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A review of Literature, the Arts, and Public Affairs
January, 1988
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The Cresset
Comment on Contemporary Affairs by the Editor

Why the GOP Will Win in 1988

January. The beginning of a new year. Time to reveal to a breathless nation the outcome of the presidential race in 1988.

Before any of our readers act imprudently on the revelations that follow, they ought to know something of the history of political activity of the person making them. His first political act came in the spring of 1948 when he brought the mock Republican national convention of the Martin Street School's fifth grade in Wellsville, New York to its feet with a stirring speech placing in nomination the name of Harold Stassen. Unfortunately (a case of art anticipating life) Stassen lost the Martin Street nomination to Thomas Dewey. Nothing daunted, the budding political prophet came back the next fall to the sixth grade mock general election campaign to speak eloquently for Dewey against Harry Truman, an effort so effective that Martin Street bucked the national trend and voted decisively for Dewey (only the small-minded would argue that the relative absence of Democrats in Wellsville had anything to do with the outcome).

To bring the story up to date, faithful readers of these columns will recall the occasion some five years ago when Senator Ted Kennedy (acting, no doubt, in a fit of personal spite) withdrew his name from presidential consideration within days of In Luce Tua assuring its readers that he would be the Democratic nominee for 1984. For a time, we withdrew ourselves from the arts of political prognostication, but in an act of public service (and in blithe disregard of past performance) we hereby re-enter the lists.

In 1988, the Republican candidate (whoever he is) will defeat the Democratic candidate (whoever he is). Remember (unless things turn out otherwise) you read it here first.

The reasons for the predicted outcome have only partially to do with the particularities of the candidates in the race for either party, but a full understanding of the situation requires a rundown on the various pretenders to the presidency.

First the Democrats. The desperateness of their condition is exemplified by the fact that their two leading contenders, Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson, are utterly unelectable. Hart's candidacy is a bad dirty joke and everyone knows it, except, apparently, the candidate himself and the 20-some per cent of Democratic voters who (as of this writing) support his quixotic and renegade campaign. It is difficult to determine on which count Hart's arrogance registers higher: his ignoring of his moral unfitness for the office he seeks or his posturing concerning the "new ideas" on which his candidacy presumably rides but which no one outside his campaign staff can discern or define. If the Republican National Committee is not secretly channeling money into Hart's campaign, it ought to be. He is their dream candidate.

Except possibly for Jesse Jackson. Jackson's supporters contend that it is his color that makes his candidacy appear untenable. But it is not race that disqualifies Jackson (though racism of course persists); it is rather his lack of significant political experience and his radical ideological perspective. If Jesse Jackson were white, he would not today be a serious candidate for the nomination. He cannot win, but he will almost certainly attract enough delegates to exercise significant influence on the choice of the nominee and the drafting of the party platform. In both matters, he will push the Democrats to the left, and in so doing he will damage their chances for victory next November.

Among the rest of the Democrats, Michael Dukakis and Paul Simon rise most obviously to the surface of plausibility. Both hold firmly to the left-liberal orthodoxy that party activists require of prospective candidates, yet neither has the manner of an ideologue. But there's little excitement in these two, either. For all his manifest competence and intelligence, Dukakis attracts more respect than enthusiasm. Simon has gained a deserved reputation for decency and integrity, and party activists admire his willingness openly to declare himself a liberal. (It says a great deal about our political culture that while candidates may speak freely of being "compassionate" or even "progressive," it is still seen to require considerable courage to attach the L word to oneself.) Simon has managed to some degree to turn his earnest drabness to his own advantage (no PR glitz there), but one still wonders how well he would wear over the course of a general election campaign.

The remaining three declared candidates—Bruce Babbitt, Richard Gephardt, and Albert Gore—are all improbables, though not necessarily impossibles. Babbitt, an attractive candidate in many ways, unfortunately comes across on TV as a victim from a Rolaid's ad (unfair, but there it is). Gephardt earned a reputation as a talented legislator, but has also earned distrust as an unprincipled political chameleon, notably for his reversal on abortion policy from pro-life to pro-choice.
pro-choice just at the time he began to consider a run for the presidency; it’s hard to see any reason for the switch other than political expediency. Gore would probably be the party’s best candidate in the South—a region essential to the Democrats—but his departures (however mild) from liberal orthodoxy on defense and foreign policy issues have made him unacceptable to many in the party establishment in the North.

Since none of the candidates has caught fire, the notion persistently arises that the party convention next summer will vote “none of the above” on those already declared and turn elsewhere: the names of Mario Cuomo, Bill Bradley, and Sam Nunn receive most frequent mention. Should that occur, the political calculus could change significantly, but the odds against it happening remain high (though diminished from what they were a few months ago).

On the Republican side, the great surprise thus far has been the failure of Jack Kemp to emerge as a major contender. We had confidently assumed that he would consolidate the conservative activists behind his candidacy and become a finalist for the nomination against either George Bush or Robert Dole. (Those inclined to risk the family silver on the assurance offered above of a Republican victory in November might wish to reconsider their options at this point.)

Kemp obviously has been hurt by the comparatively strong showing of Pat Robertson. Robertson is the GOP’s Jesse Jackson, a contender whose support within the party is insufficient to allow him to capture the nomination but is more than sufficient to damage the party’s prospects because of the fear and antagonism his candidacy arouses among the general public. But Kemp’s problems go beyond Robertson; he simply has failed to galvanize the Republican Right, a failure for which it remains very difficult to account.

Since no one takes seriously the candidacies of either Pierre S. (“call me Pete”) du Pont IV or Al (“I’m in control here at the White House”) Haig, that appears to leave the GOP nomination to either Bush or Dole. Both are competent and experienced men, though neither—like Dukakis or Simon among the Democrats—sets off waves of enthusiasm. Each is struggling, with mixed results, to offset certain image problems: Dole, seen by many as too abrasive during his 1976 campaign for Vice President, has so held himself under restraint during debates as to suggest terminal boredom, while Bush, plagued throughout his career with the “wimp” label (odd, considering his genuinely impressive—and unwimpish—resume), occasionally tries too hard to prove that he is indeed a man among men.

If neither party has a self-evident advantage in likely candidates (though the leading Republicans have fewer “negatives” with voters than do the leading Democrats) why the assurance of a Republican victory?

Ideology has less to do with it than was the case in 1980 or 1984. American voters are still generally conservative, though not so markedly so as in recent years. There is a great rush for the moderate center: Democrats insist that they’re humane but not soft-headed; Republicans portray themselves as realists with warm hearts. As already noted, the L word is still out, but caring and compassion (though always within budget restraints) appear on broad display. Democratic candidates generally present themselves as rather less liberal than they in fact are, while most Republicans take on mildly progressive coloring to moderate their conservative instincts. It’s as if both parties recognize, whatever their own inner desires, that most voters are looking for what might be termed “Reaganism with a human face”—government much as before but with rather more attention paid to those on the margins of society.

The simple reality of the situation can be located in recent presidential voting history. The Republicans have won four of the last five elections (after losing seven of the previous nine), and their only loss—a narrow one to Jimmy Carter in 1976—came when they were burdened with the memory of Watergate, the pardon of Richard Nixon, and a bland and unelected incumbent. Even then, Gerald Ford would likely have won had the Democrats not been wise enough (for a change) to nominate a southerner.

The fact is that in America today, while there are still more registered Democrats than Republicans, there are more natural Republican presidential voters than Democratic ones. (Nominal party allegiance weakens at the presidential level, especially among Democrats. One can sum up the situation with the shorthand observation that the New Deal coalition is quite thoroughly dead.) The GOP now has a substantial advantage, other things equal, in the South and the West, and the Democrats begin each presidential campaign at a significant disadvantage. We won’t bore you with statistics, but the figures are there. Republicans also gain by their general advantage in smaller states, which have disproportionate weight in the electoral college system.

Does this mean a Republican victory is guaranteed? Not quite. “Other things equal,” the Republicans win, but equal other things seldom are. But with current conditions of peace and prosperity, and with the likelihood of a Republican candidate at least as presentable in personal terms as his Democratic opponent, the GOP has considerably more reason for optimism about next November than have the Democrats. The Republicans could lose, but they’ll have to work at it.
ACADEMIC LIFE: VOCATION OR CAREER?
Reflections on the Meaning of Christian Vocation—II

(Editor's Note: This is the second part of a two-part essay.)

In the first part of this essay I discussed the secularization of Christian vocation, and in particular its application to the worship of work so dominant in contemporary society and among students in church colleges. My conclusion was that the secularization of vocation into the world of work was not bad because it allows us to recognize and affirm the uniquely incarnational quality of the Christian message. Grace and Judgment encounter us in the world, and in the world, including our work, we must respond.

Our response must not bow to the carnal worship of work, but maintain the primacy of our calling as Christians and keep work accountable to a higher purpose than maximum production, maximum profit, or maximum personal success. This higher purpose must reflect the biblical message of the affirmation of life, through the care of the earth and the care and development of whole people. To maintain our Christian vocation in secularized life we must recognize the words of both Judgment and Grace we encounter in our work and in our attitudes toward work.

In this second part of the essay I wish to apply this incarnational Lutheran theology—as opposed to the Two Kingdoms variety of Lutheran theology which too often collapses into dualism—to what has been called the academic vocation. In a recent article in these pages' editor Jim Nuechterlein expressed himself skeptical about the possibilities of uniting faith and learning, which he said "exist largely on different planes and are incapable of essential fusion or integration." It seems to me that one arrive at this position at least in part because of a too easy acceptance of certain post-Enlightenment assumptions about what is the purpose of education and the university, and how the calling of knowledge relates to other callings.

To put it briefly, we have assumed that academic life is a calling because the pursuit of knowledge is intrinsically a higher purpose than the pursuit of technical training leading to job security. To buttress this assumption we have marshalled quotations from all the ages about knowledge and its meaning, and we have assumed that this rhetoric fits us and the way we actually practice the academic life. I will contend that historical circumstances and intellectual context has changed so much since the enunciation of these high ideals for knowledge that in fact we are far closer to being technically trained practitioners of a career than we are to those who originally bespoke the dignity of knowledge as a calling.

Secondly, our career orientation has helped us to assume all too easily that the only purpose of the university is "an endless quest for truth." This is indeed one purpose for the university, and one not to be surrendered, but historically there have been others which we are in danger of leaving behind. And ironically, just our current positions on the nature of the university are hardest to integrate with Christian faith. I hope to show that if we uncover the true historical roots of the calling of knowledge and of liberal education we can be alerted to ways in which we can hear words both of Grace and of Judgment in our daily work as academics, a work which we are in danger of carnalizing from a vocation into a career.

First let me examine the other historical possibilities for the purpose of colleges such as ours. It is true that one view of the purpose of education is "an endless quest for truth." This is indeed one purpose for the university, and one not to be surrendered, but historically there have been others which we are in danger of leaving behind. And ironically, just our current positions on the nature of the university are hardest to integrate with Christian faith. I hope to show that if we uncover the true historical roots of the calling of knowledge and of liberal education we can be alerted to ways in which we can hear words both of Grace and of Judgment in our daily work as academics, a work which we are in danger of carnalizing from a vocation into a career.

Constance Gengenbach completed this essay shortly before her death from cancer last September at the age of 42. She was Associate Professor of History and Senior Tutor of the Paracollege at St. Olaf College.
Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, the methods of natural science come more to the fore. This heritage of learning fits Nuechterlein’s "endless quest for truth" tolerably well.

But there has always been another ideal of education in the West, associated with the artes liberales ideal. This view of education was developed by Cicero and Quintilian, harkening back to Isocrates. The purpose of education was to train the good citizen or leader, the virtuous orator capable of addressing any subject with eloquence, wisdom, and judgment.

By the eighteenth century nature herself was autonomous, and the Christian God was removed to the position of prime mover or, in a vague way, guarantor of the moral law through punishment after death.

The artes liberales ideal taught respect for a clear set of values and familiarity with classic texts which embodied them. It was this vision of education, and not the speculative one, that informed the various early medieval syntheses between classical learning and Christianity. It was revived in the Renaissance and became the foundation of several patterns of "learned piety" in the Reformation as well.

These two patterns of education, the speculative and the artes liberales, have stood in fruitful and exciting tension for over 2,000 years. But when faculty at liberal arts colleges of the church buy completely into the speculative ideal, with its specialized research orientation, an essential part of this vivid dialogue is lost, and so is an essential part of their real contribution as educators. Education must be seen to deal with people and their abilities—including judgment, values, eloquence, and service—and not just with truth, especially since truth in modern academe can be discussed and verified only in ever more narrow and specialized discourse.

I do not believe that most of the historic statements about knowledge as a vocation support a vision of truth as an end in itself, to be pursued with endless application of refined critical tools. From the seventeenth century or so when the vocation of knowledge slowly emerged as an autonomous calling separate from religious faith, it was still overarched with broader human purposes for knowledge. Particularly French thinkers like Descartes announced the scientific agenda of taming the world through knowledge and bending it to human desires. Here is Descartes’ vision in 1637:

... it is possible to reach knowledge that will be of much utility in this life; and that instead of the speculative philosophy now taught in the schools we can find a practical one, by which, knowing the nature and behavior... of all bodies which surround us... we can employ these entities... and so make ourselves masters and possessors of nature.

Specifically he mentions invention of an "infinity of devices to enjoy the fruits of agriculture and all the wealth of the earth without labor," but also the possibility to "rid ourselves also of an infinity of maladies of body as well as of mind" and perhaps also conquer old age. No impediment to this work exists save human capacity to think, experiment, and share the results.

The scientific strain of the vocation of knowledge continually emphasized that knowledge meant power, control of nature. Seventeenth-century thinkers, Descartes and Bacon included, saw this power at least formally within the context of God’s continuous creation and sustenance of nature. By the eighteenth century nature herself was autonomous, and the Christian God was removed to the position of prime mover or, in a vague way, guarantor of the moral law through punishment after death. For the philosophes increased knowledge meant not only better practical control of nature, but also increased human virtue and happiness. Advances in natural science in the nineteenth century further inflated the vision of the power of scientific knowledge. In 1880 novelist Emil Zola wrote:

We shall enter a time when all-powerful man will have enslaved nature and learnt to use her laws to establish on earth the greatest possible range of justice and freedom. There is no purpose more noble, more lofty, more great. This is where our part as intelligent beings lies: we must penetrate the why of things in order to dominate them, and reduce them to the state of obedient machinery.

Much could be said about the differences between this vision of nature and man’s relationship to it and that found in the Bible, where occasionally the concept of mastery is found, but more frequently the charge is care, culture, stewardship. But another strain of


Emile Zola, The Experimental Novel (1886).

knowledge as a calling developed its own rebuttal to this scientific view. This was the humanistic version of the calling of knowledge. It was perhaps more hospitable to the Biblical tradition but distinct from it.

Blaise Pascal recognized that in addition to the esprit de géométrie which dominated scientific endeavors, the world could also be approached with an esprit de finesse, of insight or intuition into inward meanings. This observation is fully developed only later, in the Romantic rebellion against the Enlightenment. Not dominion but understanding is emphasized. The goal of progressive control of the environment is denounced as shallow, while progressive growth in virtue through knowledge is denied outright.

Johann Gottfried Herder thunders "you Voltaires, you Humes, you Robertsons, classic twilight phantoms, what are you in the light of truth?" In its romantic version, the special calling of the knower is to provide insight into the human heart—an insight enabled not by experiment or manipulation of data, but by love and Empfindung—fellow-feeling or intuition.

Feeling can provide true insight into the nature of the world as well, though it cannot be conveyed in ordinary language. For Beethoven a higher insight into the harmony of all creation could only be expressed by music. In music man has a means to grasp the "boundless universal . . . which without it would remain occult, unnoticed, unsuspected." In this version of the calling to knowledge, the knower actually participates in the divine, and his calledness is quite explicit. "Rare are the chosen ones," Beethoven is supposed to have said. In the same vein, romantics could variously call music, history, or poetry priesthoods.

Still, it is less their own capacity which they celebrate than the truth which they perceive and allow to speak through the forms they create. A few romantics went on to formalize this essentially artistic vision into a specific social role. One example is Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s idea of a clerisy, or a group of priestly knowers given social privileges so that they could body forth a higher vision of truth for their contemporaries. Thomas Carlyle’s image is vivid:

Genius, Poet: do we know what these words mean? An inspired soul once more vouchsafed us, direct from Nature’s own great fire-heart, to see the Truth, and speak it and do it. 8

Truth comes through insight, and the poet is priest. Examples could be multiplied for many pages, but it should be clear that by the nineteenth century both science and humanistic knowledge had appropriated a vision of vocation for their work. In one case the ultimate end was to be creation of a better life for humanity, and in the other a higher truth about life and the human heart. Despite its independence from formal religion, this calling was a priestly one. The knowers proffered their truths to the rest, but they were specially gifted because of their knowledge. I believe that these visions of knowledge as a calling are still part of our consciousness as academics, and inform a fair amount of our rhetoric yet today.

But do we in our modern, professionalized, specialized age really approach our work as academics in this spirit? Or is academic life more a "career," defined by Robert Bellah as a "course of professional life or employment that offers advancement or honor." Career has no face-to-face community, but instead operates with a combination of personal standards of excellence and a national system of occupations governed by quantitative laws of supply and demand.

The industrializing of American society meant the end of economic life as a community of callings and the rise of a corporate society organized around competing careers. Bellah sees the modern research university as one of those corporate entities, and the heroic man of science as one who has "exchanged general citizenship in society for membership in the community of the competent."9 We might protest that the heritage of the modern research university is far older than industrialization and the notion of career. We can hearken back to the University of Berlin, founded in 1810, to find our crucial modern academic principles of total academic freedom and the mutual support of specialized research and teaching. But here again, there is only a surface similarity between our vision of research and that of the founders of the University of Berlin. First of all, they were steeped in eighteenth-century neohumanism, which saw the aim of education as Bildung, "full and harmonious training of the whole individual, and formation of an aesthetically pleasing, cultivated personality."

For the founders of Berlin, disciplined learning or Wissenschaft constituted a "universitas," or organic totality.10 There existed a single all-embracing truth to be investigated from every side with critical methods. In the Gymnasium students had received basic general education. In the university they were to be intro-

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8Beethoven, letter to Goethe, May 10, 1810, quoted in Bettina Brentano, Goethe’s Correspondence with a Child (Boston, 1876).
9Beethoven and Wagner saw music this way; Ranke claimed priesthood for history, and Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis for poetry, to name just a few examples.
11Bellah, quoting Thomas Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science (Urbana, Ill., 1977).
duced to the creative process of searching out the truth, rather than receiving a body of current information. This was not only to arouse their curiosity and enthusiasm, but it was to become a force in their personal moral and ethical development, or Bildung. In Wilhelm von Humboldt’s words:

As soon as one stops searching for knowledge, or if one imagines that it need not be creatively sought in the depths of the human spirit but can be assembled extensively by collecting and classifying facts, everything is irrevocably and forever lost. . . For only that learning which comes from the inside and can be transplanted into the inside can transform character; and humanity in general cares little about knowledge and talk, but a great deal about character and actions.13

Wissenschaft (disciplined knowledge) is not a collection of current knowledge but a process of inquiry. It is an end in itself only insofar as the inward truth of things speaks to the inwardness of individuals, and can therefore serve as an agency in the formation of human character. Education therefore had a great deal to do with the lives of participants, at least as much as pursuit of a speculative ideal of truth.

Neither was true knowledge only what individual specialized scholars found it to be. Lest we think Humboldt did not know the real academic world, this is what he wrote to his wife while in the midst of the university project:

You have no idea with how much difficulty I have to struggle, above all with the scholars—the unruliest and most difficult to pacify of all peoples. They besiege me with their eternally self-thwarting interests, their jealousy, their envy, their passion to govern, their one-sided opinions, in which each believes that his discipline alone has earned support and encouragement.14

This might be called the “Dean’s lament,” and we can imagine it becoming louder in the years after 1830. When German idealism broke down, the vision of philosophy as an integrating element in the study of a spiritually unified body of knowledge was lost. Wissenschaft now meant only the specialized knowledge of individual disciplines. The elements of character formation and an integrated vision of life were lost.

According to Hajo Halborn, “after 1870 German universities turned out chiefly specialized experts, whose general education was poor.”15 It is ironic that at just this point young American students were attending German universities in droves and bringing their ideals back to American universities. Increasingly through the twentieth century good liberal arts colleges have staffed themselves with faculty trained in universities oriented to specialized research, the academic career rather than teaching or learning as a vocation.

After industrialization and the disintegration of German idealists, the third fact to speed the transition of the scholarly vocation to the scholarly profession was the development of precise scientific methodology in the natural sciences, the emerging social sciences, and the humanities alike. In Max Weber’s classic 1917 lecture “Science as a Vocation,” all the lineaments of the modern academic profession emerge clearly. For Weber academic vocation necessarily means specialization, and absolutely single-minded devotion to work as well. He will hear nothing of Bildung or aesthetic self-formation, but only of the specialized discipline. This is not the earlier vocation which claimed that knowledge could tell us the true conditions of existence, or the path to virtue, or the meaning of the universe.

Who—aside from certain big children who are indeed found in the natural sciences—still believes that the findings of astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry could teach us anything about the meaning of the world? If there is any such “meaning,” along what road could one come upon its tracks? If these natural sciences lead to anything in this way, they are apt to make the belief that there is such a thing as the “meaning” of the universe die out at its very roots.16

The theme most vividly asserted by Weber is that academic disciplines can give us technological tools for mastery and intellectual tools for gaining clarity about our assumptions and the consequences of our position, but they cannot give us values. They cannot answer directly the question: “What shall we do and how shall we live?”

Weber’s sophistication is exactly in that he enunciates the limits of science. He has none of the illusions found in the older vocation of knowledge. In his view the academic vocation can provide tools but none of the ends and purposes for which to use them. His own solution is the stoic one, to “bear the fate of the times like a man.”

The difference between our modern academic careers and the historical examples of the vocation of knowledge is that we live at the end of what Weber has called a process of demystification. All dimensions of ultimate purpose and human value which once

15Holborn, II, p. 482.
overarched life and work in the academic vocation have been removed. The ideal framework around knowledge in previous centuries, the grand visions of liberal education, or human service, or Humboldt’s formation of character through inquiry, have all been gradually shed, leaving specialized knowledge as an end in itself.

Sophisticated practitioners of the academic vocation have recognized the limits of knowledge, and admitted that they could not identify the purpose or meaning of human life. Ironically, the abdication of the sophisticated left the field open to crasser views, where “experts” enunciate false or partial values such as power, production, or the triumph of the American way. Or they identify no values at all, but simply continue to do what they have always done.

Sophisticated practitioners of the academic vocation have recognized the limits of knowledge, and admitted that they could not identify the purpose or meaning of human life.

This nearly rote accumulation of more and more specialized knowledge can all too easily be defended as “pursuit of the truth.” Secularization of the vocation of knowledge into specialized disciplines has left education an unsolved problem. Colleges still struggle continuously with encouraging teaching along with research, and struggle sporadically with integration in the curriculum. But there is little agreement as to what constitutes good teaching, and the course of study even in liberal-arts colleges threatens to become simply an assemblage of individual disciplines, with connections between them accidental if they exist at all.

Can the modern, specialized academic career, denuded as it is from a context in values or a broader community of human responsibility, be productively joined with Christian vocation in a college of the church? How can we use our calling as Christians to liberate us from the tyranny of the standards of our work, which in their own way are no less carnal than those of banking or business or technical activity?

True, secularization of the academic vocation has meant in many cases that knowledge has moved away from faith, but in response faith has frequently abandoned knowledge and the world, too. The irony of this response is that in trying to maintain the purity of biblical calling, it has in effect left daily life in the

world to its own devices. It has not challenged and tested this age, the saeculum, to see where God’s Grace is imbedded within it, and where Judgment. I believe that clinging to the Two Kingdoms and asserting that not much fusion is possible between academic life and Christian vocation has the same effect.

Dualism, separation between Christian ethics and the world, is not in the true tradition of Lutherans either. Luther was richly aware of the incarnational dimensions of all life. He showed it in his treatment of the sacraments, his love of nature and music and learning. Luther knew the true substance of incarnational theology—that we encounter God’s Grace and his Judgment in, with, and under the ordinary experiences of life. Centuries of Lutheran practice have all too often lost that unity, and, as H. Richard Niebuhr wrote, have separated “Luther’s interactionism of the gospel working by love in the world of culture” into a “parallelistic dualism of separated spiritual and temporal life.”

The academic vocation in a church college cannot fall victim to such dualism. Instead we should identify the incarnational dimension of both our history and our current lives, to affirm the gifts of Grace and be aware of the warnings we find there. As Dorothy Soelle argues, this is what we were created to do, actually created three times: once in God’s image to be cocreators with him in the world; once in history, attested to by the Exodus story when God led his people out of slavery into the land of freedom; and a third time, in our baptism into death and rebirth in Jesus Christ.

The old being who must die is not only the egocentric; she is also the powerless human being who feels incapable of changing anything in her world. . . .

We are, in a word, not only created for hope but for choice and for action. Our true vocation is thus singular, the calling to participate in and fulfill God’s promises. This vocation can help us approach our other heritages. In each of the visions of academic vocation which have touched the church college there has been something to affirm and celebrate. In each there are things which must be renounced; and in each there are clear institutional actions which, though politically and practically difficult, can and should be taken.

What can we keep of the modern calling of the professional academic, and what must we temper or leave behind? We can surely celebrate knowledge. Our abil-

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ity to know creation in its inward and outward dimensions is one of the great gifts offered us as beings formed in God's image. It can be an avenue toward worship as well, when we reveal and celebrate the intricacy of that creation, "the proof of God's Providence in the anatomy of a louse."20

This kind of celebration of God's world is as possible in scientific knowledge as it is in the humanities. In fact, the two versions of knowledge are complementary and mutually corrective. Without knowledge which aims at action and control there is no disciplined way to change and improve life. Without knowledge as insight into the wondrous parable of existence there is no connection with purposes, values, or truths that transcend manipulation.

It has been suggested that the proper task of the church college is to "resist the process of intellectualization" which has been the fate of Western culture.21 I disagree, and not only because, as Martin Marty puts it, "Christianity will have a hard time having its voice heard if the public deduces that our colleges and universities settle for people who reproduce knowledge and filter it through the glass of Christian greenhouses where students are protected from the unorthodoxies where adventure, and thus learning, occurs."22

Even beyond this, we should continue to deepen and broaden our knowledge because it is the most sophisticated and thoughtful knowledge which has a sense of its own limits, and the givens outside of which it cannot operate. Only charlatanism claims quick and total solutions through research and technology. At its best, knowledge itself will show the limits of knowledge. As Max Weber put it, "the devil of intellectualism is old, and so you must grow old to understand him."23

By the best and deepest of knowledge I do not mean the most sophisticated manipulation of reality. The warning of Judgment to be heard about our pursuit of knowledge is that too often we worship such manipulation, and fail to approach our disciplines with sufficient thoughtfulness and profundity. Max Weber and other thinkers at the end of the nineteenth century who struggled to develop reliable disciplinary methods were very sensitive to philosophical questions of meaning, purpose, and significance in specialized knowledge.

Only when such a philosophical approach is taken do the limits of our knowledge emerge clearly. Within such a philosophical and historical context the practices of the academic disciplines show themselves to be human intellectual constructs. Here again knowledge as science and knowledge as letters stand as warnings, each against the other. If the sciences approach their own disciplinary methodology philosophically and historically, they are reminded of the limits of knowledge. The very productivity of science in life reminds the humanities that timeless contemplation of the human condition can be a dangerous aestheticism unless it reaches out to inform public discourse and action.

There are institutional policies and actions that follow from this discussion of the meaning of knowledge in the light of Christian vocation. The philosophy and history of the academic disciplines tend to be viewed

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23Weber, "Science as a Vocation," p. 152. The full passage is: "This does not mean age in the sense of the birth certificate. It means that if one wishes to settle with this devil, one must not take to flight before him as so many like to do nowadays. First of all, one has to see the devil's ways to the end in order to realize his power and his limitations." Weber stopped with asserting the limits of knowledge, however, and preferred a prideful stoic response to the issue—"bear it like a man" (p. 150). See Schwehn for an opposite interpretation of Weber's position.
in colleges as an intellectual luxury, a kind of trimming on the tree of the "hard knowledge" the disciplines have to offer.24 Sometimes specialists themselves view them that way, or assume that methods can simply be taught along with the real subject matter of biology or literature or sociology.

Our colleges must not allow this to be the case, because a sophisticated sense of method is a primary bridge between modern knowledge and the sense of the limits of human capacity which makes room for religious truth. It seems to me as practical today to require that newly hired faculty have a philosophical cast of mind and thoughtful view of their disciplines as it is to require that they be practicing Christians. Methodological sensitivity in a discipline can insure that it will be taught in ways that leave room for the seed of faith to grow and mature, whether or not the teacher shares that faith. The "enemy" of religious faith is not modern knowledge, but knowledge too shallowly conceived.

Can we also celebrate our second heritage as disciplinary specialists? Yes! Excellence, intellectual vitality, discovery are all gifts of a creative God to the creature in his image. We can celebrate our professional expertise, but we need not deify it. Specialized graduate education in the twentieth century (perhaps already in the nineteenth) is really technical training. It emphasizes the mastery of information and the most current techniques and bibliography more than it offers a broad perspective either on knowledge or the relationship of knowledge to human life. This is as true of the education of historians and specialists in Romantic poetry as it is of sociologists and natural scientists. Such disciplines have cut up the pie of reality and also the college curriculum into departmental units.

This has been detrimental to the most urgent task of late-twentieth-century education—the need for integration or coherence of some kind. The issue is not simply one of political resistance to interdisciplinary study. Some scholars find such study morally and intellectually objectionable and a betrayal of true academic vocation, because the faculty participating in interdisciplinary work deal with fields where they are not experts.

This insistence on having "expert" knowledge has also resulted in a one-sided view of what good teaching is. The disciplinary specialist tends to convey the best and most up-to-date information and use the most up-to-date critical and analytic tools and equipment. Active specialized scholarship helps to prepare for this kind of teaching and it certainly has an important place on the college campus.

But what if good teaching is also something else? What if it is awakening curiosity and stimulating judgment and training eloquence? This kind of teaching can easily be in conflict with modern specialized scholarship, simply because the student gets little practice at independent inquiry and judgment but instead sits at the feet of the expert.

Liberal arts colleges should see that the importance of teaching is probably greater than their role as creators of knowledge, and extend this recognition to their internal reward system.

Hajo Holborn has commented that even with the finest specialized education that German universities could offer, students failed to "acquire the knowledge that would enable them to make critical judgments on the fundamental questions of their own lives or general problems of the age. Most of them gained merely professional training for a specific career, and in the conduct of their later lives simply conformed to the prevailing ethical standards of their social group."25 Such an education is no education for a Christian called to recognize and cooperate with God's work in the world.

These warnings do not mean that we should dispense with current professional standards or qualifications in the disciplines. They help us achieve the intellectual vibrancy that learning must have. But we do need institutional policies that will balance and correct the biases of the specialized disciplines.

It seems clear that the teaching function undertaken by college faculties is done nowhere else in our society. Liberal arts colleges must recognize that the importance of that role is probably greater than their role as creators of new knowledge, and extend this recognition to their internal reward system and not only to their conversations with prospective students. The unique contribution of liberal arts colleges has much more to do with the impact of knowledge upon students than it does with the speculative ideal of the "pursuit of truth." The technical specialized university

24Robert Bellah, in an appendix to Habits of the Heart (Berkeley, 1985) entitled "Social Science as Public Philosophy," pleads for a social science which synthesizes historical, philosophical, and scientific approaches. He sees the modern, specialized discipline not so much incapable of such an approach as uninterested in it (p. 298). For a devastating description of the tenor of contemporary social science, see p. 300.

will always purvey more bits of truth than the small college. We must recognize that the quality of student-faculty encounter is our real gift, and we must intentionally cultivate this rather than “covering fields.”

It is clear that the departmental domination of the curriculum needs to be balanced by encouragement of interdisciplinary and integrative studies. Such programs, where they exist, are usually marginal in the curriculum and in the reward system of the college. This must be changed, because not to do so defies professional expertise at the expense of teaching and learning.

**There are teaching techniques designed to relax competitiveness—by using group assignments, or ungraded activities, or letting discussion occur while the teacher is absent.**

It also behooves us to relax our competitive professional ethos long enough to recognize that the peace, love, and mercy so prominent in what Christians are called to do are sometimes absent in the dynamics of our classrooms and our professional activities. There are teaching techniques designed to relax competitiveness—by using group assignments, for example, or ungraded activities, or letting discussion of material occur when the teacher is absent. These sometimes grate against our professional ideals of expertise, thoroughness, and competence and our students’ desire for graded success, but they foster remarkably well those qualities of wonder and independent judgment which are so important in true learning. There are cooperative methods of faculty evaluation which could generate more improvement and less anxiety.

We must also recognize the falsity of many of the divisions created by education that narrow our sense of community. The Western celebration of knowledge has as its darker side a social and intellectual elitism that forgets the simple laborer. Our ideal of liberal education leads us to disdain “mere” technical or vocational training. To many in church colleges the “problem of vocationalism” is defined as the need to prevent training in technical fields from entering the liberal arts college.

This problem simply evaporates when viewed in light of the various traditions of vocation examined here. In the biblical view of vocation no one kind of work is superior to another if all are viewed and penetrated with a sense of God’s incarnation among us and our decision in response. Examination of the academic vocation has shown that literature and history can as easily be pursued as a form of technical training as can business.

The choice between “liberal” and “vocational” education or a combination of both should depend on the tradition and practical necessities of each college. Both kinds of education and both kinds of work need to be viewed as the arena of grace, but also judgment. We need to defuse the defensiveness of liberal educators about these practical concerns by creating programs bridging theory and practice in economics and business, math and computers, and internships for students and faculty. We also need to liberalize the practical disciplines by challenging their assumptions about what constitutes ultimate meaning and purpose in human life.

We must make greater efforts to bridge other false divisions separating us from community with the rest of humanity. We need to rethink the liberal arts curriculum not only in view of the social elitism it represents, but to compensate for the monopoly of western subject matter represented in its canon. Grace and judgment meet us in the action of ideas and lives of non-Western non-white non-males too. We also need to challenge and put in perspective the values represented by the western canon—individualist, activist, assertive, oriented toward practical achievement and success—because these are the values of a materialized vocation, not an incarnational one imbedded in the secular world. The perspectives of women, the handicapped, and peace studies can show us new and unsuspected faces of grace and of education.

Joseph Sittler has said that the purpose of the church college is that generation after generation shall be sophisticated, that is, made wise about the realities of human life. We, as academics, armed with the truths and lies and puzzles and achievements and failures of human knowledge through the ages, can certainly do this. We must also annihilate innocence—“the innocent understanding which remains untouched by the misery and pain and ambiguity and uncertainty” and also the magnificence and sheer giftedness of life.26

All this enables us to open to students and ourselves the magnificent cosmic dimensions of the Gospel of God’s Grace in Jesus Christ, and to prevent us from shrinking the Gospel to our own personal or cultural size. But we must annihilate our own innocence too—our unthinking acceptance and parroting of the current goals of the modern multiversity. We can celebrate our vocation as professional academics, but our vocation as Christians can give us the standards by which to judge it too, and the courage to do so.  

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26Joseph Sittler, unpublished lecture from 1981.
CONVERSATION WITH FRANCOISE SAGAN

Reflections on Art and Life

The following conversation took place last May in Françoise Sagan's sumptuous Paris apartment, on its second floor, where the telephone does not ring and where the maid is not allowed to enter except during the absence of the mistress. She offered champagne and whisky, but did not have any herself because of a recent pancreas disorder. About an admirable photograph on the piano, depicting a Parisian street, she explained that it was her own work, that taking pictures was one of her favorite hobbies, that she was proud of it. The discussion turned to her latest novel, Un Sang d'aquarelle, to the process of writing, to money, to gambling, to life and death, and to many other topics. Although she does not grant interviews often, once one has managed to obtain an appointment, she is charming and she knows how to put one at ease.

QUESTION: You have many admirers. Many of these do not like your work but like you.

ANSWER: This is true. Recently, when I had that accident in Bogota, I got a lot of mail. When I was able to leave the hospital, people would stop me in the street and ask me to have a drink with them. Even today I am told: "Ah, you are well. I am so glad." It is nice to hear it.

Q: To what do you attribute your image of a person so close to many, so attractive?

A: I like people. I have no preconceived idea about anyone. People must feel or know this. I think, also, that unlike many writers of repute, I held on to a certain naturalness. I was told that this comes across when I appear on television.

Q: On television one notes also your tone of voice, very particular . . .

A: Of course, you mean to say that I talk too fast, so fast that I am incomprehensible. Maybe it is because they can't understand me that they like me.

Q: At the beginning of your career you were not liked. You were said to be the cause of so many scandals.

A: Of course there were scandals. Being successful at age seventeen . . . it's just not done.

Q: People did not like the idea that you were earning a great deal of money and that you were leading a rather dissolute life. The media did not portray a nice image of you.

A: No, but the public always found me pleasant. I was making a lot of money and I was throwing it out the window. But why not? There is a bourgeois reflex that money must be saved, invested. My temperament is more romanesque than economical, and the public likes the romanesque.

Q: Your last novel, Un Sang d'aquarelle, has just appeared. Can you tell me how you write? During the day, at night?

A: Always at night. There is too much noise during the day. The telephone, people always dropping in, my son's friends. At night it is peaceful. I work from midnight to 6 a.m. I always have a bad beginning; I am malcontent; I stumble. And I don't manage to work every night. But once I get started I hardly stop. Ah, but getting started is so difficult. I have the first sentence, but after . . . there is so much blank paper. It humiliates you. Then comes the flight, the nirvana. And when I start believing in what I write, the pleasure is immense. One is king of the world.

Q: Do you like your books?

A: At the moment of the nirvana, yes. I feel some tenderness for them for two or three months after they are finished, then, when the public gets hold of them, there is a divorce.

Q: Do you not reread them?

A: Never.

Q: Did you always want to write?

A: I began at age twelve. I was writing poems; very bad poems. I was always reading. Even now I read a great deal. I read day and night. I sleep very little;
Jour de tristesse, an immortal work.

Case, I shall only stop writing when I shall have written. But it would be very difficult; and the result very uncertain. Today I don't know. Of course, there is genius in Proust. That is evident. But he spent his life writing. He did little else.

Do you ever think of living less and becoming a writer of genius?

A: No, of course not. Maybe if I were sure of becoming one I would consider it. But it would be very difficult; and the result very uncertain. Proust stopped living because he had asthma and he could no longer run around. I don't have asthma.

Q: Just being a writer, do you think that there was a precise border between genius and talent. Today I don't believe it. I would stop writing. I write with the hope that I will be really proud of my next book.

Q: In *Un Sang d'aquarelle* is there only talent?

A: The sentence you paraphrased about Proust, I must have said it when I thought that there was a precise border between genius and talent. Today I don't know. Of course, there is genius in Proust. That is evident. But he spent his life writing. He did little else.

Q: Do you foresee a day when you will stop writing? Do you have any desire to retire?

A: There are so many idiots who write until their last breath that I myself could become one. In any case, I shall only stop writing when I shall have written an immortal work.

Q: Do you think that one recognizes it when one has written it?

A: When one recognizes it one is truly an idiot.

Q: In general do you agree with your reviewers, critics?

A: Rarely. I find them either too tolerant or too harsh. Never in the middle. Especially in so far as *Bonjour tristesse*, they were much too tolerant. I was not so dumb as to think that it was a masterpiece. I was only seventeen, but I had read a great deal and I already knew Proust.

Q: Can you explain what is particular about your talents?

A: With difficulty. A kind of naturalness, I think. A certain grace in writing, an inborn gift which makes me find the adjective that goes with the noun, the word that really expresses the idea. I am never paralysed by something because it is current. I always think that the next idea will be better. There is, also, in my writing, a mixture of arrogance and humility: the arrogance is the certitude that I have grace in writing; the humility is that at the same time I am never really sure of it and I try and do better in the next sentence. Of course, I am not the only one to have a certain grace of style, but I don't fuss about it. I have a certain talent, but I don't make a system out of it. And yet, I have never made the best of my talent. I could have done better.

Q: Do you have the feeling that your talent was hampered by . . . a certain laziness?

A: I work much, but I could have worked more.

Q: Your books sell all over the world. But if one day they stopped selling, could you do anything else? Is there any other profession you would like to exercise?

A: I have never done anything but write. I stopped my formal education at seventeen, when *Bonjour tristesse* appeared. I kept on writing since, and my popularity remained intact. If I were no longer successful I should like to be a psychiatrist since I exercise the profession every day, with a lot of people, without getting paid.

Q: Are you under contract or is it you yourself who decide when to write a book?

A: I, but more often my tax accountant.

Q: Are you always sure of being able to go on? Isn't it scary to start a new novel?

A: I know I can always write a new novel. Especially today since I just finished one and I like it and I feel capable. But when I shall begin another I shall again have doubts after the first sentence.

Q: Does it annoy you, that "certain music" of which one speaks whenever one describes your style?

A: I got used to it. That "certain music" is the bitter-sweet tone. But in *Un Sang d'aquarelle* there is no longer a "certain music," there is Wagner.

Q: Can we change the subject? You are a leftist. You wrote many articles in defense of socialism, but your work has no message; it has even been accused of being futile.

A: Once I did write a political novel, *Le Chien couchant*. The critics all said: "Why is she getting involved in all this?" I am accused of remaining in my ivory tower, but when I get out they reproach me for the fact that I do. It was safer in an ivory tower. Do you recall that Lamartine was one of the greatest precursors of the 1848 revolution, yet he never wrote one single political poem?

Q: The Sagan legend, is it still reality? That woman you have a son, twenty-four years old. When he was born you said something very beautiful: "I am like a tree that has an extra branch."

A: It is exactly how I felt. And at the same time I felt freer than ever. I felt total freedom.

Q: Is it strange because in general the new responsibility imposes constraints.

A: No. One has only one responsibility: vis-à-vis oneself. Above all to yourself be true, remember...
Shakespeare?
Q: But you were living fast and dangerously. Your son's birth did not make you slow down?
A: Maybe just barely, but not immediately. It is difficult to stop me. Or for me to stop. I might have if I had had several children.
Q: It seems, however, that lately you did slow down.
A: You think so?
Q: You no longer drink . . .
A: It is not I who put the brakes on that; it is my pancreas. If I drink I have pain. It is not willingly that I stopped; it is because of fear.
Q: You no longer gamble in casinos . . .
A: I do incognito and when I have the money. You know, one is born a gambler as one is born blond or brunette. I was born a gambler.
Q: All games, or just the casino kind?
A: All games. But especially those in a casino because they are more dramatic. And then, in the casino, money once more becomes what it should be: tokens, chips one throws in the air. I have the passion of gambling in my blood.
Q: So uncontrollable that you are now refused permission to enter certain casinos?
A: For five years. What stupidity! I have to go play in London, or in Monte Carlo. The traveling costs so much money. I am beginning to pay my debts, but when I hear the cling-cling of a one-arm bandit, I cannot resist. It is so difficult to interdict things to oneself. I cannot gamble, I cannot drink, what will be next? Will I have to give up smoking?
Q: So that you have not changed?
A: Of course not. I put on certain pious airs so that my bank won't worry, but my heart is not in it.
Q: But your piety seems to pay off. Now you are even being invited to Mitterand's house.
A: Let's not talk about politics.
Q: Do you really have to make an effort to give your banker, and the President, such a reassuring image?
A: I do, since I have the same urges as I had at seventeen. But I know now that it is more practical to wear a mask of reasonableness. I have a son who is twenty-four, and it would be very annoying for him to have a different kind of mother. And at my age, a woman-child rouée is not a very esthetic personage.
Q: I find you very different from the image I had of you. You seem rather sad.
A: I have humid, melancholic eyes, and they cause people to pity me. My eyes provoke tenderness in people and this is very practical. Having said that, though, there are still many who cry on my shoulder day and night.
Q: No doubt because you also have the reputation of a very generous woman.
A: I prefer to have this reputation rather than one of a stingy person who holds on to her money.
Q: Do you contribute to charities as many stars do?
A: No. I am being solicited directly by individuals, and I don't have the means to contribute to organized charitable institutions.
Q: Recently you went to Colombia and to Poland. Was it with a militant or humanitarian aim that you made these trips?
A: I went to Bogota to see Bogota, as a tourist. I went to Poland because I wanted to see Lech Walesa. It's such fun to see him. Such natural, brute strength; such shrewdness. Beautiful eyes, as those of a wild animal. I found Poland to be an incredible country. Under occupation, with a resistance movement, and with collaborators headed by Jaruzelski, that ferocious Petain.
Q: If we could change the subject again . . . You said once that one knows a writer when one discovers his or her nostalgias. Which are yours?
A: I regret not having a slower life, a more harmonious one, more poetical. I dream of lying on a huge bed, on a beach somewhere, with nothing to do. I am beginning to pay my debts, but when I hear the cling-cling of a one-arm bandit, I cannot resist. It is so difficult to interdict things to oneself. I cannot gamble, I cannot drink, what will be next? Will I have to give up smoking?
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unwelcome guest arrives earlier than expected. And then, you think of no one, neither family nor friends, for you are alone and you tell yourself: “Nuts. Already?” Before the horror of it the body revolts, but the mind says: “Oh well, there you are. How absurd!”

Q: And when you awaken still alive?
A: You exclaim: “Wow!”

Q: A “wow” that lasts, one that changes your way of looking at life, or do you go on as if nothing happened?
A: I have never been able to determine how being close to death changed my life. But I don’t look at death as do those who have never been near it. Having seen death limits its prestige. Did that change my life, though? Maybe it made it more inconsequential, more frivolous.

Q: You have often been accused of frivolity. In fact, one imagines that you like being frivolous.
A: I find frivolity elegant. It is a place of refuge if things go badly. After one has seen death close-up, when a literary critic tears you apart, you don’t take it very seriously any more. You tell yourself: “There are far more important things than that.” Also, frivolity is a way of being civilized, of respecting people by not being presumptuous. Example: If I knew I had a mortal disease now, I would not even tell those closest to me.

Q: But you would want the doctors to tell you?
A: Of course. Not six months in advance, that’s too much; two weeks before, that suffices. They should tell you because it is enough that one lies to oneself. When I thought I was dying I really never accepted the idea. The spirit refuses. That’s not lack of courage; the spirit must go on struggling.

Q: Do you think that your books might survive, make you immortal?
A: I don’t believe in survival in the libraries. But it is funny that you should talk to me about it since I have just been encouraged to become a candidate for membership in the French Academy and join the Immortals. I refused. Because . . . because of many reasons. First of all their uniform would not suit my body, and then it is contrary to my ethics: honors disgust me a little. Yet, it is annoying because there are enormous advantages in belonging to the French Academy. You become rich for the rest of your life. Even for a little preface you are paid a fortune. And you are never put in prison. Do you know that there has never been one imprisoned Academician? So there are many advantages. Yet, I don’t want to join. But why were we talking about the Academy?

Q: It came up when we chatted about mortality.
A: Oh yes. You know, getting some letters telling you that your books helped this or that reader, that’s already satisfying enough. I get many such letters. Even if the aim of the novel is not therapy, it is nice to know that it can be.

Q: What is the aim of the novel?
A: To get as close as possible to the purity of art.

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Poems with No Names:
The Sacred Pathway II
(After Lao Tzu)

4.

The square-cut log quiets the whole room
Where it stands on end
It is a lesson; like Jerusalem
It is at peace with itself
It is resting—
The origin of prayer
The foundation of order
In the world.

5.

The authentic one, the person of peace,
Is like the square-cut log,
A unity at rest
Never calling attention to himself.

The authentic one is always filled
With compassion. Like the abbot
In the desert he receives the cup of water
Whenever it is offered,
Even from an elder.

The authentic one’s peace and compassion
Well up from within,
Are never required by virtue of morality
Or etiquette
Which, then, is no virtue.

The authentic one does not think about what
He does. Intuitively he drinks, and eats,
Walks and listens, leaves the flower on the stem
Sits in stillness and silence.

Travis DuPriest
FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY

A Review of Recent Developments

Over six years have passed since the publication of Stages of Faith (San Francisco, 1981) by James Fowler. Though he and others had written articles and published modest volumes on faith development prior to 1981 (e.g., Life-Maps by J. Fowler and S. Keen), it was the publication of Stages of Faith which established the theory of faith development as an important field of theological inquiry in the 1980s and beyond. It is the purpose of this essay to make a critical assessment of faith development studies since that time and briefly comment on their implications for the church’s life and ministry.

Development is a modern concept that has proved to be of enormous heuristic value for all the humanistic disciplines. It was only a matter of time until the idea of development would affect the way Christians think about faith. Faith, of course, is not easily defined. It has always had both an objective and subjective meaning. Faith can mean “what” is believed (e.g., “the Christian faith”), but it can also refer to “how” a person believes (e.g., “trusting Jesus”). Faith development theory focuses on the subjective side of faith, what Fowler calls the structure as distinguished from the content of faith. It is obvious that “how” a person believes changes over time, and thus we have different educational materials for first graders than we do for adults, but it is only recently that serious studies have begun to chart the stages of this development and explore the implications for Christian education, pastoral care, evangelism, and many other practical and theoretical concerns.

Fowler’s book made such an impact at the level of both theory and practice not only because there was readiness for the idea of faith development within contemporary culture but also because his theory was based on solid empirical studies that he and others had been engaged in at Harvard University and later at the Center for Faith Development Studies which Fowler established at Emory University and still heads. Fowler defines faith as a relationship of trust and loyalty to centers of value and power, a definition similar to that of Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr, both of whom understood faith to be a human universal relating the individual to what is ultimate in his or her life. Fowler’s approach is unique in that he traces the patterns and passages of faith throughout the life cycle. He charts the process of development on the basis of interviews which he and his colleagues conducted with individuals (both Christian and non-Christian) at different ages and from different stations in life.

Fowler defines faith as a relationship of trust and loyalty to centers of value and power, a definition similar to that of Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr, both of whom saw faith as a human universal.

Fowler distinguished six different stages of faith from the interview material, each having its place within a sequential order that is invariant. Each new stage builds on and incorporates into its more elaborate pattern the operations of the previous stage. Thus development is always in the direction of greater complexity and flexibility. Fowler acknowledges his debt to Piaget’s theory of cognitive development and Kohlberg’s theory of moral development. He understands faith to include forms of logic and moral judgment but also additional aspects of meaning-making by individuals, such as perspective taking and the forming of symbols.
Though Fowler goes beyond the more limited cognitive structures that Piaget and Kohlberg examined, he still belongs to the family of theorists called structuralists (positing cognitive structures) or constructivists (the mind constructing reality rather than simply perceiving it). The key idea in this approach is that all knowing is interactional. The mind is never simply the passive recipient of an incoming stimulus, be that a football game or a revelatory event; there are evolving structures for making meaning, including the meaning of faith.

**Psychotherapists generally have been critical of faith development theory for being too rational and not attentive enough to psychodynamic factors that operate largely in the realm of the unconscious.**

A detailed description of the six stages of faith can be found in Chapter 5 of *Stages of Faith*, as well as in other writings of and about Fowler. *Primal Faith* (Stage 0) begins with a prelanguage disposition of trust and loyalty toward the environment which forms in the rituals of relationship with those providing care. *Intuitive-Projective Faith* (Stage 1), lacking stable logical operations and the ability to differentiate and coordinate one's own perspective from and with others, gives free reign to the imagination and gives to the child's experience an episodic character. *Mythic-Literal Faith* (Stage 2) can make use of symbols and concepts, but remains largely concrete and literal. It most frequently constructs an ultimate environment on the analogy of a consistent, caring, but just ruler or parent. In the effort to gather its meanings, story is as close as it comes to reflective synthesis. *Synthetic-Conventional Faith* (Stage 3) emerges generally in early adolescence when worth is heavily keyed to the approval of significant others, including God, who from this stage onward is conceived in personal terms. Authority resides outside oneself. A person at this stage says, "I believe what the church believes." *Individuative-Reflective Faith* (Stage 4) shifts from a tacit system of beliefs to a more explicit meaning system subject to critical examination. This can be a period of doubt and soul-searching as symbols rich in mystery are "flattened out" in order to get clear and explicit conceptual formulations. The focus of faith's authority shifts from outside to inside the self. *Conjunctive Faith* (Stage 5) arises with an awakening to polar tensions within oneself and to paradox in the nature of truth. It seeks to unify seeming opposites in mind and experience. Though faith at this stage knows that symbols can be reduced to abstract meanings, it develops a second or willed naiveté that can appreciate a depth and power in symbols as never before. *Universalizing Faith* (Stage 6) brings an identification with or participation in the Ultimate. One begins to love and value from a centering located in the Ultimate. Though rarely attained (Jesus, Martin Luther King, and Mother Theresa are examples), it is the goal toward which all faith intuitively moves.

A recent critical review of Fowler's faith development theory bears the appropriate title of *Faith Development and Fowler* (Birmingham, Ala., 1986). I strongly recommend this book to anyone seriously interested in the subject. The book is a collection of essays written by theorists in a wide variety of fields who engage in critical conversations with Fowler on the strengths and weaknesses of his theory, as well as the implications of its "practical" uses.

The opening chapter on "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning" by Fowler is an updated essay first published in 1980. Here Fowler provides a clear and concise introduction to the major dimensions and insights of his theory. The next section of the book offers a number of evaluations of faith development theory, the best of them by Craig Dykstra, who questions whether faith is really a human universal or rather a mode of life that is grounded in a more or less conscious and chosen responsiveness to the activity of God in the world. The latter definition, which comes closer to the way most people would define faith, suggests a very different pattern of growth in faith than that of Fowler.

Part III of the book has to do with enhancing faith development theory. In an excellent essay, Sharon Parks argues that faith development theory would be enhanced by a more thorough understanding of the nature of the imagination and its relation to the human spirit and the Spirit of God, an idea that we will explore more fully below in examining her book on *The Critical Years*. She suggests that by examining the role of imagination we can overcome the problem of the relationship between structure and content that cognitive-structural theories have difficulty addressing.

Part IV of the book explores the relation of faith development theory to ministry. The best of these essays is by Carl Schneider: "Faith Development and Pastoral Diagnosis." Schneider's critique of Fowler's theory comes at it from the viewpoint of pastoral psychotherapy. Therapists generally have been critical of faith development theory for being too rational and not attentive enough to psychodynamic factors that operate largely in the realm of the unconscious. Schneider approaches Fowler from the perspective of
object-relations theory, a major school of psychology that is now of special interest among pastoral psychologists. *Faith Development and Fowler* concludes with a response by Fowler to the essays included in this volume. In his response Fowler is remarkably open, generous to his critics, and clear in differentiating his position from that of others.

**Some participants in a recent research project objected to the definition of faith as the making of meaning.**

**First, there is no mention of God, probably because the definition is derived from Tillich-Niebuhr-Fowler.**

Current interest in faith development theory has moved in the direction of adult development. This is true of developmental theory generally. A number of studies in adult development in the past decade have sparked this interest. The most influential of these studies is *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York, 1978) by Daniel Levinson, an in-depth longitudinal study of forty adult men. Studies in adult development can generally be grouped under what has been classified as life cycle theory, the father of which is Erik Erikson and his well-known delineation of "eight ages of man." The central idea in this approach is that there are psychosocial stages that persons go through, ready or not (e.g., adolescence), and some rather clearly defined transitions (e.g., mid-life crisis) that can be anticipated in any person's life. This is a rather different approach to human development than the structural-developmental approach of Piaget and Kohlberg that so deeply influenced Fowler's faith development theory.

Fowler's recent book on adult development and Christian faith, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian* (New York, 1984) shows the influence of life cycle theory much more than did *Stages of Faith*. Erikson, Levinson, and Carol Gilligan's feminist interpretation of development come into play along with Fowler's own faith development theory. The key theological terms in Fowler's analysis are vocation and covenant, understood as ideals of Christian selfhood and contrasted to the popular ideal of self-actualization. The strength of his analysis lies in his exposure of the self-grounded "evolving life structures" that are so prevalent in the case histories of Levinson's study and in the alternative he offers of adult faith development grounded in the purposes of God.

Fowler's book on adult faith development is well done, and I commend it to the reader, but the most significant research on adult faith development in this decade has been conducted by the Religious Education Association. Between 1981 and 1986, the Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle Project, sponsored by the REA, studied a variety of factors relating the processes of aging and faith development among adults. This extensive research involved well over 1,000 persons in North America and produced findings that have many implications for various forms of ministry in the church. The report of this research project has recently been published (June, 1987) under the title *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*. This report is not to be confused with a book by the same title that was published in 1983 (Sadlier) and edited by Kenneth Stokes, the over-all project director. That book was generated at the early stages of the research project and contains essays by a wide variety of people who were assisting the research staff in generating appropriate hypotheses for testing.

The REA research project worked with the following definition of faith: "the finding and making meaning of life's significant questions and issues, adhering to this meaning, and acting it out." The core of this perspective is that faith is the making of meaning. Some participants in the research objected to that definition. First, there is no mention of God, probably because the definition is derived from Tillich-Niebuhr-Fowler. Second, the definition is not that which most adults would choose, a point borne out by the research itself. In one of the multiple choice survey questions, 51 per cent of the respondents defined faith as "a relationship with God" and only 20 per cent chose "finding meaning in life."

The research used two complementary research designs to gather data, one a large statistically valid Gallup sample, and another in-depth, face-to-face exploration of deeper meanings. The major findings of the research are as follows:

1. Maturity in faith is related to resolving psychosocial tensions in marriage, job, etc. Psychological and spiritual health are closely related.
2. The period of early middle-age (35-45) is the time of the greatest struggle with resolutions to life-cycle tensions and is likely to be the most critical time for adult faith development.
3. Men and women experience the faith journey differently. Women reflect on and find fuller dimensions of meaning in experiences they associate with their faith journey and tend to share faith attitudes with others more than men. Men tend to be more traditional in their faith statements.
4. Involvement and participation in a religious community is not by itself a determining factor in one's
growth in faith unless that community helps to “sponsor” or encourage one's spiritual quest.

5. Crisis experiences, both positive and negative, appear to be the major factor in the stimulation of faith development. Most change in an individual's faith takes place at times of life transitions.

6. Two out of three persons believe that faith should change throughout life, although fewer church members than non-members hold this view.

7. Higher education leads to more openness to faith change, and also to a weakening of traditional faith orientations. Many regard this as having “less faith” rather than “more faith,” a finding that appears to be related to the previous point that church members often feel that faith should not change.

8. Involvement with social issues and concerns appears to enhance faith development.

9. A balance between the “cognitive” and “affective” dimensions of one's faith development is highly important for a fully integrated and functional faith.

10. Non-traditional forms of education often lead to greater maturity in one's faith development.

The research report on *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle* is well worth the purchase of a copy. It provides an overview of the entire study, a description of the methodology used, a summary of the findings, theological reflection on the findings, implications for ministry, as well as scholarly documentation of the project's two research designs. The material in this report should guide programs in Christian education, pastoral care, and outreach ministry for many years to come.

Of all the recent publications in faith development theory, the one I find most exciting is Sharon Parks' *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (San Francisco, 1986). One reason for my particular interest in this volume is that it helps me as a college professor to better understand the process of faith development in the college years. But I think I would be excited by this book even if it weren't my task to nurture the faith of college students. Parks provides the clearest and freshest description of faith as meaning-making that I have seen. The book is aptly named; the college years are the critical years for making meaning. Put within the framework of the Lutheran tradition, the college years are the time when a student moves from a confirmation faith that has been given by the community to the composing of a faith that fits with his or her emerging understanding of self and world.

Parks charts the journey toward mature adult faith by providing a model for understanding that journey that is clearly diagrammed and easy to follow. One of her unique contributions to faith development theory is that she discerns a stage of development between adolescence and adulthood, the stage of the young adult. This stage is characterized by a form of cognition that she calls “probing commitment,” a form of dependence that she defines as “fragile inner-dependence,” and a form of community that she calls an “ideological compatible group.” These are apt descriptions of the provisional self that is in the process of transition from being a person whose identity is defined by external authorities and the secure person who knows who s/he is within a community of adults. Her description of young adult faith is must reading for college professors, campus pastors, parents of children in college, thoughtful adults who would like to reflect on where they've been, and perhaps even some perceptive college students, though most of the latter are likely to be so deeply embedded in the process that they will be unable to get enough distance on it to use Parks' analysis for self-understanding.

Of all the recent publications in faith development theory, the one I find most exciting is Sharon Parks’ *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By*.

Parks makes another striking contribution to faith development theory in her chapter on “Imagination.” Fowler's faith development theory makes a sharp split between the structure and content of faith, the “how” and the “what” of faith. Though acknowledging the importance of the content of faith, he devotes almost all of his attention to the structures of cognition, dependence on authority, forms of community, etc., that are at work in forming the content of faith. Parks shows the power of the imagination at work in the formation of adult faith. As she states: “We must recognize that the function of structures is to hold life in meaningful patterns and that . . . life’s patterns are given form, not only by the structures already described, but also by the images the structures hold.”

Parks offers a corrective to this “neglect” in the Piagetian paradigm with a description of critical “moments” in the process of imagination as these bear on human development: (1) conscious conflict (something not fitting), (2) pause (or interlude for scanning), (3) image (or insight), (4) repatterning and release of energy, and (5) interpretation. These elements are borrowed from James Loder's oft-quoted analysis of *The Transforming Moment* (New York, 1981). The use of these elements to describe both the role of imagina-
tion in faith development and the task of higher education as a "community of imagination" is carefully and thoughtfully done.

Parks understands faith development to be the task of all those engaged in higher education, not just campus pastors and theology professors. Though most of my colleagues would accuse her of a bit of hyperbole in describing "the professor as spiritual guide" and "the syllabus as a confession of faith," at least one college has taken this with full seriousness. Under the direction of J. Paul Ballas, Thiel College has engaged in a complete rethinking and restructuring of its entire educational program under the rubric of faith development. A full report of this venture will soon be published under the title, *A Handbook on Faith, Development, and the Lutheran Church College*. It will deserve careful study by all those engaged in higher education, but especially by church-related schools which see faith development as one of their primary objectives.

There is another approach to faith development which I can only mention in passing. This approach grows out of the application of psychoanalytic object-relations theory to an understanding of faith formation. Anna Marie Rizzuto has written a fascinating account of the *Birth of the Living God* (Chicago, 1979) in which she argues convincingly for very early formation of images of God that grow out of relationship to parents. Rizzuto is a psychoanalyst and writes from that perspective. John McDargh places this approach within a theological frame of reference in his book on *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God* (Lanham, Md., 1983). The strength of this approach resides not only in providing a perspective for viewing the earliest stages of faith formation, but also in offering a corrective to the heavily rational approach of the structuralists on whom Fowler is so dependent. Carl Schneider's essay in *Faith Development and Fowler*, referred to earlier, makes that point convincingly.

Within the last decade faith development theory has clearly established itself as an area of theological study that will continue to attract scholars for years to come. Though sufficient empirical research has been done by the REA and the Center for Faith Development to establish the validity of faith development theory, much remains to be done in testing new hypotheses (e.g., Parks' positing of a new stage). Specialists in Christian education, pastoral care, and evangelism should find much in faith development theory for reflecting on ministries in these areas.

One of the greatest challenges that awaits an enterprising scholar in the future is to attempt an integration of the various "schools" of faith development theory: structural, life cycle, and object relations. Robert Kegan has gone a long way toward this goal from the psychological side with his superb book on *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982). A similar study of "evolving faith" that would have both the breadth and depth of Kegan's analysis is something devoutly to be desired as faith development theory matures in the years ahead.

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**First Light**

In the first light it happens, when the place starts up with sounds and smells of coffee somewhere, and a new dog barking where before was silence.

Then small things gouge the spirit, when the eyelids are closed, hands still folded on your breast, knowing where you are by the stillness of the room.

Here is where it begins; the first moves toward life, reaching down, past faces, past parts of lives still clinging to your lazarus spirit, folding back the long shadows that rise and fall in diaphanous waves on the inside of your eyes where night sounds slide on mossy stones and foxes move in light from bark and stone.

Then a bird's clear insistent song weaves a scarlet thread through the deep-throated chapel bells; your eyes open and drawn upward from the cool shades of sleep, Christ on the white-washed wall becomes your morning prayer and birth-breath.

---

J. T. Ledbetter
Interrogation?

Charles Vandersee

Taking a walk in Portland late one afternoon, down the street and through a spacious hillside cemetery, I came upon three or four people picking wild Oregon blackberries.

I stopped to pick a few myself. They were perfectly ripe, yielding at the merest touch, and very tasty, like the famous plums in William Carlos Williams’ poem—the ones I ate that you were probably saving for breakfast (“Forgive me / they were delicious / so sweet / and so cold”). It was Sunday. I took a handful back to the house, where the people were glad I was pleased but seemed not impressed.

These wild Oregon blackberries appeared again a few days later, between Ashland and the Pacific coast. Along the Umpqua River was a large roadside park, and again only a few people were picking the lush ripe berries. Most of them, it appeared, were going to go unpicked. They turned up again that night, where the yard of the motel in Astoria overlooked the Columbia River.

Next day I mentioned these little juicy pleasures to the woman in the information booth at the Astoria Column, a landmark overlooking Lewis and Clark country. “Oh, those pests!” she replied, with matronly condescension, “They take over everything!”

Wild blackberries, it turns out, are no luxury in August in Oregon. Any more than forsythia and azaleas in Dogwood in April. My discovery was merely personal; everybody else knew about these berries. Furthermore, the natives knew their value.

There must be a sort of anthropologist in most of us. In a new place, that is, looking about and discovering what’s there, but then going on to find out the truth that doesn’t yield itself at a glance. And enjoying that disruptive truth.

I remember knowing, in the 1960s, before driving into Los Angeles for the first time, that the city was part of the great Southwest desert. But throughout Westwood Village were these immaculate green lawns! At the Tudor house where I had rented a room, I got out of the car and looked. The lawn was being watered not by a green Midwestern hose but by a buried network of pipes, with outlets all over the lawn. The desert was not a desert—I felt as amazed as Lewis and Clark, or Keats’ Cortez, seeing the Pacific.

Consider also, only a few weeks ago, our Sunday morning church class. Perversely, the leaders use earnest topical books produced by church publishing houses. These books guide lay people from text to selected text in the Bible, enabling us to “discover for ourselves” certain patterns in the mind of God, which He has hidden among vast stretches of desertlike, unteachable material.

Perversely, while the Sunday discussion plodded toward its predestined discoveries, I snuck a look at adjacent passages. We were doing man’s disobediences. What I personally discovered, in Genesis 6, in a passage not assigned, was that God, about the time of Noah, had grown disgusted not only with men and women. He was also furious with the birds. Also with cattle and the creeping things. This I had never known. But none of the natives was around to ask, so I missed the pleasure of disruption. What had the birds done?

These are such little things, the epiphanies of travels and texts, important merely for making us want to keep on living. A satisfactory epiphany is a discovery surprising in itself but then leading on, by investigation, to a disruption that enhances the pleasure. The blackberries were delicious, but the pleasure was agreeably disrupted by learning that the natives despised them.

Consider what happened in a class last fall. When we read Emily Dickinson I was surprised by a discovery in a poem I’ve read dozens of times:

After great pain, a formal feeling comes.
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs—
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?

The pleasure was suspicion: I wagered to myself that the critics were going to differ as they discussed “He.” So the poem would nicely illustrate for the class the problem, often in Dickinson, in reaching closure and consensus.
Possibly we have here what theorists call "indeterminacy," arising from instability in our language. But it's more satisfactory to tell undergraduate students that we have a case of "intelligent readers disagreeing," out of ignorance, or failure to pay attention, or perverse ingenuity, or maybe the instability of language.

Now this lengthy illustration merely betrays the eccentric passions of an English teacher. I admit it. Also, not everybody enjoys blackberries.

Well, the premonition was right. A fairly recent book on Dickinson told me that "He" was a sort of other self. The heart that questions is standing outside itself and trying to get distance on that self by putting itself in third person: Am I the one who has been bearing this pain? And it seems so long, but how long is it? "He" is the heart itself. Another book on Dickinson said something similar: The stiff Heart has "a sense of wonder at its own former agony."

But an older book, the first edition of Understanding Poetry, by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, brought in a different conclusion: "The heart, obsessed with pain and having lost the sense of time and place, asks whether it was Christ who bore the cross."

So here was the next step after discovery: the pleasurable "disruption." Indeed, a bit more disruption than I expected. I had expected disagreement as to whether "He" was Christ, but I expected that every critic would offer Christ as at least a possibility. It would be just like Dickinson the skeptic to wonder whether any kind of strong Savior did indeed bear the cross, or griefs, or sorrows. If so, why were they still around?

Now this lengthy illustration merely betrays the eccentric passions of an English teacher. I admit it. Also, not everybody enjoys blackberries. What can I say?

What I've been intending to say is that some sort of pattern is operating here. A two-stage sequence of experience, discovery and disruption. What would a third element be?

Following discovery and disruption might well be persistent interrogation, until reaching a sort of foundation. What if in Oregon these random natives are not only right but wrong? Suppose it turns out that certain other natives are harvesting great quantities of blackberries, mixing them with pectin and sugar, and marketing them across the nation as Genuine Oregon Wild Blackberry Preserves? Available in your gourmet food section.

That is, a foundation truth about wild blackberries could be not only their intrinsic goodness and their territorial aggression, but their contribution to the economy of the state.

As for Genesis, suppose that most of the commentaries agree. Perhaps in Hebrew tradition the corruption of human beings is understood as necessarily defiling nature. (As suggests the Interpreter's Commentary, while Wycliffe ignores.) There is the fascinating and disruptive information that enhances my discovery. What I need now is the foundation I perhaps cannot get: the reason the Genesis writer chooses birds, of all things, for making his point. Is it poetry? Is there purpose here, lost and arcane?

As for Dickinson, what if, out of 100 commentators on the poem, 90 do see Christ? My luck is to find two, in a random investigation, who have not plunged deeply enough. The foundation would be that Dickinson is not as indeterminate as she may seem.

A satisfaction of this little pattern is the way it helps me think about how the mind approaches the bottom of things, the place for a foundation. Involved in education, I think about this every now and then, especially in pondering the failures in American education addressed by such recent critics as

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The bottom seems to be what we need, but the superficial discovery is fascinating, and the disruption that may follow the discovery is very often so appealing that the mind happily rests there. As, I confess, my own mind often does, especially in a lower-division undergraduate class, which is where we were reading about pain.

At the moment, all I want to do is connect this spurious repose with the conventional lexicon that we use without thinking. The term "education" applies to all the official stages of a person's mental growth: elementary education, secondary education, higher education, postgraduate and professional education, continuing education. As if at all levels essentially the same thing goes on, which seems to me not the case.

Maybe we need to alter the lexicon. Let "elementary" education be called schooling, implying the common place, the school building, where the young and ignorant repair, as to an old-fashioned gas station, for filling and for little kind services.

Let "secondary" education drop that indeterminate adjective and be called simply education, according to the conventional (some say spurious) etymology of the word, the "drawing out" or "leading forth" of what's within; that is, emphasis on both critical and creative powers once a certain fund of information has become present, and also certain skills, linguistic and arithmetical.

Then, for "higher education" an emphasis on what I have been talking about: interrogation. The process by which the mind pushes down farther into both fact and significance, until at or beyond what is hitherto known. Bedrock. As it is, "higher" education may, unfortunately, connote ascent—into abstraction, into ivory towers—whereas "interrogation" is necessarily a descent, a plunging, a mining or excavating expedition.

I have no term at hand for postgraduate or professional education, since postgraduate education seems to me a continuation of interrogation. And professional education varies from profession to profession, emphasizing both skills and knowledge in ways that make it something like schooling, but transposed to a different key.

Does it matter what we call things? Does one word rather than another, ten thousand times a year in the media, affect our analysis of current problems?

All this may be merely whimsical. Does it matter what we call things? Does one word rather than another, ten thousand times a year in the media, affect our analysis of current problems?

Again, you have the English teacher before you—a fellow who bristles whenever local educators get quoted in the Dogwood Daily Progress about the "youngsters" they deal with. I dislike this word intensely; it sounds as if children K-12 are predestined to remain diminutive: ignorant and irresponsible beings, instead of being led by schools into adulthood through imitation of adulthood. The old term connoting such mimesis is "pupils"; one of its dictionary meanings actually is "disciples." I would gladly welcome "pupils" back into public discourse.

So that I'm curious whether public discourse on colleges and universities would focus and improve if we kept reading and hearing about interrogation. College preparation thus becomes "getting ready to go away to interrogation." College itself is, more than anything else, inquiring. Asking across the curriculum. Students are understood to come to college to use question marks, more than to marvel, to rest, to recite, to "expose themselves." The name of the game is Foundation.

We would be dealing with our spurious ease. We know how easily we rest at beginnings, with the pleasures of the senses. And how we also rest comfortably at halfway points, the pleasurable disruption that new information provides. A fine passage of Keats, in a letter, comically affirms the senses:

Talking of pleasure, this moment I was writing with one hand, and with the other holding to my mouth a Nectarine—good God how fine. It went down soft, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint [plumpness] melted down my throat like a beatified Strawberry.

For "youngsters," the pleasurable thing about Keats is the plumpness of his poems, his sensuous language, almost making things palpable. A "pupil" of the same age might ask how long it took Keats to develop such language; well before he died at age 25, would be the disruptive and fascinating answer to rest with.

An "interrogator," moving on beyond language and biography, would then ask how such precocity develops, and be led to the foundation of the matter—the answer being interrogation itself. Well before his premature death this youngster had for years been brilliantly interrogating Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth about language, thought, art, and imagination.

From Dogwood, yours faithfully, C.V.
Privatization

Paul H. Brietzke

Many of us get more conservative as we grow older, if only because we seek to conserve something from our past that seems better than what we have now. For me, that better past was the late 1960s. We fought over Vietnam, the War on Poverty, and many other things; almost everyone regarded public affairs as matters for public concern.

In the years that followed, most hippies all too quickly abandoned an apparently superficial commitment to "community." They became yuppies who got "into" Ronald Reagan and private consumption. The Reagan Administration can claim few noteworthy and lasting achievements, but historians are likely to remember this Administration for a massive transfer of public confidence and other more tangible resources from the public sector. (I assume that defense contractors like General Dynamics and Lockheed still fall into the private sector, and that our Persian Gulf policy should be made by the President and State Department rather than by Standard Oil.)

I was set to thinking about the privatization of our public life by a remarkable book—A History of Private Life: I. From Pagan Rome to Byzantium (Harvard University Press, 1987). This book is very expensive, probably because of the many enjoyable but usually irrelevant illustrations, so read it on interlibrary loan if you can (a good '60s-style tactic, that). Seeking to make Pagan Rome come alive for his readers, Paul Veyne contrasts behavior there with the "modern view" that public service is corrupted when personal ambition is placed above the common good. Veyne neglects the most modern view, that a stimulated private ambition most efficiently serves our common good; we are quickly becoming more Roman than the Romans. Most of our public functions may thus become Roman rackets, requiring that an official quickly deliver the goods to his or her single-interest clients or be driven from office.

As is increasingly the case with us, public dignity was a private property in Rome. An official's "credibility" was everything to him, and being credible is a very different thing from telling the truth or even being right. Gravity of gesture and language were indicia of authority, and the equivalent of our media consultants and P.R. people coached officials, much as candidates and toilet paper are packaged today for private consumption. Bread and Circuses were used to seize the limelight in Rome. Today, the media control the limelight on less Bread and more Circuses: the Statue of Liberty and the Constitution, Jim and Tammy Faye, Contragate and Bork confirmation hearings, and the Pope's visit—triumphs of form over substance.

Roman civic virtues came to include ostentation and a disdain for the poor who were, and now increasingly are, thought to be morally inferior to the beautiful people (Seneca) who have the leisure for civic duties. "The Gods" formed a private religion that impartially guaranteed interests that wished to appear disinterested; Roman Gods patriotically rewarded your and your nation's friends, and enemies were punished—with plagues rather than with AIDS.

We know what happened to the Romans, but the means of governance among the "barbarians," the ancestors of many of us, are less well known. They are detailed in a History chapter by Michel Rouche. In fifth-century Gaul, wealth became a purely private matter, and there were attempts to make everything private, especially homes. The same thing—"cocooning"—is happening among us, but absent a broad legal right to it, this privacy will belong only to the rich. Privatizers (privateers?) like Robert Bork would deny us this legal right because (among other reasons) privacy can then become what economists call a status good; flying to a Swiss clinic for your abortion or stationing a guard in the foyer of your condo costs a great deal of money. Bork got hoist with his own petard as, absent a privacy right, his videotape rental records were exposed to public view. Such records are as revealing of a yuppe's "lifestyle" as are his income tax returns.

We know what happened to the Romans, but the means of governance among the "barbarians" are less well known.

The Germanic origins of power were magical, divine, and military, with the king condemned to conquer in order to maintain his authority. Reagan comes across like a modern-day German princeling, a
**Gott mit uns** magician from the Silver Screen who keeps his troops happy, not with the booty of war but with the pork barrel of the Defense Department. "Enemies" are more or less synonymous with "enemies," Nicaraguans for example, because we have not shared a banquet with them. Among the Merovingians and increasingly among ourselves, the total confusion of public and private and an inability to rise above strictly personal and concrete realities foster an inability to even conceive of the common good.

Of course, history does not repeat itself event-for-event. The purpose of my historical conceit is to temper the conceit we may feel in the inevitability of progress in America. Articles by Robert Lekachman and Karl Freiden, in the Summer 1987 *Dissent*, attack our expansionist conceit over privatization. We should at least be aware of the fact that profit-making schools, hospitals, research centers, job-training programs, and prisons are rapidly displacing public, or at least non-profit, institutions. There may soon come a time when corporate America will fulfill all of the needs that it chooses to fulfill and that some of us cannot pay for as individuals. We can then say that "America is back," to private and public charity akin to those of the Victorian or Dickensian eras.

The argument put by Bork and other Chicago School gurus is that privatization widens "consumer" choice, while saving money by substituting marketplace disciplines for bureaucratic rigidities. Americans are apparently willing to buy into these arguments. Gallup and Roper polls cited by Freiden show that more than 80 per cent of Americans believe the public sector to be less efficient than the private sector, and that government employees are less diligent than their corporate counterparts. The median estimate of how much government spending is wasted approaches 50 per cent. People presumably think about public inefficiency while paying far too much for gas to put into their made-in-Detroit guzzlers.

In our free-enterprise economy, government gets to produce and sell only what is left after corporations and private consumers have picked over the opportunities.

Freiden is right to attribute these public attitudes to ignorance and misunderstanding. In a private-enterprise economy like ours, government gets to produce and sell only what is left after corporations and individual consumers have picked over the opportunities. Most government products are, like education, consumer regulations, and police protection, unsuitable for assembly-line mass production. Most of them are also unsuitable for marketplace exchanges; B-1 bombers, Yellowstone Park, and clean air are not sold like Chryslers. Where the public and private sectors overlap in the marketplace, government invariably caters to the less affluent households. Such households are unattractive to corporations and to the affluent generally, as standing reproaches to our entire system.

Private consumption can be satisfying, if you plan expenditures well and reckon that you got what you paid for. But collective consumption is always unsatisfyingly divisive because, through taxes, you have to pay for what you do not want as well as what you want. I am opposed to Star Wars, but I have to pay for it anyway; if we funded the system by passing the hat among dedicated Star Warriors, its costs would come nowhere near to being covered. People seldom know what they are getting in the form of public goods and services. Apart from the Defense Department, government spends little on advertising. If people were made to want good schools as much as they are made to want Chicken McNuggets and Star Wars, our consumption patterns would begin to change.

The public sector operates in a fishbowl, as it should, but the private sector is relatively immune to criticism. News of Contragate and of the equally juicy insider trading scandals on Wall Street broke at about the same time, yet the latter scandals received much less media attention. So long as accountants can make a corporation appear to be profitable, even its shareholders are unlikely to complain. Our values have become so distorted that predatory images of business, of greed and callous self-interest, reinforce its reputation for efficiency.

This reputation does not survive a hard look at the evidence. Lekachman notes that inpatient bills from for-profit hospital chains (e.g., Humana) were 24 per cent higher than for non-profit hospitals in California (11 per cent higher in Florida). The for-profits even had 4 per cent higher costs in Florida. So much for private-sector efficiency, when the for-profit hospitals can "cream off" patients (conspiring difficult people and ailments to public hospitals) and can improve "productivity" by increasing to barbarous heights the ratio of patients to nurses and residents.

In contrast, public hospitals do more research and teaching, offer a broader range of health care services, and provide more philanthropic care. Where is all the money in for-profit hospitals going? To shareholders, to senior executives who have M.B.A.s rather than M.D.s, and to inefficiency. If
present trends continue, more of the indigent, elderly, and chronically ill will get more of the kind of care Americans apparently believe they deserve.

Private prisons would presumably have no incentive to reduce overcrowding or improve minimal conditions.

The just-deserts perspective is even more interesting in the for-profit prison movement. If we don't care about sick people, how much less do we care about prisoners? Private prisons would presumably have no incentive to reduce overcrowding or to improve conditions beyond the minima required under an inevitably loose state supervision. We would be lucky if these places became no worse than Victorian workhouses. Some analysts are apparently advising their clients that for-profit prisons are the best possible investment. (Remember that you read it in The Cresset first, and reward your editor accordingly.)

In a May 1987 Vanderbilt Law Review article, Ira Robbins notes that there are only some thirty for-profit prison facilities in the U.S. so far, many of them for juveniles or illegal immigrants and none for adults thought to require medium or maximum security. Because for-profit prisons are so new, Robbins must ask many more questions than he can answer. The most important one is: What happens to the prisoner's constitutional rights, the protection of which the State, having put him or her in jail, presumably cannot delegate to a corporation? What happens when private warders believe they must use potentially deadly force or go out on strike? What happens if the for-profit prison declares bankruptcy after a riot, in order to avoid paying up when inmates sue for injuries? What happens to the authority of government and to the integrity of the system of justice?

If we can have for-profit prisons, it strikes me that, by the same logic, we can have for-profit courts and we can expand private police forces. We would then have a corporate state, literally. I do not want to sound alarmist, but delegations of public functions to private entities can become fascism when, as in inter-war Germany and Italy, these entities delegate their authority back to a charismatic leader. What gets lost in the shuffle are checks and balances and a separation of powers.

A neat parallel to events in Europe can be found in our Depression's Blue Eagle, the National Recovery Administration. Each industry was supposed to devise its own Code of Conduct—fix prices, wages, production levels, and so

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### Haunting

Someone has told me of a holy place.
Clear as a bell it calls me over the water:
island, clapboard farmhouse, garden, prayer.

I have dreamed it all this restless night,
shimmering within the mist, a reaching warmth;
island, a garden, books on sturdy shelves, weathered hands.

This morning the fog has settled in,
hiding the simple paths I'd seen to reach
flowers bright in the farmhouse window, prayer in all weathers.

"Fog, too, is part of the process.
Follow the buoy bell to the island;
white in the sunbreaks a farmhouse stands
and a garden for prayer."

And when I have found it, no one is there.
Bright with chrysanthemums, solid as houses,
inviting as bookshelves, light breaking through—I am an island.

Island again, I walk my stark beaches,
gather white rocks, carry them home. Empty as a bell,
I am calling over the water,
"Here is a holy place."

Kathleen Mullen
forth—in a massive privatization of economic policy. The Supreme Court decreed this scheme unconstitutional in Schechter Poultry, the “sick chicken” case. Had this not happened, businessmen seemed desperate enough to cede additional powers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, who would face little political opposition after the 1936 elections. We may not be so lucky next time; the Court may not be so conservative and the president may not be so democratically-inclined.

We must fight to regain caring attitudes because the pursuit of a narrow self-interest is counter-productive in an increasingly interdependent world.

A less far-fetched prediction is offered by Lekachman: privatizations seem “fated to replicate the expensive history of the military-industrial complex, complete with conflicts of interest on the part of bureaucrats who plan to move into the very private sector with which they officially deal. . . .” Ossified corporate and governmental bureaucracies will wage a “phony war” with each other on the basis of the principles of creative accounting.

The citizens’ duty here, as elsewhere, is to learn which questions to ask, and to demand reliable answers before following the “experts” down the primrose path. That path leads, as we know, to an “efficient” nuclear power and to Vietnam, the experts’ war. We should not be fooled by a few experiments that are temporarily successful because of pressure to perform induced by close observation.

Could General Motors really manage public schools effectively without violating our beliefs about individual rights and self-governance? If General Dynamics is so inefficient a defense contractor, how could it run a prison efficiently? (General Dynamics has acquired one of almost everything else, and it is only a matter of time before it tries to acquire a prison, perhaps as a source of cheap labor for its coal mines.) If Volkswagen, Airbus, British Petroleum, and Credit Lyonnais have proved fairly efficient, why wouldn’t similar public corporations be equally efficient, why wouldn’t similar public corporations be equally efficient in America? Isn’t the threat of creating such a public corporation the only thing that will force our oil companies to behave?

There is nothing more difficult to define than the public interest. But if we do not even try to define it as best we can, we certainly will never discover what it might mean for us. Maybe we tolerate the idea of for-profit prisons because they seem to absolve us of responsibility for the difficult remaking of inmates into valued members of society. The social costs of recidivism will remain, however, even if corporations reap some of the benefits.

As with our penology, many aspects of the War on Poverty were poorly designed. But much of the public care and concern that provoked this War were genuine enough, and we have apparently lost them. We must fight to regain caring attitudes because the pursuit of a narrow self-interest is counter-productive in an increasingly interdependent world with a fragile ecology and nuclear balance, and with huge gaps between rich and poor people and nations. Ultimately, attempts to define the public interest are acts of faith, faith in our ability to learn from the likes of the Romans and the Vandals, and faith that there will be a future which can be made better for everyone.
academics in English departments across the country, still struggle to 
insure that the novel is depicted, if 
not as dominant as it once was, at 
least as more artistically prominent 
in the critical ranking of the two 
forms.

Tom McDonough, in the unique 
position of being both a fiction­
writer and a professional camera­
man, characterizes such thinking in 
"That Blank Page, the Screen," an essay on the relation­
ship between film and the contem­
porary novel: "Novelists may find 
consolation in their faith that the 
written word is wiser, more defini­
tive. Prose, they maintain, is the 
true cinéma vérité; the novel is best 
at conveying the experience of 
walking around in the world. The 
attentive writer is still able to skip 
around the sensorium more ad­
droitly, more evocatively than the 
cameraman. And there are times 
when the merest preposition is 
skipped for the many movies 
churned out under the old studio 
system, it was a matter of conveni­
tence to use the previously proven, 
carefully crafted plots of novels 
and to accept gracefully the audi­
ence appeal accompanying the 
adaptation of a classic text or a cur­
rent best-seller. In addition, studio 
heads knew their fledgling film in­
dustry suffered from a lack of so­
cial and artistic respect; therefore, 
adaptations of critically acclaimed 
shorts, lent credibility to move­
making as an art form, or at least 
as an entertainment more highly 
esteemed, more acceptable for the 
average American family to attend. 
More importantly, middle America 
began its gradual openness toward 
film attendance as a regular ritual, 
started to equate the merits of the 
two art forms, and initiated its shift 
of allegiance from one medium to 
the other.

However, in recent years, the use 
of novels as the bases for film 
scripts has become an economic 
necessity—not so much for the film 
industry, but more so for the pub­
lishing houses. The balance has 
tilted toward film, and it is the 
publisher now who needs the ad­
vantages that only an accommodation 
with Hollywood can provide and 
only a novel's association with a 
movie can offer.

Today, the terms of authors' con­
tracts, and in some instances even 
the acceptance or rejection of their 
works, are determined by editors 
who take into account the suitabil­
ity of their writers' manuscripts as 
future film projects. Some novels 
are even sold to film companies be­
fore their release in order to fi­
nance publication and to guarantee 
a profit. Additionally, many novels 
will sell well when their attachment 
to a film is stressed by an advertis­
ing campaign. For instance, Har­
court Brace Jovanovich and the 
Pocket Books division of Simon & 
Schuster, publishers of the hard­
cover and paperback editions of 
The Color Purple, which won the 
Pulitzer Prize and the American 
Book Award for Alice Walker in 
1983, sold many more copies (in 
fact, The Color Purple was the 
number one best-seller for the 
1985-86 publishing year) when an 
advertising blitz linked the novel to 
the Steven Spielberg treatment.

Indeed, an ironic twist of fate 
has created a climate in which the 
health of American fiction may be 
affected by the film industry as 
continued publication of novels by 
new, untested writers—often 
thought one of the most essential 
elements needed to keep American 
fiction fresh and vital—increasingly 
can occur only because of support 
procured from the film producers.

One would expect, as reported in 
recent articles, that proven, 
Pulitzer-Prize-winning authors such 
as John Updike and Larry McMur­
try would command large bids from film companies, and they have: film rights for Updike's *The Witches of Eastwick* were purchased for $250,000 and McMurtry's *Texasville* was sold for nearly $1 million. However, one has to be startled when the same articles report that the following list of new authors, all previously unpublished, also had screen rights for their first novels bought for large sums by movie producers months before scheduled publication dates: Glenn Savan (*White Palace*)—$200,000 plus; Michael Chabon (*The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*)—$300,000 plus; Scott Turow (*Presumed Innocent*)—$1 million; H.F. Saint (*Memoirs of an Invisible Man*)—$1.4 million.

In an interview which appeared in a recent issue of the *New York Times*, Arthur Miller comments on the influence film is having on contemporary fiction and theatre: "None of us who write is willing to confront the power film has had on our culture. It's an immense pressure on the way we write, tell stories, even think. The methodology of movie storytelling reflects dreams. It's gotten deep into the way we write. And it's perfectly admissible."

It is possible that in addition to the form of American fiction being influenced by the cinema, as James Monaco also has pointed out in his comparison of the narrative methods of contemporary fiction and film, the role of those who will fill the ranks of new American fiction-writers will be determined to some degree by filmmakers as well. One can only be in full accord with accounts suggested by a number of other critics that consequences, arguably both positive and negative, are already apparent as these influences fostered by film have contributed to the current trend toward minimalist fiction and resulted in an elevation in the evaluation of young, overnight sensations, such as Jay McInerney, Bret Easton Ellis, and Tama Janowitz, a trio of presently popular authors among those whose works create contemporary situations written in a style which publishers believe tends to translate more easily from the printed page to celluloid.

Against his wishes, Selznick had to revise a few of the scenes of *Rebecca* before the final prints were produced.

However, in the midst of all this harmony evident between factions of film and the written word, a dissonant, or perhaps dissident, chord could always be heard. Despite the obvious interconnectedness of the two art forms, the economic cooperation between the industries, and the various degrees of dependency on one another displayed by representatives of each medium, a schism still exists between those who believe filmmakers owe it to the audience to be faithful in their depictions of the novels from which their characters and stories have been borrowed and those who see directors, despite their acknowledged indebtedness to these novels, as independent artists under no obligation to act as second-rate copiers tracing mere imitations of others' original works.

This controversy has continued since the first instance in which a filmmaker placed on the silver screen situations or characterizations which strayed from the actual events or characters described in the novel upon which they were based, since the first time a director determined that his own plot inventions and technical innovations amending the script derived from a novel need not reflect even the explicit or implicit intentions of the novelist.

A classic case of such a conflict has been revealed by Leonard J. Neff in his new book, *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood*, which, among its reports, details disputes between Hitchcock and Selznick during the making of the legendary *Rebecca* (recently released on videocassette). Selznick supported a strict interpretation of the already successful novel by Daphne Du Maurier. (In fact, Du Maurier had been Selznick's first choice to write the screenplay.) However, Hitchcock, one of the first directors recognized by the French New Wave critics as a true *auteur*, credited his own success as a filmmaker to his "ruthlessness in adapting stories for the screen," and encouraged a fresh treatment of the novel. Ironically, in this instance Selznick, as producer, was able to exercise his power over Hitchcock and overrule the director's attempts at a vast overhaul of the novel, but Selznick was not able to overcome some of the objections of the 1930s censors to his version which demonstrated total fidelity to the original. Against his wishes, he had to revise a few of the scenes before the picture's final prints were produced. As a result, Selznick still wound up with a film not completely faithful to the novel he revered so highly, yet a film which received great acclaim.

Furthermore, despite the eleven Academy Award nominations for the movie, and despite the fact that *Rebecca* initiated Alfred Hitchcock's transition from England to America, enabling him to expand his influence as a filmmaker, the lack of an opportunity to place his individual signature on the film led the director later to disown the project as "not a Hitchcock picture." Two decades before the *auteur* theory would be advanced, Hitchcock was already advancing a definition for the role of the direc-
tor as the creative force in filmmaking, even when working from the established stories of successful novels.

By identifying himself only with those films in which the original scripts were redesigned by his camera's eye and, therefore, which truly reflected his authorship, Hitchcock was also setting a precedent for those directors who would follow, a precedent that reserved for the director a right to mold works from any sources and declare them as his own. Just as Shakespeare had discovered the need to stamp a creative seal on his adaptations of earlier tales in the production of plays such as *Hamlet*, making them forever his own and establishing a new standard, today's film directors have learned that simply to duplicate a novel on the screen is not enough, even if it were possible to do so exactly.

T.S. Eliot had once declared in response to criticism that his poetry, particularly *The Waste Land*, misused original sources, "Im mature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different." Likewise, good filmmakers do not imitate. They steal: they take from the original and make something better, or at least something different.

And so what if Robert Redford's 1970s *Gatsby* does not resemble the fellow Fitzgerald introduced in 1925. So what if the innocent Spanish girl Hemingway described in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is played in the film version by a sophisticated Swedish beauty. So what if George Miller's adaptation of *The Witches of Eastwick* varies greatly from John Updike's novel. And so what if such well-made movies as *East of Eden*, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Natural*, and any others one might care to add from an admittedly long list are not faithful to the original novels. Is it not all for the better?

The audience benefits by being able to experience the two versions, the two visions. The difference between the film and the novel encourages viewers to read the book, readers to view the film. It is this difference which helped sell those many millions of copies of *The Color Purple*. It is this difference which will keep the cinema, already our dominant art form, from taking total control. It is this difference which should be encouraged, appreciated, celebrated by all, especially film critics and novelists. [Part 2 of a series]

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**Poems with No Names:**

**The Sacred Pathway**

(After Lao Tzu)

6.

When I speak of the sacred pathway in the forest
Some
  Liken it to Dante
  Politely listen and nod
  Laugh, then excuse their laughter
  Examine every singular detail

These responses verify the sacredness
Of this pathway which
  Is crooked but straight
  Is long yet short
  Is heavy yet light

Which leads away from where you are
Toward home where you began.

The pilgrim along this way, like good news,
Travels slow.

7.

One day I walked out to a ruined abbey
On the River Wear. On the way I forgot
All I ever knew but saw the grass
And grain and buttercups, stared down
A cow in her pasture. I no longer
Walk the paved roads
When I can walk the fields
And follow, for awhile at least,
What sages call The Mighty Way!

Travis DuPriest
THE LAST WORD

A Political Progress

Dot Nuechterlein

Well, I won. That is to say, I WON!!! It's Ms. Competitive Nature speaking here, but except for Scrabble or Trivia or card games, it is rare for me to go nose to nose with an opponent, let alone come out victorious.

This is January, when I begin four years as a City Council member, a position gained in the November election. It goes against all of my carefully nurtured and well practiced group dynamics principles to admit it, but wow, winning sure is fun!

Since this was my first try, and since you may not be one of the infinitesimal number of persons ever to run for public office, I'm dying to tell you about it, start to finish.

Motivation—patriotic duty and all, especially after living abroad; besides, the local party drafted me for a seat becoming vacant and I couldn't think of any reason not to do what I wanted to do anyway.

Basic Research—greatest impact made by any color combination is black printing on bright yellow stock, so choosing materials was easy.

Strategy—attended candidates' workshops sponsored by state party; I learned “Don't waste money on glance-&-pitch stuff”—locally, stress name and office, but most other propaganda isn't effective. So first flyer had only last name, office, plus party symbol and VOTE crossed at O by DOT.

Handout—“give people community-related keepers”; opponent had typical family portrait and list of qualifications, but for fall in

Hoosier-land I chose male and female high school and University basketball home game schedules with slogans “Support your home teams” and “Support Dot.”

Parades—rode in two and enjoyed them a lot; the amount of eye contact with bystanders is amazing. (“That’s your thing, Mom,” said child #3, “smiling and waving.”) During the Homecoming parade my present and former students began chanting my name, and the crowd joined in—what fun!

Some talked about women as candidates; I didn’t want any votes just because I am one—unless they couldn’t think of another reason.

Door to Door—the best part of all. In 2½ weeks I knocked on nearly every door in my four precincts—around 1,700 in all—and someone answered at about 1,000. Everyone friendly, some talkative (especially several lonely senior citizens), a few curious about me or local issues; only two politely declined my handout (wrong party). Many assumed at first I was a sales rep—several husbands called their wives to deal with me.

Some people talked about women as candidates; I didn't want any votes just because I am one—unless they couldn't think of another reason. Most wished me luck; I see now how candidates get false pictures of how they're doing, because nearly everyone responds positively. But most people don't vote: the other guy got 206 votes and I took 290, so we didn't exactly create great civic fervor.

Biggest problem was keeping track of where I'd been; the four or so basic house plans in the district begin to blur together. Had to

go down one side of the street and back the other, keeping to the right, of course. (What else would you expect from a Republican?)

Animals—this non-“fido-ophile” swears the district has more dogs than humans. Plus other species: once no one answered at a home where lights were on and drapes open; turning to go, I saw a huge beast lumber past the window. I can't prove it was a bear, but do dogs "lumber"?

And once just before knocking I noticed this posted by a door: “Warning. Enter at your own risk. These premises are protected by live cobras.” Mercifully, the antidote was attached.

Yard Signs—they're big around here, but I vetoed them: after the first glance they lose impact, and it costs a lot to say a little. Instead, on election eve I made two dozen yellow posterboard flags with my first name in black, stapled to short stakes, and before dawn put them along the main intersections of the district to remind people to vote.

The Event—a reporter asked me later what I had done on election day. I reverted to childhood—years ago on Christmas Eve day we used to make the time pass by doing chores, so now I took the day off and cleaned my house. No way could one day make up for weeks of neglect, but it seemed a productive way to wait. I voted shortly before the polls closed; by then my precinct captains thought I had forgotten. (Child #1 voted for the first time that day—I think she voted for me.)

The Victory—the party throws a party, and people give you hugs and handshakes, send flowers and cards, and bring balloons and banners. The work is all still ahead, but I'm raring to go.

The Future—a friend has already suggested that next time I should run for Matriarch. You'll be the first to know.