceful world than we have known these past three decades? We wish we could find some grounds for considering them good, or at least hopeful. But neither in theology nor in geography — the only two disciplines in which we claim even the most minimal competence — can we find any sound basis for optimism. Skillful diplomacy can negotiate a stand-off in a particular quarrel, but the vision of the Peaceable Kingdom this side of the Parousia is incompatible with everything that this turbulent century has taught us about the nature of man.

And so what do we do? Those of us who are Christians become fools for Christ's sake and, in full knowledge that we are laboring for what appears to be in-
trinsically impossible, we live and act and work as those who have been taught by Christ Himself to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." For us it is neither a question of optimism or pessimism, of hope or despair, but of obedience. Even if we could be sure beyond all doubt that our best efforts could not prevent nuclear war from breaking out tomorrow, we would spend today on those efforts which would seem best calculated to accomplish God's purposes on earth as they are fulfilled in heaven. Beyond that lies the divine mercy and forgiveness and love and surely, here or elsewhere, peace at the last.

**Toward Denver - III**

One of the most knowledgeable churchmen we know—a high official of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod—predicts that within ten years the Synod's system of parochial schools will be pretty much a thing of the past. We can not fault his logic: education at all levels has become so expensive that only the state seems to be able to marshal the resources to carry it on at a high level of excellence. Moreover, whatever role the Lutheran day school may once have played as the conservator of an ethnic culture, that is no longer, for most Lutherans, a valid reason for maintaining these schools; we are no longer a German church and the last thing we would want for ourselves or our children would be confinement to an ethnic or cultural ghetto.

But we are a confessional church. Within that vast area of freedom with which Christ has made us free we respect certain restraints which serve to keep us firmly bound to Him Who is the source of our freedom. In theological language these restraints are called dogma. Dogma is to theology what axioms are to mathematics, the known and secure home base from which we launch out in our explorations of the unknown and to which we must periodically return to re-establish our bearings. An undogmatic Christian is like the Flying Dutchman, a lost soul doomed to purposeless wanderings with no certain destination.

This dogma must, somehow or other, be transmitted from one generation to another. The Christ whose body we confess the church to be was most commonly addressed in his lifetime as Rabbi, teacher. We may and indeed do know him in many other aspects of his humanity and deity as Lord, as Savior, as Friend, as Brother, as Suffering Servant—but everything that we know about him derives finally from the fact that he came among us as one who taught with authority. From this it would seem to follow that His Body, the Church — whatever else it may or may not be—is the Christus docens, the teaching Christ.

The sorry state of contemporary Protestantism should serve as a warning to the delegates who will be gathering in Denver next June that when the Church aban-

dons its teaching function it abdicates all of its other privileges and responsibilities. Even its necessary and all too often neglected obligations to the secular city derive ultimately from an understanding of its own nature and calling, an understanding which is not a matter of discovery or consensus but of dogma. It may be argued that the ecclesia docens does not need to maintain its own school system to perform its essential teaching task. But before we let the system collapse, we had better decide what we propose to put in its place.

**Letter from Bethlehem**

Dear Jack;

Mary and I are most grateful for your prompt response to our SOS. The fiver will take care of our room for most of this next week, and the bundle of clothing may well have saved the Child from pneumonia. (Please don't apologize for not having it cleaned before you sent it. I know how busy you must be.)

It was terribly embarrassing to have to ask you for help, but this trip had left me strapped. I had hoped to pick up some carpentry jobs while we were here, but, of course, this is the off-season and, in any case, my Galileean union card is no good in Judaea. And now I am even more embarrassed for having embarrassed you. You really should not have felt it necessary to explain why you "couldn't send more." I blame myself for forgetting that, while your income seems princely by Galileean or even Judaean standards, your expenses must indeed be staggering by comparison with those of all but the wealthiest of us in this part of the world. It is really quite impossible for me to imagine myself in a situation where one must maintain a social position, operate two cars, entertain as you do, and meet those frightful installment payments. No wonder that, as you say, you just barely make it from one paycheck to the next. (Is gin really $5.25 a quart, or did you mean a gallon?)

The Child is a great joy to us, despite all of the anxieties of our present circumstances. Mary and I had both hoped that you might be able to stop off and see Him on your way to the mission conference but I can see that, with meeting of the Commission on Theology before the conference and the Ecumenical Assembly right after the conference, it would be next to impossible for you to squeeze in a day in Bethlehem. So you will just have to take our word for it that He really is an adorable Child. Sometimes, when He stretches Himself, there is something about the position of His arms that reminds me of the priests blessing the people at the Temple. Mary says it reminds her more of the way those poor devils on Skull Hill are stretched out on their crosses, but I suspect that she has just a touch of post-partum depression.

Best regards to the family. I hope that we shall be able to get together sometime soon.

Joseph

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At Homecoming, a little over a month ago, a young alumnus with whom I was talking remarked that he thought Homecoming as a tradition would soon be fading from the college scene. This alumnus, something of an activist when he was a student, gave as his reason for this opinion the fact that Homecoming is too sentimental an affair and that it lacks "objectivity," whatever he may have meant by that. His presence on campus this particular weekend, he said, was motivated by other business and had nothing to do with Homecoming, though I noticed he was present for a number of the weekend events.

It may be that Homecoming is too sentimental an event and that it does lack objectivity, but I could not agree that it will fade from the scene. I would also predict that this particular alumnus will be coming back "accidentally" on Homecoming for many years to come.

Alumni return at Homecoming for a variety of reasons. It is doubtful whether most of them know the reasons which motivate their return, nor is it necessary that they do so. Probably the majority return to meet old friends and to experience a colorful and generally enjoyable weekend. There are those, however, who come back to satisfy deeper needs, and I talked with a number of them on that bright October weekend. These are the alumni who have not quite made it in the world. They are not in the jobs they feel they should be in or they have not advanced in their professions as they had expected. Some have not succeeded as fathers or mothers or as husbands or wives.

Those who have feelings of frustration or failure return because they know that for at least a brief moment they are equals among equals and that, among their fellow alumni, they are not judged by what they have done or have not done but are remembered as they were when they were students, in the days when their dreams were fresh and their hopes and ideals high. From this experience of returning, they find strength and a rekindling of hope. So long as Homecoming provides an opportunity to meet these needs, major or minor, it will continue as a campus tradition, and it will continue to be a sentimental occasion lacking in "objectivity."

All this is by way of a lengthy introduction to a thought which occurred to me on Homecoming weekend, that Christmas and Homecoming have many things in common as festivals or traditions. As in the case of the young alumnus who felt the sentiment surrounding Homecoming would kill it off, there are those who say that we have made Christmas into such a sentimental festival that it will soon fade in importance.

Christmas is a sentimental festival and I am certain it was God's plan that it be so. Christ could have been born of wealthy parents who lived in a suburb of Jerusalem, in which case, I grant, it would have been difficult to become sentimental over the occasion. But he was not. He was born in the small town of Bethlehem, and not even in a house, but in a manger, where he lay surrounded by cattle, his presence known only to a few poor shepherds. What an appealing setting and what an unusual set of circumstances! How could a festival based on this amazing and touching story be anything but a sentimental one?

The argument of those who are not in favor of the sentiment surrounding the celebration of Christmas is, I believe, that the sentiment tends to obscure the fact that this is True God, the Christ of Calvary, lying in that manger. The wonders surrounding that Birth are too great to allow us to forget who the Child is. What the Christmas story does emphasize is the fact that this is also True Man, a real baby in that manger. It is because this is a true story of a real Child, born under unusual and difficult circumstances, that we are touched and respond emotionally.

There are other similarities, beside the matter of sentiment, between Christmas and Homecoming. Christmas is, after all, a return for all Christians to the manger which was the birthplace of Christianity, its original earthly home. While there may be many who celebrate Christmas solely as an enjoyable and colorful tradition, most of us, I feel sure, are trying in our celebration of this event to satisfy deeper needs. We return because to that Child what we are or are not in the eyes of the world is of no importance. But what we are as followers of his is all-important, and it is at the cradle of that Child that we find the hope, the strength, and the faith to be better followers. We become at the manger what we may once have been and what we hope to be, more faithful, less worldly, truer to him.

I would hope that what I have said will not be misconstrued. I am not in favor of over-sentimentalizing Christmas. What I have tried to say is that sentiment will not diminish the importance of Christmas and that an event so touching and with such a strong appeal to the heart and spirit is a sentimental one and that it was a part of his plan that it be so.

I also hope that you will experience in your return to the manger this year a happy and blessed Homecoming.

December 1968
Christianity and the Goals of Economic Policy

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The question of proper goals for economic policy, from a Christian perspective, has become increasingly urgent in recent years, largely because of two developments. The first of these, chronologically, is the growth in the sheer economic power of the Federal government to influence the functioning of the economy, which has resulted both from expansion in the size of the Federal budget and from enlargement of the range of governmental functions. Through the use of fiscal (tax and expenditure) policy and monetary policy, the Federal government is able to influence such magnitudes as the nation's total output, and even, to a degree, its composition and distribution.

No less important is the second development: the growth in knowledge of the economic and social consequences of particular uses of this economic power. Many policymakers and their advisors today have a far more sophisticated grasp than was the case a decade or two ago of the way in which the economy works and, therefore, of the impact that various alternative government economic measures can be expected to have on the economy. As evidence of increased awareness of the potential economic effects of government actions, consider the kind of reasoning used in support or condemnation of recent Federal tax measures and proposals. We seldom heard arguments that this or that plan would "raise needed revenue" or would help "balance the budget." Rather, the arguments were — and are — generally in terms of the effects the particular measure is likely to have on the economy — on prices, unemployment, the balance of payments, etc. — or on conditions in some major sector, such as housing construction, the defense industry, and the like.

Taken together, these two developments — expansion of the economic power of the Federal government and an increased awareness of the effects of various economic policy measures on the part of those with policymaking responsibilities — constitute a profound social change, the implications of which are not yet adequately understood and appreciated. In this new environment, the Christian citizen, who is concerned that God's will be done in the economic order as in other spheres of human existence, must face the issue: What should government do with its economic power and knowledge? What, in other words, should be the goals of economic policy?

Reasons for Indifference

Before coming to grips with the major theme of this paper, we should acknowledge that the urgency of this topic is not felt by all informed Christians, for a number of reasons. A paragraph or two concerning each of these reasons and the flaws (in our view) involved will place our own position in better perspective.

One influential segment of Christian thinking takes the position that "the business of government is to promote peace, order, and justice in society, not to concern itself with such matters as the rate of economic growth, the level of unemployment, and the like." It would be convenient if this were possible. The difficulty, though, is that we know too much! Knowledge entails responsibility for the use of that knowledge. For example, we could forgive less-than-sterile conditions in hospital operating rooms in the days before the discovery of the nefarious work of certain types of micro-organisms which frequent such places; but we will no longer tolerate unsanitary operating-room conditions. People responsible for laxness in this regard are considered guilty in a moral as well as legal sense. Similarly, even though we now know that certain measures adopted to cope with the Great Depression of the 1930s could only have had harmful effects on the process of economic recovery, we do not condemn those responsible for these measures because at that time most of the policymakers (and economists!) were ignorant of their effects. But if, at some future time, the Federal Reserve Board or the Congress were to adopt these same measures to deal with a recession, we would be justified in holding these policymakers morally responsible for the consequences because now they are at least approximately predictable. In this way, economic knowledge changes the environment in which policy decisions are made, imposing new responsibilities for the consequences of our economic policy actions, responsibilities which cannot be avoided.

Another point of view which implicitly denies the urgency of specific Christian concern over economic policy goals takes such goals as "given," by a sort of social consensus, being concerned only with proper means of achieving these goals. This is an application of the old maxim, "vox populi, vox dei," and, as such, is clearly out of harmony with the Christian view of man. As we shall develop in the following section, Christianity has traditionally considered man as "fallen," i.e.,

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morally imperfect, susceptible to less-than-holy motives, chronically unable to will and work for his own highest good, let alone the good of others. Hence, there is no more reason to rely on the ethical quality of economic policy goals based on a social consensus than on the essential goodness of individual goals and motives.

A third and final dissenting view might be described, following St. Augustine, “Love God and do as you please.” While perhaps a useful guide for individual behavior, if handled with extreme care, it is most untrustworthy in situations in which predicting the consequences of actions requires technical knowledge. When we undertake to construct a church building, for example, we do not proceed by holding a prayer meeting, then scattering about to assemble all the building materials we can secure, and finally knocking the materials together, with no clear idea of floor plan, structural properties of the materials, characteristics of the site, etc. By exact analogy, we cannot simply hope and pray for desirable results in the economic policy sphere. In the first case, we rely on people who know both architecture and the purposes and functions a church building is supposed to serve; in the second, the best that most of us can do is to rely on people who are thoroughly grounded in both economics and the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Our procedure in discussing certain leading economic policy goals from the standpoint of Christianity will be as follows: first, we shall survey some of the central doctrines of Christianity and their implications for our problem; then we shall examine economic policy goals from a Christian standpoint; finally, we shall indicate some of the distinctive aspects of a Christian appraisal of economic policy goals.

Theological Underpinnings

As a Christian, one’s evaluation of a particular objective of economic policy is — or, at least, should be — actually the conclusion of a line of reasoning based ultimately on theological premises and on assumptions concerning economic facts and relationships. In this section we intend to examine the elements of a Christian understanding of God, man, the physical world, and their interrelations. This theological statement will inevitably be sketchy and dogmatic; but its purpose is simply to indicate the nature of these theological presuppositions, not to develop a systematic theology.

The doctrine of God is, of course, the foundation of any theology. The following statement by a Christian economist is representative of Christian thought in this area and its relation to economic life:

All Christian thinking about the nature of the universe and the purposes of human activity must start from God. God is the creator and sustainer of all life. He has made all things and He intends them to be used for His glory. He has redeemed all things in Christ and made it possible by His grace for them
to be restored to the perfection which is His intention for them. He sustains and inspires and directs all things by His Holy Spirit.

A second element in Christian doctrine concerns man — his nature and his relation to God. Of particular relevance to our topic are these aspects: (1) man’s fallen state, (2) moral freedom, (3) creativeness, (4) social needs, and (5) eternal worth.

Man, as a fallen being, shares a state of “wretchedness, an incompleteness, a failure, and a warring within ourselves, of which we are well aware,” a state which has been defined as essentially a denial of man’s relation to God, a refusal to accept man’s creaturely status in relationship with God, an evasion of the need to worship the Holy One, to give Him that, which is His due, and which is also the only final fulfillment of man’s deepest needs...(resulting in) an incapacity to lead a properly human life.

This facet of the doctrine of man has rather definite implications for economic policy evaluation, producing an attitude of skepticism regarding the possibility of social arrangements ever to produce a heaven on earth. Specifically, (1) policy recommendations of Christians are likely to be biased by conscious or — more likely — unconscious acceptance of non-Christian values; (2) even if somehow untainted, these recommendations will probably not be adopted, for the same reason; and (3) even if adopted, their potentiality for alleviating socioeconomic problems is limited.

Also part of the Christian view of man is his moral freedom. Implicit in this belief is the obligation of Christians to exert their influence toward the building of a society which gives all men ample opportunity to exercise economic choice — as businessman, worker, and consumer.

Man is, moreover, a social being; therefore, economic policy should recognize and contribute toward meeting the deep needs in this category, such as security, status, and fellowship.

Man is also creative, endowed with the capacity, as well as entrusted with the obligation, to “subdue the earth.” The economic order should be so structured that outlets for creativeness will be provided for man as worker and decision-maker in business and in connection with other economic institutions.

Finally, man is, in Christian doctrine, a being of eternal worth. This concept is related to the secular assertion of the “dignity of all men,” but with the time dimension extended to infinity. Man possesses significance not only because of the qualities with which he has been endowed by his Maker but also because of his peculiar relation to God. More than a product of physical processes, he partakes of the “image of God”; and Scripture is insistent in proclaiming the message that God cares for us, has provided for our redemption, and has assured us of eternal life. This exalted view of man provides sufficient rationale for Christian social con-
cern in the economic realm as well as in other aspects of the social order.

The natural order, having been created by God and being a revelation of Him, is for that reason considered "good." Although evidences of Platonic thought are not altogether absent from its doctrines, Christianity is essentially "materialistic," in the sense of regarding the physical world as suitable for man's enjoyment, not to be deprecated. This "enjoyment" is, however, subject to moral constraint: "For the Christian, the criterion ideally should be that use of resources which provides for the greatest enjoyment of God's gifts to His glory and which hence is most in accordance with His Will."6

Man's proper role with respect to the natural order, then, is to enjoy it and utilize it for God's glory and the accomplishment of His purposes. It is at this point that theology and economics have a joint commission: theology to furnish the basic foundation which should shape our ideas about economic policy goals, constraints, and means; economics to spell out some of the consequences of such choices and the most efficient means for the accomplishment of specified goals, within the limits imposed by our resources and social constraints.

To recapitulate, Christian theology — at least in its authentic traditional forms — postulates (1) God as transcendent yet deeply concerned with human beings, their actions and their welfare; (2) man as a being with definite social and individual needs, a creature of eternal worth, yet flawed in his self-alienation from God; and (3) the natural order as a means to the enrichment of human life and, through man, the fulfillment of certain purposes of God.

From Theology to Economic Policy Objectives

A great deal of "filling in" is required in order to move from theological premises to judgments concerning specific economic goals. One cannot reasonably state, for example, "God is transcendent; therefore we should move toward less inequality in income distribution." What is needed is, in the first place, the deduction of general and particular ethical principles based on the Christian ethical imperative of agape — a task that has long occupied Christian scholars and one which, because of constant social change, is never really finished. Just as essential to the "filling-in" process is the acquisition of knowledge concerning the structure and functioning of the society under consideration, particularly in its economic aspects — a task which is just beginning to receive the needed sustained attention by Christian students. And finally, a chain of reasoning (a syllogism, in the terminology of logic) is necessary, which will embody premises not only from theology but from economics, sociology, psychology, and other sources as well.

This "middle ground" between ultimate theological presuppositions and specific economic policy matters has been the subject of some cultivation both by Christian economists and by theologians and other members of the clergy with some degree of economic sophistication. Articles concerned with various aspects of the problem of relating Christianity to economic policy are appearing in increasing numbers in a wide variety of secular as well as religious journals; but the temptation to include a sampling of this literature must be resisted, because it would carry us far afield from our main task.

It is in this middle ground that most of the disagreement over policy questions lies. Even in instances in which Christians agree on theological fundamentals, there are ample grounds for divergent views from that point on, for any of the following reasons: (1) dispute over the "facts of the case," (2) failure of one or more parties to follow the rules of logic, of identification and verification, and (3) differences in social objectives.7

It is easy to believe that disagreements will arise due to reasons (1) and (2); sometimes the available data must be supplemented by judgment, and logical errors can be most subtle. But reason (3) can cause trouble too. Christianity is, after all, a religion; its Founder was primarily concerned to reveal God, not to propound a system of rules for conduct. Since, therefore, ethical doctrines in Christianity are almost wholly derivative, disagreement over social goals and their priorities are likely to occur, disagreements which cannot be resolved simply by reference to theological doctrines.

On the other hand, one should not be greatly astonished to find Christians on the same side as many of their nonbelieving brethren concerning particular economic policy issues. After all, both groups share in a common cultural heritage, with moral standards substantially influenced by Christianity. Both "believe in" the scientific method as a means of arriving at new knowledge — a fact which, incidentally has had a significant impact on our social ethics.8 The doctrines of man, Christian and secular, contain points of disagreement, to be sure, but a much larger area of agreement.

Indeed, if the pattern of man's nature, as Christians affirm it, is really man's natural pattern, in which God made him, its explicit clarification will awake a response in the non-Christian, even in spite of sin.9

And, finally, there are "proximate aims" which practically everyone, Christian or otherwise, will acknowledge as desirable. With regard to such aims:

The justification for action in one direction rather than another is clearly not to be found in the fundamental affirmations of the Christian faith... It will thus be possible for Christians and non-Christians to agree on certain "middle axioms," which provide a background for concerted action. These "middle axioms" are so described, because they lie halfway between, on the one hand, the truths of the faith, with which they are consonant, but from which...
they are not to be incontrovertibly derived, and, on the other hand, the concrete application of principles to particular circumstances. . . . (Such) a set of middle axioms provide a coherent Christian basis for social action, a means for common action between Christians and non-Christians.

Goals of Economic Policy

Bearing in mind, then, that theological presuppositions are a necessary, but not a sufficient, foundation for a Christian critique of economic policy goals, we turn now to a consideration of specific goals. Although varying in detail, nearly every formulation of economic policy objectives will contain, in substance, the following: economic growth, equitable income distribution, economic security, economic freedom, and wide distribution of power. We shall examine each of these in turn and, in addition, several goals seldom mentioned in secular writings but clearly implied in Christian doctrine.

Economic Growth — The attitude toward economic growth most often expressed by Christian economists may best be described as qualified, somewhat uneasy, approval. Two quotations from the writings of Kenneth Boulding exemplify this attitude. In his chapter contributed to *Goals of Economic Life*, he states that economic progress is not in itself an ultimate end of economic activity... nevertheless it is a significant partial end. . . . I would urge that economic progress deserves to be weighted high, not only for its own sake, but because it is complementary to so many other desirable ends.

But, at the same time, he recognizes the existence of a strong “on the other hand.” He acknowledges an uneasy feeling that economic progress is not always a progress in the noblest sense of the word. . . . (The) records are full of people who have been damned by a sudden increase in riches; whose wants were of such an undesirable character that, while they did not have the power to satisfy them, they got along fairly well, but as soon as the power to satisfy these undesirable wants was granted, licentiousness, debauchery, and ruin followed. . . . The same may even be true of nations and societies. Indeed, one may question whether it is not true of our own society; whether the tremendous increase in riches that has occurred in the last hundred years or so has not actually perverted our taste, debauched our cultural life, and permitted us to indulge in wars of a scale and extravagance that poorer ages never dreamed of.

The same kind of attitude is expressed by Munby, who sees economic expansion as a means to more ultimate ends — certain types of security, discovery of “more of the Glory of God in his Creation,” and enlarged field of choice — but asserts that

The modern world’s lack of taste is in part due to the breathless speed of change, and the insecurity and frustration of many lives is directly caused by their inability to adapt themselves to such a rapidly changing environment.

Income Distribution — Inequality of income and wealth is an undesirable, though probably inevitable, condition in society. In its grosser forms, economic inequality is a barrier to fellowship, to mutual understanding, and is therefore antithetical to the Christian conception of mankind as brothers, equal before God. It is this point, rather than any notion of “unfairness,” *per se*, of inequality, which is the heart of the Christian criticism of inequality. In our kind of world, however, some degree of inequality is necessary in order to allow for incentives and traditional differences in remuneration, to encourage economic growth (our first goal), to compensate for greater responsibility and longer training required for some types of work, and, in short, to ensure for society an adequate supply of any kind of labor which would otherwise tend to be in short supply.

Inequality is also a characteristic of the distribution of income and wealth among nations, and Christians attempting to evaluate economic policy goals must weigh this situation carefully. It is inconceivable that God should will and desire the extremes of poverty and wealth that now exist among nations. Although we are wont to congratulate ourselves on our national generosity to the less-developed areas, we must recognize that aid is not enough: used alone, it is dangerous since it stresses, and tends to perpetuate, the relation of giver and recipient. Rather, the rich and poor nations must become, in Munby’s words, “partners in developing the resources of the world for the good of all, partners in the awakening of the masses of mankind to their full human heritage, partners in helping others to discover for themselves some of the lessons we think we have learnt in our history.”

Security — A third social goal toward which the economic system is expected to contribute is security. "Only within a framework of the right sort can we freely express our talents. It is therefore important that society should provide the right sort of security and background against which we can freely develop," states Munby, who goes on to analyze three aspects of security: (1) “a settled emotional framework of family life, and... the friendship and respect of those among whom they work or live;” (2) “the assurance of status in society that satisfactory work usually provides;” and (3) “the recognition by society of a due place and status... for what they are as human beings.” This is not to imply that more security is inherently better: “Both security and change are necessary in our modern world, and to find the right balance is a continuous problem of adjustment. . . . (but) only from within a certain stability is change possible.”

Economic Freedom — Included in most formulations
of economic policy goals by Christian economic writers is economic freedom. Its theological basis is in part found in the nature of man as free agent, as we noted earlier. Freedom also finds theological support in the doctrine of God. Employing a typical Quaker mode of expression, Boulding affirms a belief in the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit, or Inward Light, available to every man to teach, guide, reprove, and draw him up toward goodness. . . . It is true, of course, that the guide can be blind and the light dark. . . . This is always the cost of freedom. But unless there is freedom to follow the Inward Teacher, how can man ever develop a sensitivity to His voice.22

It is worth noting that, from the Christian standpoint, the rationale for the goal of freedom is to be found ultimately not in its economic results but in its relationship to the needs of man and the working of the Holy Spirit. Economic freedom has important implications for the situation of the businessman, consumer, and worker. Our social order has been highly responsive to the needs of business owners and managers for freedom of enterprise, although this freedom is subject to an increasingly extensive body of constraints.

Consumers, too, have been granted the widest possible freedom of choice and action. Yet, law and public opinion recognize that there are circumstances in which this freedom should be limited, on grounds that, in particular cases, people need to be protected from themselves or because the price system is not properly applicable to certain situations.23

The divergence between actual conditions and the Christian ideal of economic freedom is greatest in the work situation, in Munby's view:

As producer no man can properly be used as a tool to serve the needs of another; this is the essential mark of slavery. However humble the tasks he performs, every man needs recognition of his responsibility for what he produces. From this we derive the requirement that every worker has a right to share in the responsibility for controlling the output towards which he contributes.24

Distribution of Power — The diffusion of economic power as a goal of economic policy has a firm basis in Christian theology, with its stress on the propensity of fallen man to be corrupted by, and to misuse, power. In Boulding's words, we face the "perpetual dilemma of power — but can goodness take on power without losing its goodness, for power by its nature corrupts the goodness which seeks to use it?"25 — a consideration which points clearly to the advisability of a wide distribution of power.

Diffusion of economic power may also be defended on the grounds that a social system so organized is likely to be more effective in achieving socioeconomic goals than a monolithic system.26 Although supporting evidence is strong, it cannot be termed conclusive.

The special problem imposed by the state in this connection must be recognized. At the very least, we demand that the state perform the economic function of governor of the economic system, with the duty of concerning itself with "the power structure of the society, in order to maintain the wide diffusion of power and to check the growth of organizations at the point where they pass the tolerable limits of power, whatever that point may be."27 However, consideration of the inherent tendency of the possession of power to corrupt its possessors leads Christians to hold a skeptical attitude toward domination of the economy by the state, since this would seem to entail an arbitrary concentration of political and social power into a few hands, which would so hamper and cramp the freedom of action of the bulk of the members of the community as seriously to hinder that development of personality through responsible cooperation which we believe to be in accordance with the purposes of God.28

Other Goals — Finally, from a Christian point of view, there are certain other goals, achievement of which is to be sought through the operation of the economic system, goals which seldom appear in more "conventional" lists. Two of these are (1) fellowship and (2) outlets for creativity. With reference to the first: "God intends men to live in fellowship with one another, and their work and other economic activities are intended to be a field in which this fellowship can find expression through cooperation in a common task."29

Opportunity for creative activities through the economic order may be considered an implication of the nature, hence the needs, of man:

(God) has made us so that we only develop to the fullest extent of our capacities if we have the opportunity of using our powers in some form of creative activity. . . . It must surely be God's purpose that our daily work, which occupies such a large part of our waking lives, should provide scope for their exercise. . . . This is one sphere in which the need for redemption is obvious.30

Conclusions

Economist George Stigler once complained that "our basic (economic) goals are the same as the basic goals of the Russians,"31 despite the vast ideological gulf separating these two nations. Can the same be said about the economic policy goals deducible from Christian theology as compared with those held generally by the American people?

We observed earlier that there are reasons to expect a large area of agreement between Christians and others concerning goals of economic policy, due to the influence of Christian ideas on popular ethical thinking. In addition, there is much common ground in the views of the nature of man held by Christians and others and in their usage of the scientific method of analysis.
On the other hand, we also listed reasons to anticipate a considerable divergence in views among Christians—and also among non-Christians—over economic policy goals, due to disagreements over facts, analysis, and social priorities.

After making appropriate allowances for these factors, we must attempt to ascertain whether significant differences over economic policy goals between Christians and others remain. There do not appear to be sizable differences of opinion concerning the goals themselves. Both “sides,” with few exceptions, would endorse the same list of goals, albeit with qualifications in some cases. The real differences lie in two distinctive aspects of Christian treatments of economic policy: (1) the bases for the goals and (2) the implications of the nature of man.

Considering, first, the bases for economic goals, we have noted that the Christian approach is to build a case for a particular goal or set of goals on specifically Christian premises. Economic growth, for example, is advocated from a Christian standpoint, not as a cold-war weapon or to make the United States a showcase of democracy or to satisfy our desires for “more”—all reasons commonly advanced—but because it is part of man’s duty to God to utilize more effectively our natural and human resources, because growth can yield a fuller life (wider range of choices), and because it enables us to lift the degrading curse of poverty from others. Equality is espoused not so much on general intuitive grounds of “fairness” as on the basis of the effects of inequality on human personality and on the degree of achievement of community in society. Security also ranks high for similar “human” reasons. Freedom is included not because of its purported superior economic results but because the nature of man requires it; while diffusion of power is required due to man’s fallen nature.

This conception of human nature should—and often does—produce an aversion on the part of Christians toward regarding any particular economic system as inevitable, or necessary, or appropriate for all times and places. Hence, defense (or condemnation) of a particular policy goal as being in harmony (or incompatible) with the nature of a specific system is not a particularly important argument. Even the late David McCord Wright, a Christian economist who was also an ardent defender of capitalism, believed that a very wide range of economic systems can at least be tolerated by Christianit."33

Finally, coloring even our strongest conclusions and recommendations, we Christians must see ourselves as possessing, in common with the rest of mankind, a flawed nature. This fact should make us wary of espousing any particular program as the Christian solution and keep us from undue exasperation over disagreements concerning particular issues. This point is expressed very aptly by Sleeman in a statement which, at the same time, issues “marching orders” to Christians who are concerned with the economic problems of society:

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There is...a Christian duty of carrying out, through insight given by the Holy Spirit, a sort of continuous critique on the workings of the economic system, both in its motives and ideas, and in its outward form. This must, however, be done humbly and carefully, with a full realization of the limitation of our own vision, and the extent to which we ourselves are affected by the spirit of the age, both in what we accept and what we condemn.34

1. This section is based on the author’s article, “A Theology of Economic Life,” The Reformed Review, XXVIII (December, 1964), pp. 10-27.
4. Ibid.
8. Cf. Boulding, Kenneth E., “Religion in the Social Sciences,” in Religion in the State University, ed. by Erich A. Walter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 150. “The rise of the Keynesian economics has opened up the possibility of remedying the major defects of an unregulated market economy by the fairly simple means of government policies that do not involve serious loss of individual freedoms or the manipulation of men. Such a movement in social science inevitably has a profound impact on the judgments and preachments of social ethics.”
9. Munby, Christianity, p. 32.
10. Ibid., pp. 32-33. Economist John M. Clark, arguing from a secular point of view, is similarly optimistic. After raising the issue of whether society needs a common religious (or at least philosophical) basis of conduct in order to hold together, he expresses his conviction in the negative, stating that the main requirement is agreement “on one thing: respect for the worth and dignity of men and their need and duty to work together in a society, contributing to the common enterprise and restraining impulses to aggression and exploitation—one’s own as well as those of others.” Alternative to Surfdom (2nd. rev. ed., New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1960), pp. 131-132.
15. See Sleeman, op. cit., pp. 63, 116; Munby, Christianity, pp. 119-120.
17. Sleeman, op. cit., p. 60.
19. “Full employment,” while not included as a specific goal in this formulation, is nevertheless regarded as an important means to more fundamental ends, notably economic growth and security.
24. See the thorough discussion of this topic in Munby, Christianity, pp. 152-160.
27. Ibid., p. 81.
28. Ibid.
29. Sleeman, op. cit., p. 129. See Chapters 6 and 7 of this work and Munby, Christianity, Chapter 12, for full discussions of the issue of economic planning from Christian perspectives.
31. Ibid., p. 37.
34. Sleeman, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
Must Our Minds Meet?

By CAROL HAMILTON

The normative statement in Shakespeare concerning the desirable relationship between man and woman seems to be that famous line from Sonnet CXVI: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.” Love relationships within the plays are judged by this plumb line, from the sensual union of Troilus and Cressida to the philosophical mating of Brutus and Portia. Shakespeare seems to judge as lacking those who choose by the eye and live by the physical, while he extols those who choose by the virtuous qualities of the beloved and live by the mind. In true love Bassanio praises Portia for her “wondrous virtues”; and she, in turn, warns him in song that fancy “is engender’d in the eyes, With gazing fed and fancy dies, In the cradle where it lies.” Ferdinand and Miranda prove their “marriage of true minds” by playing at chess in the cell.

On the other side, Lear says of physical sex, “There’s hell, there’s darkness, there’s the sulphurous pit. . .” Hamlet tells his mother that her marriage to his uncle is “to live in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, stew’d in corruption, honeying and making love over the nasty sty. . .” Romeo proves the falseness of his love by raving about the beauty and fairness of Rosalind, without the slightest mention of her virtue, mental qualities, or spiritual strengths. The Shakespearean view would seem to be that the physical portion of the man-woman relationship should be regarded as the least important, if not the undesirable, side of love.

It is probable that many persons would feel that this view of the physical is essentially that view put forth by the Biblical tradition. It is unlikely that anyone would contend that this notion is prevalent today. However, it is my feeling that we are more likely today to feel that sexuality must be justified in terms of other qualities or needs than we are likely to admit. This unacknowledged downgrading of the physical may find us foolishly dangling the Shakespearean plumbline to our lives while the Biblical writings present a richer, more joyful understanding of the physical, and Shakespeare may indeed “admit impediments” to the “meeting of true minds.”

C. S. Lewis has said that ours is the only age which has been able to make the subject of sex a bore. We consider and judge ourselves as being materialistic, and yet it can be wondered if we are not profoundly unmaterialistic, for we seem to find no meaning in the “material” world with which we surround ourselves. Much of our advertising, much of our way of life, much of our talk is centered around a frantic drive to achieve the material or the physical goals we set for ourselves, but once achieved, the goal becomes boring, “old,” and no longer exciting. This frantic twirling around a center until it becomes a vacuum has become the understanding and the image of the physical which we possess. It is far from the richness of value placed on the physical in the Biblical understanding.

The disenchanted with goals, once achieved, should cause us to question our own understanding of life. When the disenchanted centers around sex, however, we do not seek for the cause within our understanding of ourselves, of sex, or of life. We more often say that the fault lies in our forming relationships which are not based on authentic attitudes. We say that we must seek another, more perfect basis for our relationships. We then turn this reasoning around and use the assumed perfection of the new base as justification for the sex, which we feel is somehow devoid of meaning. The justification is often found in our equivalents of Shakespeare’s “meeting of true minds.”

Perhaps it is doubted that perfection is insisted upon in the realm of sex. The idea, however, is often and clearly stated. The main thrust of the “new morality” and “situation ethics” has been that when two people are able to establish a relationship of complete concern or “love” for one another, then a sexual relationship cannot be considered out of place. This is seeking a foundation of perfect trust in the virtue and motives within oneself and within the loved one. The filtering down of Martin Buber’s “I-Thou” relationship into the general thought about sex once again bases the relationship on one’s ability to think of another always as a person and never as an object. A few years ago a college student of my acquaintance airily stated, “If I can have an affair with a different girl every weekend, and if I can have a complete physical, mental, and spiritual union, then why shouldn’t I?” The perfection implied in a “complete physical, mental, and spiritual union” is a staggering goal in any situation. A recent printed statement by a student announces: “. . .if there is insincerity by either partner, then premarital intercourse is not the creation it should be, but if both persons are being honest, then the emotional union is just as valid for the unmarried couple as for the married.” The person in question must, it seems, be one with the ability to feel complete concern for the other person as a person, with the ability to achieve a complete union with another person in all the aspects of his being, and with the virtues of unmitigated honesty and sincerity. And to establish this relationship, it takes two such saints. If these requirements were strictly held, the population explosion would soon be a dim memory. In these supposedly sophisticated views of sex, we disregard the
power of the physical, and at the same time we downgrade its worth in human terms.

The Affectionate Touch

The physical, in the broadest sense and in practical terms, is a powerful basis for our relationships. The affectionate touch may be more binding between people than many other factors. It is practically impossible for human beings to express their love for one another without using the sense of touch.

The love of a parent for his child is probably unique for the human in its overwhelming nature. I have often wondered what causes and sustains this love when it is faced with so many inconveniences, disappointments, and irritations. It cannot be n...rely hormonal or biological, since adoptive parents experience the same emotion. It is my feeling that the intimate and continuing physical contact one has with a child is the basis for the growing love.

Many fathers, afraid of holding a tiny baby, will say that they did not really come to love their child until he was older, but other, more confident men, who share in the caring for the infant, feel the same growth of affection the mother feels. Admiring the beauty of a child, enjoying his actions, and talking to him does not lead to the love felt when one is able to hold the child and give him the affection which he needs.

The affection and physical contact which we are able to share with a child is something unacceptable in polite society. We are told that we are taught to hide our aggressions in society, but are we not equally taught to hide our affections? All of us must have seen friends and relations in times of hurt, embarrassment, or joy when we wished to respond to their needs openly and physically, as one would with his child. However, except in times of extremity, these feelings are bottled within us, and we try to cover the need with inappropriate cliches or authentic jests. It is not the proper thing to express our affections openly and physically. With a child, however, it is possible, and within a love relationship, it is possible. This ability to touch, casually, affectionately, or sexually, within the marriage relationship, with social approval, is both a basis for love and an outcome of love. In a time of depression or sorrow, both in marriage and in friendship, the affectionate touch is more healing than any word could ever be.

Many orientals, for whom marriages were arranged, have attested to the love and companionship found in these pre-arranged relationships. This love grew from the physical relationship, and whether or not it grew into a "meeting of minds," (which was probably rare), good and meaningful relationships did develop.

In the context which permits growth, then, it would seem that from or alongside the physical grows the meeting of minds or interests, and, of course, from common interests a physical relationship can grow; but to base a relationship on another's virtue or the virtue of the relationship is courting dissolution of the relationship or disillusion with the relationship. Physical love does not need to be justified by virtue.

The Sanctification of the Physical

In the Biblical tradition, both the physical world and the physical relationship between man and woman are considered to be of value. The man-woman relationship is expressed as being essentially physical. The first mention of man and woman comes with the woman who is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." And God ordained that they were to "become one flesh." Fortunately, Adam did not insist upon Eve's virtue, for it soon became evident that her supply was limited.

Throughout the Bible the relationship between man and woman is a unique one, based on the physical union which is mysterious, and which makes it possible for men and women to live together with their faults and continue to grow together mentally and spiritually because of the prior physical relationship.

In Hebrew-Christian thought, the physical is sanctified, not considered a thing to be put aside in favor of the mind or the spirit, despite the many later modifications from Greek and Medieval thought which influence our understanding. God's covenant with Abraham was made known and sealed in the very physical birth of a son. In the New Covenant the Word was made concrete and physical in the Son, and his presence is made known in the physical act of eating bread and wine. Salvation is made known in the water. We concretize our loyalty to God in the trivial and physical routines of attending church and giving money. The physical is always in the heart and center of the Biblical understanding of God, man, and life.

A marriage is certainly more and often completely different from a meeting of minds. Many a man of great mental capacity seems to find joy in living with a woman who does not try, or is not able, to meet him mentally, but who can share his life and bring something indefinable into it. . .perhaps comfort, perhaps escape, perhaps comic relief! Then there are those happily married people who have no particular mental interests at all. Must we all play chess together, or can we just as well share the funny papers?

But, of course, reading the comics together or living an unreflective life of joy is offensive to the high-flown expectations we have for the sexual relationship. One rarely hears so much mystical language used nor finds such mystical expectations expressed as when the subject of sex arises in a serious discussion. But apart from the religious and/or the procreative aspects (both of which are denied as influential factors, today), the sexual act is practical. The wild spectacle of sex which is found in D. H. Lawrence's novels is the result of the mystification of sex with no basis for this mystification. In some of his novels, sex becomes frantic in its drive for novelty, and in some it becomes downright silly.

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Not so long ago a student group was discussing the situations in which pre-marital sex might be meaningful for the fulfillment of a complete understanding. When it was pointed out that in order to achieve this mystical union and fulfillment, one might decide to get a motel room, which would necessitate lying, and when all was finally prepared, the girl might be tired or nervous, the outcry was, “But now you are being practical!”

Practical, it is, indeed. The enjoyment of the sexual act is dependent on practical matters. C. S. Lewis wrote of the comic nature of our emotions regarding sex. We may find ourselves overcome with desire in some public setting, only to discover that once solitude is achieved, the desire has fled. Lewis reminds us that St. Francis compared the human body to Brother Ass, a comic beast, both obstinate and loveable. The human body is comically awkward even in the sexual act itself. The mystification of sex leaves little room for laughter at love’s failures and comic aspects.

In our current understanding of sex we overvalue it mystically and undervalue it practically. We do not find meaning in the thing in itself, but in our grand notions about it. Rather than saying sex is good, but not ultimate in our lives, we tend to think that it is ultimate but not good. For the Christian, the understanding should be that sex has both ultimate significance and practical good.

We are human, and to be human involves the practical as well as the sense of mystery. It involves humor as well as the sense of seriousness. We may seek a perfect relationship or a perfect partner and then assume that with this in hand we can handle the physical relationship and drain it of its meaning, but the quest for perfection drains the relationship of its human value and meaning before we begin.

A sense of humor and a sense of humanity are the saving graces of the man-woman relationship in all of its aspects—mental, physical, and spiritual. As humans we have a difficult time fitting life into any idealistic formula, be it loving another in order to improve him, to fulfill another’s being, to fulfill our own being, to seek a complete union of any kind, or to experience a “meeting of true minds.”

Not Chess but a Kiss

And so we come again to Shakespeare’s basis for a good relationship: “Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.” Shall we use this guide to judge love relationships even though it would seem that Shakespeare was not speaking of the man-woman relationship but of friendship? Can we measure with this plumbline? Perhaps we shall find that the Shakespearean plumbline is not a weighted one at all.

In the plays of Shakespeare there seems to be a great deal more written on the theme of humanity than on the virtue of the “meeting of true minds.” Lear is saved when he realizes his faults and his humanity. Henry V becomes a good king as he learns to be a man. Hamlet never accepts himself as a man, but seeks to see himself as an intellectual embodiment of what is right sent to avenge what is wrong. Brutus overlooks his humanity and believes that his philosophy and his honor will see him through.

Portia and Brutus felt they shared their minds and their philosophy and would not accept their human fallibility. Portia shared her husband’s mind, lost her own, and killed herself in despair. Othello and Desdemona insisted that their relationship was above the power of the physical. They fell in love as she listened to him talk, and she would be as he, strong, and follow him to the wars. They both believed that their love was of the mind, and that they were not swayed by the passions, and yet the passions were there and finally destroyed them.

Does not Shakespeare show the futility both of basing love on physical attractions alone and forsaking responsibilities and duties, and of basing love on some idealistic foundation and ignoring the realities of physical love and of weakness and evil within all human beings, including one’s mate? Othello, Brutus, Romeo, and in some respects, Anthony, take their love relationships out of the context of the reality of life and try to shape them into some ideal, which in the end is destructive.

Two relationships stand out for me within the Shakespearean plays as delightfully full and human. One is that of Hotspur and Lady Percy. It is obvious from their dialogue that they love one another, and yet they do not romanticize about love or idealize their relationship. Lady Percy’s first concern is why she is a “banished woman from my Harry’s bed.” She teases him to know his plans, but he does not tell her. They do not extol one another’s virtues nor proclaim their own. He tells her he knows she is very good at keeping secrets, especially if she does not know any. They seem to love one another as they are, not for their virtues, but because of their humanity and because of their physical relationship. In Henry IV Part II, Lady Percy wishes her husband back so she could be “hanging on Hotspur’s neck.” She weeps for her Harry and wishes him alive, but she does not lose her mind or kill herself.

When Prince Hal woos Katherine in Henry V, he speaks only of her fairness, his love for her, and his own humanity. Their love can hardly be a meeting of minds, since they can barely talk with one another, she with her broken English, and he with his poor French. And yet, I find in their relationship more of a love which allows for growth than in all the stuffy, self-righteous, “meeting of minds” love which Othello proclaims, or which Portia displays. I feel that Henry had not only come to an understanding of his own humanity but was accepting the humanity of his love. And I thank heaven that when he felt he had won Katherine’s love, he asked her, not for a game of chess, but for a kiss!
God Was Manifested in the Flesh

By DAVID P. SCAER
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Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.

I Timothy 3:16

The church of Jesus Christ is constantly in danger of becoming so overly religious that it begins to lose sight of God's good world. At Christmas the church in its preaching retreats from the world as if her very ecclesiastical life depended on it, fearing that over contact will result in spiritual attrition, secular infection and perhaps even death. Being a thoroughgoing secularist, Lutheran, and Christian—I would like to add the word “humanist,” but someone would be bound to misinterpret it—I am also in favor of sentimental, nostalgic, and maybe even bawdy Christmases. “Just like the ones I used to know.” Standing on the threshold of another season of Advent penance, for which I am thankful that it is only twenty-four days and not forty like its Spring counterpart, I have thrust my greedy hand forward across these three weeks to the Christmas holiday.

I am fully aware of my liturgical infraction in annulling the indelible ink on the liturgical calendars that scream out at us with its purple colors. However, our Advent and pre-Christmas sermons in many of churches have really become so blatantly and obviously anti-Christmas that unless the church makes a sincere attempt to secularize Christmas we will soon fall back into the waiting and ready arms of the grim-faced Puritans, who with scorned disdain undermine and undercut incarnational theology. The Christmas celebration in some churches has become so abbreviated that if you don't make it into a church some time in the eighteen-hour period between six p.m. on Christmas Eve and noon on Christmas Day, you might miss Christmas for the whole year. The post-Christmas New Year's Eve services are frequently so dirge like, with their unhealthy concentration on those annually added to the rolls of the deceased, that one might give more glory to God by joining the world in its godless celebrations. Therefore, after years and perhaps even decades of typical sermons directed against the so-called evils of this Christmas tide, I, for one, state publicly and also unequivocally, that I am in favor of creches, Christmas cards, tired feet, long hours supposedly wasted in shopping, street corner Santa Clauses, decorations, office parties, Christmases—preferably the ones so much a part of our American culture through the efforts of Bing Crosby and Perry Como, like “Silent Night,” for example. I sincerely back all Christmas parties and dinners and I highly treasure Christmas greetings from all friends and acquaintenances who are in no way committed to the Christian religion. There is something holier about a commercialized Christmas than the purely religious type which for the sake of perfection and purity turns out to be a soured occasion as it curdles the joy that God became man.

Since the incarnation, the world has never been the same. God was manifested in the flesh. And since that one event, God through His tender love has been bending our stiff theological and religious necks by drawing us closer to Him through the love that radiates from the Infant in the manger. This event of Incarnation is so powerful in force, so magnetic in attraction that even after nearly two millennia a society, so turned away from God in its core, is forced at least once a year into an outward act of genuflection. For if the heavens declare the splendor of God in majestic, but still inarticulate praise, so man, cold in his heart, is forced, even if only out of curiosity, to “see those things which have come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.” If the inert creation, dumb in its praises to God, and the brute creation, inarticulate in its praises, will raise silent voices on the final day of judgment when the incarnation will be universally declared, so even now the world turned away from God in its very purposes is drawn without resistance by the magnetic event of Christ's coming in the flesh.

The young man in holy, and perhaps even righteous, zeal directs his prophetic warnings and threatening in the style of a Jeremiah against the banes and curses of a commercialized Christmas. But Christmas is not the “holy day” of the prophets, Moses, Jeremiah, or even John the Baptist. If there must be a prophet for Christmas, then let it be Isaiah. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people. Tell her that her warfare is over.” Quite opposite from the overly zealous man, who wants to sound like John the Baptist but ends up being a Samson pull...
ing down the pillars of society, is the man whose heart has worshiped God by grasping the Child lying in the manger. This man sees in this annual agonizing, frenzied Christmas commotion both a silent and vociferous witness to the fact that God became man. Though his heart is broken in the penitential sorrow of Advent, it soon breaks forth in songs of praise because God once became man. The world for him becomes a sacrament in which its own unholy way assures him that the Incarnation did take place and has left its visible, tangible marks on the world.

Concerning the redemption under the natural law, St. Paul mentioned that fruitful seasons served as faithful witness to God when the voice of God was itself silenced by the impudence of man. At Christmas, through forced induction, God drafts a godless world for His purposes in commemorating the incarnation of His Son. It is an old theme among the people of God that those things and persons outside of the Child would join them in acknowledging the coming of God. It was not by accident that the pericope of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is the first Gospel in the Advent Season. Regardless of this unusual blend of Advent and Passion, Jesus was acknowledged as Lord by those whose hearts were not loyal to Him and whose minds did not really understand. Isaiah spoke about the lowering of the hills, the raising of the valleys, the leveling of the rough places. Isaac Watts saw the fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeating the sound joy in an antiphonal echo to man’s praises. And we, set in the midst of a commercialized, financially centered society, will hear the echoes from well worn records of a Christmas carol scouring out its message, while cash registers like pipe organs in the west galleries will provide a varied and continuous antiphonal background.

If then we should long for what Irving Berlin—and he is Jewish—called “the Christmas I used to know,” we would become like Mary who, after the fanfare of the incarnation and birth of the Savior, pondered all these things in her heart. So plunge yourself this Christmas into festive mirth. Indulge yourselves in nostalgia for whatever you have ever held dear. And let the world abound in cards and gifts and sentimental thoughts. These are creation’s sacraments. For all these are remnants and reminders of that one great event that touched and effected all creation—that God once became man.

On Second Thought

When a debate moves out of the formal realm of a verbal contest into the realm of public decision, it is not only proper but often necessary to question motives. A man’s words are part of the debate. So are the pressures which led him to say them and the purpose he hopes to accomplish by the way he said them. None of us is so self-aware that he speaks with pure objectivity. Each of us is intimately bound by the experiences which formed him and out of which he speaks.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church are confronting the decision of fellowship. In the tension of the debate, a man’s reason for saying something and the objective he hopes to accomplish are as important to understanding as what he says. A number of speakers have gone to great lengths to prove that the two churches disagree in doctrine. Just as many have argued carefully that there is agreement. Before we descend to childish argument (“We agree ... we don’t ... we do ... we don’t”) we ought to ask why we’re so anxious about that particular game.

Luther has been quoted to prove that the hope of heaven is involved in doctrinal differences. But surely the history which has intervened has demonstrated that we are not and cannot be so “pure” in doctrinal statement as Luther thought. If we are Lutheran in our concept of grace alone, we cannot suppose that we are saved because our doctrine is pure, or that God despises those who disagree with us. The very purity of doctrine which we hope to preserve will tell us that God’s grace covers us despite our ignorance of the truth.

Perhaps the hope of heaven will be lost because the truth will be defeated where falsehood is permitted. If that were true it would be the only truth remaining to us. All other doctrinal truth would have been erased by the mistakes we have from time to time and place to place espoused. If we are Lutheran in our concept of the means of grace, we cannot believe that our human minds and wills are the final bastion against error. God speaks His Word and the darkness will never overcome it.

The arguments of doctrine begin to fall by the wayside. The debate is between those who want fellowship and those who do not, for reasons largely unrelated to doctrines. The economic and influence strength of large numbers, the loss of individual importance in a larger pool, the emotional stress of admitting that our past enmities were folly, the Christian strength of knowing a larger fellowship in the Spirit without the tensions of animosity, all of these are more pertinent to the debate than the doctrinal differences or agreements.

There is one step we need yet to take on the way to fellowship. That is the dying step of realizing that we are saved only because God is gracious. On the other side of the death in that step, we can understand that nearly all of the arguments against fellowship and half of the arguments for it are irrelevant. It’s a time for sinning boldly—doing what seems wisest to us without claiming impeccable righteousness. It’s a time for trusting that God is truly gracious.
An avalanche of publications flooded the market about a year ago when Protestantism prepared for the commemoration of the 450th anniversary of that famous October 31, 1517, on which Martin Luther supposedly — and notwithstanding all learned criticism most probably — posted his 95 Theses On Indulgences on the central bulletin board of Wittenberg University, i.e., the door of the Castle Church in that town. From the publications which crossed our desk in connection with this anniversary we have selected several which are well worth calling to our readers' attention.

Whatever some Lutherans may think of the magazine Dialog, we all have reason to be grateful to the editor of this magazine for Charles Anderson's review of major recently published material concerning Luther interpretation. While one does not usually expect any great breakthrough in scholarship in such a review article, if it is done by an expert it quickly introduces the reader to the problems and the the pertinent literature. And Anderson's "Will the Real Luther Please Stand Up" accomplishes precisely this.

In the search for "real Luther" the interested layman, the student of history, and last but certainly not least the pastor in the parish can reach now for four major and basic works. Oxford University Press has reissued that old standby for any work in Reformation history, B. J. Kidd's Documents of the Continental Reformation. Unfortunately the volume was in no way updated; and further, since quite a large amount of material is presented in the original languages, the volume will be fully enjoyed only by those who have kept up their ability to work in foreign languages. As balance to this "shortcoming," however, we have available Hans Hillerbrand's The Reformation. A Narrative History Related by Contemporary Observers and Participants, which was published in 1964. While we basically object to cut-up selections of this kind, the volume is quite useful, especially because it presents a substantial amount of material pertaining to the Radical Reformation. The book seems incomplete, however, since it deals only with the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, England, and Scotland, and to some extent with the Catholic response and renewal; but the volume says little or nothing about the effects of this renewal on the European theater, or about the Reformation outside the countries mentioned. Kurt Aland presents Martin Luther's 95 Theses with the Pertinent Documents from the History of the Reformation. We have already referred to the ongoing debate regarding the events of October 31, October 1517. Now the reader himself can study all the important material which thus far has figured prominently in this debate and draw his own conclusion. And finally, Theodore G. Tappert has edited a handsomely boxed, four-volume set of Selected Writings of Martin Luther at the astonishingly low price of $10.00; each volume can also be bought separately for $2.50. Bound in flexible paper and printed on very good paper, the volumes should withstand hard use — which cannot be said concerning some other paperbacks. By presenting the more important writings of the Reformer in totality, the Tappert edition will fill the gap existing between the one-volume sourcebook and the great editions. Certainly he who studies these four volumes will become thoroughly familiar with Luther. No one may now hide his ignorance or laziness concerning Luther behind the old excuse that it is too costly to buy the great editions of Luther's writings; the Tappert set certainly should be, and with some good will can be, on the shelves of all who profess to have an interest in Luther and the Reformation, be that interest friendly or hostile.

The great advantage of the Tappert set is its organization. For once an editor of a selection from Luther's writings has abandoned the artificial "systematic" divisions into which Luther's writings are commonly pressed, unfortunately even in Luther's Works, American Edition; Tappert presents Luther's writings in a chronological order. While this chronological order does not eliminate overlapping or duplication — the systematic order cannot eliminate this either — it does accomplish three things: it lets Luther speak on the decisive issues as they emerged in the course of his life; it makes clear how Luther time and again makes the same affirmations, so that the core of the Reformer's thought becomes discernable in ever new variations; it avoids some of the frustration and waste of time which occurs if one is trying to locate, perhaps through a date which is only approximate, some specific writing of Luther in the "systematically" organized sets. We made two observations while looking through the set. It is, of course, proper to reproduce translations made by authors at another time and for some other publication, provided, naturally, that these translations were done well. It is impossible to reproduce the introductions accompanying these translations, however, without running the risk of presenting outdated material. In the case of the 95 Theses the text and the introduction are taken from vol. 31 of Luther's Works, American Edition (Philadelphia-St. Louis, 1957). In 1957 it was still possible to talk as if the events of October 31, 1517, were the most certainly dated in the history of the church. Today, after almost ten years of controversy, one simply cannot bypass in an introduction to the 95 Theses the serious questions raised by Volz, Isleroh, and Honselmann, especially since these questions might also affect the value of the presented text. And further, while we do not take issue with the selection as such — any selection can be questioned — we have to mention that the area of the devotional material, as well as of materials pertaining to pastoral care, has been shortchanged to such a degree that one can hardly discern "Luther der Seelsorger" and "Luther der Beter": This is a definite shortcoming in this set.

A collection of Luther's prayers edited by Herbert F. Brokering somewhat compensates for the lack of devotional material in the Tappert set. Though some serious technical mishaps occurred, apparently during the production of this booklet (hopefully these matters will be taken care in the second printing), it is a gem. In whatever way liturgical experts may evaluate Luther's contribution to worship — and their comments on this subject are usually not too complimentary — the prayers reproduced in this booklet deal with the raw stuff of the Christian's prayer life. Luther may or may not have been an expert in liturgy, but he certainly was an expert at prayer. One example may suffice: O heavenly Father, you have created all things and have brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, across the wilderness, and over the Jordan. All this is of no help to me. What is it to me that you have done great wonders to Noah, and enabled Peter to walk on the sea, and commanded the leper to show himself to the priest? But it is important for me to call upon you and hold fast to you. I do so by the word and assurance: You, Lord, have redeemed me through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. This word concerns me, for it penetrates heaven and with it I surely do touch you. You have bound yourself to it so that I might find you and cling to you. Hear me! Although neither I nor any angel can stand before your Majesty, I still have Christ whom you cannot hate. I depend on him and on the assurance that you will receive me through him. You must reject him before rejecting me. Amen.
The following topics are covered in the six sections into which the booklet is divided: preparation for prayer; the Lord's Prayer; Luther's simple instructions for prayer, which were written for Peter the barber at Wittenberg; prayers for enlightenment from sufficient help to allow one to make sections into which the booklet is divided: God's Word, for a overtones, or polemics. The archives at century handwriting. The volume is of course use of this booklet not only in one's personal provide source references for further study. volume

From behind the Iron Curtain came a volume16 in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation, a volume which is free from any ideological-political overtones, or polemics. The archives at Dresden, Weimar, and Oranienburg have published thirty-six documents which illustrate highlights of Reformation history in Saxony from 1517 to 1555. Though all the material has already been published at one time or the other, it should be quite a thrill for the reader to come to face to face, if not with the originals themselves, then, at least, with the excellently reproduced photographs of the originals. A brief introduction sets the background of each document, and a transcription encourages and helps the student who cares to venture into sixteenth century handwriting. The volume is of course addressed mostly to the specialist in Reformation history or to the connoisseur of fine books and old handwriting.

During the preparation for the commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation one point we heard continuously emphasized was the need to make the Reformation relevant for the present day. This concern resulted in a carefully thought-through program for a colloquium on Christian Humanism conducted in October, 1967, on the campus of Valparaiso University. Originally the University wanted to stage an international congress of Reformation research. A look at the available funds, plus responsible stewardship, made it impossible to develop this plan beyond the dreaming stage. Aware of the links existing between the Lutheran Reformation and Wittenberg University, which in turn was a center of Humanism, the University decided to concentrate its efforts in connection with the 450th anniversary of the Reformation on the role of Christian Humanism in the Lutheran Reformation, and the contributions which the Christian faith and a University under the Cross can make to the development of the humaan today. To what degree the colloquium was a success has to remain an open question. No volume of exciting essays did materialize from the colloquium — and this should be an indication all by itself. We were somewhat disappointed that so little of the carefully laid plans and sought for results did materialize. One reason for this was the fact that, as is often the case, some of the speakers, (though they were willing to accept some nice monetary rewards) used material out of their files, or out of some projected book, and this material often did not come to grips with the issues envisioned by the planners as the center of the colloquium. And the discussions were often conducted in a vacuum since the essayists did not make their manuscripts available for prior examination. While the colloquium did stimulate thought about Christian Humanism and Christian faith, it was, in our opinion, not the success that it could have been.

Homo, humanum, and natura were some of the pressing issues for the Reformation, just as they are among the pressing issues for theology today. Luther's controversy with Erasmus was certainly not a Gelehrtentritt, which could have been avoided by "men of good will." Arne Sjirala11 and Harry T. McSorley12 present some thought-provoking contributions to Christian Humanism by taking a new look at the Erasmus-Luther controversy. Endorsing Luther's stand on the bound will as genuinely cath­olic, in contrast to that of Erasmus, McSor­ley's result is quite startling to a good Lu­theran, coming as it does from a Roman Catholic theologian. Sjirala approaches the controversy between the Humanist and the Reformer in the framework of the personality science, and suggests that personal freedom can be found in Luther's position alone, while Erasmus presents a mechanistic concept of man, in which the free personal character of the divine-human encounter is denied. Only time can tell to what degree both authors have understood or misunderstood Erasmus and Luther, and to what degree their interpretations can stand the test of the reexamined sources.

The last title which should be mentioned is Christianity and Humanism Studies in the History of Ideas.13 This is a collection of essays by Quirinus Breen, one of the grand old men in Renaissance and Reformation history. The collection is edited in Breen's honor by Nelson P. Ross, one of his pupils. Breen's research interest was concentrated on two major topics — rhetoric and law during Renaissance and Reformation. Inasmuch as in classical antiquity the great lawyers were also great orators, it is easy to see how interest in one leads to interest in the other. Six of the reproduced essays deal with technical issues and will probably be of interest to the specialist only. The relationship of philosophy to rhetoric in Mirandola, Barbaro, and Melanchthon is analyzed in the first essay, while the second and third essays deal with Melanchthon's twofold truth theory, and understanding and usage of the term loci communes. The fourth study deals with Calvin and the rhetorical tradition, while the fifth and sixth articles concentrate on the revival of Roman Law in the twelfth century and in Renaissance Humanism.

Against such a background of highly de-tailed knowledge and research, Breen presents his view of Christian Humanism in the last of the reproduced studies entitled "The Church as Mother of Learning." This essay should be of great interest to all who are concerned with Humanism, "secular learning," and the Christian faith. Drawing on a wealth of details (and also personal experience with official representatives of the church, experience which interjects into the presentation a sense of urgency, and perhaps sometimes a sense of bitterness), Breen demands in the first section that secular learning be allowed to be secular (pp. 201-217). To take up the phrase that has been coined by Philip Watson to charac­terize the core of Luther's theology, "Let God be God," one could paraphrase Breen's arguments. "Let man be man, and let the world be the world, because the dignity of man consists in his being the object of the divine redemption, and the dignity of the world is established through creation and incarnation." Consequently Breen argues in the second section (pp. 217-234) that the church acts contrary to its own con­fession of faith if it behaves as a "stepmother" toward secular learning. (As far as we can see this term "secular learning" is never exactly defined, or described. What disciplines belong to it? Is "sacred learning" the contrast to "secular learning"?) And if so, what is the difference between the two learn­ings?) Roaming through the history of the church, Breen sees three attitudes which illustrate this stepmother-like behavior of the church: fear lest learning damage faith; snobbery which accepts learning for worldly advantage and status; condescension which denies that learning has a place of its own, but affirms learning only as "handmaid to faith." The author concentrates then in the third section on the role of the church as foster mother (pp. 234-248). He concludes his presentation with an analysis of the church as mother of believers, who must live in the secular, and who build a bridge from the church to the secular (pp. 248-266). The second and third sections of this study, which reminds the reader of Niebuhr's Christ and Culture, are predominantly historically oriented: the first and fourth sections are predominantly systematically oriented, although throughout the essay is found an abundance of historical material as illustration or documentation for the author's arguments. While the first and second sections are quite exciting, the third and fourth are a letdown. Some observations might substantiate this judgment.

The title of the study, "The Church as Mother of Learning," could raise the ques­tion of the father in the family in which the author simply overlooks more important, however, is the fact that in the third section the author speaks of the church's role as "foster mother," while in the second section he spoke of the church's role as "stepmother." He completely overlooks the impossibility of
pigeonholing the church’s attitudes toward learning as he does. That same medieval church and university, in which the author sees illustrated the church’s role as foster mother of learning, produced the Inquisition — and this cannot simply be interpreted as an act which violated the university’s freedom, or the freedom of learning. Is the church at this point a foster mother who is only erring or has gone astray? Or is the church a stepmother? And further, it is fundamental to the nature of the church, if it is to retain its kerygmatic nature, to live both in continuity and discontinuity with the secular: To use Breen’s phraseology, the church, if it is to be church, has to be simultaneously stepmother and foster mother. But can one in view of this fact still apply the mother-image to the church’s paradoxical relation to learning? Or are we not here at the point where the image simply makes no sense, or is unfit to do justice to the nature of the church?

It is not just “the more central business of the church” to save souls, or deal with men as believers (p. 234), but it is, we are convinced, the central and exclusive function of the church. If the author argues that the church is to take over a part in “saving civilization” (p. 235), then this argument documents that idealistic Kultur-protestantismus which knows little of the true nature of the church and of the eschatological dimension of the Christian faith.

In speaking about the church as mother the author suddenly abandons the structure of the whole study. To this point he has talked about church and learning, and now he talks about the church as mother of the individual believer and the “motherly attitude,” which these believers exhibit toward learning; he also speaks of the gifts which the church can and should bestowed on scholars and artists. And now the author’s arguments, which began so promisingly in the first and second sections, gradually ooze away in platitudes and exhortations.

It seems to us that the major problem in these third and fourth sections is the author’s unwillingness to come to terms with the nature of the church, as well as with the differentiation between the sacred and secular, ratio and fides, God and man, creation and redemption. Besides this, there is a certain fogginess in argumentation. On the basis of Augustine’s praise of philosophy and of Plato, the author concludes that Augustine does not symbolize the stepmother-like attitude toward learning; at least not at this point. The author finds this confirmed through Augustine’s praise of rhetoric. “His rhetorical analysis of many scripture passages shows how lovingly he could read the Bible with the eyes of a classically trained rhetorician” (p. 240). Several pages later the author concludes that philosophy is in the church as in the house of a foster mother (p. 245). The foster mother cares for offsprings not her own; she protects others’ children until they reach maturity, and then “the church should let them go, if they wish” (p. 234). Applied to rhetoric and philology this would mean that the church took both in, nurtured them, and now upon their maturity frees them to choose to go or to stay. In the light of his whole presentation we highly doubt that the author would want to say this. More important than this would be the question why the church took rhetoric and philology into its house and became foster mother of these offsprings obviously not her own, i.e., these disciplines of secular learning. (Here it becomes utterly urgent that the difference between secular learning and sacred learning be established.) What motivated Augustine to continue the use of rhetoric, or Erasmus to practice textual criticism, or the reformers to advocate “secular learning”? Had the author confronted this circle of problems he would have realized the necessity of coming to terms with the difference between secular and sacred learning; he would also have realized that his mother-image, while it can sometimes be used, simply does not work all the time. The church adopted these disciplines because it needed them as handmaids essential ones to be sure, but handmaids nonetheless. And according to Breen this would be precisely the attitude of the stepmother. And not of the foster mother. Augustine, while not rejecting rhetoric, nevertheless did not consider rhetoric to be the existentially relevant task to which he wished to dedicate his efforts, but rather theology. Consequently rhetoric becomes the handmaid of theology, and this affirmation does not originate in condescension — the fact that in the history of the church it only too often originated in such an attitude is another matter. Breen could have been prevented from using the mother image to the point of absurdity had he interjected into his discussion the idea of Hilfswissenschaften.

The essay is thought-provoking, even though we cannot agree with the author all the way, and even though we think that the author’s contribution to the search for a Christian Humanism should perhaps be more constructive. To continue the discussion on the nature of Christian Humanism should be one of the major legacies of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation. And this not only as a footnote: another legacy is the discussion of the nature of the church, and of the church’s relationship to the world.

7. See note 5.
9. ibid., p. 5.
10. Die Reformation in Dokumenten aus den Staatsarchiven Dresden und Weimar und aus dem historischen Staatsarchiv Oranienburg.

Worth Noting

CHINA: The Remembered Life

By Paul Frillmann and Graham Peck (Houghton Mifflin, $5.95).

Paul Frillmann went directly from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Hankow. His career as a missionary in China lasted only from 1936 to 1941, when Frillmann was appointed as chaplain for General Claire Chennault’s Flying Tigers. After spending most of the Second World War as an Air Force intelligence officer behind Japanese lines, Frillmann became a Public Affairs Officer at Mukden and Shanghai. When the Chinese Communists drove Americans from the mainland in 1949, Frillmann was made head of the United States Information Service in Hong Kong. In 1953 he resigned from the Department of State, a victim of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy’s crusade against the China experts. Written with the collaboration of Graham Peck, China: The Remembered Life is a memoir of Paul Frillmann’s experiences in a nation torn by war and civil strife.

China: The Remembered Life is, in one respect, a disappointing book. While the stories he retells are often fascinating, they are just as frequently trivial. In essence, the book is a compilation of random and unsystematic recollections. Yet, Frillmann’s account is not without value to laymen, to historians, and to the Mission Board of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The layman will enjoy a story well told. The historian will profit from the first-hand observations of a man who saw Chinese Nationalists shirking military responsibilities and slighting the needs of the peasantry at a time when Chinese Communists were assiduously working to strengthen their hold over the countryside. The Mission Board will gain information on how not to operate in foreign lands. Frillmann’s reflections on how dedicated missionaries walled themselves off from the Chinese people by adhering to American customs and comforts are instructive. Perhaps most important, China: The Remembered Life will be discomforting reading for anyone who still believes that the United States “lost” China and “sold” Chiang Kai-shek down the river.

KENNETH E. SHEWMAKER

December 1968

GOTTFRIED G. KRODEL
Music

Magnificat Anima Mea

By WILLIAM F. EIFRIG, JR.

“And Mary said, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is his name.’ ”

A great and mighty wonder is this indeed. The Word becomes flesh to dwell among us and with his coming are given the words of thanksgiving, joy, and worship. The simple maid of Galilee utters a text so perfect in meaning, so beautiful in form that poets cannot improve upon it. Mary’s song becomes the Church’s song, Magnificat the canticle with which it closes every day.

Poets dare not apply their labors to the song, but musicians not only dare, they vie with each other to create newer and more inventive settings.

Several passages in Scripture represent songs created with apparent spontaneity upon occasions of divine visitation. The New Testament canticles—Zacharias’ song “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,” Simeon’s “Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,” and Mary’s Magnificat—were assigned to the first and last offices of the day by the Church of the early medieval period. The psalms and canticles, songs of worship, require music to which they may be sung. A service is given to the musician that is denied the poet.

Earliest settings of the Magnificat are simple chants. A few tones of inflection grace the reciting tones without inhibiting declamation. The antiphons sung before and after the main body of text are much more tuneful and involved. These, each proper to one season or feast, however, are only ornate frames for the timeless chant melody.

The techniques of improvised polyphony in the eleventh and twelfth centuries must certainly have been applied to the singing of the Magnificat as they were to so much of worship music. While one group of singers sang the plainchant melody, another group or even two other groups wove other melodic lines about the traditional tune. This was the musical counterpart to the art of the medieval worker in gold and precious stones when he fashioned brilliant covers for altar Bibles and handsome reliquaries.

Not until the fifteenth century did composers in the western church use their considerable polyphonic skills to create Magnificat settings more complex than these. Perhaps it was satisfaction with the traditional settings that postponed this development so long or perhaps it was merely the establishment of rich chapels in the entourage of nobility that demanded music less austere and suited more for royal households than for monastic communities. Even these canticle settings, though, retained the plainchant melodies, alternating them with sections composed in counterpoint.

Monteverdi in Venice, of the new seventeenth century, was the first to turn dramatically from the traditional to the original. While echoes of the ancient chant sound in the choir, instruments and solo voices placed all about St. Mark’s church pour out passages and decorations as sumptuous as the architectural setting. The Magnificat is now a theater in which the meanings of the verses are explicated and pious emotions evoked by musical means.

The great Bach cantata which sets the Virgin’s song is also baroque theater. The twelve movements are twelve scenes in the sacred opera which presents the maiden singer, all generations after her, and the whole empyrean of heaven in music by turns grand, affective, and thoughtful.

Thereafter the office services diminished in the esteem of most churchmen. Sunday morning worship was sufficient for the laity; vespers remained primarily a monastic occupation. Some Magnificat settings are encountered in England where Evening Prayer retained some importance. Composers of Services in G, in B flat, in A, and all the rest included Composers of the canticle set to music properly solemn and comfortable for Victorian sensibilities, music of modest distinction.

The few settings of Mary’s canticle in our day (e.g. Tippett, Vaughan Williams, Hovhaness, Wienhorst) give evidence of the continuing vitality of the song and its power to inspire new melody. These latest examples of the musician’s art, however, are either quite simple in style or intended for concert, since it is a rare Vespers that is today sung with great ceremony.

December is a good month to reread Luther’s exposition of the Magnificat. We join our hope to his that the Canticle of the Virgin continue to be sung “in a special and appropriate setting that sets it apart from other chants” and that we may all “draw from it wholesome knowledge and praiseworthy life, and thus come to chant and sing this Magnificat eternally in heaven.”
It is not Julian Beck's and Judith Malina's The Living Theatre, and in a frightful way it may be. I saw their four productions which they are taking on a college tour through the country for the next six months or so. They may come your way. Don't go to see them, and yet, on second thought, don't miss them.

They have stirred more interest and controversy than their daring theatricalities warrant. If they are right, they are right for the wrong reasons with the wrongest means. They are not the future of the theatre, but their fringe existence may be vital in finding the right way. Clive Barnes of the Times thought that their theatre "is very much what is happening." He was attacked by Eric Bentley in his J'accuse, entitled "I Reject the Living Theatre," and Barnes retorted and defended his position. Essentially, he thought he saw them coming close to a new kind of theatre, "perhaps it is the beginning of a new type of dance theatre." It certainly is non-verbal theatre most of the time their productions last.

The Living Theatre has taken the idea of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty—beautifully realized in Peter Brook's staging of Marat/Sade—very literally. The stress is on gesture, movement, and choral comment. The concept was to push the action beyond all limits to a compulsively intense, ritual theatre in which there is no longer any separation between actors and audience so that the spectators go through an experience that is supposed to change their lives. Artaud—whose only production was a dismal failure—was against the preoccupation with personal problems, in a far more radical manner than Brecht, and for a return to myth and magic.

I doubt that there is any magic in The Living Theatre. Perhaps the visualization of a huge monster in "Frankenstein" created with the bodies of the entire cast is remarkable—but more of a stunt than magic. It is improvisational theatre of mainly visual images, sometimes fantastic in their exaggeration, mostly naive and boring when the directors—it is a collective creation of the company—indulge in endless repetitions.

There is a great deal of gesturing and movement in all their productions. But the acting is not so much amateurish as it is plain non-acting of non-actors. And so is the movement, the staging of groups, the undisciplined, often hysterical movement of non-dancers. In this respect, their "Antigone" is a case in point. Only the litany of the chorus moving into the audience at one passage has any theatrical value. But its purpose is killed because no climax can be maintained for too long. Although "Antigone" was the worst of all productions, being almost a sophomoric parody of a classic, it was the most interesting one.

It is based on Friedrich Hoelderlin's version of the Sophocles drama, which Brecht dramatized. His dramatization was used by Judith Malina as raw material for the production of her company. There was little of Brecht and nothing of Hoelderlin in it. Certainly, Sophocles must have rotated in his grave. And yet it is their strongest production since it is pure political theatre, which is closest to their hearts. Although they stand at the extreme left, they have strangely adopted the Nazi method of Goebbels which successfully mesmerized with the repetition of slogans. Probably it is not so strange at all since the extreme left and right are brothers under the skin.

Whatever The Living Theatre does is raw, blunt, and brutal, challenging society and the world in which it functions. We know too well how poorly it functions, but The Living Theatre does not want to do anything creatively about it. It negates, it intends to destroy, it is all out for anarchy, or, as its actors would call it, for total freedom now. In their productions, "Mysteries" and "Paradise Now," audience participation is the key to success. No doubt, a great number of young people followed the Pied Piper. I have never seen before in any theatre such Hieronymus-Bosch-like bedlam let loose as in "Paradise Now." Spectators involuntarily became players. The spectacle I saw was theatricalized mass hysteria par excellence. It wasn't so ugly that the actors stripped to their Bikini shamefulness; it wasn't so frightening that some in the audience stripped to the shamefulness of "Paradise Now." What was so nauseating to me was that the function of the theatre can be so misused, that bawdy boredom can be taken so seriously because of the despair in our midst. (I do not doubt for a minute that Julian Beck thinks of himself as a new kind of Messiah and is quite serious about it.) What was so wonderful to me was that it is still the theatre which can give meaning to life. Particularly to the young.
The Problem of Kitsch

By RICHARD H. W. BRAUER

Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas.
Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations.
Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times.
Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money 
...not even their time.

Clement Greenberg

By the time this column is read the high season of Christmas Kitsch will be well started. Just yesterday, a restaurant I was in had “Season’s Greetings” posted near the door. Metallic garlands were wound from light fixture to light fixture, and an occasional plastic Santa Claus appeared on the walls. There was a certain festivity about it all, I suppose, but I couldn’t get into the mood, and just the thought that the event for which these “pretties” had been put up was almost two months away made them look already tired and empty. Whatever novelty and freshness, not to mention beauty and meaning, these decorations might project could not endure two months exposure...no party decorations could. Furthermore, some of the anticipation and specialness of the coming Christmas season was being dulled and spoiled for me by this premature display of flash.

Such Kitsch makes celebrating the Christmas season in a faith-strengthening, life-enriching way more difficult. Kitsch’s pervading presence can diminish the searching spiritual preparations of Advent, and even the splendid and gracious festivities of the Christmas holidays. However, recognizing Kitsch for what it is can help us to deal with it.

The word Kitsch is one of those German words without a good English counterpart. The word is sometimes used as a label for art ostensibly genuine and serious, yet actually cheap and “ersatz.” To enter into the depth of feeling and beauty of genuine, serious art costs the beholder something. It costs him his time. It costs him his aware, sensitive attention. It may even cost him some of his conventional attitudes and values. Ultimately, to enter into the expression of a serious work of art costs (and rewards) the beholder’s whole being.

Kitsch, on the other hand, is cheap. It costs the beholder very little time and sensitivity. Rather, in the guise of serious art it merely rouses easy, superficial feelings leaving the more basic, discriminating, thinking, feeling, and sensing self unchallenged and unaffected.

Waldemar Otto, the Berlin Lutheran artist spoke to us at Valparaiso in 1964 about Kitsch: “The simple piling of horror pictures...produces comical horror, comic strips, not tragedy. In the same way, the performance of the smooth and lovely, without showing the other side of the coin, will (also) produce Kitsch...Under the aspect of ethics, Kitsch reveals itself as a basic shortage of truth, authenticity, and aesthetic veracity.” In brief, therefore, “a basic shortage of truth” and a debasement of serious art seem to be major characteristics of Kitsch.

Examples are endless. From Thanksgiving to December 25 appear great quantities of cloyingly sweet, innocent, pastel pink, blue, white and gold Mary and baby Jesus pictures...realistic and modernistic. Whole picture books nostalgically escape to nineteenth century rural scenes such as “Sledding home from Church on Christmas Eve.” High festival Christmas decorations are installed (even in the home) weeks before the high festival days themselves, etc.

On the other hand examples of Christmas religious art relatively free from elements of Kitsch are rarer and must be searched out. The bulletin cover The Night is Far Gone, The Day is at Hand was made for the first Sunday in Advent, and was based on the traditional “Annunciation-Incarnation” theme. The artist used a very realistic pen and ink technique, basing her drawing on a photograph of a fetus in a biology book. She then took great pains to create the expanding, shimmering, changing texture around the fetus. Is the result bad taste? Is it a disgrace to picture Christ, the Son of God as a helpless fetus? We are shocked. And in our shock we begin to realize, in a fresh way, the humiliation of God at the incarnation of Christ; the consequences of our sins and the costliness of God’s grace. And yet that shocking fetus is also made to appear as a glowing egg of new energy and life with implications of promise and beauty.

The Visitation is also a traditional subject of Advent season art. Yet here to the artist has infused fresh meaning into the tradition. Otto does this by creating, in the confrontation of these two women, a formal opposition of fullness and hollowness. The fullness of Elizabeth points to the hollowness of Mary and, for me, prefigures the fullness in Christ Mary will soon bring to empty mankind.

Finally, Wars, Dread of Mothers is from the second section of a series of prints based on meditations on Psalm 51, a psalm of penitence. This section deals with the brutalities men inflict on each other. Though Rouault did not mean these figures to be the Madonna and Child they can be seen as such. The impact of the rich black and rough greys mix tenderness and sadness and reminds us that Christ came to redeem us by dying a violent death at the hands of men. It can also remind us that to celebrate the Christmas season unconcerned for the human misery abounding today is to turn the very celebration into Kitsch.

The Cresset
Georges Rouault, WARS. DREAD OF MOTHERS, plate 42 from the Miserere series, engraving. 16” x 20”, 1914-27.

Waldemar Otto, VISITATION. bronze. 10” high. 1962

Using the words of II Corinthians 4:8-12, we must assert these facts about the world in which we live: 1. we are afflicted in many ways; 2. the contingent and precarious circumstances of the world drive us to despair; 3. the man of love and forgiveness is persecuted; 4. our troubles strike us down; 5. death is always close to us, looking over our shoulder. II Corinthians 4:12 in large measure describes this side of man: “So death is at work within us.”

The man of God, however, insists that death and despair are not necessarily true of the children of God. The man of God will cite in addition other words from II Corinthians 4:8-12, words more optimistic: 1. we need not be crushed by our afflictions; 2. we are not necessarily driven to hopelessness by our perplexities; 3. we are not forsaken in our persecutions; 4. amidst all our enemies, we do have friends; 5. and, though death does exist, “we are not destroyed.” In death even, life is still with us.

Death works in us while life is still in us. All this seems to be a contradiction that perhaps only the men of God really understand. But the life-death paradox is one of the universal themes of theology and philosophy, of all the humanities for that matter. The Christian insists that he can get this straightened out—rests in the God-to-man-through-Christ relationship.

God? What is that? Who is that? Who, when, where, and what is that? God and godliness are a mystery. Man does not understand God because he is not God. Man is man and God is God and sometimes the twain do not meet. Man does not really know in his mind what gives rise to this world, to its destiny, and to the blueprint of the “real” human activity. Man is not God, so why should he have a clear understanding of God? Why can man not let God be God? Because he is an inquisitive and speculating human being.

Where in the world did the Christian get such ideas about these matters? According to the unpublished manuscript of a friend of mine, the Christian answers like this: “we got the ideas from our Creator through a book called the Bible.” My friend continues: “In our Judeo-Christian background we have thought of the Bible as the basis of our authority system, the teachings that we feel come from God (and we) intended to be our basic pattern for inter-action among people.” “But unfortunately,” asserts my friend, “when we think of the Bible as the word of God and as our authority base in the matter of human inter-action, we have to know that (men) have a peculiar tendency to think of (themselves) and (their little ‘in-groups’) as the only proper interpreter of Biblical authority.” My friend becomes even more penetrating than that: “we have reluctantly to admit today that the Bible is not considered the authority for all mankind in our culture as it tended to be twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago.”

No matter what any of us personally hold to be answers to the great and imponderable questions, many of our contemporaries, especially the members of the younger generation, simply are not accepting our old and traditional views of God, of immortality, and the rubrics of conduct. Perhaps, at this juncture in time and space, poet John Updike is trying to tell us something:

Polyarmed and polyheaded,  
Gods proliferate until  
Puristic-minded sages edit  
Their welter into one sweet Will.

This worshipped One grows so enlightened,  
Vast, and high He, in a blur,  
Explodes; and men are left as frightened  
Of mana as they ever were.

The writer of this column, perhaps in the spirit of Rudolph Bultmann, feels that a good deal of de-mythologizing is ahead of us. Our talk about God and godliness, about our authorities and sanctions, and about our answers to the great questions will necessarily be set in different contexts and will reflect changes in our culture.

This seems so elementary. But why are so many Christians so reluctant to move ahead?

Now for an old refrain of the columnist: the new theologies and philosophies will not be written alone at university and seminary desks but on the sidewalks of our cities and in our marketplaces. The God of our day does not ride high above the dusty way. Our God is everywhere, wherever people are.

God? God!
Just moments ago I heard President Lyndon B. Johnson's Halloween message to the American people: As of 8:00 a.m. (EST) tomorrow (Nov. 1) all air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam will cease. At last, a halt to the bombing.

But only some of the bombing. Bombing will, of course, continue within the borders of South Vietnam, and Laos and Cambodia may reasonably expect their jungle trails to be imperiled by falling objects, as in the past. After all, the United States of America must use every allowable resource at her command to protect her fighting sons. Every resource, that is, except her troop carriers, which might be used to bring the soldiers home.

You sense a note of bitterness in these remarks? You suspect I think the President of the United States tricked us into thinking we got a treat on October 31? You think I see dark purpose behind the announcements on the eves of All Fools' Day and All Saints' Day? You're wrong, and right.

The Vietnam war is a big mistake, a colossal diplomatic, military, and moral blunder. We all realize that now. I think President Johnson realized it long ago. But when a blunder reaches the proportions of the Vietnam tragedy, those involved in it can hardly pick up their wounded and crawl home. No; a miscarriage so gross requires commensurate psychic adjustment. To admit guilt for a sin of this magnitude would be more than our frail body politic could stand. We must play games with ourselves for a while, make up suitable stories, utter rationalizations as we ignominiously back out the door. Then, perhaps, we can forget.

That, it seems, is what President Johnson has begun to do in our stead. True, it was he who intensified our involvement in the muddy internal problems of a wretched Asian people. Yet we, too, are involved, for until the New Hampshire primary, not enough of us said enough to force him to stop. Now he must be for us a tired statesman, who spends his waning hours in office "laying the groundwork" for "an honorable settlement" to the country's longest and perhaps ugliest war. His All Fools' eve and All Saints' eve messages show that he is up to the task, and for that, I suppose, history will reward him.

The historian would be premature, however, to begin his chronicle of the Vietnam war just yet. There is little indication that much has changed as regards America's professed interests in Southeast Asia. Still we insist on "free elections" or the "right of self-determination"—which, being interpreted, means the right of the South Vietnamese to endorse a U.S. sanctioned government for the country. Still we insist that we are willing to withdraw all our troops from the area within six months after the "end to the violence in South Vietnam"—which, being interpreted, means the defeat of the Viet Cong. The Halloween message, nevertheless, did represent a step toward peace. What is disconcerting is how small a step it represents, and how many steps have yet to be traveled, and how many tricks have yet to be played on us by ourselves before we can bury in some dusty tome this chapter in our imperialist history.

The tricks, for example: Tonight President Johnson said that all along he has insisted that the bombing could be halted once he had reason to believe that the cessation of the bombing would lead to "prompt and productive talks"—which he now defines as talks in which the government of South Vietnam is a participant. Of course, until the moment of his broadcast, the American people were told that the condition for the cessation of the bombing was the receipt of evidence from the North Vietnamese that they were reciprocating in de-escalating the war. Again, we were told, prior to Halloween, that the bombing could not end because the lives and safety of American troops would be endangered by such a halt; yet tonight the President announces that he has unanimous assurance from his advisors that a bombing halt will not pose any new peril for the soldiers—assurances which, so far as we know, were unaccompanied by any evidence of North Vietnamese de-escalation of the war. The military situation, then, seems not to have materially changed in recent months; what has changed is the readiness of America and her leaders to persuade themselves that nothing is being lost, and everything is being gained, by making this step toward peace. But surely this pose is a farce; no war can de-escalate without loss to all parties concerned. Yet we shall not speak of the loss, just as when this dark episode of our national history is finally over we shall not remember the truth of these disastrous years.

I am not suggesting that President Johnson is insincere in his professed desire for peace in Southeast Asia, nor that he is guilty of playing politics with the war. He does want peace, and he didn't stop the bombing in an attempt to shoehorn Hubert Humphrey into the White House. Yet the desire for peace came only when Johnson realized that he stood no chance of securing his goals in Vietnam, and the bombing halt came only after it was manifest that the war was ripping our country to shreds. Thus, on a deeper level, the bombing halt was a political move, the urgency for peace a sign of the defeat of our evil ends.
A Christmas Letter

Dear Son:

Last night long after midnight I sat in the one corner of the world where you can see the moon rise over Asia and Europe at the same time. . . . It came quickly, as it always has—a thin sickle of silver over the Bosporus. . . . I was sitting on the top deck of a small ship whose business it is to carry tired twentieth century folk along the footsteps of Alexander, Ulysses, and St. Paul. . . . For a week now we had been doing this and I had become increasingly melancholy over the restlessness of those three wanderers. . . . If they had stayed at home tending to their chores, I could be spending these dark autumn days listening to the Olympic games rather than wandering over the trackless sea examining their roads, their great public buildings, and their lingering churches. . . .

By and large, it is a sad task. . . . So much in the calling past—so little in the forgetful present. . . . This morning I visited a Turkish bazaar. . . . Except for the electric lights and an occasional reflection of a hesitant automation (human bearers of goods were replaced by little wagons), I could have expected to meet St. Paul around the next corner, looking for a place to display his tents. . . . Time had done much to us these two thousand years, but the business of buying and selling was still, unchanged and unchanging, at the heart of the human enterprise. . . .

I shifted my chair to face Asia. . . . Across the five hundred yards of water there were lights, many more than there were two thousand years ago. . . . Constantinople had broken its walls long ago and had become Istanbul, city of 532 mosques and sixty Christian churches. . . . For five hundred years the waves which began at Bethlehem and Calvary had eddied visibly here. . . . For my faith and hope it had become a place of mooring, of retreat and defeat. . . .

And still I could not forget that at this moment, in this particular place, I was nearer to the village at which you and I will look again, our eyes clouded with tears. . . . It will be Christmas again, Bethlehem again, as sure again as St. Paul knew it to be when he wandered driven over the sea behind me. . . . Only a few hundred miles beyond the dark rim of hills across the water there were still the village, the dust and dirt of the place where, God decided, He would come into our lives, our bazaars, our great cities, our coming and going over far waters. . . . Here He had come, not far away all these years—and here He had stayed. . . . but it is the benediction of His staying which we have so largely and sadly lost. . . .

A sudden mist fell over the water and beneath a star over Asia I seemed to see the Wise Men on their continuing quest. . . . Two thousand years ago they probably came from the vast lands to my left, perhaps Persia, to bend a willing knee before the King whose conquering way has not yet ended but goes on ad diem Dei et irae, world without end. . . . For a moment, too, I thought what a cosmic irony it would be if the antiquarians of your generation should discover that the Wise Men had come from some forgotten corner of the modern Soviet Union. . . . Certainly you would know that they had been farther away from home than they knew and that the wandering star had been a very necessary travel agency. . . .

And so I turned back to my familiar Western world and to the task and destiny of your generation. . . . You will approach the third millennium of Christian history carrying the Child from Bethlehem. . . . Your journey will be as long and far as the journey of the Wise Men and its end will be determined by the singleness of heart with which you carry the Child. . . .

Your remaining years—and the years after that—will see a new and unprecedented emphasis on the centrality of the Child. . . . Your life will have to be Christological. . . . You will be aware of the coming of the Holy Thing into history as never before. . . . You will remember, heart and soul, the great discontinuity marked by Bethlehem. . . . the towering exception of the Manger. . . . Once more, I hope, you and some of your companions on the Way will feel and know the power which drove St. Paul over the world—the stunning awareness of the "Sein-Dasein-Mitsein" of the living God in Jesus Christ. . . .

Has your generation come to the Kingdom for such a time as this? . . . You have come to a time of despair and hope, but ever and always, I hope, a time for a new upwardness. . . . for I have seen it again, here nearer the place where the unexpected and the undeserved really happened. . . . and the Wise Men saw it. . . . adored it. . . . and went home by another Way no longer needing a star but only the eternal leading of the Child. . . .

My generation is close to the end of its parenthetical ministry. . . . Look closely at Christmas 1968 and you may begin a new sentence.

Dad

The Cresset