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Above: Don Vogel, South Bend, Indiana, American Door. (Keep on Trucking).
1975, Acrylic/enamel on door, 51 x 25".

Front and back cover: Ed Paschke, Chicago, Illinois, Urban Quilt. 1975, Oil,
22 x 42". Collection of Elinor Wilke.
IN LUCE TUA

THE RED SUN

RUMORS OF HIS DEATH OR its imminence had appeared in the Western press for over four decades. Yet he had always reappeared — on the Long March, in the caves of Yenan, swimming the Yangtze, directing the Cultural Revolution. It is perhaps then not surprising that news reports of the death of Mao Tse-tung left me feeling strangely incredulous. His life had been so intertwined with the turbulent events of twentieth-century China that “China without Mao” seems vaguely impossible. For many millions of Chinese it almost certainly seems inconceivable. For, Mao to the Chinese was among other things in the people’s collection of metaphors, “the very red sun that shines most brightly in our hearts.” The metaphor comes from a talk given in 1967 by a fifty-three-year-old peasant woman, and it suggests three aspects of Mao’s role in the history of Chinese civilization as perceived by his people.

Most significantly, as the sun heralds the new day, so it was Mao and his revolution that ushered in a new era for China. To borrow the title of Graham Peck’s book, China before and after Mao can be seen as “two kinds of time.” From a half century before his birth in 1893 until he assumed power in 1949, China had been ignominiously subjected to imperialist demands and wars. Having lost control of her territory, her resources, and her own administration, China could not even prevent Western nations from forcibly exporting her soybeans during periods of severe famine. The sign on a Shanghai park entrance in the Western concession area of that city—“No dogs or Chinese allowed”—symbolized the nadir of Chinese fortunes. Today the West is gone; and China, a member of the still-exclusive nuclear club, is ranked among the world powers.

Twentieth-century China before Mao saw the depths of poverty and its consequent brutalization of life. Peck gives a graphic description of the misery of a peasant family in Western China.

The father of [the] family died. Since his wife had been failing and the family was very poor, they decided not to bury him right away. Perhaps the old woman would die, too, before really warm weather came and the old man began to smell. Then they could save by burying both with one funeral . . . so they stored the coffin in their darkest, coldest room, the old woman’s sickroom, and piled stones on its lid to keep the dogs out.

With poverty often went starvation and during periods of famine the consumption of such things as tree bark, garbage, stones, and mud. Today’s China still has not overcome poverty, but the horrifying abject poverty and starvation are gone. Mao recognized that the task of remaking China was not over; last year in a poem, he wrote, “Our mission unfinished may take a thousand years.” But the day has begun, and of the two kinds of time, there can be little doubt which the Chinese prefer.

In the peasant’s image, the red sun also glows within the hearts of men. The leader and his thoughts have become one with the people: “our hearts beat as one,” avowed the peasant later in her talk. Unity with
the people in a mutual effort to transform China was the key to Mao’s revolution; and Mao, of peasant stock himself, cultivated his populism. With over 80 per cent of the Chinese populace peasants, Mao made them the vanguard of the revolution despite the attempts by Moscow to keep him hewing to the Marxist-Leninist urban proletarian line. Putting his faith in the people (and expecting their loyalty in return), Mao came to power despite, not with the help of, the Soviet Union. Always distrusting the “experts,” whether Moscow, party bureaucrats, engineers, professors, or technocrats, he repeatedly came to emphasize learning from “the people” who had more than mere “book learning.” Thus, hsia-fang—the sending of urban students, urban professionals, and party cadres to the countryside to work with and learn from the peasants—became a hallmark of Maoist policy.

Mao believed in the power of human will to transform China. He warred repeatedly from the 1950s on with those so-called “moderates” who wished to emphasize planning, expertise, and pragmatism in rebuilding China. In a speech at the close of the Seventh Congress of the Party in 1945, Mao contended that the people working together with only hoes could dig up mountains—if they had the will to do so. He argued that the will of the people was more important than any equipment, tools, or weapons—even the atomic bomb; and in this light, the United States became a “paper tiger.”

In 1965, after visiting his old guerrilla headquarters in Southeast China he wrote:

Wind and thunder rumbled;
Banners unfurled;
The realm was made stable.
Thirty-eight years have elapsed
Like a snap of the fingers,
Reach the ninth heaven high to
embrace the moon
Or the five oceans deep to
capture a turtle: either is possible.

Return to merriment
and triumphant songs.
Under this heaven nothing is
difficult.
If only there is the will to ascend.

A third aspect of the sun metaphor (and one also mentioned explicitly by the peasant) is that the sun is life-giving and life-sustaining. At this point we are dealing, I believe, with the crux of Mao’s revolutionary thought stripped of much of its Marxist-Leninist mantle—the remaking of humanity in the Maoist mold. Mao thought and taught that men and women can be purged of selfish concerns and shaped and molded by Mao’s ideals (i.e., given new life) to live for higher goals—the group, the state, and Communism. Both the origin and sustenance of this life are directed struggle. Dissidents and opponents can be born again through struggle: a process of introspection and written confession for past wrongs (self-criticism) and a period of “struggle meetings” in which the group accuses the individual; the individual confesses and repents; and the individual gains new identity with the group. This new identity can be maintained only through constant vigilance in Maoist education and through continuing class struggle. This entire process has, in fact, been envisioned by Mao as one of re-education and includes such policies as hsia-fang; calling for the emulation of certain men and women who have sacrificed for China; and the launching of great campaigns to accomplish certain goals. It was Mao’s concern that some of China’s leaders had lost their Socialist identity and that China’s young had not yet gained that identity which led him to direct the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s against the very party organization he had created. The new China, like the new human, was born amid struggle and can be sustained only in struggle. Mao asserted in a speech five years ago that even “when we reach Communism, there will still be struggles.”

Mao’s struggles to remake China have been violent; men have died opposing his vision of humanity and the new China. He had warned almost fifty years ago that “a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.” Populist, nationalist, and romantic, Mao Tse-tung was pre-eminently a revolutionary with a vision of remaking his nation and humanity. Whether one believes he succeeded or failed and whether one believes his goals good or bad, there is little argument that Mao led the most extensive and wide-ranging political-social revolution in man’s history and that China today seems almost light years away from China before him.

As he wrote after the Long March,

The past has been gone for over a thousand years,
When the Emperor Wu of the Wei dynasty ordered his army northward
To pass by the Chieh-shih Hill, as history tells us.
Again the rustling autumn wind now, but
What a changed world!

R. KEITH SCHOPPA

The 1976 ELIM Assembly:
A CRISIS IN CHURCH-TALK

THE 1976 ELIM ASSEMBLY IN suburban Chicago brought to the surface a crisis in talk about the Church—a crisis that has lurked beneath the surface not only since the beginnings of ELIM, but since the beginnings of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Cresset
There were, to be sure, other and more obvious crises at the Assembly. Shall ELIM continue? Shall the Assembly endorse the ordination of women to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament? Shall the Assembly read the handwriting on the financial wall or vote its heart on the question of budget? But it missed the chance to help the crisis in Church-talk that has dogged Missouri for so long.

One shouldn't be in too much of a hurry to blame the Assembly. It hardly had a chance. A group is only as good as its input. And this year the input (at least at the beginning) was less than clear about the Church. The Assembly was, in fact, mis-prepared and misled into looking in all the wrong places for its agenda.

General Manager Elwyn Ewald spoke for ELIM's leadership in his keynote address when, likening the movement from LCMS to ELIM to AELC, he made heavy use of imagery from Israel's Exodus from Egypt and the journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Ewald's keynote aim was clear, and it was clearly the key to the nudging that the leadership aimed to give the Assembly. ELIM should give way to the emerging English and regional synods and to the AELC. The confessing movement should stop spinning its wheels with now clearly futile protests against the machinations and legalisms of Missouri's current leaders, and it should risk a new organization, a new denomination. Three years of ELIM, Ewald said, had been life in the desert, a time for growing. But now we are at the Jordan, and the promised land lies there, ours for the crossing-over.

My wife, as perceptive as waggish, wondered out loud whether the rush of time were so fast that we could get as far in three years as Israel in forty! Myself, less keen and less charitable, gagged at the dual equations: AELC Promised Land, and ELIM desert. (The biblical Elim was, after all, an oasis, not the desert.) Nevertheless the keynoter warned that those who fail to heed God in the desert are doomed to die there. Those who aim to recreate the old Missouri Synod will die in the desert. We're called to serve the world, so let's get out of the ELIM desert and cross over into "being the Church." There in the AELC let us realize "our visible newness as Church."

The vision that Ewald urged us to share was to deactivate ELIM, phase out operations in the LCMS, get serious about the church's mission, and focus our resources for support of the new AELC. As a result, the Assembly dealt with an agenda that focused on ELIM itself and on the AELC. And the chance to speak clearly about the church was missed. For several hours of discussion, the Assembly groped for ways to say that there might just be a better answer.

It wasn't until midway through the Assembly that something pointing to that better answer was heard—in the form of a major presentation by Seminex Professor Robert Bertram, "On Churching the Movement." A confessing movement said he, "has no other calling except to go around saying that that one reality—one Lord, one faith, the one Gospel-and-Sacraments—does indeed suffice." That, of course, was an appeal to Article VII of the Augustsburg Confession: "it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments."

THE AELC IS VERY LIKELY not only desirable but in fact necessary. Besides, a congregation's synodical affiliation is purely voluntary. And the suggestion that leaving the LCMS is tantamount to leaving the Church sounds too much like Missouri's own shoddy ecclesiology. But what is the Church? What is it to be a confessing movement? We all are groping in the dark at this point, and "synod's historic position" won't help us a bit. Still, a confessing movement for the Church might well consider the following:

1. The Church is not primarily something seen or not seen, something visible or invisible. The Lutheran Symbols assert that the Church is "holy believers and sheep who hear the shepherd's voice." The Church is defined primarily by what she hears, by whom she hears. An alternate visible association of congregations is at best only that, an alternative; whether it will be an improvement will be decided by other criteria, like how well it hears the Gospel.

2. The Church will be found where faith is operative, for the Church is herself an article of faith. The same faith that is required to perceive the Church under the form of the Missouri Synod is also required to perceive the Church under the form of the AELC. No more and no less.

3. The Church is furthered when the "Amen" of trust in the promise of the Gospel is enabled. ELIM was most Churchly when it bore the Word of judgment and promise, said it very loudly, and enabled thereby the loud "Amen" of its members. AELC and LCMS cannot be more Churchly than that.

4. The "dear holy Cross" will be there. Because the Cross is both dear and holy, we dare not flee it. To the extent that our present turmoil is our share in the dear holy Cross, to that degree it is faithless to try merely to put the crisis behind us either by leaving the LCMS and joining an "alternative association for mission and ministry," or by staying and hoping that all dissent "moderates" will quickly leave us in peace.

5. The Church is an "ear"-house, and not an "eye"-house. We cannot ever "see" our rightness. Only faith in the promise of forgiveness "by grace for Christ's sake through faith" makes just and right. Only such faith—i.e., that faith alone—is what is good about any of us. Not our leaving. Not our staying.

6. Thus in February of '74 some went into exile in triumph, convinced of their rightness by the mere doing of the exile deed ("ex opere..."
Others, by contrast, went into exile as driven ones, with fear and trembling, repenting that awful deed and the awful situation that made it necessary. The step to the AELC is fraught with the same risks. No more, and no less.

7. We must learn how to suffer in faith, how to find the posture of confession once again, and thus by word and deed to bear our witness to the Gospel. As the Formula of Concord puts it (FC, SD, X, 10):

We believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God.

8. That requires our patient (i.e., suffering) learning of how it is that we shall make that confession in word and deed. Some of us must suffer it to be true that joining the AELC is that confession, just as the march into exile in 1974 was. Others of us must suffer it to be true that ELIMites will continue to bear patient witness as members of the Missouri Synod.

9. All of us must suffer it to be true that the Church will exist also in the form of the LCMS as well as the AELC, when those Synods' members preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments—a holy fact which keeps us one.

10. We will realize our confessional heritage, our churchly birthright, not by the myth of majority votes. “Remember,” Acting President Martin Scharlemann admonished the students-in-moratorium of Concordia Seminary in January 1974, “truth is not decided by majority vote!” (His audience, understandably, cheered that statement.) We will realize and recover that heritage and birthright rather by the truth of the preached and confessed Gospel. Nothing else will do it. Nothing.

11. But the Gospel, and that confession, do make the “Amen” of our faith possible. None less than that true-blue Lutheran, Matthias Flacius Illyricus, could say as much: “Pure doctrine means first of all sincere, certain, steadfast confession.”

12. That confession is necessary. And it is possible. The one Gospel-and-Sacraments is enough. Really.

MAN

in some untoward situation
a falling son
landed
and in pieces
many attempted to reconstruct
that which had been
from far and about
everyone who believed
gathered
and piece by piece
gathered the fallen son
with what they knew as love
love for one another and
the son that was
put him together
to appear as though he had never
left the place rightly his
today we look we see
the fall the resurrected
reassembled
and rightly so
he appears to be a man he never was.

JAMES T. SANTOR
PAINTING

Lilac, green, beige — going under.
White over scarred colors —
walls and windowframes and doors.

It’s our gym now.
It’s our fresh firmament to play in —
a clean sweep except for shadows rolled
out from incendiary windows:
boxed in, geological — a gathering.

We will make worlds of walls,
seal ourselves in with touchables
and the persistent nick and knock of what’s not touched
beneath the skin’s cream and wildfire.

We will tapestry the white with shadows,
thread with silhouettes that darken,
deepening with all the steady climb
of what we leave behind.

We bring shadows to shadows,
profound and permanent — set on white.

SHEARED BY WIND

Windows rattle,
a quaking of bones.
Wind incites
a monody
from leafless trees.
Keen line—
with edge so fine
it scratches and scatters
dusty snow.
Landmarks are
veneered, made strange—
old island creeds.

Patterns form,
a shiver brushing
ground — reform.
Ground revealed—
beaver-gloss,
sheared by wind—
is rock, is brass
on which the wind
sounds, resounds
as though marauders
leap from the woods
unseen — and cry.

IN THE LIBRARY

Within delays of windows and walls
Clocks mark and measure.
Books in line turn backs to viewer,
His gaze through gray lenses.
Senses nursed by instrumental
Gales, fluorescent suns,
Adapt to oracular neighborhood.

The gods are silent, observing
Their created goods in schooled
Categories, glad without
Buffoonery. Rumors
Pinned to page: of madness seen,
Of lunar zero, smooth
Grape-colored sea, of some besotted

Wretch bewitched by dream of garden,
A husband slain in bath . . .
Such rumors turned to spectacle
Were sad madonna birth:
To watch the child limp out, not quite
On journey hoped for, not quite
So strong as tracking heart might wish.

LEWIS B. HORNE
ON A WEEKEND LAST OCTOBER, BETWEEN five hundred and a thousand admirers and students of Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938) met in Asheville, his home town, to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of the man whose vision of America has caused him to be called the Walt Whitman of the twentieth century. In this small city in western North Carolina, major scholars for three days talked about such matters as Wolfe's hunger for life, his relationship with his home, with the South, and with his country. Someone once said that the problem of Wolfe was simple: he was a man in love with America. Yet, paradoxically, he had to leave home to find her, and it was when he was abroad that he wrote the most moving passages in her praise. He wrote lovingly and memorably of her people in prosperity and in depression; of their joys and of their tribulations. For him, America was home.

Speaking October 4, 1975, on “Thomas Wolfe and America,” Professor C. Hugh Holman of the University of North Carolina (Wolfe’s undergraduate alma mater) observed that Wolfe had visited every state but Texas. “Thomas Wolfe,” he asserted, “was on the one hand deeply entangled in the details of modern, industrial, urban America. Wolfe said, ‘I’ve got somehow to find my America here, in Brooklyn, in Manhattan, on trains, and in the Chicago stockyards.’ On the other hand, at the heart of his feelings there remained an America that was older, and essentially rural. For him, as he wrote of George Webber (the protagonist of his last two novels, The Web and the Rock and You Can’t Go Home Again), his whole America was the America of the country man of the wilderness. . . . In the ledger out of which The Hound of Darkness was to have grown, there’s a long list of sights spread out over the nation: ‘cornblades rustling in Illinois, a road in Maine, thunder and lightning near Santa Fe.’” Wolfe’s Notebooks and the ledgers in which he composed his books contain other lists of American people, places, and things.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of Wolfe’s strong love for his native land, Malcolm Cowley has tried to place Wolfe with the “lost generation,” the expatriates of the 1920s. Wolfe denied kinship with this group.

1Taken from tape recording made at the birthday celebration.
2See, for instance, “Twenty-Five Years After—the Lost Generation Today,” Saturday Review of Literature (June 2, 1951), pp. 6-7, 33-34.
3See, for example, Wolfe’s strictures on Cowley in the Notebooks and letters, passim.
He never abandoned America in any sense, never once lost faith in her potential for a better life, and his speech delivered at Purdue University in May of 1938, four months before he died, contains in its typescript form an impassioned apostrophe to the American people. Although he saw and proclaimed evil, greed, and suffering in America, he never thought America doomed because of these. His rejection of Nazi Germany in his now famous “I Have a Thing to Tell You,” featured in The New Republic for March 10, 17, and 24, 1937, and later incorporated into You Can’t Go Home Again, finds no parallel in his attitude toward this country. Some years ago Edmund Fuller, in a book that deserves to be better known than it is, made some significant contrasts between Wolfe and a later author, Jack Kerouac. Mr. Fuller’s remarks help to define what Wolfe is not and, incidentally, to define the kind of America that each writer saw. Abandoned by a drunken father, Dean Moriarity, the protagonist of Kerouac’s best-known novel, On the Road, grew up hanging around pool halls; in Denver he set a new record for stealing cars and went to the reformatory. (This is Kerouac on his hero.) His specialty was stealing cars, gunning for girls coming out of high school in the afternoon, driving them out to the mountains, making them, and coming back to sleep in any available bathtub in town. (Dean’s ‘criminality’ was . . . a wild yea-saying overburst of American joy; it was Western, the west wind, an ode from the Plains, something new, long prophesied, long a-coming (he only stole cars for joy rides).”

Writing in The New York Times, according to Mr. Fuller, Gilbert Millstein commented, “There are sections of On the Road in which the writing is of a beauty almost breathtaking. There is a description of a cross-country automobile ride fully the equal, for example, of the train ride told by Thomas Wolfe in Of Time and the River.” Mr. Fuller, however, justly replies, “In the first place it is not the equal because it is so potently an imitation. Moreover it is a slander of Wolfe, taken in the total context of the work of these two men. Kerouac is openly striving for some of those ‘Wolfean’ rhapsodic effects, which even in Wolfe are not always successful. But Kerouac’s America is the beautiful big land with the cretinous little people. Wolfe, on the American scene, is full of wonder, amazement, awe, and excitement.”

That these feelings, attitudes, and emotions involve not only the land but also the American people can be seen from an examination of Wolfe’s fiction, at his Purdue speech, and of his remarks at the Colorado writers’ Conference in 1935. A more recently published source of information on Wolfe’s Americanism is his thirty-five pocket notebooks that he kept for twelve years—from 1926 (when he began Look Homeward, Angel) to 1938, which is to say, up until his fatal illness. Containing lists of places and people remembered, the appearance of an iron railing in Atlantic City or the exact shade of red of a boxcar on a siding in New Orleans, remembered scraps of conversation overheard in a cafeteria in Manhattan or in a bar in Brooklyn, these notebooks are the raw material from which the fiction came.

**THERE ARE, I THINK, AT LEAST THREE REASONS BEHIND WOLFE’S MAMMOTH LOVE-AFFAIR WITH AMERICA. FIRST, AMERICA WAS HIS LAND, AND, SHARING THE PARTICULARLY AMERICAN TRADITIONS AND ATTITUDES, HE WAS PART OF HER. AMERICA NURTURED HIM, AND HE RESPONDED TO HER NURTURE AND TUTELAGE, PROBING AND SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL SOUL. SECOND, AMERICA WAS A BIG LAND, AND WOLFE, OVERRIZED HIMSELF AND ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THIS, IDENTIFIED WITH BIGNESS. THE SIZE OF AMERICA BECAME PART OF A HUGE CHALLENGE: TO UNDERSTAND THE DIVERSITY INHERENT IN THAT SIZE WAS, IN A SENSE, TO KNOW AMERICA. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT, WHEN HE WAS IN PORTLAND, OREGON, IN JUNE OF 1938 AND LEARNED OF AN ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER WHETHER IT WAS “FEASIBLE AND SENSIBLE TO TOUR THE WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS WITHIN THE TIME LIMITS OF THE AVERAGE MAN’S VACATION” AND, IF SO, WHAT THE COST WOULD BE, WOLFE DECIDED TO JOIN THE MOTOR CARAVAN.” (THE COST TURNED OUT TO BE UNDER $50.) AS PROFESSORS KENNEDY AND REEVES POINT OUT, THIS WAY “HE WOULD GET ONE MORE CHANCE TO TRY TO ABSORB THE WEST, WHICH HE FELT HELD A SPECIAL MEANING FOR AMERICANS. HE TOLD [EDWARD] MILLER [A PORTLAND NEWSPAPER EDITOR]: ‘ALMOST EVERY AMERICAN, NO MATTER WHERE BORN, IS A WESTERNER AT HEART . . . THE WEST IS INEVITABLE. SOMEHOW OR OTHER THE GREAT DEVELOPMENT IN THIS COUNTRY IS TAKING THE WESTERN DIRECT-**
tion—not north or south but moving across. The West will be truly great when it has enough people. The West is the American horizon.”

This belief of Wolfe’s leads into the third reason why he loved America as he did. Lacking the older, more stable traditions of the East, the big, unfilled West offered new challenges and opportunities. To Wolfe, who had spent years in the rarefied intellectual atmosphere of Cambridge and Boston and among the million-footed manswarm of Manhattan and Brooklyn, the West, fifty years before still the frontier, even in 1938 offered an appealing vision of emancipation and opportunity. The very attempt to visit eleven national parks by car in two weeks’ time itself epitomizes the Western challenge.

So it was that between June 20 and July 2, 1938, Wolfe visited Crater Lake, Yosemite, General Grant (now General Grant Grove), Sequoia, Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce Canyon, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Glacier, and Mount Rainier National Parks. Out of it came his Western Journal, published posthumously. 9

iii

IN 1929, WHEN WOLFE WAS TEACHING AT Washington Square College of New York University, he entered in his notebook a topic for class discussion: “Make out a list of American characteristics—general traits or facts about Americans that distinguish them from the peoples of other nations.” 10 Part of his own answer to this challenge can be found in the notes he made for the lecture he delivered in July, 1935, at the Writers’ Conference in Boulder, Colorado. He begins by tracing his apprehension of the receipt of his first novel in Asheville and in North Carolina generally to the fact that he was a Southerner and that in the South exists “something... twisted, dark and full of pain,... but of which no one has dared to write.” He speculates that the cause of this “great hurt” may lie in “our old war, and the huge ruin of our great defeat, and its degraded aftermath,” but suspects that its roots go further back in time, to “the evil of man’s slavery and the hurt and shame of human conscience in its struggle with the fierce desire to own,” coupled with desire “repressed below... a bigot and intolerant theology.” But mainly the psychic wound came from “the weather of our lives, the forms that shaped us and the food that fed, from the unknown terrors of the skies that bent above us, the pineland barrens and the haunting sorrow, from the whole shape and substance of the dark, mysterious, and unknown South.” 11

From this concern with the psychic wounding of the South, Wolfe moved to a concern with our national pain. “Here in America, as well,” he wrote, somewhat hyperbolically, “we have been wounded cruelly—and we cannot bear to look upon our scars. We fear, we hate, we loathe, we execrate America—and somehow—oh, impossible—we love her! We must not look alone at the instances of defeat and shame and failure in the nation’s life, but at the central core and heart of the defeat and shame and failure in our own lives, which has brought this ruin to pass; we must not look alone on the overwhelming evidences of ugliness, savagery, violence, and injustice in the life around us, we must look straight into the ugliness in our own lives and spirits which created them.” 12

These assertions adumbrate the social criticism of The Web and the Rock and You Can’t Go Home Again as Wolfe, living in New York City during the Depression years, came to see instances of the great gulf between rich and poor—a gulf as great as that separating Dives and Lazarus in the parable—and attacked complacency in the face of evil and suffering. Wolfe never lost faith in the power of the nation to assert its primal strength. For him as for Sandburg, the answer was “The People, Yes.”

Yet one scholar at least has suggested that Wolfe “sought a frame for himself and found it in an America of his own creation,” magnified by delusion. “Wolfe translated his fever for large-scale action into an heroic America which, as a matter of history, had vanished with the pioneer, the Western frontier, the building of the raw continent. Unlike Whitman, who described America in adolescence, full of promise, Wolfe merely read his own adolescence into a country whose springtime had ended.” America in Wolfe’s day “was in fact only a country well along in years, beset with the consuming diseases of maturity.” 13

In this negative appraisal of Wolfe’s dreams for America there may reside some truth; probably even in Whit-

8 Ibid.
9 University of Pittsburgh Press, 1951.
10 Jbid., pp. 761-762.
man's day the dream was never so fair as he saw it. The point is, I think, that even if the American dream is not always fulfilled and has been many times betrayed, the dream, the ideal has not been rejected. In our own day we have seen this nation repudiate a national leader whose continued presence in office was a stench in the nostrils. We have seen attempts to gain equality of opportunity for all races, and although some of the attempts consequent upon the desire may seem and actually be folly, one cannot deny that the underlying motive is salutory. If Wolfe were alive today, unless the weight of years had overwhelmed him, he would welcome, I think, these evidences that the American people still value and desire opportunity for the little man, honesty and integrity. The tremendous recent popularity of James Whitmore's impersonation of Harry Truman supports the point.

Wolfe said in 1938, "If I had to state my politics, I'd call myself a social democrat . . . a man who believes in socialism but not in communized socialism, and in democracy but not individualized democracy . . . I do not believe . . . that the ideas represented by 'freedom of thought,' 'freedom of speech,' 'freedom of press' and 'free assembly' are just rhetorical myths. I believe rather that they are among the most valuable realities that men have gained." These, of course, are part of the American ideal, going back to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Although the suggestion has been made that Walt Whitman in his poetry was describing an America no longer extant in Wolfe's time, at least one scholar has found a multiple kinship between these two men in their attitude toward this country and its promises. Both men, he wrote, seek "to encompass all of America," its people and its land; both assert democracy, individualism, and the brotherhood of man while commiserating with man's suffering; both are aware of the importance of the past yet stress the importance of the here and now; both share in all mankind's experiences and parallel each other in their concepts of this land. Both "have faith in the possibility of a better and greater America," though neither is completely consistent in this attitude.

Maxwell Perkins, Wolfe's famous editor, who knew Wolfe about as well as anyone, said once, "It was with America that he was most deeply concerned, and I believe he opened it up as no other writer ever did for the people of his time and for the writers and artists and poets of tomorrow." One of the major Wolfe scholars has commented that Wolfe's "great subject . . . was America. He rendered it poetically, gave it a glamor and mystery. He made the places you were living in, and were just beginning to explore, seem full of promise and excitement. As [William] Styron says, Wolfe 'was the first prose writer to bring a sense of America as a glorious abstraction—a vast and brooding continent whose untold bounties were awaiting every young man's discovery.'

Despite these praises, at least one critic, calling Wolfe a "professional" American, has objected to the famous Credo ending You Can't Go Home Again on the ground that it deals in rhetoric rather than with a specific program. But Wolfe was a novelist, not an economist, sociologist, or political scientist. Writing in the midst of the Depression, with powerful tyrannies abroad the extent and duration of whose conquests no one could be sure of, he sought to lift the spirit of his countrymen in a triumphant affirmation of belief in her future. We need such affirmations to keep us from forgetting what men and women have dreamed of, for themselves and for their posterity. It is meaningful, I think, that having seen tyranny in Hitler's Germany, he affirmed freedom in America. Had he not seen its negation, he might never have penned its affirmation.

Were Wolfe alive today, he would be nearing seventy-six. How he might have changed is impossible to say; probably he would have become more conservative. I suspect, though, that his vision of America would not have basically altered. "I believe that we are lost here in America," he once wrote, "but I believe we shall be found." What he referred to, I think, was our own loss of vision, our directionless wandering in a time of national and international uncertainty and stress. Perhaps today he would have said that we as a nation have found ourselves. Perhaps not. But were he still with

14 Ibid., pp. 915-916.
16 Quoted in Cecil B. Williams, "Thomas Wolfe Fifteen Years After," South Atlantic Quarterly 54 (October 1955), 596.
18Williams, pp. 533ff.
us I believe that he would rejoice in having lived to participate in celebrating this nation's bicentenary, even though in 1976 the United States of America has not yet quite become the Promised Land. Materialism, greed, and folly have not vanished from the American earth, but neither have they from the heart of man.

In 1933, Wolfe took a trip by car through Vermont. In the New England mountains he saw, perhaps, a reminder of home in a region far different in some ways from that of Appalachia. And yet, if that region did not share the local heritage of home, it shared in that greater and unique heritage that belongs to the nation. His companion wrote up the trip. Wolfe said almost nothing of it in his notebook-diary and letters, surprisingly, and the trip has largely gone unnoticed. In words that Wolfe might well repeat today his companion quotes him at one point, near the beginning of the trip: "This is a great country. There is no country like it. I used to lie in some hotel room in Europe and remember the spaces and names of America, and the feel and smell of our things."20

Wolfe wanted to see the Rocky Mountains. Two years after his trip through Vermont he did, and three years later he saw the great Western ocean. Then he died. Thomas Wolfe rejoiced in this nation's immensity—geographic, demographic, psychic—and told us what he saw and how he felt about it. Today, some forty years later, we continue rejoicing that he was moved to write great words that have become a permanent part of not only our national literary heritage but of world literature. Reading them now we can still share his vision of and faith in the "glorious abstraction" of America that we are striving to transform into concrete reality.


WOLFE'S BOOKS IN PAPERBACK TODAY

Novels

LOOK HOMeward, ANGEL (1929), Scribner's (Contemporary Classics edition).

OF TIME AND THE RIVER (1935), Scribner's, 2 vols.

THE WEB AND THE ROCK (1940), Harper & Row.

YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN (1941), Harper & Row.

Short Stories

FROM DEATH TO MORNING (1935), Scribner's (Contemporary Classics edition).

THE HILLS BEYOND (1941), New American Library (Signet Classics).
TEN YEARS AGO I WORKED THROUGH DIET­
rich Bonhoeffer’s little book on “community,” Life To­
gether,1 with about six students who were serving as chaplains with the residential ministry arm of Valparaiso University’s Chapel campus ministry program. We were excited by the study and thoroughly caught up in its vision, but apart from a weekly meeting in my home the vision hardly touched ground in the form of down-to-earth concretization. Yet today I find myself about to begin a third year of living in a “Christian community household” consisting of my wife, a daughter in the sixth grade, a son in the fourth grade, and eight additional men and women in their early twenties and almost all now graduated from the university. What provoked this concretization of “life together” while reading Bonhoeffer did not? And how does Bonhoeffer read after one’s own experience in community living?

Why “Life Together”?

IN A MEMORANDUM DATED SEPTEMBER 6, 1935, and addressed to “The Council of Evangelical Churches of the Old-Prussian Union” in Berlin-Dahlem Bonhoeffer sought approval for his plans of establishing a “Bruderhaus” (community house). In stating his case he included the following consideration:
The question regarding how to live as Christians has been rekindled for the new generation of theological students. Today one is no longer credible if one tries to meet the question with old slogans like “Anabaptist enthusiasm” or “un-Lutheran position.” Such responses are considered sheer escapism. However, the answer to this question cannot be given on the basis of abstract thinking but only as it is arrived at through a concrete and conscientious life in common and a communal reflection upon the Commandments.2

Bonhoeffer thus had a sure sense of the spiritual perils awaiting the Christian church in Nazi-Germany. The least that could be done, he concluded, would be that some Christians commit themselves to “life together” and thus find a strength and a clarity in the church to meet and turn aside these perils—but too little too late. And reading Bonhoeffer in 1966 I could only sense the importance of his challenge and not act radically upon it.

Meanwhile the perils have mounted, not only for the church but for our entire society; not only for Germany but for the world; and in a real sense the United States and we in Valparaiso are hovering in the cross hairs. Our situation has been painstakingly and frighteningly described by sociologist Robert Hunter.3 Merely to study this book with a class has brought its own horrors. One begins to see the alternatives—either genuine Christian community or its anti-Christian counterpart, “the comfortable concentration camp.”4

Haight-Ashbury was not the only product of the sixties. These years also gave birth to such explicitly Christian communities as are found in Ann Arbor, Michigan, under the name “Word of God”5 and in Houston, Texas, in connection with the Church of the Redeemer.6 In fact, since the close of the Second World War religious communities have appeared in ever-growing numbers and the interest in Christian community life shows no sign of abating.7 The impetus for the establishment of these communities, however, has not come from read-

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ing books like Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*. Rather, the impetus came for most from an experience deeper than a book read in common. It was the common experience of the reality of Jesus' presence as he distributed the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, gifts which were given precisely for the building up of community, the Body of Christ. One author puts it this way:

**Community is a by-product of the Spirit. Setting out to create community will not create community. As a leader in the charismatic movement and a writer on Christian community put it, Christian community is not built by building Christian community. Community is the side result of doing something else, like following the leading of the Spirit. . . . The disciples of Jesus did not sit down in a board meeting in the upper room with a blueprint of how to build community. When the Spirit came, community was created in their midst.**

By 1968 my involvement as a pastoral counselor to university students had helped to draw me into the “charismatic movement.” It began with a shared charismatic experience and soon thereafter I was committed to shepherding a charismatic prayer fellowship together with an older colleague. This involvement was interrupted for three years while I served as director of the University foreign study center in Reutlingen, Germany, but by the time I returned in 1972 a growing number of Lutherans had identified with the charismatic experience and soon thereafter I was committed to creating community that is complete in itself and is exercised in the fellowship as frequently as there is desire for it, it serves the Christian community especially as a preparation for the common reception of the holy Communion. . . . The day before the Lord's Supper is administered will find the brethren of a Christian fellowship together, and each will beg forgiveness of the others for the wrongs committed. Nobody who avoids this approach to his brother can go rightly prepared to the table of the Lord.

However, in an essay discussing Bonhoeffer’s relationship to the Liturgical Movement, Reginald H. Fuller scores Bonhoeffer’s thinking on the Lord’s Supper as “still confined within the limits of his Lutheran tradition: the Lord’s Supper is exclusively the occasion of receiving” and as failing to consider properly what participants in the Supper are to “do.” Yet, given Bonhoeffer’s thoughts on community and their culmination in the celebration of the Holy Communion, one doubts whether he would separate this celebration from the “doing” of community. He writes:

**Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this.**

As Christians we know this so well that it hardly startles us, but when put slightly differently the effect is nothing less than overwhelming. For example:

. . . The salvation of the world is a cooperative work, and can be achieved only by Christian communities.

**Or:**

*On the day of Pentecost, to be saved meant to join the Messianic (later called Christian) community.*

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11 Bonhoeffer, pp. 120f.


13 Bonhoeffer, p. 21


St. Paul saw that God's plan was not primarily to teach men new thoughts or even to redeem individuals from their sins but to transform creation into community.¹⁶

These statements are overwhelming when their implications are drawn. They turn to platitude when we assume that there are no implications calling for action on the part of a Christian but that there is only the fact. Bonhoeffer's book on community speaks more to the "fact" than to the "implications." He wrote:

Among earnest Christians in the Church today there is a growing desire to meet together with other Christians in the rest periods of their work for common life under the Word. Communal life is again being recognized by Christians today as the grace that it is, as the extraordinary, the "roses and lilies" of the Christian life.

Thus Bonhoeffer seems to consider the concretization of community as something belonging only to the "extraordinary" and not to the "ordinary" experience of most Christians. If that is the case most Christians won't draw implications in the direction of concretizing community but will let themselves be surprised if this "extraordinary" gift of "roses and lilies" is given to them by their removal from the midst of their enemies.¹⁸ Is it surprising that Bonhoeffer's book did not initiate a "community movement"?

Obviously Bonhoeffer was in this point no synergist. Community comes as gift and not by desire. He states:

Just at this point Christian brotherhood is threatened most often at the very start by the greatest danger of all, the danger of being poisoned at its root, the danger of confusing Christian brotherhood with some wishful idea of religious fellowship, of confounding the natural desire of the devout heart for community with the spiritual reality of Christian brotherhood.¹⁹

We agree heartily with Bonhoeffer's stalwart insistence upon Chalcedon's "unconfused and unchanged," here applied to the distinction between human and Christian community, but we wonder whether he has not slighted the "undivided and inseparable" pole of that paradox. His rather brusk dismissal of the psychological dimension of Christian community betrays a pre-prison Barthian influence:

In the spiritual realm the Spirit governs; in human community, psychological techniques and methods. In the former naive, unpsychological unmethodical, helping love is extended toward one's brother; in the latter psychological analysis and construc-

¹⁶ Jones, p. 9.
¹⁷ Bonhoeffer, p. 21.
¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 17f.
¹⁹ Ibid., p. 26; cf. also p. 38.

Review Essay

The baptismal responsibility to build community is best fulfilled when the people involved make an explicit covenant to work together. For our baptismal commitments cannot be fulfilled unless we grasp what they are, and explicitly commit ourselves to fulfilling them. Once we grasp that Baptism is a commitment to fraternal community with others, then we must commit ourselves not only to the Lord, but to all the people with whom we are called to build community.²¹

This notion of baptismal responsibility lies behind the designation "Covenant House" for our own Christian community household. It intends to say that Jesus Christ is the community's foundation, that the gift of baptismal faith settles us upon this foundation, and that our covenant with one another to share our lives in community is simply the response to and concretization of our shared baptismal covenant (1 Cor. 3:11; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Cor. 12:3; Gal. 3:15-29; 2 Chron. 15:2,12).

When a covenant is betrayed it is necessary that such betrayal be acknowledged, confessed, and forgiven and that the covenant be renewed and celebrated in restored table fellowship. All of this Bonhoeffer sees clearly and it was an exhilarating experience to reread his final chapter on "Confession and Communion." My original reading of it left me excited as I can still detect from the heavy underlinings, arrows, and exclamation points in the margins of my copy of the book, but it also left me empty because it appeared to be an unrealizable ideal. However, upon reading it again ten years later I can only say, "Praise God, this is not merely for the elite. He wants it for all his people. And he's giving it to his people according to his promise: 'The Lord is with you, while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.'" (2 Chron. 15:2)

²⁰ Ibid., p. 32.
²¹ Hinnebusch, p. 56.
The Practice of “Life Together”

BONHOFER’S EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY

was with seminarians and pastors, thus with people whose experiences, training, and goals were in many ways extremely similar. Our own community, though at this time drawing heavily on university-trained people, is somewhat more diverse. Presently we have ten adults representing the following disciplines: theology, education, deaconess training, engineering, music, social work, chemistry, nursing, psychology, and law. All this plus two elementary school children. Obviously, the practicalities of worship, work, and leisure will here be different than they were for Bonhoeffer’s community. We refer to only a few.

Who did the “household chores” in Bonhoeffer’s community? No mention is made of them although he does discuss the “unity of prayer and work”22 and in the above mentioned memorandum he writes:

The director of the community house instructs the brothers as to their specific work. In this connection we think particularly of the situation as it exists in a deaconess mother-house. 23

From this one might gather that household chores were shared along with other elements of such “life together,” but there is no discussion relating to the importance of sharing in those tasks which those dwelling amongst the “roses and lilies” might consider menial. It is in facing these tasks communally that community members learn much about themselves and the extent of their conformity to the image of Christ.

The tone and rhythm of Bonhoeffer’s community, however, were set not so much by the work schedule of its members as by their times of common worship. Bonhoeffer wrote:

The brothers of the community live together with their day determined by a stringent order of worship. Not cultic forms but the word of the Bible and prayer guide them through the day. 24

For Bonhoeffer this obviously then meant beginning the day with worship—with Scripture reading, song, and prayer before breakfast. Commenting on this, Reginald Fuller quips:

Any European or Anglican who has had a hand in organizing an ecumenical conference will remember from experience what a barrier to unity is the strange reluctance of American Protestants to meet for worship before breakfast! Not so Bonhoeffer. 25

But only partially “not so” at Covenant House. Our day “together” begins at 6:00 A.M. This time was chosen to allow for an adequate period in which common wor-

ship and a common meal could take place before some members of necessity would have to leave the house. The question of whether worship should precede breakfast or vice versa was determined by practical considerations. First of all, sleepiness during devotions seemed a greater hazard when moving directly from bed into worship rather than with an intervening twenty minutes devoted to breakfast. Secondly, those preparing breakfast would miss the common worship if it were immediately follow. However, we do begin the meal with song and/or prayer. And recently we have been encouraging each other to spend a half-hour of individual “quiet time” with the Lord even before coming to breakfast. The day “together” should really be anticipated by some individual time alone before the Lord. This is confirmed by Bonhoeffer’s beautifully stated paradox:

Let him who cannot be alone beware of community.
Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.26

For individual “quiet time” or personal meditation Bonhoeffer prefers something like the use of the “Losung,” the daily Bible passages selected by lot and published by the Moravian Brethren.27 However, for the family fellowship he strongly recommends the lectio continua or consecutive reading of Scripture. He argues this on the basis of salvation history as well as pedagogically:

Consecutive reading of Biblical books forces everyone who wants to hear to put himself, or to allow himself to be found, where God has acted once and for all for the salvation of men . . . We must learn to know the Scriptures again, as the Reformers and our fathers knew them. We must not grudge the time and the work that it takes. . . . Do not object that the purpose of common devotions is profunder than to learn the contents of the Scriptures; that this is too profane a purpose, something which must be achieved apart from worship. 28

As cogent as the logic of this may appear for some, the practicalities of family worship which includes children has dictated otherwise to us. We therefore encourage the reading, exposition, and application of a brief text of Scripture for community worship and the reading of longer consecutive passages from Scripture for private devotion. We prefer this to the greater risk of fostering sterile worship by advocating the pedagogical reading of Scripture for family devotions. Bonhoeffer himself, I believe, allows for such adjustment when he writes:

Different fellowships will require different forms of worship; this is as it should be. A family with children needs a different devotion from that of a fellow-

22 Bonhoeffer, p. 70.
23 Dudzus, p. 147.
24 Ibid., p. 147.
25 Fuller, p. 181.
26 Bonhoeffer, p. 77.
27 Ibid., pp. 50, 81f.
28 Ibid., pp. 52-54.
ship of ministers, and it is by no means wholesome for one to be like another or for a company of theologians to be content with a family devotion for children. 29

At only one point in my rereading of Bonhoeffer’s Life Together did I actually become angry. I suspect he pricked my conscience even though I still feel he has overstated his case. The point at issue is whether singing during common worship should be in unison or polyphonic. Long before I ever read Bonhoeffer on this question I had learned from my liturgics teacher at my Wisconsin Synod seminary that the liturgy and hymns were to be sung in unison. At that time the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. After two years of “life together,” however, during which time singing in as many parts and accompanied by as many instruments as we can muster has been enjoyed by all, I am reluctant to believe that the flesh is adequately dealt with by restricting ourselves to one part song in worship. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer’s paragraph on the “destroyers of unison singing in the fellowship” 30 ought at least be read aloud in our polyphonic fellowship twice a year and this not merely for the throat-clearing laugh which it will evoke but also as a reminder to our song-loving flesh that spirited singing is not always “in the spirit.”

Bonhoeffer was a strong advocate of praying the psalms in sequence but this did not make him an opponent of free prayer. On the contrary, he argues eloquently for such prayer:

No matter what objections there may be, the fact simply remains that where Christians want to live together under the Word of God they may and they should pray together to God in their own words. . . . Good and profitable as our restraints may be in order to keep our prayer pure and Biblical, they must nevertheless not stifle necessarily free prayer itself, for Jesus Christ attached a great promise to it. 31

Reading this again in Bonhoeffer has confirmed for me the practice of free prayer which we enjoy in our community. However, I am not sure why he is so insistent upon this free prayer being said only by the head of the family or at least by only one person over any extended period of time. Aren’t there better ways to learn submission to authority or doesn’t he believe himself when he writes:

Helpful as the Church’s tradition of prayer is for learning to pray, it nevertheless cannot take the place of the prayer that I owe to God this day. Here the poorest mumbling utterance can be better than the best-formulated prayer. 32

Perhaps a community’s willingness to bear with such poorly formulated prayers is the precise exercise in love and caring which is required of it and perhaps also it is in such a loving community that we shall learn to pray not only with more faith but also with more beauty. At any rate, I am pleased to be instructed by Bonhoeffer on the advisability of balance between the sequential praying of the psalter and free prayer in the context of community worship.

In contrast to what is happening in most charismatic Christian communities today Bonhoeffer has very little to say about the structure of authority within the community. A director or family head seems to be assumed but we are given practically no help in understanding how that person functions in this role or how individual members of the community are to relate to him. In his chapter on confession he is careful to emphasize that such confession can be made to any brother in whom then one representatively meets the entire fellowship. 33 We wonder whether in this reluctance to work with hierarchical structure and strong leadership Bonhoeffer was not perhaps reflecting his own problems with his nation’s “Führerprinzip.” This would be understandable. Yet can healthy Christian community exist without a head—a visible head acting with the delegated authority of Christ himself?

Our own community is in this matter modeled on the “Word of God” community in Ann Arbor. Here a baptized hierarchical principle prevails, one permeated with the pastoral theology of the Good Shepherd himself. 34 Here “liberation” is found in the freely rendered submission to those called to exercise headship in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, not in egalitarianism or in chaussinism. Christian community is characterized not by an undialectical autonomy or an undialectical heteronomy but by the dialectical theonomy revealed in the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Some will wonder whether such Christian community is not simply a twentieth century version of Spener’s seventeenth century ecclesiaeae (conventicles). Without trying to answer the historical question we do insist that there is a sense in which ecclesiaeae in ecclesia is precisely the pattern of early Christianity which by the end of the New Testament period assumes father-led Christian families (ecclesiaeae). 35 Donald Bloesch says without embarrassment: “A religious community should

33 Ibid., p. 113.
35 Eph. 5:21-6:9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Note also Luther’s Small Catechism with its repeated “. . . in the plain form in which the head of the family shall teach them to his household.”
ideally be an ecclesiola (little church) in the ecclesia." 36

Sectarianism is neither the intention nor necessarily the unintentional consequence of such Christian community households. In a fine piece of research, Stephan B. Clark investigates precedents for such renewal communities in the Early Church and finds them especially in the ascetic movement between 305 and 451 A.D. and the renewal communities established as a result of this movement. Of particular importance he finds the relationship between such communities and the official church, a relationship which was surprisingly cordial, with bishops both supporting the unordained elders of such communities and also frequently ordaining them. Such open approval provoked integration and prevented these renewal communities from becoming sectarian. 37 Or, as Bloesch puts it:

... without the community or brotherhood, parishes are in danger of becoming mere social clubs; on the other hand, without the parishes, a community is tempted to become another sect. 38

Bonhoeffer wrestled with the sect versus church problem in his doctor's dissertation Sanctorum Communio, completed about ten years before his Life Together. Whereas the latter work gives little evidence of his struggle against sectarianism, the former work does as he comes to grips with the notions of the "nuclear congregation" and the "Group Movement." 39 It would seem that he did not consider the community proposed by Life Together to come under the polemic directed against the sect in Sanctorum Communio.

"Life Together" — A Re-evaluation

THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE OF OUR DAY IS turning out to be the doctrine of the Church. Of course, no doctrine stands in isolation from any other, but it is at the doctrine of the Church that other issues converge in a practical way. This is so because the Church is community and salvation is community; therefore if we are to find salvation we must find the Church as community. Commentators on our present culture call us a lonely people searching for community and they have more than enough evidence to make their case. 40 Bonhoeffer acknowledged the need for community, but limited the fulfillment of that need to those who might be blessed to live amongst the "roses and lilies.” Perhaps it was not until he was in prison that he definitively learned that roses come with thorns and lilies come with valleys. We agree with Bonhoeffer that Christian community is a gift and that it is not a product of our desires. That's what salvation by grace through faith is all about. But that does not rule out a Christian's asking for it, seeking for it, knocking for it. That's what the promise and prayer are all about. Bonhoeffer should not have forgotten the ancient paradox as stated by the Apostle Paul: "work out your own salvation (community) with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

36 Bloesch, p. 108.
38 Bloesch, p. 108.

KNEE

Now that the scalpel has been sheathed, the leg unfurled from yards of mummy cloth, one knee abounds in a discoloration plus a transverse healing slash on the inside sprouting a silver wire from its blond baldness. One bearded and one smooth as an onion, two legs go Jekyll, Hyde, between the crutches, one cocked like a dog's, the other bumping earth. Weeks glow in the sky and a slow growth enhances the peeled appearance of the puny limb with the hangdog limp to it.

Temple of horrors, low pressure area where carnal pains rush, death-house on death's row with split-second victim, bad knee, you salvage of a sturdy ram that butted, braced, I pray for thick new strength.

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON
FIDELITY:
THE PRACTICE OF KEEPING PROMISE
KENNETH F. KORBY

In mid-June, Robert Riedel, formerly vicar at the Chapel of the Resurrection, and Ruth Pullmann, formerly administrative assistant and circulation manager of The Cresset were joined in holy wedlock. This sermon was preached at that wedding ceremony.

September, 1976

TODAY WE ARE WITNESSES TO AND PARTICIPANTS IN A WORK OF AWE AND HONOR. THAT WORK IS CONJOINING THE CHOICE AND WORK OF GOD WITH THE CHOICE AND DECISIONS OF THESE TWO PEOPLE, BOB AND RUTH.

JUST AS THE CREATION OF MALE AND FEMALE IS THE SPONTANEOUS AND JOYFUL CHOICE OF GOD PUT INTO REALITY, SO MARRIAGE IS GOD’S HAPPY IDEA AND GOOD WORK. GOD, AND HE ALONE, IS CAPABLE OF CREATING LOVING, CHOOSING, LIVING INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE JOINED IN A UNION WHERE THERE IS ONENESS OF FLESH WITHOUT PLAYING Wipe-OUT ON THE PERSON OF THE INDIVIDUAL, WHERE THERE IS THE INCREASING SPLendor OF THE UNITED INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT SPLINTERING THE UNION. WE ARE WITNESSES TO THIS WORK OF GOD THAT IS TO BE HELD IN HONOR BY ALL.

SUCH UNION IS A MYSTERY. IT IS THE WILL OF LOVE TO BE UNITED WITH THE BELoved. SUCH UNION IS NOT POOLING YOUR GREED OR COMPOUNDING YOUR LONELINESS. THE UNION IS THE EXCHANGE IN FULL GIVING AND FULL RECEIVING—THE REALITY OF WHICH IS BOTH EFFECTED AND MADE EVIDENT IN YOUR MARRIAGE BED. YOU ARE NOT TWO PERSONS ENTERING A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH EACH MUST STRIVE FOREVER TO PROVE THE ADEQUACY OF YOUR PERSONHOOD OR ELSE SINK INTO DESPAIR THAT YOU, OR THE OTHER, OR THE RELATIONSHIP, "JUST IS NOT RIGHT."

YOU ARE A MAN AND A WOMAN. SPECIFICALLY, YOU ARE BOB AND RUTH, THE CREATOR’S WILL EXPRESSED IN HUMAN FLESH THAT YOU AND YOU PARTICULARLY LIVE. YOU ARE JOINED IN THE ESTATE OF MATRIMONY; THAT IS, YOU ARE UNITED BY GOD IN AN ESTATE TO CARE FOR, A KINGDOM TO GOVERN. IT IS THE KINGDOM OF EXCHANGE WHERE YOU DO NOT USE THE OTHER TO GAIN THE PERSONAL FULFILLMENT YOU HAVE ALWAYS CRAVED. RATHER EACH OF YOU GIVES WHAT YOU ARE SPECIFICALLY. IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ESTATE OF MARRIAGE YOU RECEIVE THE GOODNESS OF THE GENEROUS GOD WHO WILLS TO GIVE YOU WHOLLY, MALE AND FEMALE, TO EACH OTHER THAT THEREBY YOU MIGHT RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF YOUR OWN MALENESS AND FEMALENESS.

YOU, BOB, ARE INSTRUCTED TO LEAVE THAT PLACE WHERE, IN THE UNION OF LOVE, THE CREATOR HIMSELF GAVE YOU LIFE: LEAVE YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. YOU ARE TO CLING TO YOUR WIFE, FOR GOD MAKES ONE FLESH OF YOU TWO.
You, Ruth, are the locale of the new union, the place and the space of the new life.

In joining you, God breaks the fearful sign of death, the dread loneliness. He builds a companionship that is initiated in joy and pleasure. You are to tend that companionship as lovers and heirs of the grace of life. You are to be nurtured ever anew in that joy and delight in that pleasure, for aside from the joyful union with us in the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, there is no greater root of joy for you than your union.

However, the work that each of you is to do in tending the estate of that union is not identical. Ruth, you are the locale of the home. The locale cannot divide its time between tending itself and being the locale. Hence, our Lord instructs you to submit to your husband. That is, you are to entrust yourself to the tending that is his work. To be loved is to suffer love; it is risky and frequently marked by pain. For this reason, you are to be nurtured and trained by the example of holy church herself, the one who submits to the Lord Jesus’ love. In the fear of that Lord, entrust yourself to your husband.

You, Bob, are to love. To love costs your life. Insight and wisdom, will and knowledge are brought to bear in tending to her, the locale of your union. You are head of the marriage; no one can alter that expression of the Creator’s will. It does not follow that you will be a good head. Because of sin and the battle between the sexes, because of the distortion that typifies the ideal man as a “playboy,” because of our fear of pain and death, we men too frequently do our work of headship badly. Therefore, you are to be nurtured and trained by Christ our Head, the Head that bore the crown of thorns. If your headship gets heady remember the crown of his headship. Among the works and duties God lays upon you, this is first, that you love your wife the way Christ loved the church. He loves the church that she may be full of life, holy, splendid, and adorned with honor. Christ does not love or seek his own pleasure directly, and to this end use the church. His pleasure and love are given to and seen in the church. That is the way you are to love your wife.

THERE IS AN INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH AND YOUR MARRIAGE AS HUSBAND AND WIFE. Christ’s bride is not raped into union with Christ; she is wooed and loved and nurtured. Christ is not seduced by his bride into loving her. She trusts him to give her his love as the burden of his own being.

Christ’s bride is not bullied or brow-beaten by Christ in order to satisfy his desire for adulation, service, or affection. She is picked up and carried by Christ and adorned with the gift of himself. The church does not use Christ or manipulate him to achieve and further her own ends. She wills his will and trusts his faithful promises for her good.

For that reason, this holy assembly of Christ’s people listens to the promises you make to each other. Fidelity in your union is practising a lifetime of keeping those promises.

Because your union is so intimate it can become vicious. Because the coinherence is reality, the character of the union can become carniverous. And yet, as you live from Him and on Him who is your Rescuer from sin, so you live from and on each other: His redemption is able to make holy also your marriage.

In these days when the life of the church is in turmoil, let the union of your home be to all who know you a living placard of Christ’s gracious union with sinners to rescue them and join himself to them forever. In these days when confusion about manness and womanness, about being husbands and wives, about fidelity and chastity in union is furthering disintegration in our most intimate lives, let your instruction about being husband and wife come from Christ and his church. In so doing your marriage will not contribute to the corruption but be rather a holy display, giving courage, comfort, and guidance to others in their marriage.

In our temporal life no individual receives a greater gift from God than such a marriage nor does a society receive a greater gift for its life and health. In the name of our blessed and everfaithful God, we invoke that divine charity and favor on your marriage and your lives.
Elements in a Labor Day Meditation

WHEN SIGMUND FREUD PREDICTED that “work” would be the primary question of the twentieth century, he was thinking how industrialized labor might adversely affect the energies of people, as he put it, “to work and to love.” At the three-quarter mark, “work” has also become a primary political question of the century.

A peculiar anxiety attaches to employment in a society where one’s sense of identity derives from what he or she does for a living (where the young are asked “What are you going to be when you grow up?” and housewives are asked “And what do you do?”), yet where thousands of jobs can be created or destroyed by the stroke of a pen. But today that anxiety is compounded by a new perception of “limits”: by a sense that the problem cannot be referred much longer to an expansion of industry, which has in the past underwritten an expansion of services and has yielded a surplus of revenues for poverty.

This Labor Day called forth longer thoughts than usual. But such thinking will need to find a way.

Classical theologians used a locus to reopen a question. A “place” was cleared for fresh exploration by setting forth aspects or elements of the question which would have to enter into any wholesome understanding of the matter. They could then take hold of the topic first from one side, then from the other, drawing forth things both old and new.

Reviving this practice, we might seek needed perspectives on “word” by posing once again the traditional distinction between “labor” and “leisure.” “Labor” would then refer to activities that are materially necessary or biologically useful. “Leisure” would refer not to inactivity or time off (sleep and exercise, being physically necessary, really belong on the side with labor), but to activities which entail choice or freedom and which develop distinctive human characteristics or virtues. Of course, the notion of biological usefulness can be extended to interpret all human functions; and intellectual, social, and artistic activities may be seen to give shape to labor.

To round out our topic, let us add a third term pointing to an activity which is distinguished both from material labor and from virtuous leisure yet which sheds light on both: a word like “rest” or “contemplation” long associated by Jews and Christians with the Sabbath.1

Following are some first forays, forward and back, to get the hang of it. Their intent is not to exhort but to discover. “Reflections,” as Kierkegaard called them in his Journal for 1847, “must not so much move, mollify, reassure, persuade, as awaken and provoke and sharpen thought. Their purpose is to rightly set all the elements in motion.”

LABOR — LEISURE

THE FIRST THING WE NOTE is that “labor” needed for survival is in an important sense subordinate to “leisure” which exercises freedom and develops character and culture. Certainly these two elements overlap in most activities; but it will not be sufficient in this discussion to speak of leisure as a respite from labor, a reward for labor, or as enjoyed for the purpose of returning with renewed strength to labor.

A certain amount of food, sleep, and exercise are needed for the sake of labor, and labor is needed for the sake of leisure. This affords a descriptive way of judging when one may be getting “too much sleep” or “too much exercise”—without conforming to a work ethic. “Killing time” can be a mark of neurosis or even be suicidal. It also provides a way of judging when one has taken on too much labor, even without a “workaholic test.” We do not live for the sake of labor or wages; labor and wages are for the sake of living—well.

Productive labor is properly justified on the ground that it reduces drudgery and enlarges freedom. In many previous societies, labor was assigned to slaves so that leisure could be enjoyed by “free men.” It seems an indisputable advance that we are able to speak of all men and women as capable of both. Technology and organized production played important roles in bringing this about.

But production can also lay claim to too much time and energy. Necessities can replace rather than subserve freedoms. Socrates counted his wealth not in terms of his pile of possessions but in terms of his lack of needs. Who buys a powerboat feels constrained to drive it around. We must count not only the time and energy spent in consuming products, but also that which goes into supportive industries and services. Herein lie the makings of “the harried leisure class.” A French economist calculates that labor pouring into passenger miles (production and sale of vehicles, upkeep and repairs, road-building and maintenance, fuel processing and delivery, parking facilities and services, meter maids, traffic police and traffic courts, insurance, ambulance and hospital, junking, recycling, etc.) has raised the percentage of human time spent on travel from 5 percent to 26 percent. The more miles per hour, the more time goes

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into producing them—with fewer choices and vicissitudes along the way.

It is possible, of course, to add a social or leisure dimension to eating, sleeping, exercise, and work, and it is a mark of human culture that we do not simply empty a Yahoo's trough. Yet it appears curious that we should employ others to entertain at dinner, in bed, on the playing field, or at an office party—except perhaps as propaedeutic to similar activities of our own. The world's oldest profession and newest massage parlor seem patent examples of offering for a fee what everyone should be able to get (and give) at home.

There is need for cultivation and practice of leisure activities. If people wish to read, they must be taught—and should be taught to read critically. Thus we may acknowledge a legitimate extension of remunerative work into the leisure field. Yet it seems appropriate to remember how Socrates was offended by teachers who took pay for leisurely prodding of leisure activities. There is a certain propriety in the assumption that teachers and counsellors go less by the clock and in their being said to receive a "living" rather than a wage.

Beyond such plausible extensions of labor into leisure, we begin to find what look more and more like takeovers of leisure activities from behind. Health, considered a virtue among the ancients, has become a mark of human culture that we do not simply empty a Yahoo's trough. Yet it appears curious that we should employ others to entertain at dinner, in bed, on the playing field, or at an office party—except perhaps as propaedeutic to similar activities of our own. The world's oldest profession and newest massage parlor seem patent examples of offering for a fee what everyone should be able to get (and give) at home.

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Beyond such plausible extensions of labor into leisure, we begin to find what look more and more like takeovers of leisure activities from behind. Health, considered a virtue among the ancients, has become a matter of more and more services supplied by others. Citizens in the ideal city of Erewhon were held responsible for their diseases as for their crimes. For our part, we seek external certification of the patient role; and to distrust such authority is itself denominated a disease—hypocondria.

Justice is everyone's business; yet it may become increasingly a matter of retaining a lawyer. Politics is a paradigm of common activity; yet it may turn into a matter of paying public servants to do what we, by a familiar inversion, disdain to do. Taxpayers are offended to find a lack of integrity in public officials—having forfeited for themselves this very sphere of virtue. If we are at present in process of restoring virtue to public life, we must perhaps give consideration to reconstituting such spheres.

Undue extensions of labor into leisure may be seen to place physical constraints on our time and activities. They may also be seen to impose social constraints as tools and techniques come to be held by some in the name of all. They even entail cultural restrictions as we no longer expect to act in voluntary, mutual ways. We labor to buy, as Philip Slater said in The Pursuit of Loneliness, something we do not really want at all. Remember his punch line: "In every case, it is fair to say that we participate eagerly in producing the frustration we endure—it is not something merely done to us."

LABOR ← LEISURE

IN THE COURSE OF TURNING this arrow around, we might observe that we are engaged at this very moment in a "leisure" activity bearing on "labor."

Here we must pay initial respects to familiar attempts to put more freedom into industrial labor: coffee breaks, places to sit other than packing cases and lavatory stairs, "suggestion boxes" for "job enrichment," worker participation in decisions bearing on the work place, and enduring worker ingenuity at getting through the day. Horizontal organizational schemes serve to disperse initiatives; e.g., Volvo's worker-teams organize segments of the work in the Sweden plant (though this practice has been judged uneconomic for a new plant in Virginia). Not least, profit-sharing schemes are instituted to raise a sense of worker participation in the corporate enterprise.

More powerful effects of leisure on labor may be found by following the laborer out of the plant. Some remarkable labor history has emerged in England, and found disciples in America, which treats social relations in work in conjunction with the organization of worker communities. Such social solidarities afford a milieu for political discussion and strategy bearing on industry.

But if leisure is the goal of labor, we must push our question beyond industrial relations, and even beyond profits and control of industry, to inquire into the very nature of tools themselves. Are the tools of society the sort which facilitate human doing and human mutuality on the whole? Or are they such as needlessly perpetuate monopoly and pre-shape human activities? Such questions deprive "technology" of any claim to "givenness," at least in our own minds, and make it once again a logos of techne: a reasoning together about what kind of things ought to be made.

While we cannot derive specific programs from this inquiry, we can draw out certain "if-then" directions for policy. If there is to be an expansion of public service jobs (and these have worked as nothing else to distribute the wealth of the society), then it becomes a matter of equity to broaden access to them. The Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, Section 7, proposes to give neighborhood communities a role in determining which jobs and services need doing. Such a shift of authority could profoundly alter the nature and benefits of public employment.

If, even after tax reforms and trade-offs with weaponry, Humphrey-Hawkins remains inflationary in ways which return spiraling costs to the workers, then equity requires that jobs be created in a no less obvious manner: through work-sharing, more jobs of fewer hours. (This is the only measure to mitigate a last-hired-first-fired policy that robs back recent gains from women and others entering the work force.) It follows that industrial operations should be placed near communities of high unemployment; this may require new legislation along with that bearing on financial investment in such neighborhoods. "Down to six in '76" seems...
an enlightened cry from labor groups, as was “Down to eight” at the time of the Haymarket demonstration.

Now we seem close to the most felicitous trade-off of all. For additional leisure produced in this way could take the form of activities which bear, directly and indirectly, on costly “social problems.” This at a time when, in all candor, those “problems” seem not amenable to services as usual and are perhaps ill-defined.

Recent futurists have employed a zero-sum game (what goes to some cannot go to others) to predict a “lifeboat ethics” and cases of triage in the next decades. But if we were to become serious about equity as never before, not in terms of distributing a surplus from growth (as in the “Anti-poverty Program”) but of dividing up a non-growing pie, and were to engage in all manner of social inventions—there might be some surprises in that. Something of the loaves and fishes again.

**LABOR -------- LEISURE**

**LEISURE -------- CONTEMPLATION**

**WE CANNOT FIX THE LINE** once and for all between necessary labor and voluntary leisure; and it is not always easy to say where the activity of leisure leaves off and the passivity (not dormancy!) of contemplation begins. In general, we may note that labor and leisure usually focus particular ends in view, whether old or new, while contemplation is said by comparison to have no purpose at all. It is “a waste of time for God” (Guardini).

Our forebears recognized this distinction when they said that labor (let alone sport) was to cease for the Sabbath rest, and that social activity (let alone theater) was no substitute for it. In the biblical creation story, the world was completed not in six days of work but on the seventh day when God “rested” and “saw.” Adam was commanded to enter into that sort of rest and contemplation, and in this relaxed awareness things were to come to a proper appreciation beyond their ordinary usefulness to him.

Exactly in its purposelessness this rest may be seen to shed a certain peace, and this contemplation a certain light, backward over all leisure and labor, as well as over all eating and drinking, over play and even sleep. In order to “know” anything in the fullest sense, or to “love” or “enjoy” it most fully, one has to give attention to the subject itself. If one focuses on his own vegetative needs, or even on his own intellectual, moral or esthetic virtues, this passion becomes something else.

Labor is undertaken most explicitly for the sake of the future. The modern industrial worker has become bound to a repetitive, clock-bound, so-many-sick-days, market-efficient form of labor through a virtually unprecedented promise concerning the future. He performs work he can scarcely rationalize except for the paycheck and all that represents for the future.

When confidence in the future dims and it seems there will be diminishing returns on long term investment, when depletions lie ahead and polluting side effects appear along the way, the same worker may become ready for an even more fervid futurism with an attending scapegoatism. (“It was OK until they . . .” “. . . those people who don’t work.”)

In the face of a balked future, labor must give way to leisure in which we find and pose new directions for the future—“growth sideways,” perhaps. But leisure should also yield, now and again, to rest and contemplation in which we do not rush to the future but descry sure qualities of any desirable future in the present.

We produce commodities but we do not produce values. We plan for the future but we do not, strictly speaking, make the future come nor even advance toward it. We build factories, schools, and churches, but we do not build the city. The city is. It comes.
sung. In fact, those cabarets keep away from any elaborate show, they try to get by with as few scenic effects as possible. What is elaborate is the esprit, a climate of savage wit from fun-making to political satire, prevailing in smoke-filled places, most of which are in the basement of restaurants and cafes, some in small theaters.

The name of its German version, Kleinkunstbühne, indicates that the artist, the cabaretist, envisions his art as a miniature edition of the legitimate theater, but by far not as a minor edition. Cabaret-like features can be detected in Aristophanes' comedies and in a variety of plays whose dramaturgic line is rather loose and whose purport is to demystify myths and to expose the evils in our society. In a smaller literary framework the cabaret has chosen this line of thought. It can demystify with songs, in sketches and dances; it can expose with words of gentle ridicule or shoot with cannons of verbal fury.

THE CABARETISTS ARE basically born satirists. They have also been called fools with vitriolic pens. But even those who do not believe that the world can be changed by making man face the mirror image of his follies frequent these places to laugh about themselves. This type of cabaret will soon celebrate its hundredth birthday. It was in 1881 that a Swiss who lived in Paris at that time founded the cabaret Chat Noir. Rodolphe Salis had a daring view of what such an “underground” little theater should be like and did not mind putting it into print. To this very day it is still one of the best definitions of what such a cabaret ought to be:

We intend to lampoon political events, to enlighten mankind, to make man face his stupidities; we want to wean the petit bourgeois away from his morbid moods, to show the Philistine the sunny side of life, to tear the hypochondriacal mask from the faces of all hypochon-

driacs; and to find the material for these literary entertainments we are ready to listen everywhere and to sneak around at night like cats on the roofs.

In the course of time and as an expression of their very being as the heirs to a tradition reaching back to Francois Villon, the French developed a particular flair for the chanson with a charm and bite all their own. Its German pendant is probably best exemplified by the Bländelied, mostly a satirical song with either a sentimental-nostalgic touch or a more or less muted attack on the human condition. The man who, already in the 1890s, dared to tell the Philistines of their warped attitude towards sex in his play, Spring's Awakening, and who created the all-devouring and self-defeating female figure of Lulu, was one of the first to master the Bländelied. His name was Frank Wedekind and, in 1911, he created the then famous cabaret The Eleven Executioners in Munich. With all verbal means at his disposal he wanted to spite the smug bourgeois and avenge the artist whom he envisioned as being forever crushed by the establishment. Wedekind has often been depicted in his time as a literary figure whose pen was directed by a devil or demon. This cabaretist par excellence may not have believed in God but he was religious, since he was fully aware of good and evil and only portrayed the evil to make us see the good.

There is an ethical pathos in many German satirists who have turned to cabaret work in order to have a convenient and most immediate outlet for their attacks on society. It is little known that Bertolt Brecht started as a cabaretist. At that time, immediately after World War I, Brecht was strongly influenced by the satirine Wedekind and the Munich beer-hall comedian Karl Valentin. In the 1920s, in the wake of the first cataclysmic event of this century, the cabaret spirit flourished in Central Europe as never before. It seems to fall on fertile ground when moral collapse cries out for criticism.

One could maintain that the modern spirit of the cabaret started in 1916 with the birth of Dadaism in the Spiegelgasse in Zürich. This revolutionary movement in the arts could not help being born during the First World War as an automatic reflex to the rapid death of all old values and as the true reflection of the twentieth century's trauma. It was a broad assault on the ethics and aesthetics of its time, and its birth could only happen at a place sheltered from the holocaust of man-made madness. A few artists who found refuge in Switzerland came together in Zürich and protested in the name of art against all art. Among them were the German poets Hugo Ball and Richard Hülsenbeck; the Swiss painter Tristan Tzara, the Alsatian painter-poet Jean (Hans) Arp, and the Swiss painter Sophie Taeuber. Ball and Hülsenbeck claimed they accidentally found the word Dada in a German-French dictionary. Tzara maintained he discovered the word while sitting in the Terrassen Café in Zürich one evening at 6 P.M. Ball owned a beer parlor in Zürich's Altstadt, and this place was converted into the famed Cabaret Voltaire where Sophie Taeuber danced in a grotesque manner, where Hugo Ball created his Verses Without Words, phonetic poems or sound paintings, and where Jean Arp showed his Dada collages. These artists demonstrated against the follies of a materialistic, rationalistic and chauvinistic world. Dada was a glorified invective spat into the face of a world which asked for it.

This was the right material and ambiance for a cabaret and a point of departure for these rebels. They gave this miniature theater the necessary impetus, the courage to say what must hurt, and the strength to ridicule the ludicrous and to laugh about the traps we dig for ourselves and to lampoon the tri-

The Cresset
umph of all triviality and mediocrity.

The Cabaret Voltaire and its happenings in 1916 were created by non-Swiss artists who found refuge in Zürich, as also Lenin did, who happened to live across the street from where Dada was born. But it was here that a cabaret came into being, conscious of its potential power and fully aware of the deeper sense it could make of all the nonsense in the world. From then on and over many decades the Swiss have developed a particular flair for this art form and achieved impressive heights with it whenever the outside pressures were most acutely felt. Rightly so; Zürich has been where for some time a handful of scenic designer Alois Carigiet, talked and prepared a cabaret "Made in Switzerland." All that was still needed was a name. When Carigiet ordered a ham sandwich he saw a little pickle on it. The name was found: Cornichon, the French word for pickle. Cornichon opened on the 1st of May 1934 and became a moral institution, a center of spiritual resistance. It helped the Swiss to hold out against a furious neighbor.

The Cornichon was only a beginning. From then on and almost year after year other cabarets opened at other places in the city. New talents were discovered among the Swiss writers and actors. Most of them appeared this year in theaters and on television. They have grayed at their temples but their spirit seemed the same as so many years ago. Most of their material, as a direct reaction to the problems of the past, showed here and there the patina of a world whose evils multiplied and whose follies have enjoyed the accelerated pace at which they came and went.

Of course, the cabaret flourished not only in Switzerland. There were some daring fools in Berlin and Munich whose reputations were so magnificent that they could defy the Führer and the concentration camps in the thirties for some time until the darkness of the days overshadowed them. The writer of this feature was very much involved in cabaret work as a young man, writing sketches and staging them in the basement of Vienna's coffee-houses in the thirties.

This art form, which is so very much a product of its day, needs an understanding that cannot be created overnight; it needs to emerge from an understanding of its tradition. The finest form of it is an elusive wit that hits its target with power and precision. The honesty and urgency of the cabaretist's motivation, his skill to say the most unpleasant truth without offending any censor are prerequisites of this art form, the twist leading to the epigrammatic point that kills with laughter is the trick of the trade. It can be great fun, however sad the target may be.

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TENNESSEE WILLIAMS HAS long been a controversial figure in the theater, and after reading his memoirs, it is easy to see why. He is a paradox. His embarrassingly frank autobiography reveals a man ravaged by his carnal appetites, suspicious and temperamental in dealings with his friends as well as the public, obsessed with his illness, real and imagined, paranoid about his diminishing productivity and approaching death, and clinging, not always successfully, to his sanity. Yet it also reveals a very human, tender, appealing man who longs with the heart of a child to be loved. He seeks a center in his crazy world and finds, sadly, that the only thing he can respond to wholly is his work.

Williams divulges his neuroses with unabashed candor and provides some new insights into his character. While one might assume that he had a troubled youth, the depth of his difficulty in dealing with others is surprising. Since Williams' power and his genius undoubtedly lie in his exquisite grasp of words, and this is the main charm of the book, I will take the liberty of quoting freely. He says:

My adolescent problems took their most violent form in a shyness of a pathological degree. Few people realize, now, that I have always been and even remain in my years as a crocodile an extremely shy creature—in my crocodile years I compensate [sic] for this shyness by the typical Williams [sic] heartiness and bluster and sometimes explosive fury of behavior. In my high school days I had no disguise, no facade. And it was at University City High School that I developed the habit of blushing whenever anyone looked me in the eyes, as if I harbored behind them some quite dreadful or abominable secret [his homosexuality] . . . . I don't think I had effeminate mannerisms but somewhere deep in my nerves there was imprisoned a young girl, a sort of blushing school maiden. (17)

Williams seems to long for lasting relationships and affection, and he has found them at times in his life, as he did with Frank Merlo, his companion for fourteen years, and Audrey Wood, his agent of thirty-two years. But he ended both partnerships. Shortly after his break with Frankie in 1962, he learned, to his remorse, that Frankie was dying of cancer. His death had a far-reaching effect on Williams. He says: "As long as Frank was well, I was happy. He had a gift for creating a life and, when he ceased to be alive, I couldn't create a life for myself. So I went into a seven-year depression." (194) This deepening depression lead to a disconcerting inability to talk, almost to the point of mutism, as he says, and to acute insomnia. He was unable to sleep without heavy sedation or to work without stimulants. Williams' hospitalization in 1969 is described in interesting detail but not deeply analyzed. Shortly after this he severed his professional relationship with Audrey, who he thought had grown neglectful. Looking back, he admits that it is only recently that he has learned to accept and appreciate his companions; time will tell if these relationships last.

Williams' passion to write is the incessant undercurrent of his Memoirs, but, disappointingly, he seems unwilling or unable to share it with his readers, except on a superficial level. He records randomly an accumulation of his recollections of contracts, actresses, openings, reviews, and closings, his intense involvement with his plays' productions. Towards the end he does reveal an uneasy acceptance of his declining years:

I do have plans for the near future in addition to the inevitable one of death. I will move to Southern Italy or Sicily and I will fulfill my promise to acquire a nice bit of land on which to raise goats and geese and finish one more play. . . . Of course I will continue to work, but not to trick myself into supposing that what I now accomplish still has the vitality of my work at full tide, when it sprang like the torrents of spring. (231)

Yet he is still implacably defiant and self-pitying:

It wasn't easy to live as a writer with a brain damaged by three convulsions in one morning and a heart so damaged by coronaries that going to sleep each night is always attended by the uneasy and sometimes fearful suspicion that you may not wake up in the morning.

Mornings, I love them so much!—Their triumph over night. . . . it is and has nearly always been the mornings in which I've worked. . . .

Work!—the loveliest of all four-letter words, surpassing even the importance of love, most times. (240-241)

A DISCUSSION OF WILLIAMS' life would not be complete without some mention of his relationship to his family. Williams talks reservedly of Miss Edwina (his mother), his father, and Dakin (his brother), and fondly of Rose (his sister), and his grandfather; but again not with the depth of analysis that a curious reader would appreciate. One has the feeling that these are subjects too painful or perhaps inaccessible for Williams to turn on them more than a medium-watt light.

In spite of these glimpses into his inner being, Williams, again disappointingly, says little about his philosophical beliefs and values, especially in the first half of the book. That section is mostly a rather boring recitation of his homosexual, and one heterosexual, encounters. But towards the end, he gives some typically Williams' lyrical insights.
A man must live through his life's duration with his own little set of fears and angers, suspicions and vanities, and his appetites, spiritual and carnal.

Life is built of them and he is built of life.

The umbilical cord is a long, long rope of blood that has swung him as an aerialist on an all but endless Trapeze, oh, such a long, long way, from the first living organism that gave birth to another.

Define it as the passion to create which is all that we know of God. (242)

Is that an agnostic thing to say? I think not.

In evaluating Williams' Memoirs as a whole, one finds the book much like his plays, though not as successful. It is flawed. The farrago of facts and feelings is often confusing; a supplemental chronological listing of events would be a tremendous help. Yet in spite of its shortcomings, it has Williams' infusion of life and genius. It is an exuberant book. As Williams has the wisdom to note:

I have told you the events of my life, and described as best I could, without legal repercussions, the dramatis personae of it.

But life is made up of moment-to-moment occurrences in the nerves and the perceptions, and try as you may, you can't commit them to the actualities of your own history. (250) Williams does make a valiant effort to reveal more than just the events of his life, and he is fairly successful. He seems in many ways to be a man hopelessly lost and damned, much like the characters in his works, but Williams also shows forth the innate beauty and dignity of the human spirit that immortalizes his plays.

CATHLEEN N. VON BARGEN

CHRISTIAN: ITS MEANING IN AN AGE OF FUTURE SHOCK.

PUT A SENSITIVE, COMMITTED CHRISTIAN TOGETHER WITH A VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EASTERN AREA AND SOMETHING NEW WILL STIR. THE CONTEXT OF THE CRADLE OF CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, AND JUDAISM CANNOT BUT JAR THE SENSES. MALCOLM BOYD'S VISIT TO ISRAEL IN 1972 IS THE SEED PLOT IN WHICH THIS SERIES OF REFLECTIONS GERMENATED. HIS JOURNEY WAS NOT ONLY A GEOGRAPHICAL ONE BUT ALSO ONE TAKING HIM BACK TO THE DEEPER SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS OF THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND COMMITMENT IN OUR TIME. AND SO THIS BOOK, BEGINNING AT THE WAILING WALL IN JERUSALEM, RANGES BEYOND THAT TO A WHOLE CLUSTER OF QUESTIONS DEALING WITH CHRISTIAN EXISTENCE IN THE POST-MODERN AGE. "JEW AND CHRISTIAN," "SUPERCHRIST OF A SUPERSTATE," "IMAGES AND INCENSE"—THese ARE THE TITLES OF CHAPTERS WHICH REFLECT ON THE AGONIZING ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND OUR RESPONSES TO IT, THE ROLE OF FAITH IN RELATION TO NEW FORMS OF STATE AND CULTURAL RELIGION IN AMERICA, HUMAN SEXUALITY AND THE CHURCH, AND MANY OTHER SOCIAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES WHICH PROVIDE THE AMBIENCE FOR CHRISTIAN THOUGHT AND ACTION TODAY.

BOYD'S THOUGHTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST ARE DEEPLY EMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED. HE FELT THE SHAME AND HORROR OF THE HOLOCAUST IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH JEWS ON KIBBUTZIM AND IN VILLAGES AND CITIES, SURVIVORS OFTEN OF THOSE MOST DREADFUL MOMENTS. HAVING FELT THAT ENCOUNTER SO DEEPLY IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT HE WOULD REACT TO DANIEL BERRIGAN'S CRITICAL WORDS TOWARD ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. YET PERHAPS BERRIGAN'S FEELINGS AT THE SAME TIME VOICED SOME OF THE AGONIES OF DISPLACED ARABS ON THE OTHER SIDE. WHO IS THEREFORE TO SAY WHICH OF THESE SENSITIVE CHRISTIAN SOULS IS NEARER THE TRUTH, OR WHETHER THE TRUTH IS NOT IN THEIR TRYING TO BEAR SOMETHING OF THE ALIENATION AND HOSTILITY FELT BY VARIOUS VICTIMS IN THE CONFLICT? IT IS A MOVING EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIANS ATTEMPTING WITH COURAGE TO ENTER INTO THE FRAY OF LIFE AND HISTORY, WHERE THE AMBIGUITY AND FINITUDE OF THE HUMAN CONDITION MEET US PAINFULLY AND INCREDIBLY.

BOYD IS TO BE COMMENDED FOR MOVING FROM HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH JEWS TO HEARING OUT PALESTINIANS, AND THEN RETURNING AGAIN TO REFLECT ON THE ISSUE. PERHAPS ONLY IN THIS WAY IS IT POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE CONFLICT TO BRING SOMETHING NEW AND POSITIVE TO IT.

FROM THIS MIDDLE EASTERN EXPERIENCE BOYD VIEWS THE INSTITUTIONALIZED CHRISTIANITY OF AMERICA. OVERALL HE CONFESES WITH CONSIDERABLE ANGER AND SORROW THAT NORMALIZED AMERICAN CHURCH LIFE OFTEN TENDS TO WARP OR EVEN MUTILATE PEOPLE BY TAKING FROM THEM A SENSE OF THE REALISM OF LIFE WITH ITS JOYS AND SUFFERINGS. Thus he calls for a form of revitalization in the Christian institutions in which serious efforts will be made to overcome their packaged character, their materialism and petty moralism, and which will help people to grow up (in Christ) as real human beings, able to experience their own lives, and to participate more sensitively in the things affecting the lives of others. IT IS A KIND OF MAGNA CARTA FOR THE CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT, WHICH MUST REACH OUT TO THE WORLD AS IT IS NOW—not the ideal world we would like it to be, or the world of the eschaton which is surely not yet, but the world of the here and now.

WITH THAT KIND OF ORIENTATION BOYD'S BOOK MUST BE CLASSIFIED AS AN EFFORT IN MISSION AND APOLOGETICS. PROBABLY FEW READERS WILL BE ABLE TO READ IT WITHOUT BEING IRRITATED AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER, AS I WAS. However, I FOUND MYSELF GOADED BY THE QUESTIONS RAISED. BOYD'S CANDID BOOK IS AN UPDATED ATTESTATION OF THE FACT THAT THE REAL QUESTIONS OF FAITH AND LIFE BEGIN TO BE ASKED IN JERUSALEM AND GO OUT FROM THERE "TO THE UTMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH!"