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It is easy to dismiss the "God is Dead" theologians as apostates from the faith and traitors to their profession, but they have one thing going for them: their logic is consistent with that of St. Paul who, it should be remembered, was quite willing to let the authority of the whole Christian Gospel hang on the single question of whether or not, as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. St. Paul believed that he was stating a historical fact, attested to by a large number of reliable witnesses, when he insisted that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead. A great many contemporary theologians who are not ready to say that God is dead are, nevertheless, unwilling to defend the historical factuality of the Resurrection. These theologians, it seems to us, deserve more severe censure than the God-is-dead crowd. There has always been a logical argument for atheism or agnosticism. There is a fatal defect in any line of deduction which starts from a doubtful premise.

If the bones of Jesus of Nazareth are now a part of the dust of Israel or Jordan, the Christian faith is a lie, we are still in our sins, and, for all we know, God is nothing more than an hypothesis which people in another generation needed to explain mysteries which were not easily explained by other and better hypotheses. If there is no way of knowing whether Jesus of Nazareth actually rose from the dead, the most tenable position is that of the agnostic. Only the certainty that "the grave could not hold Him" allows us to say that a living God, acting through a living Christ, has shown His good will toward men and can be trusted to fulfill the great promises of the Gospel.

We are not trying to draw up a brief for the kind of fundamentalism that reads the Holy Scriptures as though they were the daily newspaper. We are quite prepared to admit that myth is one of the many respectable literary forms through which the divine revelation is communicated to man. But no fair reading of the Gospels or of St. Paul's epistles will yield the conclusion that the writers thought that they were relaying a myth. They thought that they were proclaiming the most astounding fact that man had ever had to come to terms with, a fact which required the re-assessment of everything that men had, until then, accepted as factual. That is why Easter was, for them, the highest of all holy days. And that is why it is still, for many of us who believe, the day around which all of the rest of the year revolves.

The war in Viet Nam is a nasty business which we wish we had never gotten involved in, but we are involved in it and nobody has yet persuaded us that there is any better course for us to follow than a sustained effort to win it or to conclude it with some sort of honorable settlement which will leave the Vietnamese free to decide their own destiny. Neither victory nor an honorable settlement seems to be immediately in prospect, so it appears that we must prepare to invest still more men and still more money in this war.

We don't like to pay taxes. But if we are going to ask young men to risk their lives on the battlefield it seems immoral to us to demand that the war leave us free to live it up as though there were no war going on. It is impossible, in time of war, to equalize the sacrifices that are demanded for its successful prosecution, but it is possible to distribute them in such a way that everybody has to hurt a little. If that is not done, it is all too easy for many people to get the idea that war really isn't such a bad thing after all.

Having just filed our federal and state income tax forms, we do not rejoice at the prospect of paying a 6 per cent surcharge on our federal tax next year. But we think that the President was right in recommending it and we hope that the Congress will approve his recommendation. In our case, it will mean deferring the purchase of a suit which we need and would very much like to buy. But on the principle that a man ought to put his money where his mouth is it may be that our not
getting that suit will help, in some small way, to make us a little less inclined to favor the use of force in the solution of international problems. At the very least, it should remind us that war costs something.

Over and above these considerations, there is, of course, the additional question of whether we can, in good conscience, pass on the costs of this war, as we have passed on so many costs, to our children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation. The Puritan ethic may be dead, but we have not yet heard of any new way of discharging a debt than by paying it off or filing a bankruptcy petition. Somebody, someday has to pay — or Welsh. If the economy will not allow us to follow a Pay-as-you-go policy, it surely can’t be in such a precariously state that we can not pay at least a substantial part of the cost of the war as we go. Indeed, one way or another we are going to pay, either by taxes or by inflation. Of the two, we much prefer taxes. And we are reasonably sure that this is the preference of most of our people.

The Right to Life

A recent Harris Survey shows, surprisingly, that a clear majority of Americans (51 per cent) favor “a federal plan such as medicare for older people that would cover all members of your family.” Not surprisingly, support of such a plan is greatest among low-income families, for it is among these families that the burden of illness rests most heavily.

It was not so very long ago that this was not the case. As recently as thirty or forty years ago, ability to pay for doctors and medicines had comparatively little to do with one’s chances of recovery from an illness. Diagnostic tools were few and simple, surgery was possible only in a limited range of cases, and medicines were for the most part little more than relatively inexpensive herbal compounds. Whether one was rich or poor did not greatly matter; in most cases there was nothing that medical science could do for the millionaire that it did not do for the poorest widow in the community.

All that has changed in the past generation. Many once-fatal conditions and illnesses are today curable or at least arrestable if they are diagnosed soon enough and if they are treated by surgery or by one of the new (and often expensive) medicines. There is today a demonstrable relationship between health and wealth. And most of us sense that there is something wrong in such a relationship.

Too often in the past, we have placed the blame where it does not belong. In our search for whipping-boys we have fastened upon doctors and dentists, upon hospitals, or upon the pharmaceutical industry. We would not be prepared to say that medical, hospital, and pharmaceutical costs can be defended absolutely, but neither are we prepared to say that they are seriously out of line with other costs of living. The trouble, we believe, lies elsewhere. It lies in our refusal, up to now, to accept the idea that access to the best possible medical care is a right which any well-ordered and compassionate society ought to be willing to guarantee to all of its members, whether they can afford it or not. To deny any citizen of our country the kind of medical attention he needs because he can not pay for it is to limit or deny that “right to life” which the authors of the Declaration of Independence considered a natural right of man by direct endowment of the Creator.

It should not be beyond the ingenuity of our lawmakers to come up with some kind of plan of universal medical care which would respect the professional rights and obligations of the medical profession, which would be economically feasible, and which would not involve the indignity of a means test. Almost every other Western country has such a plan. Why don’t we?

The False Messiah

It was not so very many years ago that a few concerned whites joined forces with a few brave and responsible Negro leaders to make an all-out assault on the evils of racial prejudice which have plagued this nation since before its founding. There were times when the battle got pretty rough. Some of our comrades died. Many of them took wounds which they will carry with them to the grave. But it was more than worth all that it cost. One by one, we saw the strongholds of legalized injustice come tumbling down. No one would pretend that the Negro has yet come into the full possession of his rightful inheritance as a citizen and as a human being, but at least the law is now clearly on his side.

We have been trying to remember what contribution the Honorable Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., made to the struggles of those tough and dangerous years. What we chiefly remember is having to apologize for him, having to explain that he was not typical of the leadership of the Negro community, having to reassure our fearful white friends that Powell did not have and would not have any significant voice in the civil-rights movement. We thought that we were telling the truth. We still think that what we said then is true now. But we would greatly appreciate a little support from our old comrades in arms. We would like for them to show some of their old courage and responsibility in a clear repudiation of this vain, arrogant, and ludicrous man who now seeks to usurp the role of spokesman and symbol of the Negro community.

We are quite ready to grant that there may have been an element of racism in the action which was taken to deprive Mr. Powell of his committee chairmanship and to postpone his seating in the Congress. But the case against him was strong enough without introducing any element of racism. We think it is fair to say that if any white Congressman had conducted himself as Mr. Powell has over the years, he too would have strained the tolerance of the House to the point where it would eventually break.
Neither can we buy the argument that Mr. Powell had just cause for grievance because he got clobbered for doing nothing worse than a lot of his colleagues, past and present, have done. In the first place, we do not know of any member of the present Congress who has so flagrantly flouted the rules and traditions of the House. If there are any, the answer would surely be not to lay off Mr. Powell but to go after his colleagues who are in like condemnation. And in the second place, even if a man is only doing "what everybody else is doing," he remains liable for the consequences of his own misconduct, whether others are punished or not.

Mr. Powell got what he has been asking for. The best thing for the Negro community to do is to show that it can be mature enough and responsible enough to take on the job of cleaning up its own messes. We think that it will do just that and that Mr. Powell is wasting his time trying to persuade his fellow Negroes that he is some latter-day Messiah.

The Trains Came Through

Long-time readers of this magazine can hardly fail to be aware of our strong bias in favor of the railroads. Hard as we try to conceal it, it is there. In the past, we have been apologetic about it. But no more. Since last we wrote, our part of the country has experienced the Great Blizzard of '67. And what that experience has taught us is that the country still needs the railroads, perhaps even more than ever before.

More specifically, the country needs to preserve and enlarge its passenger railroad services. By the grace of God, the Blizzard was relatively short-lived. If it had lasted longer than it did, a large part of our country, including its second-largest city, would have become a disaster area of unprecedented dimensions. Automobiles were strewn over the streets and expressways. Airplanes stood useless on the snow-clogged runways. Buses were immobilized. But the trains got through.

We will grant that much of the decline in railroad passenger business can be ascribed to unimaginative management. For years it has been able to offer no better solution to the problem of declining custom than to petition the I.C.C. to allow it to discontinue one passenger train after another. As a result, it has dug itself into a hole from which it may already be too late to retrieve itself. But if private corporations can not or will not keep the passenger business going, there is another way of doing it. The government can take over the passenger business and run it as governments do in most countries, on the grounds that it is necessary for the security and convenience of the nation.

Given far-sighted and imaginative management, the government ought to be able to operate such a service at a profit — perhaps not in the short run but certainly in the long run. For evidence that this is true, one need look no farther than Canada, where the Canadian National Railways are now competing successfully with the airlines on major inter-city runs. The best and fastest way to travel between Toronto and Montreal is by rail. Of course, it took a lot of money to get the service in operation — more, perhaps, than a private corporation can afford. But the investment has paid off. There is no reason why a similar investment should not pay off in the urban corridor of our east coast and in the megalopolitan areas that are developing in several other parts of our country. But somebody has to exercise a little imagination.

Direct Election of the President?

The American Bar Association Commission on Electoral College Reform has concluded that the present method of electing a President is "archaic, undemocratic, complex, ambiguous, indirect, and dangerous" and recommends scrapping the whole system in favor of direct popular election. We are inclined to agree with the Commission's description of the present system. We are not so sure that its faults, if they are faults, constitute any greater menace to the national welfare than would a system of direct election.

It is one characteristic of a mature society that its fundamental institutions undergo changes and permutations as need or convenience dictate and are seldom radically altered to conform to some intellectually-constructed Ideal Type. The proper question to raise about our present system of choosing a President is not: "Does it make sense?" much less "Does it conform to any respectable ideological pattern?" but "Does it work reasonably well?" The best way to answer that question is to take a look at the kind of President it has given us over the years. In our judgment, few nations — none that we can think of off-hand — have had as distinguished a succession of Chief Executives over as long a period of time as has the United States.

We can't get unduly concerned about archaic systems when they are still capable of bringing a Churchill to power in England or any of our twentieth-century Presidents to power in the United States. The fact that our system may be — probably is — undemocratic does not bother us because, as we understand it, we are not a democracy anyway and have never pretended to be. As for the system's being "complex, ambiguous, and indirect," these could be seen as virtues of the system for the Presidency itself demands a man who is able to operate effectively in an atmosphere of complexity, ambiguity, and indirection. Whether the system is "dangerous" or not depends, we suppose on whether the other adjectives which the Commission uses to describe it are taken as complimentary or pejorative. We take them as complimentary or, at worst, neutral, and we therefore fail to see the danger which the Commission sees.

Direct election, on the other hand, seems to us to hold the threat of all kinds of unforeseen and unforeseeable dangers. Certainly one risk which can not be easily dismissed is the possibility of presidential elections degenerating into mere popularity contests with the office going to the man who "comes through" best on television. The
President has to be more than a nice guy with a winning smile. He has to be, above all else, an effective politician. The present system puts him through a rigorous process of screening by his professional peers and that, we think, is all to the good.

**The Kerr Affair**

_Homo academicus_ is an odd species, much given to bloody internecine battles but fiercely loyal to the pack when any one of its members is threatened from outside, especially if the attacker belongs to the species _Homo politicales_.

Clark Kerr has, for a number of years, been one of the most respected leaders of our pack. The instinct of our species is therefore to rush to his defense now that he has been grievously wounded by a band of _Hominis politicales_. But we are not so sure that this is a case where instinct can be trusted. For even _H. academicus_, despite some evidence to the contrary, is rational and moral. He is even capable of seeing that there are rare occasions when his blood enemies have a certain amount of right on their side.

This, we reluctantly concede, could be the case in _l'affaire_ Clark Kerr.

The president of a state college or university is, by definition, a political appointee. He is accountable to officials or boards that are directly elected by the people or appointed by the political authorities. He gets the money to carry out his policies and programs primarily from the state legislature. A part of his job is to keep his political fences well mended.

It is ordinarily in the best interests of the politicians to give the president a free hand in running the institution. But there are cases when, no matter how well the president is functioning as a _Homo academicus_, he threatens the happiness and safety of his masters. Sometimes he goes so far as to challenge them to a power struggle. When he does so, he is almost foredoomed to lose.

Dr. Kerr found himself in a situation where he could not refuse a challenge to his own professional integrity and to his conception of the best interests of his university, and so he took on his masters in a contest of power. We suspect that he did so in the knowledge that he had to lose. He did, and for the time being, at least, that is the end of the matter.

It is possible to maintain that the Regents of the University acted unwisely without denying their right to act as they did. The myth that the publicly-supported university enjoys a freedom which the denominational or private university does not enjoy has never been anything more than a myth. Politicians will, under sufficient provocation, react at least as firmly and even harshly as any bishop, church convention, or clique of wealthy trustees. In our country there is no such thing, in the final analysis, as a completely free university. If nothing else that is good comes out of the Kerr affair we may, at least, be disabused of the idea that the public institution has an autonomy and freedom which the private institution does not enjoy. That would be a very considerable gain.

**Good Losers**

Chosen has weekly, red-bordered Lucemagazine TIME the under-25 generation as its 1966 man of the year. No youngster we, delighted we are to hear that our replacements have arrived, are champing at the bit to take over. Query: would a week from Thursday be too soon for the change-over?

(Brief pause while we shift from TIMEse into English.)

Before we hand over our typewriter to the bronzed, vitamin-enriched, under-25 chap who is pacing the corridor waiting for us to clear out of the office, we beg leave to make one small point. We came on the scene before it became customary to label generations. As a result, we fear that history may little note nor long remember that we existed, paid taxes, fought a couple of wars, loved and were loved, put the kids through school, and tried in the midst of many revolutions to find some solid ground on which to stand. We are quite willing to depart the scene, but we would like to take some sort of name with us.

Our own suggestion for a name would be The Passed-Over Generation.

We (that is, the generation which is now slogging its sore-footed way through the forties and fifties) grew up in an era when it was taken as axiomatic that nobody could be trusted with any real responsibility until he had ripened for at least forty years. "Be patient," we were told, "let the passing years teach you wisdom, judgment, prudence, and restraint. Then your time will come and you will be ready for Bigger Things. Meanwhile, give your best to the job at hand."

So we waited. The silver threads appeared, more or less on schedule, among the gold. The first occasional twinges of arthritis or bursitis came, almost as welcome signs that the ripening process was approaching that stage when one could begin to dream realistically of a title on the door and a Bigelow on the floor. Some of the more venturesome of our generation began to intimate that they would be willing to take on more demanding responsibilities if they should be offered.

What they got was a karate chop across the windpipe. It appears that the wisdom, judgment, prudence, and restraint which our elders had advocated as prime desiderata for Responsible Positions had been supplanted by other and quite different criteria. "The man we are looking for," the Executive Positions Open ads say, "is young (preferably under thirty-five), cool, aggressive, imaginative, vigorous. He must have style. Knowledge of cybernetics and the new math essential."

We get the message. There is no key to the executive washroom in our future. But we are not crying. Life did at least teach us how to be good losers, and that is something the under-25 boys and girls may still have to learn.
As a boy one of my favorite poems was John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Snowbound.” This descriptive poem of what it was like to be snowbound in a New England farm house left me with a strong desire to experience that type of isolation and close family feeling. In the last week in January I got my wish when we found out what it meant to have “No cloud above, no earth below — a universe of sky and snow.” Before the storm was over 26 inches of the white stuff lay on the ground and our area was tied up for several days.

Since Whittier’s poem had made an impression on me when I was that age, I decided to read it aloud to the boys in our household. On the second day, we gathered, appropriately, around the fireplace and I began to read aloud. I got no farther than the second page because the gales of laughter were drowning out the sound of my voice. While I realize the poem is dated, I had never thought it was that hilarious.

I read the rest of “Snowbound” to myself and I must admit that things have changed in the 101 years since Whittier wrote it. It is also clear that a century of progress has taken a lot of fun out of being snowbound.

For a short period on that second day we experienced that eloquent silence of which Whittier wrote, “Beyond the circle of our hearth no welcome sound of toil or mirth unbound the spell,” but it did not last long. Whittier’s farm family dug a path to the barn, but in our neighborhood, everyone was trying to dig his car out of the driveway and the scraping sound of snow shovel on concrete was highly audible.

The road in front of our house was one of those cleared during the second night so we were not required to wait a week for Whittier’s oxen to break a path. Roads in other areas of the town were not cleared for another two days, and the residents along those streets felt the oxen might be faster than the street department snow plows. On the second day it was possible to walk to a supermarket which was completely stocked except for milk, and here Whittier’s farmers were one-up on us since they had a cow in the barn.

In Whittier’s poem, no one left the house except to feed the livestock in the barn. Our children could get out and enjoy the snow, probably because the type of clothing and equipment available today makes this possible. Instead of “buskins” they had good boots and galoshes and all sorts of foul-weather gear. It was fortunate they could get out, since school was in recess almost a week. If the children had been forced to stay inside, most mothers would have been climbing the walls around the third day.

Entertainment for Whittier’s family consisted of sitting around the fire telling stories, which was all they could do since they owned only a score of books and pamphlets which had been read many times before. We had television and radio, so although we spent more time together as a family than we normally would have, the kids could escape to television, whose programs came through with methodical sameness.

Nor were we without news. For the New England family it was over a week until “At last the floundering carrier bore the village paper to our door”; our floundering carrier made it on the third day and regularly thereafter. But even without a paper we had news broadcasts and the local radio stations kept everyone informed on conditions in our town. The telephones were operating so we could keep in touch with friends local and long distance.

I think it was the radio, the television, and the telephone that I objected to. For while we were snowbound, I never experienced what I realized I had wanted to experience ever since reading Whittier’s poem — a sense of complete isolation. What I had really wanted was to be completely cut off for a day or two just to know what it felt like not to be in touch with anything or anyone outside the four walls of home.

Apparently this is the price modern man must pay for his progress that he can no longer shut out the world, can never know complete isolation, and will no longer have any way of testing his self-reliance. The world comes in electronically and none of us is strong enough to take the receiver off the hook or to turn the knob to “Off.”

Perhaps it is for the best. I have a vague suspicion that had I been one of the ten occupants of that New England farm house in “Snowbound” and had been forced to sit around the fire telling stories for a week when “Wide swung again our ice-locked door, And all the world was ours once more” I would have been carried out screaming and suffering through an advanced stage of hysteria and claustrophobia.
Newspapers and the Challenge of Change

By THEODORE PETERSON
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One November day in 1814, readers of the London Times got evidence of a tremendous advance in communications. The copy they held, an article told them, was one of many thousands that had been produced the night before by a mechanical apparatus. The Times called the achievement "the greatest improvement connected with printing, since the discovery of the art itself."

And achievement it was. That day's paper was printed on a double feeder rotary press powered by steam, a machine that foreshadowed the end of the hand press which had done service since the days of Gutenberg. The press had been built for the Times by Frederick Koenig in great secrecy. His workmen had been bound, under penalty of a hundred pounds fine, to tell no one of what they were up to. Even in those pre-ITU days, Koenig in great secrecy. His workmen had been bound, under penalty of a hundred pounds fine, to tell no one of what they were up to. Even in those pre-ITU days, the Times feared an uprising by the printers whom the machine would replace. Until that first mechanized issue was safely off the press, the printers were kept waiting at their old hand presses with the tale that some fast-breaking news from the battle fronts of the Napoleonic wars had thrown everything off schedule.

Great as the breakthrough was, though, it was simply another widely-spaced milestone on the long road to Utopia. For all type still had to be set by hand, almost exactly as it had been four centuries earlier when Gutenberg was printing all of those expensive Bibles for today's museums. All type still had to be set one character at a time, 1,000 to 1,400 characters an hour, and a publisher had an unattractive choice: He could either turn one printer loose on a project that might take him four or five months or hire a huge crew of printers and stock a vast amount of type. If he wanted to publish a newspaper of any timeliness, you can guess what his choice was. That era ended within the memory of men still living, in 1886, when Mergenthaler and others introduced machine composition.

By now you have probably guessed that I am a writer who walks leisurely up to his subject and that if you requested my recipe for oxtail soup it would probably begin, "Fell one ox." The point I wish to emphasize, though, is that change came slowly to the communications industries before 1900, and it leads me to the pitch of this article: We are now in the midst of a technological revolution in communications, a revolution compounded by dramatic social change, and the leisure of the past is a luxury denied today's mass media in adjusting to it. You may find the prospects reassuringly bright or chillingly Orwellian, depending on your viewpoint, but I am afraid that change will come regardless of our personal preferences.

This, I fear, is going to be a highly impractical article. I am not going to give any stray publishers in The Cresset's readership the straight goods on how to get more hardware-store advertising or how to equip a model plant for under $25,000. In fact, I am not going to talk exclusively about newspapers. To do so in today's context would be a little like discussing the rise and fall of passenger trains without mentioning superhighways and superjets. For one thing, a newspaper, as every publisher wearily recognizes, must compete with all of the other mass media for the time and attention of its readers and with at least some of the other media for at least a part of its advertising dollars. For another thing, it is quite possible in the present communications revolution for some engineer at IBM or an electronics specialist with NASA to be working on an idea that directly or indirectly will affect the Star at Green River, Wyoming, or WCSI in Columbus, Indiana.

What I propose to do is discuss some of the developments that hold promise, or threat, of changing the nature of the newspaper business, the magazine business, and the broadcasting business, although what those changes will be and how drastic, I do not presume to say.

The Electronics Revolution

For more than four hundred years, the printed media—books, newspapers, magazines—had a tight little monopoly on mass communications. But in the mid-19th century, electronics started to edge onto the stage. During the first act, electricity simply played servant to the traditional media; it replaced steam to drive the presses, for instance, but it managed to shake up the household for all of that. Consider the impact of just the telegraph on the newspaper business. For one thing, it made possible the press associations such as the AP and UPI. For another thing, by doing so, it helped to change the style of newswriting into the economical, objective, inverted-pyramid account. For yet another thing, it underscored timeliness as a news value and made the entire world a newspaper's beat.

During the second act, electronics spawned entirely different means of communication. First, of course, was the motion picture, which was born in the last decade of the 19th century, just about the time that the modern magazine was born. The motion picture grew swiftly, and theaters sprang up in places that only Mr. Rand and Mr. McNally had ever heard of. Capturing images on film, the motion picture enlarged the world of its...
audiences. By the 1920’s, sitting in small-town Palaces and Bijous and Roxys all over America, people could share the “Perils of Paris” with Pearl White, tread the “Paths to Paradise” with Betty Compton, and help Tom Mix make the West a place for upright citizens.

The motion picture appealed to the eye. Next came radio, which appealed to the ear. Radio stations, which over the years filled the airwaves with the songs of the Cliquot Club Eskimos, the skits of Joe Penner, and the portentous pronouncements of H. V. Kaltenborn, grew from a mere thirty in 1922 to more than 2,900 by 1948. By that time television had emerged to link the sense of sight with the sense of hearing and to do so with the strength of immediacy. Meanwhile, the movies too had found their voice and brought sight and sound together.

These new media grew swiftly. Within just ten years, television penetrated as many homes as radio did in twenty-five, as the telephone did in eighty. And within a generation or two, they have completely altered our communications experience. They have eliminated literacy as the ticket for admission to the mass media, so even pre-schoolers can use them. They put us into instantaneous touch with events on a grand scale. They bring the sights and sounds and even the colors of the world into our living rooms — the battleground of Viet Nam, the launching of a capsule into space, and the debates of the United Nations — along with one-legged tapdancers, talking dogs, and covetous young housewives competing for dishware and mink. They have encapsuled us in a pseudo-world, a world of symbols that we all too often mistake for reality.

The electronic media have come farther in the seventy years since Marconi sent and received the first wireless message than the printed media have come in the roughly five centuries since William Caxton touched ink to moveable type at the Sign of the Red Pale in Westminster. They are part of a communications revolution, the full dimensions of which most of us have scarcely speculated on. Marshall McLuhan of Toronto, currently high priest of one cult of communications students, has contended that the electronics revolution is restoring the reliance that primitive man once placed on the ear, is reordering all of our sense priorities into new patterns, and is changing us from a society of private individuals into a vast tribal community. “We are today as far into the electronic age as the Elizabethans had advanced into the typographic and mechanical age,” he has said. “And we are experiencing the same confusions and indecisions which they had felt when living simultaneously in two contrasting forms of society and experience.”

David Sarnoff, who as chairman of the board of R. C. A. is not ordinarily given to frivolous public statements, has said somewhat the same thing. In the thirty-fifth anniversary issue of the Hollywood Reporter, he remarked, “Developments are too radical in their nature, and the pace at which they come is too swift, for the past to serve as any effective prelude to the communicating future. We must look for entirely new procedures, attuned to the realities of the Space Age.”

One future development that Mr. Sarnoff has recently suggested is an integration of all of the existing media — books, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television — into a single electronic medium. Technical advances, he said, now make it possible to “transmit across vast distances all types of information — print and picture, the spoken word, telegraphic messages, televised images, and even the esoteric language of computers.” As he sees it, each home could have, in effect, its own message center that would put it in immediate contact with the entire world. Television programs could be broadcast to it directly from satellites, and they could be captured on a home recorder for later viewing. FM music, too, could come to it directly from satellites. Newspapers, magazines, and even books could be transmitted to it by microwave and printed out on facsimile receivers.

Recent Developments

Although the future may not put the media on the precise street that Mr. Sarnoff has named, I think that he has located the general neighborhood. Surely all of the media are in for a time of considerable readjustment. A few months ago Mr. Sarnoff said that, for fifteen million dollars, within five or so years he would be able to put up a space satellite that could transmit TV programs of the three networks directly to every home in the U.S. If we should be able to get Gomer Pyle, Peyton Place, and Bonanza from outer space, the three networks as now constituted would be obsolescent.

Let us tick off some of the communications developments that might occupy our thoughts while doodling. In the newspaper field, advances in the graphic arts have come as swiftly as bills after payday. For the past several years, a good many publishers have wondered whether or not they should convert to offset, and a number of them have made the jump. A month ago Garson Wolitzky of the ANPA Research Institute remarked in Editor & Publisher, “In the past five years, we have seen the greatest single change in the method of printing a newspaper that has ever been brought about in any other similar period in the history of newspaper printing.” During those five years, six U.S. manufacturers of presses have sold and installed some seven hundred offset presses (consisting of well over two thousand individual press units), and the equipment is now printing two hundred dailies, more than fifteen hundred weeklies, and countless shoppers.

Some time in the next few years, publishers may have options other than letterpress and offset to fret about. For instance, the Electro-Static Corp. and Stanford University are now working on a press that operates electrostatically. Perhaps “press” is not the proper term for the device, for it prints without contact or pressure. It will be able to print on a variety of different surfaces; indeed, it already has been used to print on English
walnuts, California avocados, and Washington apples. The designers think that, with luck, they may be able to print a newspaper on it within the next two to five years, although it obviously would take much longer than that for the equipment to become generally available. General Electric, I understand, has been working on a somewhat similar process.

Max Matthews of Bell Telephone Laboratories has been working on a method for setting type electrically and photographically at the rate of 150 letters a second or about eighteen hundred words a minute. Under his arrangement, the faces of the type are stored in the memory of a computer. To change from one face to another, one simply changes the instructions to the computer. The actual typesetting machine is a cathode-ray tube. The images produced on the tube are filmed; the film is then used to make an etched plate for printing.

Then, too, technology has added a couple of new dimensions to print. Cowles Communications, Inc., has developed and seems to be improving three-dimensional photography, which it has used in Look and for the covers of the most recent issues of Venture. Inexpensive recordings can now be used to join sound to photographs and the printed word to enhance the coverage of a story. A couple of years ago Practical Builder, a magazine published in Chicago, ran a feature about what it called “the quiet home.” Words alone could not quite convey all that the editors wanted to get across. So they bound into the magazine a record that demonstrated sound transmission through regular and “quiet home” partitions, with and without acoustical material in the ceilings. In August, 1965, the National Geographic gave a third dimension to its coverage of Winston Churchill’s funeral by binding in a record with narration by David Brinkley and with excerpts from some of Churchill’s best-known speeches.

The once-monochrome world of the mass media is now bursting with color. As of last November, according to the Preprint Corp., 227 newspapers with a total circulation of 23,675,000 were offering Spectacolor. Magazines last year carried 55 per cent of their advertising lineage in color, 45 per cent of it in full-color. Color TV sets are now in such demand that manufacturers cannot produce them fast enough. A decade ago, there were about ten thousand color sets in the entire U.S.; last year there were about five million. By 1970 there will be between 13,300,000 and 17,400,000, depending on whether you want to be bearish or bullish in your predictions.

What would concern me if I were a newspaper or magazine or book publisher, I think, is the multitude of new ways in which people are getting their information. At a very simple level, electronic tapes now give specialists a chance to keep abreast of specialized information in their fields while doing other things. A couple of years ago, for instance, a friend of mine in Indiana began an information service for veterinarians. He provided subscribers with a tape recorder for playback and a regular schedule of taped lectures. While shaving, bathing, or driving on calls, his subscribers could listen to outstanding authorities tell how to perform open-heart surgery on Poland-China sows, get rid of ringworm in spotted deer, and other clinical esoterica. The low-cost videotape recorders and players now invading the market will make possible not only lectures but demonstrations as well. Before long, a dentist wanting to know the latest technique for dealing with an impacted molar, say, may be able to sit in his own living room at a time that suits his fancy and, sipping his Scotch and fluoride, watch a specialist on his TV screen show him just how to go about it.

But the programs need not be specialized. Chances are good that before long viewers will be able to buy TV cartridges, much as they now buy phonograph records, for playing their favorite programs on their home screens.

In the past half-dozen years, more and more Americans have been linking their TV sets to community antenna systems. CATV has grown from 581 systems with fewer than a half-million subscribers in 1957 to seventeen hundred systems with about two million subscribers last year. A CATV system uses tall antennas to pull in distant TV signals and feeds them through cables into subscribers' homes. There is no good technical reason that a CATV operator cannot originate programs of his own, of course, and at least one has reserved a channel to keep his subscribers informed of the news as it breaks. The Emporia Gazette, which operates the CATV system in Emporia, Kansas, has kept one channel for news produced by its staff, public affairs discussions, coverage of local sports events, and so on.

The big change for those of us in the communications business will probably come from the computer, which promises to be the greatest invention since the abacus. In an age when knowledge is piling up so fast that mankind is not sure just what it knows, there is an obvious need for devices that can help us sort out information. Already specialists in the sciences can subscribe for a computerized information service that keeps them up to date on important research in their fields. Already the computer has been joined to the telephone for the instantaneous transmission of business information; last March, for instance, the New York Stock Exchange put into operation a “talking computer” which by phone supplies brokers with information about stocks. Purchasing agents are now exploring the uses of computers combined with desk-top TV sets and facsimile devices to help them do their jobs.

The Computer

The reach of the computer has been extended by space satellites, which now make possible the instantaneous transmission of information on a global scale. Oracles are already speaking of a World Information Center. From virtually any spot on earth, a person could place a phone call that would be relayed by satellite to the
In what I fear is an incomplete and rather untidy view, I have tried to sketch a part of the context in which newspapers will be operating in the next decade. I hope that you will not think me an irresponsible alarmist when I say that I am not especially optimistic about newspapers' readiness to meet the challenge of change. Newspapers have a special fondness for tradition and traditional ways of doing things. The width of their editorial columns, which are too narrow for easy reading, for instance, was determined by the limitations of handset type in the 19th century and has been maintained by inertia and economic convenience. Economic necessity rather than foresight has brought about some change. For instance, I have long wondered why, in this age of rapid transport, every publisher must be his own printer, often making his largest single investment in a press that he uses for only an hour or so a day. Economic necessity has forced some large papers, even competing ones, to share facilities. Now some smaller newspapers are discovering economic advantages to using the printing facilities of a central plant and are finding that the problems of scheduling are not really as forbidding as Everest.

The content of a good many of the nation's newspapers does not exactly represent man's cultural apex, if you believe what some newspapermen themselves are saying. Gene Graham, a Pulitzer Prize winner, Nieman fellow, and staff member of the Nashville Tennessean before he joined our faculty, has spoken some sharp words about the middle-sized press, which he likens to Mama Bear because it serves up a diet of lukewarm porridge:

It is the middle size press which echoes, via inexpensive wire services, the national-international sameness of TV's nightly headlines, and otherwise serves as little more than our Town's bulletin board. It is the middle size press which, in a weird arrangement of Federal Afghanistanism, decries the hijinks of Bobby Baker and Matt McCloskey without so much as a casual glance into His Honor the Mayor's campaign kitty, or how it was raised.

It is an irony...that today's imperatively important middle size press does its very worst job where interest is potentially highest and where it enjoys a virtual monopoly of operations — in the local public affairs forum. The irony is compounded by an editorial page which matches the pallid reporting performance; on Viet Nam or the White House, of which the editor knows little more than he reads, there is wisdom abundant; on City Hall or the Statehouse, which the editor knows or should know on a first name basis, the silence is often deafening.

The irony is really twice-compounded; for as Graham notes, public spending at the state and local level now about equals spending at the federal level.

Another newspaperman, Stuart A. Dunham, editor of the Camden Courier-Post, recently concluded that "a stenographer with a tape recorder in a saloon could come up with more interesting local copy" than he reads in New Jersey dailies. I will quote just three paragraphs from his list of specifics:

I find that city hall news about important subjects
is mostly written in the terms of procedure and in the language of city ordinances. I find that police news is written like a formal entry in the police blotter... I find story after story about highway accidents but never a story of what it is really like at the scene of one.

I quoted those two newsmen because both of them were speaking of content. And in all of our talk about the future of communications, content is often the thing that is not discussed. In all of our talk about the future of communications, we tend to focus on technology, not on what that technology is to be used for. The editorial consoles and the lasar pipelines and the facsimile systems of the future are, after all, just means toward a noble end — the dissemination of information and ideas. The value of the technological apparatus depends ultimately on the value of the content it carries. The army mess halls that I used to know had the finest stoves and mixers and steam tables in the world; alas, they seemed incapable of turning out edible food.

An American's Search For a Hero

By ROBERT HARTJE
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For those who like alliteration, one might well speak of our modern world of crises in terms of Sex, Selma, South Vietnam, Space, and Sports. In all these terms, there lie hidden many of the frustrations, hopes, and dreams of our American society. In all these areas there are indeed Tom Paine's "times that try men's souls." There is no respite. In every moment of the passing parade, there is action on every front. Papal officials ponder the problem of sexual relations in confronting birth control. Weary, dedicated, usually heroic, sometimes confused marchers continue their unrelenting efforts to highlight America's inability to bring about racial integration. New casualty lists appear, planes fly their deadly loads into enemy oilfields, and new medal winners remind us of the war being waged in a world in which war was to be "no longer an instrument of policy." Pictures of the moon, taken from an amazing three-legged stool, placed on that rugged surface by man's scientific and mathematical genius, reveal mysteries of outer space heretofore only imagined by human minds. Even as our astronauts approach closer and closer to planting stool, placed on that rugged surface by man's scientific a flag where the unmanned satellite now rests, our minds day, baseball struggles to keep its place in the sun. Large crowds still fill Roman stadiums, but the loudest cheers of our modern world of crises in terms of this century. hardiest souls as death rides round each track and over unprecedented drama. Somehow this seems to be a strange interlude of unreasonableness, sort of an LSD world —
generally times of terror, "but the day never shines in which this element may not work... But whose is heroic will always find crises to try his edge." This is a more reasonable assumption, for despite the leveling process that shades out heroes, these are times of terror and hope which produce them. These are times of the reasonable and the unreasonable. These are the times of reality and of make-believe.

In sex it is whether the female human body is an art form, a dignified creature of dignity and worth in herself, or is she just a plaything for a dissolute culture? Is man really free or is he enslaved to his passions?

In "Selma" the issue between law and principle, state or federal authority, whichever the case, is clouded over by personalities and human sacrifice. Is man chained to his past, or is he driving too recklessly toward the future?

In South Vietnam we ponder the fate of the unfortunate, the spread of communism, the tragedy of war, and our own responsibilities in the world. Is man capable of love and of understanding outside his own tribe — beyond the pale of history?

In our Space program, we cannot help but think of the heavy costs involved, wondering if this is the best way to use our vast resources — or do we really have any other choice? We see a $15,000,000 space craft standing majestically on a launching pad — tall and awesome in the early morning light. The TV tube makes it appear to be a toy in our own front room. There is an explosion, the rocket rises slowly — then faster. We are anxious, excited, exhilarated as the announcement comes through of another successful launching. Is man a little less than God?

In sports it is an expensive racing car, a high-salaried pitcher, a big bonus for a college football star — all unreasonable on some value scales, all a result of a public demand for entertainment as a daily fare. Where does man go and for what does he search in the midst of prosperity — and hopelessness?

In every situation there is the hero or the need for one. If he does not appear naturally, we create one. In sex he ranges from purely physical images like Burton and Cary Grant to the stronger masculine figures of a youthful President, a Negro church leader, a Captain Carpenter, or a Secretary McNamara. And the ladies also have their extremes — from Monroe and Taylor to the more dignified, the Eleanor Roosevelts and the Marian Andersons.

"Selma" brings together heroes as diverse as Sheriff James Clark and the Reverend Martin Luther King; energetic, dedicated Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo and brash, unsophisticated "Bull" Connor. Despite its Carpenters and a host too numerous to list, Vietnam still cries for its heroes. In this strange, unprecedented drama Everyone becomes the hero — or we become so involved in the complexity of the situation that no man can be a hero. No single figure yet rises above the crowd, for it is just heroic to be there or to be dedicated to questioning why anyone is there!

Space and sports heroes have much in common. All adjectives have been used to describe their feats, and it would be hopeless to try even to remember all the names and events and the never-ending stream of statistics that pour out upon us from IBM computers that chart the courses of so many of their actions. The deeds of the space explorers are greater than the deeds of the athletic fields, but the names fade just as fast, and they remain heroic only as "composite" figures.

So we search for a hero amidst the Johnsons, de Gaulles, Stevensons, and Fulbrights. But in our search we look especially for confrontations between opposites. We pit the Kings against the Wallaces, the labor leader against the capitalist, Jimmy Brown against Jim Taylor. On our screens and in our slick publications it is the new Hollywood star against the aging performer. Everyone loves the Sunday duel between Koufax and Marichal. In every event there is the showdown battle, the shoot-out in the street, and new heroes replace old ones in too rapid succession.

Giants in the earth are some of these men — profiles in courage — while some are merely voices on the right or voices on the left. They are heroes, but of a different breed. Does the shadow of a youthful President, hero to many before death — greater hero to all after the assassin's bullet downed him in an unforgettable Dallas nightmare — give us a new dimension to the hero in History? Are the martyrs in Alabama, Vietnam, Watts, and elsewhere making "unreasonableness" our only hope? Who is the hero, what is the stuff of his heroism? The poet senses its vagueness:

Some got their medals and the plums,
Some got their fingers burnt,
But every one's a native son,
Except for those who weren't.

The American Ideal

In The Hero in America, Dixon Wecter pointed out that the hero in this nation is a little different from the universal ideal. He is not just an event-maker or a model for others. The bona fide hero in the United States must be the people's choice — the folk singer heralded by the small group rocking to his music or the national leader crowning his leadership in a public approved action in a Cuban crisis. Also in America we usually want out heroes to be men of good will. To damn the United States or other heroes is still to limit one's own range as so many have found in recent demonstrations of protest against Government policy. Mother, God, and Country are still the American trinity — to be loved, respected, lauded! Woe be to him who expects to be a hero and does not worship at this shrine!

We in America want a hero who is strong, but we want no "strong man" whose power will be a threat to our freedom. We want a hero we can love, but we may also wish to hate him if the occasion so warrants it. We want
him to be dedicated to unselfish service, but parades of unselfish service are not enough.

We want a hero we can make jokes about. We will take him seriously when he makes his fireside chat, or the crisis speech, or when the assassin’s bullet cuts short his life, but we will joke about him to relieve our own tensions while he yet does his great deeds — or has completed them. We will tolerate a man who fails in the short run, but on the long haul he must produce. It is well if he struggles against odds, if he faces discouragement and occasional failure. And he must never be allowed to display “the arrogance of victory.” We want our hero to be on a raft. On a raft you never sink, “but damn it, your feet are always wet.” Our hero worship is not necessarily nationalistic, and as Emerson once wrote, there is indeed a danger that “Every hero becomes a bore at last.”

In our nation’s busy capital city, a grim Texan, hardly the hero image in any traditional sense, now grasps our imaginations. “The Kennedy image still haunts the White House despite all the efforts of its present occupants to dispel it. But even within the shadows of the Kennedy vision, a determined Lyndon B. Johnson struggles desperately to pursue his own course as well as the course of his predecessor. President Kennedy set a certain pace when he identified again a concept of man that great men before him fought to preserve — the Adamses, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, Wilson, the Roosevelts, Adlai Stevenson. John F. Kennedy, the last chapter in his own Profiles in Courage, lashed out at poverty, confusion, ignorance, inequality, and fear, sometimes with the brilliance of the trained lawyer, more often searching, hoping, struggling, even floundering. Always serious and dedicated, he was an image of the dynamic to the younger generation, a supporter of artists and eggheads, a lover of beauty, a man of action, a hero of the Twentieth Century against whom all other heroes would be measured.

The Man from Texas

United States Presidents make good hero material — the White House is a place where heroes can be searched out in almost any generation. JFK filled the spotlight of public opinion with a form large and meaningful in the lonely office in Washington, D.C. Then into this arena came the Texan, and from the beginning he was a “gargantuan” figure of many hues. He stood big like his own state — and he was glad to be both a Texan and President! He was a Southerner, Westerner, American — all good things to all good men. And though we all missed the days of Olympus, there was a warmth in Johnson’s usually cold personality during those trying days of tragedy. He exuded confidence that we needed badly, and we watched him take the stage through our tear-dimmed eyes.

He was a curious blend of the former and the future. He gave notice, even as we dried our eyes, that he wanted to be a hero — but on his own terms. Not that he wanted to displace the idol before him, but he wanted his own place in the American sun. He scared us, he irritated men whose ears had loved too well the sound of the Boston “r.” his Southern accent sounded too much like a death knell for some other men’s hopes. But his words softened in statements that spoke of his awareness of our varied problems in Sex, Selma, South Vietnam, and Space. He saw as clearly as his predecessor the problems of overpopulation, racial inequality, communist aggression, and satellite defense. But was he of the stuff? Could he rise above being merely a tribal hero or a tribal chieftain?

Too many men attempt to become heroes merely by imitation of true heroes or just by association with them. Senator Robert Kennedy, after his recent mountain climb, retold the story of the young paratrooper who when questioned why he joined such an organization as the Paratroopers when he hated jumping himself, replied: “I don’t like to jump,” he confessed, “but I do enjoy the company of men who like jumping.” Would President Johnson be victimized by such a weakness? Would he take the proper models for his heroes? Americans no longer wanted a log cabin resident in the White House! Could LBJ rise to their new standards? Or would he establish a new category for heroes?

From the beginning President Johnson gave notice that he would not follow a blueprint, but he would chart his own course as he pursued it. And that he has, with modifications! He accepts the Congressional system, for in it he was raised, and now he has it running as a well-oiled machine. He is not bothered as much as was his predecessor by the “pessimism and complexity of the modern world” (James Reston, “What’s He Like?” New York Times Magazine, January 17, 1965, p. 8). Though he has antagonized the intellectuals, he has not yet taken the world away from them. One need not expect to see a Robert Frost on the platform again, but Johnson has restored hope to many less contemplative and creative. The President’s is a heroism of rugged individualism more attractive to those who speak his language than those who do not. He is fiercely patriotic, and he is fierce in his determination to stamp out the heritages of hate, uncertainty, fear, and dismay that grip his nation. Too often he attempts to extend these hopes to a world which does not understand his Texas temperament, but it took courage and feeling to attempt to really stamp out poverty when History seemed to decree that this could not be done. It takes the stuff of a hero to dream such reckless dreams as he dreams. Yet we all dream with him, as we dream with all our heroes.

At the present the man in the White House still pales in the shadows of Wilson, FDR, and JFK. But these giants of the past fade in the President’s determined, sometimes frenetic, actions to satisfy the demands of the present. He disappears into the White House, to his Texas ranch, to Camp David, and current issues seem to pile up. Then suddenly there is an announcement — the
decision to strike in Vietnam, a stern demand for a Negro voting rights bill, a plea for education and housing bills to help counter some of our moral laxity, congratulations of a personal sort to successful astronauts, an angry condemnation of the KKK, the endorsement of an “Upward Bound” program for high school students. These are the unreasonable acts that highlight his daily round. These are the things of which heroes, real heroes, are made. This President may not reach the proportions of a Washington, a Lincoln, or a Churchill. In fact the world may not even demand this accomplishment. Said Walter Lippman recently: “The world of Pitt, Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone, and even Churchill no longer exists, and what the British did at the Khyber Pass provides no precedent, no model, no guidance for what President Johnson ought to be doing in Vietnam” (Walter Lippman, “Our Place in the World,” Newsweek, June 20, 1966, p. 23). Johnson really must act without precedent. “As to the trials of the future,” wrote Max Ascoli, “civilization has its standards in the...” examples set by men engaged against them. (Max Ascoli, “Death and the Hero,” Reporter, February 11, 1965, p. 20). The true hero is both a part of civilization’s heritage and a molder of its future.

Today as always, then, we cry in anguish for the real hero. We may and probably will reject him as soon as he appears — if he does — but we search on. Our Presidency is a spawning ground for heroes. It can also be a death chamber for the man who lacks heroic proportions. How our President, our hero in spite of everything, will deal with the problems of our time will undoubtedly determine his standing in the community of heroes. In each symbolic area there is a challenge for unreasonable leadership: in Sex, how to handle overpopulation and free speech without destroying incentive and creativity; in Selma, the symbol of the struggle for all men to be truly free; in South Vietnam, in the challenge to a place for America in the world and exactly what that place will be; in Space, in our hopes and dreams for the worlds beyond our own, for the persistent search through science for evasive truth without destroying the basic dignity of man. These are but some of his challenges. These are the problems that confront the loneliest man in the world. These are the issues which any bona fide hero will have to face squarely.

Of course there will be other heroes in these struggles, there are already a host who might qualify for such distinction. Some will shine like meteors running across a dark sky. Others will flash or flicker in smaller circles — a voice and a guitar catching the feel of human worth, a priest more concerned with the individual than with the dogma, the teacher presenting all the evidence even when it brings down criticism, a housewife marching toward Selma or Jackson. These heroes will pass on, and the lights will continue to burn in the White House. Will the President live up to the dreams of all Americans for a hero? Every four years we raise the question anew. For the present, two people struggle both deliberately and naturally to prove themselves worthy of the distinction of being elected heroes. The President and our First Lady are the stuff of heroes. It appears in their actions, in the determined looks on their faces, in their unprecedented if often debatable actions. Are their visions far enough beyond the cosmic purposes to sustain them as heroes? Will America enshrine them as such? We can only hope that they eventually merit such praise. Our future probably depends upon it! Even our present may be at stake!

Lear the Universal

By ABIGAIL ANN HAMBLEN

The eldest hath borne most; we that are young Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

King Lear closes with these lines, epitomizing a story that has been told by others as well as by Shakespeare, at various times and in varying ways. In widely-differing cultures of the nineteenth century alone several versions were produced.

Turgenev’s A King Lear Of The Steppe, written in 1870, begins with a reference to the Shakespearean play, though the actual plot is said to have been derived from certain happenings in Oriel province. The huge, hearty, life-loving Martyn Petrovich Kharlov, landowner, divides his property between his two daughters, with the result that he goes mad with frustration and ill treatment, and finally dies trying to pull his house down.

Balzac, in 1885, wrote Pere Goriot, surely one of the most famous Lear tales. His version is given a Gallic twist by showing a doting father allowing himself to be ruined by the extravagance of two beautiful and seductive daughters whose demands are intensified by the needs of lovers and by social ambitions.

And some years later, in 1891, the New England Mary E. Wilkins’ first book of stories contains “A Village Lear”; though her treatment of the theme has none of the Russian or French pyrotechnics, it has a quiet effectiveness. Barney Swan, the ancient cobbler, has given his property to his two strong-minded daughters, and henceforth lives under their complete domination. His only comfort is his little shoe-maker’s shack in the back yard of the family homestead where, all alone, he can keep his self-respect.

The Lear of these stories are very different one from the other. Though not a royal figure, Turgenev’s Lear has a certain impressiveness: “It was hard to say just what Kharlov’s face expressed, it was so vast. You

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couldn't take it all in at a glance. But it wasn't unpleasant — there was even a certain majesty about it...

A little further on the reader is told that as a result of his "really Herculean strength" he "enjoyed huge respect in the neighborhood." In addition he himself has tremendous pride in his ancestry and in his intelligence.

Old father Goriot has nothing of this, and yet he has been entitled to respect, for he is a retired business man who has, by great shrewdness and industry, accumulated a modest fortune. When he first comes to Madame Vauquer's pension, he rents her best suite of rooms, and displays in it his collection of silver plate and china-ware. A certain jaunty elegance in his dress and cheerfulness in his manner show him to be a success in his narrow sphere. "I am not badly off," he says genially to his very much impressed landlady. "I have plenty of bread baked, as they say, for some time to come."

Mary Wilkins' Barney Swan is neither highly bred nor very intelligent, but by unceasing, patient work at his shoemaker's bench, he has accumulated a little property and built up a comfortable bank account. His business virtues have been industry and thrift.

Diverse as these men are in their personal characteristics, they are alike in the devotion they give their daughters. This devotion is as blind and uncritical as King Lear's. Martyn Petrovich trusts his daughters profoundly. When his friend tries to dissuade him from making over his property to the girls before his death, he is indignant at the implied criticism of them: "...what do you mean? — That they — my daughters — that I — To leave off being obedient? Why, even in their dreams they — Go against? Whom? Their father? To dare?"

Old Goriot has, from their births, been overcome with adoration of his Anastasie and Delphine. He considers them the most beautiful and the most fascinating young women in the world, and it has been his constant care that they should want for nothing. As one observer says, he is "a kind father who gave them each five or six hundred thousand francs, it is said, to secure their happiness by marrying them well, thinking that his daughters would always be his daughters, thinking that in them he would live his life twice over again, that in their houses he should find two homes where he would be loved and looked up to, and made much of." And Goriot himself admits, "I loved them too much for them to love me...I have gone down on my knees to them..."

Since his wife's death, Barney Swan has been ruled by his daughters, whom he considers perfect. He is "intensely loyal toward both...not even to himself would he admit anything to their disadvantage. He always spoke admiringly of them, and would acknowledge no precedence for one above the other." More than that, he seems actually afraid of them, with their imperious ways. With her share of the patrimony one daughter has furnished her parlor in red plush. "Once in a while old Barney, while on a visit, would stand on the parlor threshold and gaze admiringly at the furniture; but did he venture to step over, his daughter would check him." At her sharp cry he would assure her he wasn't "'a-goin' in," and "meekly shuffle back."

Each version of the Lear story shows a father declining in years, with a gradual loss of judgment and will-power. More than a mere "softening of the brain" seems to afflict these men: insanity hovers over each one. In the end for each there is absolute collapse.

Closely following Shakespeare, the decline is pronounced in the Turgenev and Balzac stories. In each there is something horrifying in the disintegration of character before the very eyes of the reader. Shakespeare's Lear, shorn of his royal perquisites, raves into the storm on a lonely heath, his only company his faithful fool and a cast-off courtier, disguised. At the end the strain of his suffering is too much for him, and this once firm-willed, proud king dies.

Turgenev's Martyn Petrovich, all his magnificent ebullience gone, sits for hours on the margin of the pond aimlessly pretending to fish. But he is finally goaded to violence, the culminating incident of an insanity growing beneath his humbled exterior. There is the tremendous crash of a tremendous personality, and as he wildly tries to pull his degraded house to pieces, he falls: "Kharlov lay motionless, face-down, and on his back lay the ridgepole of the roof, the roof-tree, which followed the fallen pediment..." The ridgepole had smashed the back of his head, and he had crushed his chest himself in his fall..."

Within the space of four years, Goriot changes completely. He moves to Madame Vauquer's cheapest room, no longer wears jewelry and fine clothes, and is bereft of his youthful gaiety. At sixty-six he seems "a worn-out septuagenarian, stupid, vacillating," and as such a splendid butt for the boarders' jokes and gibes. He dies after a long illness, watched over by two young medical students, his delirium taking shocking forms: he curses his daughters, neither one of which is at his side, raves against them, describes their unkindness and their ingratitude. And then, at the end, he is peaceful, for in his delusion they are with him, as he has longed for them to be, beautiful and solicitous.

The American Barney Swan is introduced well along in his disintegration. He is shown as "a small, frail old man" who "stooped weakly," and who does not seem much larger than a child. His face resembles a child's: "his sunken mouth had an innocent infantile expression, and as such a splendid butt for the boarders' jokes and gibes..." He dies after an illness, watched over by two young medical students, his delirium taking shocking forms: he curses his daughters, neither one of which is at his side, raves against them, describes their unkindness and their ingratitude. And then, at the end, he is peaceful, for in his delusion they are with him, as he has longed for them to be, beautiful and solicitous.

The American Barney Swan is introduced well along in his disintegration. He is shown as "a small, frail old man" who "stooped weakly," and who does not seem much larger than a child. His face resembles a child's: "his sunken mouth had an innocent infantile expression, and his eyes had that blank, fixed gaze, with an occasional twinkle of shrewdness, that babies' eyes have." He too dies after an illness, and though his daughters come when summoned, he has to die in the home of a neighbor, where he collapses. An hour before the end, he raises himself and looks out the window, a feverish joy possessing him: "...Look a-there, Sary — jist look a-there," said old Barney. "Over in the meader — look. There's Ellen a-comin', an' Viny, an' they look jist as they did when they was young; an' Ellen she's a-brin' me some tea, an' Viny she's a-brin' me some custard puddin'. Yes see 'em, Sary." The old man laughed.
Out of his ghastly, death-stricken features shone the expression of a happy child. 'Jes look at 'em, Sary,' he repeated.

Corruptions of the Daughters

One impressive element in the Lear story is the inevitable corruption of the daughters who are the objects of blind trust and the recipients of paternal fortune. More than the various Lear s do, they show a likeness from story to story. Though after Shakespeare, writers have been content to show two, instead of three, it is noteworthy that the gentle but implacable Cordelia is the one omitted. Mary Wilkins does provide, in the kind young neighbor, Sarah Arnold, what might be termed a Cordelia figure; Sarah is always sympathetic and tender toward Barney, and it is to her that he goes in his extremity.

However, the Gonerils and Regans flourish under various names, with almost identically unlovely qualities. King Lear's daughters are ambitious, selfish, intensely jealous of each other. Both are unprincipled in their sexuality, and both are capable of real cruelty. (Mark their maneuvering for the favor of Edmund, and there pitiless treatment of their father. The scene in which Gloster is blinded as a punishment for helping the wandering Lear is unforgettable. When, the first eye put out, he cries for help, Regan answers, "One side will mock another; the other too." And when the mutilation is complete, she orders, "Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell his way to Dover.")

Perhaps such overt viciousness is not a characteristic of either of Martyn Petrovich's daughters, but there is something undeniably sinister about both of them. Anna the elder, "lean and very lively," is simultaneously beautiful and ugly. In her dark face, with the fine blue eyes and scattering of moles, one sees evidence of both intelligence and shrewishness. Yet her "thin hard lips" with their "unkind little smile" are somehow seductive, for she is not devoid of sensuality. Her sister, Evlampia, is no less bewildering, with her ample blonde beauty. Her smile, too, is unpleasant — "habitual" and derisive. Beneath her indolent calm lie unquiet passions. The young neighbor, out hunting, sees her with her brother-in-law, with whom she carries on a clandestine affair, and hears her singing an evil little folk song ending, "And I myself I'll kill the little wife." Martyn Petrovich is shunted aside in his own house, made to sleep in a little store room, and deprived of his servant. (One remembers that King Lear's retainers are gradually taken from him.)

Goriot's two daughters have nothing to do with one another, but each watches the activities of the other with jealous eyes. They are women of no sexual principle, each one enjoying lovers, and their only desire is to shine in the eyes of the fashionable world. Nurtured in self-indulgence, they are numb to their father's devotion, and find him a nuisance and an embarrassment at their splendid tables and in their brilliant drawing rooms.

Melvina and Ellen in Mary Wilkins' story are not "unprincipled" in any conventional sense of the term, but they are domineering and unthinking. After his property has been made over to them, their father has no spending money ("Father ain't fit to spend money."). His clothes are kept mended, and he is given adequate food; otherwise he has nothing except the peace of his little cobbler shop in the back yard. For both he is a threat to their fiercely neat housekeeping, and with feelings very much like those of Goriot's daughters, they fear his uncouthness will disgrace them.

There is one point about the corruption of the daughters that is implicit in all the stories. Balzac makes it clear: his Goriot could be speaking for all the Lear s: "'The fault was mine. I taught them to tread me underfoot... I abdicated my rights and neglected my duty; I abased myself in their eyes... my children were good and I have spoiled them: on my head be their sins.'"

The fathers in all the stories have prepared their own downfall: it is inherent in their treatment of their daughters, whether that treatment is conditioned by pride, as in the case of King Lear and Martyn Petrovich, or love as in the case of Pere Goriot, or excessive humility, as in the case of Barney Swan. In a real sense each tale is an account of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children.

The God-Analogy

Perhaps the most important element of the Lear story is the plainly apparent God-analogy. The likeness is clear enough to lead the reader to speculate as to some derivation of it other than the Britain of misty, pre-Christian ages. Might it not descend from the Old Testament concept of God as a father, his treatment of his children, and the way in which his children spurn him? Malachi, for example, shows a Jehovah as passionate as any King Lear: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour?" (I,6). It must not be forgotten that for many centuries the king was the representative of God, i.e., the father, of his subjects. Their well-being — literally their lives — were in his power. Shakespeare's tragedy combines two types of paternity in one man, and his misfortunes spring from his tossing aside his paternal responsibilities to both his people and his daughters.

A god-like pride may be present in the Lear personality. In part it explains why the property in each case was given over to the children. The bestowing is a grand gesture. Martyn Petrovich is the best example of this: "'Pride ruined me, no less than King Nebuchadnessar. I thought: the Lord God didn't stint me in intelligence; if I've decided something — well, that means that's the way it ought to be... I decided I'd show them my strength and my power once for all! I'll bestow everything on them — and they've got to know it to the grave.'" (Oddly, in later years Martyn's younger daughter is discovered living as the queen — Mother of God — of the Khlysts,

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or Scourgers, a religious sect whose main tenet is the incarnation of God in man.

Balzac shows, not the regal pride of God, but his eternal, long-suffering love: "... Since I have been a father, I have come to understand God... only I love my daughters better than God loves the world, for the world is not so beautiful as God himself is, but my children are more beautiful than I am."

Barney Swan, too, is the New Testament God, humbled, but loving still. His pride is like Goriot's, the affectionate pride of a father in the accomplishments of his children, and his love is like Goriot's, the meek love of sacrifice.

Is the analogy further carried out in the implication of ultimate forgiveness on the part of the wronged father? As he lies dying, Martyn Petrovich mutters something that sounds like "'I do not condemn..."; Goriot feels the beloved presence of Anastasie and Delphine; and Barney Swan sees his Viny and Ellen young and loving again. They die without bitterness.

Certainly these various aspects of the old story demonstrate that it lies very close to the central concerns of man since primitive times — his relationship with his children and his fumbling attempts at a relationship with a deity. Whether it is embodied in a sweeping tragedy or in a tale of rural pathos, the Lear theme is unrivalled in profundity, and therefore perennial.

At The Top Of The Tell: An Historical And Religious Dilemma

By CHARLES CHATFIELD
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The development of historical learning and the understanding of the Christian faith have been closely interrelated in their recent development. The nineteenth century saw, for example, the critical study of the Scriptures, their reconstruction as an edited collection of sources, and the search for the historical Jesus, the attempt to understand Jesus and His teaching in the context of His time. Both of these revolutionary explorations and extensions of faith took place along with the development of a critical approach and method in history itself. And historical and religious learning influenced one another; historical analysis extended religious understanding as, at the same time, the methods of Biblical criticism were applied to secular history. This interaction took place especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and has continued to the present.

One further development which took place about that time changed the perspective of both religion and history. This was the archeological and geological exploration of prehistoric time. Suddenly time itself seemed to explode. What had seemed to be a well-defined world — one which, according to Dr. John Lightfoot, had been created at 9 o'clock in the morning on October 23, 4004 B.C. — was expanded backward at a dizzying rate. The vast length and breadth of human experience were increasingly revealed, and the religious viewpoint was changed to encompass this extension of history.

It is not surprising that religious and historical insights should be so organically related as they are, because the study of religion involves the meaning of man's existence, and history is essentially the meaningful study of human experience in time. Here history and religion are involved in a common paradox. For, while religion seeks to know the transcendent meaning of man's existence in itself, yet religious insight — faith — is bound in time, shackled to the finitude, the limited understanding of the believer. So, too, while the study of history reconstructs human experience in time, in the finite world of concrete facts, historical insight presupposes an ability to transcend time, to go beyond one's finite self. Thus, both religious faith and historical learning stumble upon a paradox of human nature: man's finitude, his creatureliness, and yet his audacious claim to transcend time, to know himself. This can be illustrated by a familiar historical example, the exploration of a tell.

A tell is the site of an early city. It may be near a spring or seaport where a people found it desirable to build. For one reason or another the original city is destroyed and covered and a second city is built on its ruins. This happens in sequence over the course of centuries. Then an archeologist comes along and stands at the top of the tell.

Perhaps it is old Heinrich Schliemann, led by the dreams he had treasured as a boy in Germany when he listened to the stories of the Trojan war and made up his mind to find the site of ancient Troy. Schliemann went on his own odyssey, of course. He sailed for South America as a cabin boy, was ship-wrecked, and landed in Amsterdam. There he kept books for some merchants while in the evenings he learned eight languages. Sent by his employers to St. Petersburg, he made a fortune for himself during the Crimean War of 1854. Then he sailed to California, where he became an American citizen, and in 1868 he began his life task. After a trip around the world, he landed at Constantinople, and soon he began to dig in the hill of Hisserlik near the Hellespont, on the site of Troy. Schliemann sank an inquisitive shaft deep into the tell at Hisserlik.
The Strata of the Past

We all stand at the top of a tell. It is the tell of past cultures, past civilizations, one built on the other, often fading imperceptibly into another. The historian knows that, and he explores the strata of the past. He sees the Roman republic shading into the empire, and he notes that the institutions of the republic underlay those of the empire, just as the city of Troy followed the contours of earlier towns at Hisserlik. He traces the succeeding phases of the French Revolution which not only led to but also influenced one another. He knows that industrialism not only followed commercialism in this country, but also continued the economic doctrines and instruments of the open market into the era of concentrated economic power. In particular, the historian of social ideas knows that the assumptions of his own age are the product of successive generations of human experience in time. Thomas Jefferson wrote to Henry Lee, for example, that in writing the Declaration of Independence he had merely formulated the ideas which were common to his own age and could be found in such "elementary" works as those of Aristotle, Cicero, Sidney, and Locke. Jefferson was acknowledging that his political philosophy had been formed in successive cultures from about 450 B.C. to after 1800 A.D.

Congeries of ideas that pass in our time for conservatism or liberalism, for nationalism or internationalism, for Christianity and for Lutheranism, are built on the experiences of ages past. The profession of the historian is to study the past as it was; his calling is to separate out, date, and relate the epochs of political, economic, cultural, and intellectual experience of man, much as the archeologist is trained to excavate and distinguish various cultures within the tell. The historian is trained, therefore, in logical tools and analytic techniques for reconstructing the past. He develops critical methods for sifting, testing, and evaluating documentary sources; he applies rigorous standards for judging the impartiality, objectivity, and truthfulness of an historical work. His standard is fidelity to the past; his goal is to relate the various levels of human experience in time.

Thus, as Heinrich Schliemann dug down into the tell at Hisserlik, he believed that he was actually uncovering the past of which he had dreamed as a boy. But a curious thing happened. He dug right through Troy, never recognizing it, and on into a city that lay below it. Schliemann never knew the difference. His trouble was, of course, that he, too, was a part of that tell. His imagination was bound by the concepts of his age just as surely as his body was fixed in time. In particular, he believed that Troy was the oldest city in the series. Since he dug there, other archeologists have developed more sophisticated tools of learning than his, but contemporary archeologists, too, are bound by their own experience. So are historians.

Karl Marx believed, for example, that he understood the economic and social orders of the past, but as we know, he reconstructed them according to the model of the world which shaped his own views and values. Successive generations of historians of the French and American Revolutions have re-interpreted the past according to their own political experience and predilections.

Every historian knows that he and his understanding are to some extent the product of his experience. He hopes that through knowledge and historical imagination his experience is larger than that of those who went and wrote before him. Yet we know that the past does not speak to us directly, but rather through the imperfect intermediaries of randomly surviving evidence, of memory, and of historical imagination. We know that the ideal of attaining the truth of the past is only imperfectly attainable; that, as Hans Meyerhoff has written in The Philosophy of History in Our Time (Doubleday, 1959, p. 16):

history sets definite limits to any claims of truth and objectivity; that it is affective, emotional, or irrational factors in its subject matter and in the mind of the historian himself; and that a historical work seems to be constructed according to a peculiar logic of its own which makes it difficult to say whether it is a work of science or art, both or neither.

We know, in other words, that as historians we stand both at the top of and apart from the tell of mankind.

This is the paradox of the historian, that his learning is both finite and transcendent, both limited by the present and extending into the past, that the past is gone forever and yet is recaptured in histories which chart its currents.

The historian's paradox is also his dilemma, as Allen Nevins and others have pointed out. For the same calling which requires the historian to be faithful to the past also demands fidelity to himself. He cannot realize his own capacity, his nature as an historian, except by attempting to do what he knows is ultimately impossible. This dilemma of the historian is the dilemma of man, particularly of religious man who knows his finitude and yet seeks to transcend it. History is an act of faith, as Charles Beard explained. As students of history we must aspire to learn a kind of truth which we can never know fully or verify certainly. As men and women we must aspire to goodness and value which we can never fully or completely realize.

CORRECTION
Our attention has been called to a factual error in the final paragraph in an editorial entitled "A Couple of Happy Happenings" which appeared in our February issue.

The American Lutheran Publicity Bureau has not "offered its magazine, the American Lutheran to (the Lutheran Council in the United States of America) as a magazine for all Lutherans." The Lutheran Forum, successor to the American Lutheran, is a new and independent publication, not at all structurally related to the Council. The ALPB is its publisher, just as it was the publisher of the American Lutheran.

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The production of Garcia Lorca's "Yerma" by the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater proved several points. Above all, the thrust stage seems to be more of an impediment than an advantage for plays written for a more intimate house. The tremendous immediacy and the feeling of translucent spaciousness created by it offers yet unforeseeable possibilities for a new type of play which waits to be written. "Yerma" is a poetic lamentation about the barrenness of a woman, a ritual of wild beauty which, like the passionate flamenco dance, lies in restraint and finds its climactic and only theatrical relief in the pagan festival at a Christian shrine. This one effective scene on stage proves that it is what Lorca calls it — a tragic poem and not really a play.

John Hirsch, a talented Canadian director, was unable to recreate the earthy quality and Spanish flavor without which this spoken poem is lost. It only goes to show that to choose this play for this stage was a serious mistake. Even though the acting quality of the new ensemble has improved somewhat this season, it is not enough to offset all of the other failings. Herbert Blau yielded to the pressure of criticism; Jules Irving is carrying on alone. The fact that Mr. Irving invited a guest production for next season, Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes," to be staged by the most successful director working on Broadway, Mike Nichols, creates mixed feelings.

No doubt it will be a great hit. But, by the same token, it negates the purpose of the Lincoln Repertory Theater, which was created as a repertory theater — Nichols intends to cast the English star, Margaret Leighton, as Regina — and a theater with decidedly different aims than those of Broadway producers. True, Lillian Hellman's play is an American classic and could have been chosen by Mr. Irving long before. But to invite a guest production is a bad omen. Walter Kerr, an archenemy of Blau and Irving, has already suggested that the Lincoln Center be turned over to many touring companies. Mr. Irving's decision seems to turn against him, although he undoubtedly tried to placate his enemies.

Meanwhile, the APA-Phoenix repertory company recorded its first failure. Richard Baldridge's play, "We Comrades Three," assembled from Walt Whitman's writings, was a failure in Ann Arbor, where it was tried out several years ago. After revisions it was shown in Toronto, where it was panned. Ellis Rabb, the artistic director of the company, did some more polishing, but the play remained feeble. There is little drama in Whitman's personality, only genuine pathos in the rhapsodic words of this bard. While this play was dropped, the APA came out with a new staging of Ibsen's "The Wild Duck," which, in Stephen Porter's interpretation, mixes bold strokes of irony and caricature on the one side with earnestness on the other. It seems that it is no longer easy to do full justice to Ibsen and our own time. A note of irony seems to have invaded Ibsen's realistic and crusading plays, partly because the issues are no longer problematic, partly because some of the characters have lost their hypnotic power. We are now worried about Nora's great-granddaughter in her miniskirts flirting with LSD. Therefore, it is difficult to keep a balance between the intruding irony and the seriousness in Ibsen, but the APA staging of "The Wild Duck" does a rather good job of it.

One of the most exemplary repertory groups is the Royal Shakespeare Company which came to New York with one of its most engrossing plays, Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming." I know of no better ensemble than this and of none that could relate Pinter's intentions more forcefully. The play's reception in New York was surprisingly cool.

Pinter may not be everybody's cup of tea, but his latest play is probably the most incisive he has written so far. The strength of his playwriting technique does not lie so much in what his characters say as in what the author intimates without verbalizing it. He is the first playwright to dramatize what is between the lines. He writes the most down-to-earth dialogue ("Mind you she wasn't such a bad woman, even though it made me sick just to look at her rotten stinking face, she wasn't a bad bitch"), and yet in reality his people are the most realistic symbols of a ritual which always contains a key speech in which the author illuminates what he hasn't quite said.

It is a ritual revolving around a woman who leaves her husband and a meaningless but comfortable life in America to move into the dingy atmosphere of lower class British life to become the central figure in the existence of three men: for the two brothers she becomes a madonna figure and a whore respectively, for the old man a young and rejuvenating wife. In Pinter's eyes she returns to her triple role as woman incarnate.

For those indoctrinated by the non-message of "Barefoot in the Park" or "Any Wednesday" it may be too big and bitter a pill to swallow.
The Broken Bread

By HANS BOEHRINGER
Assistant Professor of Theology
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When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening,' they said, 'and the day is almost over.' So he went to to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

—St. Luke 24:28-32 (The Jerusalem Bible)

A simple act, the breaking of bread, and yet for the Emmaus disciples it made all the difference between seeing and not seeing. Their hearts had burned when He explained the scriptures; but when He broke the blessed bread before them, their eyes were opened. The breaking of bread was for them the act of revelation. Centuries of pious controversy over the manner of His presence has made it harder for us to experience their excitement at the breaking of bread. The various legalities through which we have in our folly sought to protect God from ignorant minds and imperfect hands have also denied us much of that joyous shock of recognition.

How much we have lost! The same joy could be ours. The significant thing about those words, "This is my body," is that they are said over bread that has been broken. Bread unbroken is bread unshared, but that Bread which was broken on the cross is bread that is given and shared. There the mystery of the heavens is revealed, brought down for once and for ever to earth. The Servant-God is revealed in that bread-breaking. He, the Great Foot-Washer, by His embracing of death, shatters all tombs and makes lords of those He has served.

Bread-breaking is no fit deed for any sort of god but the God who is the one Loaf by whom the whole world is nourished. For such a God bread-breaking is right. It is the mark of His servanthood — taken and broken by men determined on His removal from the world — and also the symbol of His victory. He was born for this and for this He rose, to be the victory and the peace of the world in all its strife and agony. He conquered to be given. There is no other way to know God except in that service and that victory. The breaking of bread is His self-revelation to the world.

By that simple gesture repeated over and over again — by the toil-roughened hands of Peter and Paul, by the blood-soiled hands of the knightly princes of the church, by the trembling hands of young Luthers and by the hands of wearied saints — by that gesture the conquering servant Lord ever sets a table and invites men and women to celebrate with Him His victory.

To eat and to drink with God, the shatterer of all man's pretensions! That is a proposal to make us blink! See how the fascination of the event still clings to the bare words: "Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel. They saw the God of Israel beneath whose feet there was, it seemed, a sapphire pavement pure as the heavens themselves. He laid no hands on these notables of the sons of Israel: they gazed on God. They ate and they drank." Murmuring Israelites or no, he seals His covenant with them. By the breaking of bread, the seal of peace is confirmed. They are His and the covenant given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is theirs.

Men in years gone by sensed the near-sacredness of all meals eaten in peace with others. Food was never just food. There was always a god to be satisfied or to be thanked. For the Christian every meal could be a domestic celebration of the victory of the Lord and a mark of the covenant of peace with men on earth. It is hard to discern this sign in the eating of sacks of hamburgers, or in meals eaten gracelessly and in pointless haste, or in meals ending in the victimization of the guest. The sign is still seen, however indistinctly, in meals eaten by lovers pledging themselves to the mystery whereby they will present one another to the Lord without spot or blemish. It is still to be seen in meals eaten by families gathered around their father's table, still to be seen in the meetings in which men celebrate the divine gift that friendship has given them.

God calls men to share bread and cup so that they may find fellowship and make communities. The table of God calls men to the great community of those who have been called to His peace. At that table the Bread of Heaven stills the hunger of men and women who live in a tantalizing but hungry world. The cupboard is full in the Father's house. It is filled with the Bread who invited the twelve in Jerusalem to eat and to drink. They could scarcely understand what He meant by His words then; but on Easter their eyes were opened. Death had by then become Life! The faithlessness, the blindness of heart, and the folly of the mind were forgiven; by once again breaking bread with them, He made them His friends, the recipients of His peace and the bringers of peace to the world that did not yet know Him.
By the breaking of bread He defined them as well as Himself. So He also defines all of us who today celebrate in the breaking of bread His victory until He comes again. His victory gives us life, but it is the same sort of life He Himself had, the life of bread broken and shared. The resurrected life is the life of self-offering for the sake of the world for which He has given Himself.

"Amen" so often seems to mean "the end." The finality of our "Amen" after receiving the blessing of God often obscures the fact that our breaking of bread does not end when the parish liturgy ends. As we know His resurrection by the breaking of bread, so the whole world must learn to know Him. Perhaps men find it hard to know Him by our ritual, but it has no other way of learning to know Him but by the breaking of bread. If not in our ritual then in the life of our brotherhood. There are private and public ways in which He is revealed to men. Yet they are all the same way just as our bread-breaking at the altar and the giving of our lives are the same thing. Always they are the same Lord giving Himself for the same world. Cross, sacrament, or brotherhood's life — they are of the same divine love and of the same divine salvation.

Ages of ritual and faithlessness have dulled our joy at the altar. So have they dimmed the joy of our brotherhood. We sing of the resurrection but less fervently bear testimony to our own resurrection. We seek Him in time hallowed memories of sacred history, but the world will not travel back 2,000 years with us. The world, however, may stand still long enough to look with astonishment on a brotherhood which in the broken bread which is its life makes our Lord present and evident today. How little or how much the brotherhood's life reveals the resurrection can be seen in how seldom or how frequently the world stops to marvel at the brotherhood's own resurrection.

It may be that when the church fully lives in that resurrection men will no longer have difficulty understanding the meaning of our action when we are gathered around the altar. Perhaps the ritual of the altar can never become transparent to those who have not yet accepted the invitation to eat at the table of God. Yet it would already be a great thing if our celebration in the world of God's victory were more consistent with our celebration of that victory in our parish liturgies. For then others may say to us: "Our hearts burned within us when you explained the scriptures and spoke to us of the Christ they proclaim, but our eyes were opened when you shared your bread with us. Then we recognized Him; then we knew Him to be the Bread that alone will satisfy us." Then we shall celebrate Easter as only God knows how to rejoice in it.

On Second Thought

"In the beginning was the Word" John wrote, "...all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Bound by our dogmatic structure of Trinity, and by our mechanistic image of creation, and by our insistence that we must have a peculiar truth as reason for our existence, we have heard John say that way back before creation there was a Being called the Son who was involved in the process of calling things into being. What John did say was that God has always expressed Himself, and that everything which is expresses God. When the Word was given in human flesh He was the expression of grace, therefore everything that is expresses the grace of God. All existing things above the heavens, on the land and in the sea are Word, and they are all the Word of grace.

If a thing is true, it speaks of God. It is then part of the message we are called to proclaim, we who have been chosen as His ambassadors. Whether it is material in the world of nature, or immaterial in the world of the mathematician and the philosopher, if it is true it is ours to speak. Everything that is learned by men, all the newly discovered fact and the newly uncovered explanation is Word of grace, for without Him nothing is.

There are two ways of untruth, two ways in which a fact or an explanation may not be Word. One way is our weakness in discovery, and that is forgiven and accepted by grace. Thank God, for not one of us knows the whole of what is. The other is our claim to possess the truth, our rejection of what contradicts us. That is shut off from grace, it is a denial of the Word's involvement in what is.

Truth is what is. Untruth is what is not. Truth is a word from God, untruth is born in our weakness and our sin. We are involved in untruth, to hear the expression of truth. When we are faced with the necessity of distinguishing between two statements and choosing one or the other, we do not ask which one fits our doctrinal structures, our ethical ideals, or our historic past. We ask which one is true. No doctrine, no custom, no theory, no law can prove a truth, but only Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. All things are in being through Him, and not through us. It is He who accepts our weakness in grace, and that is truth. He is the Truth we deny when we claim to possess the truth.

God has always expressed Himself. All things are His Word. We live in discovery of the Word, hearing God's expression in whatever is. So long as we have not yet learned to know all that is — so long as any questions still remain — so long we have not yet fully heard the Word. We cannot afford to close our ears to the new in order to protect the old, because God has not yet finished speaking.

By ROBERT J. HOYER

On Second Thought

"In the beginning was the Word" John wrote, "...all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Bound by our dogmatic structure of Trinity, and by our mechanistic image of creation, and by our insistence that we must have a peculiar truth as reason for our existence, we have heard John say that way back before creation there was a Being called the Son who was involved in the process of calling things into being. What John did say was that God has always expressed Himself, and that everything which is expresses God. When the Word was given in human flesh He was the expression of grace, therefore everything that is expresses the grace of God. All existing things above the heavens, on the land and in the sea are Word, and they are all the Word of grace.

If a thing is true, it speaks of God. It is then part of the message we are called to proclaim, we who have been chosen as His ambassadors. Whether it is material in the world of nature, or immaterial in the world of the mathematician and the philosopher, if it is true it is ours to speak. Everything that is learned by men, all the newly discovered fact and the newly uncovered explanation is Word of grace, for without Him nothing is.

There are two ways of untruth, two ways in which a fact or an explanation may not be Word. One way is our weakness in discovery, and that is forgiven and accepted by grace. Thank God, for not one of us knows the whole of what is. The other is our claim to possess the truth, our rejection of what contradicts us. That is shut off from grace, it is a denial of the Word's involvement in what is.

Truth is what is. Untruth is what is not. Truth is a word from God, untruth is born in our weakness and our sin. We are involved in untruth, to hear the expression of truth. When we are faced with the necessity of distinguishing between two statements and choosing one or the other, we do not ask which one fits our doctrinal structures, our ethical ideals, or our historic past. We ask which one is true. No doctrine, no custom, no theory, no law can prove a truth, but only Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. All things are in being through Him, and not through us. It is He who accepts our weakness in grace, and that is truth. He is the Truth we deny when we claim to possess the truth.

God has always expressed Himself. All things are His Word. We live in discovery of the Word, hearing God's expression in whatever is. So long as we have not yet learned to know all that is — so long as any questions still remain — so long we have not yet fully heard the Word. We cannot afford to close our ears to the new in order to protect the old, because God has not yet finished speaking.

By ROBERT J. HOYER

On Second Thought

"In the beginning was the Word" John wrote, "...all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Bound by our dogmatic structure of Trinity, and by our mechanistic image of creation, and by our insistence that we must have a peculiar truth as reason for our existence, we have heard John say that way back before creation there was a Being called the Son who was involved in the process of calling things into being. What John did say was that God has always expressed Himself, and that everything which is expresses God. When the Word was given in human flesh He was the expression of grace, therefore everything that is expresses the grace of God. All existing things above the heavens, on the land and in the sea are Word, and they are all the Word of grace.

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In the days preceding Christmas a Chicago station broadcast four recorded versions of *Messiah* and in so doing raised again the question of performing historical music. The comparison of the recordings engaged one in the problems of music research, performance practices, and practical editions, for the differences among them cannot be charged merely to the variations of personalities and interpretations. Each represents a studied solution to the problem of recreating for present-day audiences music originating in an age now two centuries past.

While the implications touch on all music older than yesterday, it is significant that WFMT’s programming should focus attention on the one work that has undergone more versions than any other piece of music. That Handel’s *Messiah* remains an indispensable treasure in western man’s storehouse of culture is testimony to its inherent greatness and vitality of spirit. Even the composer performed the work in several versions, making the task of restoration more difficult; the succession of singers required alterations of the arias to suit each vocal ability and annual productions needed new movements to attract novelty-loving audiences. The differences represented by the four recordings here referred to go deeper than surface detail, however.

The reconciliation of the aesthetic climate of the work’s composition with that of a current performance is their dilemma. In the nineteenth century a newly democratic society expressed its optimism and belief in progress in a sweeping, evolutionary art. Development from a tentative beginning to a climactic finale, large instrumental and vocal forces to fit the grandiose subject, and the extension of long legato lines are the marks of this art. *Messiah* displays a subject worthy of the new society. It took only some excision of ornamentation, some abridgement of movements, and a reorchestration to fit out Handel’s music in a garb appropriate to the grand theme. Since later research has made possible the re-construction of a Handelian performance, however, twentieth-century doubt of this sort of propriety plagues the mind of the musician.

The claim for the Robert Shaw recording is that it is the first to follow the 1742 version. Chorus and orchestra are reduced to the scale suggested by musicologists with the result that the contrasts between soloist, chorus, and orchestra are more finely drawn. The superfluous instruments introduced by Mozart and Prout are dispensed with, giving to the whole performance a lightness more in the eighteenth-century English character. And finally, the use of smaller groups of musicians allows the conductor to set faster tempos; the repetitive da capos and the lengthy choruses no longer seem interminable.

A feature of every Handelian performance, which any casual reading of history will show, was the brilliant display by the solo singers of their ability to conceive and execute improvisations upon the composer’s melodic line. Thus the reprise of an aria was never repetitive because a different variation of the melody was sung. The virtuoso exhibit of trills, scales, and arpeggios frequently held more attraction than the composition. Study of teaching manuals and of famous arias noted “as sung by Mme. X” and practice in the art have encouraged some singers today to revive the practice of embellishing composers’ texts. Colin Davis’ performance of *Messiah* is noteworthy in this respect. While Mr. Shaw’s musicians indulge in a modicum of alteration, Mr. Davis gives his singers complete freedom. The listener is frequently brought up in his chair with a start upon meeting a familiar face newly emerged from the musical beauty parlor. Such alterations of the Urtext often seem to be distractions from Handel’s meaning and the ornamentation sounds forced whenever for a moment the singer loses confidence in what he is doing.

Perhaps it was impatience with trying to establish a re-creation of *Messiah* satisfactory to both scholars and audiences that compelled the late Sir Thomas Beecham to commission yet another version for modern orchestra and modern singers. The score is imaginatively theatrical; the experience of being catapulted into the “Hallelujah Chorus” by a cymbal crash is alone worth the price of the album. The verve with which Sir Thomas approaches the music, caring nought for the opinion of critics, is infectious, and the full-throated, full-blown performance of the singers is thrilling. The next day, though, may find one uncertain of what was substance and what merely effect.

Perhaps it is the assurance with which they sing and play and the loving conviction they bring to the music conveyed in the performance that have made the Huddersfield Society *Messiah* a permanent feature of record catalogues. A dated, unscholarly, out-of-fashion performance it may be; but to the musicians who perform, *Messiah* is obviously part of a civilized heritage that is retained not by argument or by proof but by the continued affirmation of its importance to civilized men.

It is noteworthy that none of the musical restorations on recording employs boys for the chorus even though Handel’s scoring (oboes doubling the soprano in all choruses) and the first performance programs make this explicit.
"I want hallelujah painting." Willem de Kooning
"The ultimate act is faith, the ultimate resource the preconscious: if either is suspended, the artist is impotent." Robert Motherwell

To think of art as an imitation of nature may result in the attitude of an art student who came back from an afternoon of outdoor painting with the half joking remark, "God wins again." She rejected her painting because the representation of it simply didn't equal the actual scene. On the other hand people often accept a painting primarily because of the subject it attempts to represent. A women's group last spring held an art exhibit, and the popular prize went to a painting of a barefoot little boy and little girl walking hand in hand down a wooded lane carrying fishing poles. It didn't matter that the children were weakly centered on the canvas and surrounded by raw and monotonous green.

In the eyes of the farmer, the art student, and the women's club ladies, a painting's value, if any, is determined by the scene it records. However, with the camera taking over the job of recording appearances, such attitudes call into question the reason for being of painting and drawing themselves.

As I have tried to show in previous columns, one reaction of many twentieth century artists to the above was to try to "recover the bold force of the mediums," and emphasize the abstract aesthetic qualities that all good paintings, of any style, require. After all, the delight that we receive from a rose or a tree comes largely from their abstract shapes and colors. The delight that should come from any painting, but especially from abstract expressionist paintings, should also come from their non-representational shapes and colors.

The abstract expressionists of the late forties and entire fifties wanted to make the most of our senses; wanted to appeal first to the sensations of surfaces, colors, textures, overwhelming rhythms, and delicate pulsations — and then perhaps to the subject. Their appeal to the senses was meant to be intensely immediate, like being slapped, tasting vinegar, hearing cymbals crash... a kind of hallelujah of our senses. The visual experiences that the abstract expressionists wanted to create were not driven second-handedly from the outside world, but were a new, unique, visual experience not to be found anywhere else.

Another reaction of many twentieth century artists was to turn to an interpretation of experience led by intuition, or, if you will, the subconscious. At any rate, sensations derived from the artist's materials, and images suggestive of subconscious intuitions conducive to meditation were the interests of some of the abstract expressionists.

Adolph Gottlieb (1903) painted such pictures. His art training began at the Art Student's League (New York) and extended to Paris, Berlin, and Munich. In 1937 he went to Arizona and became very much interested in the magical designs of the Indians. In 1941, back in New York and supported by the general interest in the surrealist belief in mythical zones of the subconscious, he began his series of paintings called pictographs, represented here by EVIL OMEN. He divided the canvas into irregular gridlike compartments and in these painted highly simplified schematic emblems, in this case mainly eyes. Perhaps the forms look crude, but their cave painting simplification to absolute essentials also projects a sense of concentrated power and magical order in an anxious world.

In 1951 Gottlieb started a series, "imaginary landscapes" or "seascapes" in which the symbols have been freed from the grid, become less "literary," and richer in textural impact. In FROZEN SOUNDS, the thick, tight staccato circles and dashes of power hover in a scumbled white sky over a loose land of chaotic lines sometimes vaguely suggesting stick figures or the arrow on the left. In 1957 Gottlieb simplified his figures even further, greatly enlarging the size of his paintings and eliminating all explicit literary subject matter. As in BLAST I, two shapes remain: a compact oval stained in a deep, hard magenta in balance with a more thickly chaotically outlined black shape at the bottom. The space is very ambiguous, because the horizon is gone. The visual effect is more dramatically aggressive than a stop and go light. One's eyes keep going back and forth searching for a kind of restless balance of two unlike equals. When I studied this painting in New York recently the controlled red appeared harder and more fearsome than the chaotic, impulsive black below, which really seemed partly hidden and softened by the white background. Yet the black finally was the equivalent to the red because the black was so far down on the canvas it seemed more forward than its size and shape would lead one to expect.

As one searches out the balance one begins to suspect that much more than aesthetic order is alluded to. Critics find these dual images suggestive of highly poised balances between control and impulse, sun and earth, male and female, order and chaos, creation and destruction, reason and emotion. Reinforcing such allusions, Gottlieb has titled some of the paintings in this series, Transfiguration.

But even so, doesn't any seven-year-old have the skill to paint such pictures? Perhaps to the non-painter the supreme skill in art is representation. Yet other skills
are just as necessary and difficult, such as invention and visual judgment. The child would have to invent these forms and then handle the paint in such a way as to rigorously heighten the pitch and force of the balance with sustained visual judgment. Obviously such painting also requires a heightened aesthetic sensibility on the part of the beholder. A love of a particular subject matter can no longer be confused with an estimate of aesthetic value.

There are finally two conclusions I would like to make. In the first place, for the farmer, the art student, and the women’s club ladies to reduce all art to a copy of nature is a serious impoverishment of art and the participating beholder. In the second place, for the artist involved in creating images out of a committed Christian experience of life, Adolph Gottlieb and many of the abstract expressionists vividly demonstrate a way to impart a strong feeling-impact to symbolic forms.

THE FROZEN SOUNDS, NUMBER 1, Adolph Gottlieb. 1951 Oil on canvas, 36" x 48". Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, gift of Mr. & Mrs. Samuel M. Kootz.

EVIL OMEN, Adolph Gottlieb, 1946, oil on canvas. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger.

On the last Thursday of January, two colleagues and I set out by car from Valparaiso, Indiana, for O'Hare Field, Chicago, to enplane for St. Louis, where we were to be in an important conference with social studies experts at Washington University. We left at about five o'clock in the morning to catch an early 7:15 plane. Our plans were to return to Chicago for a relatively early evening dinner.

We did not depart. For all I know that plane is still standing out there in the snow. We did sit in the plane for a little over an hour, had breakfast, got out, saw about ticket refunds, and arrived home at two o'clock in the afternoon. We were earlier than anticipated.

A simple chronology, a trip not consummated, a long car ride home, a vicious kind of circle really, and how come?

The following Monday's edition of the Gary Post-Tribune (January 30, 1967) answered that question: "VALPARAISO — Porter County was slowly shoulder­ing aside the heaviest snowfall in its recorded history today, but was still in a state of semi-paralysis." Depending on who is pontificating, about twenty-six inches of snow fell on Valparaiso in four days. The local paper tried to tell the story in its headlines: "Residents 'Shovel-Weary'"; "Trials Delayed By Snow"; "No School Tuesday"; "Adults, Children Shovel."

The trip home was something. Cars were stalled on the ramps leading to the toll road. But my colleague driving the car managed to get on the toll road. Cars once on the toll road slipped off and were abandoned in most cases. It became a real job even to find an exit that was not blocked by a long line of cars and trucks. Damned if we stopped and damned if we did not, we managed to follow a truck off the tollway to Highway Six and home. The car, driven expertly by my colleague, sometimes sputtered and choked down a time or two. This mystified us until we lifted the hood. The car had been sucking up snow from underneath into the engine compartment. Not just a little snow. Snow had filled the engine compartment. I had never seen anything like this before. Shades of Nader.

Yet life was not altogether snug in the Hoffmann home. The schools were all dismissed and, consequently, our three youngsters and I were home for some togetherness. This crew had to live around the clock — a father, a fifteen year old, a fourteen year old, and a twelve year old. All four added together and effervescent do not add up to togetherness. I know now how wars are started. This togetherness is just fine for those who are not together. In addition, the animals were kept inside: a hybrid cat, a mixed-up beagle hound, and a German shorthaired pointer — pedigreed, but what difference did it make?

Everybody at home except mother. Director of nursing services at the local Porter County Hospital, she had her work cut out for her as did those members of her staff who could get to work. She worked around the clock with two or three hours of sleep here and there. This was the story with the total hospital staff on the job, the police and sheriff departments, utility companies, helicopter pilots, street cleaning crews, the media of communication, highway departments, doctors, and scores of others.

At the university we were in the middle of finals with two days to go. These two days were pushed off to Monday and Tuesday. This pushed up registration for the next semester. Psychologically these finals were a bust. It was something like postponing a wedding; funerals, yes — but not weddings. Yet some people were forced to postpone or curtail their wedding plans — and funerals too, for that matter.

Still, life had to go on somehow. People want to eat and drink. Our milk supply ran out. There was still liquor in the cupboard, but who feeds his kids manhattans? I did take a nip or two, just the thing to keep soul and body together during the snow storm of the century.

The complications of urban life struck home with particular acuteness during this storm. Cars, buses, and trucks stalled, thereby impeding the normal flow of human intercourse. People froze in inadequate houses. Snow removal equipment was not always up to standards. Police had to patrol on foot and therefore could not control the looting. And so on.

My grandchildren will not believe all this but I will tell them. I really will.
The Mass Media

The Now People

By DON A. AFFELDT

The Now People have come alive. Having been crowned “Man of the Year” by the great Conversational Common-Denominator, they are upon us in full force. The threat they pose is fully appreciated by neither their foe nor by themselves. The situation clearly calls for a Cassandra but, failing that, we do have a Canadian. As his momentary messenger, I call upon the masses to hear and to heed.

The Canadian is Marshall McLuhan and he is the closest we have come to the Delphic Oracle for some time. His utterances, *The Mechanical Bride*, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, and *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, are strewn with jarring insights, cryptic sayings, and incredible claims. I wish to fasten on one of these (let the reader fix the category to which it belongs) in order to analyze some current phenomena and to suggest what the implications of these phenomena might be for the academic establishment.

The Now People form the generation of Americans under twenty-five years of age. They are Now People, not because they are under twenty-five but because they spent their formative years in front of the Tube. Their defining characteristic is not poor eyesight or a proclivity for dinners on a tin-foil tray; rather, they are marked by a craving for participation. The mark they bear, at least according to McLuhan, is a function of television itself, the stamp of the nature of the medium. Television is a “cool” medium, having low definition and therefore requiring a high degree of involvement and expression on the part of the viewer. The image which appears on the screen is composed of thousands of tiny dots; the viewer, says McLuhan, has to put the dots together to form a picture before he can grasp the content of the picture. When the picture is formed, the viewer is still called upon to supply detail in all but the largest close-ups. But already at that point the medium has left its mark. The content of television is not of great consequence, says McLuhan; he says, in all seriousness, “the medium is the message.” This credo, though its import for McLuhan ranges far beyond the topic of the effects of television, will suffice for the present. It adumbrates a cause and permits me to go on to examine the effects.

The crassly sensory appeal of television has hooked a generation, and the electronic offsprings of this latter-day Cyclops will blip-blip a new world age. The Now People indicate what it will be like. Their dance-form, for example, is a cool, involved, and chatty form of improvised gesture. To try to “learn it” is very difficult, if you take “it” to be a structured pattern of foot and arm movements; the key is to relax and to swing. The music of these people is misleading; it sounds harsh and intense to the ear whose pleasures are found in Wayne King or Bach, but to a Now Person the blaring jukebox and the omnipresent transistor are not sources of aural tyranny. They are instead passages to freedom, shutting out the external world and inviting the hearer to explore his inner senses or, conversely, calling him to unshackle himself from the constrictions of his superego in order to give full play to the self who yearns to embrace all things. LSD is the magic-maker for the Now Person just because the drug expands his consciousness and heightens his senses, enabling him to participate maximally in whatever presents itself to him.

Aristotle gave full treatment to the faculties of sensation, memory, and experience, but he went on to talk about art and reasoning, and found in them a hint of men’s proper goals. “Experience is knowledge of individuals, art of universals,” he said; the designation *wise* must belong “to him who has in the highest degree universal knowledge . . . and these things, the most universal, are on the whole the hardest for men to know, for they are farthest from the senses.” The academic establishment has a vested interest in the precepts of Aristotle, for its members profess to reveal to initiates the real causes of things, and to disclose to neophytes the universals, of which the particulars are mere instances. What happens, then, when the learned member of the Lyceum finds himself in front of a group of Now People who prize the particular above the universal, who relish experience and denigrate reasonings?

The findings aren’t in yet, but it is clear that the establishment is going to have to do more than cluck its collective tongue about “the younger generation.” Perhaps we will be successful in converting Now People from the Tube to the textbook; perhaps we can re-establish Gutenberg as our household god in place of Sarnoff. But perhaps we can’t. In that event, we may have to reckon, painfully, with the fact that times have changed. We may have to reshape our curricula and our teaching methods to capitalize on the new-found hunger of this age for involvement, experience, and commitment. Aristotle, be it noted, based his philosophy on the conviction that the universal is contained in the particular; the task of the wise man, then, is to apprehend existing essences—not to supply them from on high. Now People may not be Platonists, as many of us are, but need they be blamed for being Aristotelians?

It may be that out of an electronically-necessitated recasting of old forms into new substances will come a better potion for the human spirit to drink. There are worse things than involvement, experience, and commitment.
Weep Not for Me

Year after year, we have come to terms with the fact and the meaning of Good Friday and all that led up to it. Given what we are, it should not be surprising that our natural inclination is to turn the Passion and death of our Lord to our own purposes, to distort it from what God was doing in and through it all to something which we do. The extreme form of this distortion is that of certain flagellant groups which beat themselves, apparently on the theory that an angry God needs still more blood to satisfy his justice and appease his wrath. But in less extreme forms much of our observance of Lent tends to become a form of self-flagellation. We seemingly cannot be content to adore the love that loved us to the uttermost. We insist on adding our little something to that which needs nothing added to it — the reconciliation which God accomplished, fully and on His own — in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

At the root of this insistence is a misreading of the Gospel which is so serious as to distort the Good News into a new Law. Reduced to its essentials, the Gospel says that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” We distort it, indeed contradict it, when we say, whether in so many words or merely by implication, that “God was in Christ, reconciling himself to the world.” If we start from the assumption of a God who hated men and had to be appeased before he could love them, there must forever remain a residue of doubt about the finality of his act in Christ.

But if we start, as the apostles and evangelists did start, from a view of a God who loved us even while we were in our sins, and who gave his Son as conclusive proof of that love, we can abandon once for all the wearying, worrisome attempt to make ourselves acceptable to Him, for we can know that we don’t have to win his acceptance. It is already there — as it was even before the events of Holy Week and Good Friday.

Once we begin to understand this, Lent ceases to be an occasion for orgies of weeping and self condemnation and becomes once more what it was originally intended to be, a time of preparation to receive the risen Christ. It becomes, in other words, a penitential season.

And here we have to rescue another great and holy word from the decay into which it has fallen as a consequence of our stubborn insistence upon reconciling God to ourselves. To be penitent does, indeed, imply sorrow over the sin which alienates us from our Father and the sins which result from that alienation. But this sorrow is a godly sorrow only if it purges itself of every element of that work-righteousness which tempts us to suppose that God takes pity on us because we are sorrowful. God pities us “like as a father pitieth his children”; that is, because He loves us and only because He loves us. Our sorrow does not change His hatred into love. It is itself his gift, the opening up of our hearts so that his love — healing and comforting — can come flooding in.

Neither must penitence be understood as a kind of exercise of the will, a determination to clean up our disordered lives so that God can find us lovable. The will is indeed involved in penitence — but, again, on the receiving end. For it is God who works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. Any attempt on our part to win his favor by making great resolutions (which we can not keep) can only drive us to that very despair from which we were redeemed by the sufferings and death of the Savior.

Real penitence is the abandonment of all efforts to make ourselves acceptable to God and, as Tillich has put it, the acceptance of the fact that we are accepted. It is, in other words, to let God be God, and to let his grace be grace. This seems so simple, and yet it is the hardest thing in the world. For it requires us not only to walk by faith rather than by sight; it requires us to deny the ultimate reality of much of what we think we see — the apparently inexorable law of retribution which seems to run through the whole creation, the universality of the principle of tit for tat, even (in some sense) the Scriptural warning that what a man sows he shall also reap.

To be truly penitent is to abandon one’s self to the love and pity of God, to throw one’s self on the mercy of the court in the full confidence that the Judge is our loving father. In the highest and holiest sense, to be penitent is to relax, to quit trying to prove anything either to ourselves or to God, and to let him take over the direction of our lives. It is to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him, confident that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace.

This is the Christian Gospel, signed when our Redeemer died and sealed when he was glorified on Easter morning. May the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing. And may he make us ministers and channels of that reconciliation which, though already operative through his own act in Christ, remains unknown to millions of our fellow-men who still live out their lives of desperation in fear of the idols that oppress them.