



-the mind polluter

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transcendental meditation

by Ken McFarland

Is transcendental meditation the universally sought elixir for all life's problems, from simple nervous tension to psychosomatic illness? Or is it a Hindu wolf in an American sheepskin?

THE PREMATURELY aging woman at the end of my row leaned forward. "Can transcendental meditation really give me inner peace?" she questioned.

She had not asked the question lightly. The pleading desperation of her eyes and her tense grip on the back of the seat ahead of her betrayed the tangled nightmare of private stresses that fueled her inner torment.

"I mean, I've tried everything," she continued. "Religion, psychoanalysis, drugs—you name it. But I keep coming up empty, and I'm still looking."

A modest crowd of about fifty of us had turned out for the first of two free introductory lectures on transcendental meditation, or TM as it is commonly abbreviated.

Somehow the lady at the end of the row had apparently not yet heard about the One who once said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). Later, I thought to myself, you must find an opportunity to tell her. But right now all eyes were on the instructor. They came here to hear his answer.

"The faithful practice of TM leads to a freedom from tension, anxiety, and stress that can be experienced in no other way," he began. "TM has as one of its primary goals the attainment of this inner peace you mentioned. Inner peace is the natural result of eliminating through meditation the many negative influences in one's life."

A mental cure-all? Transcendental meditation. Newly rediscovered mental technique? Eastern religion masquerading as a science? Fascinating new road to a drugless high? Solution to all personal problems? Latest fad to emerge from the counter culture?

As books on TM continue to climb best-seller charts and national magazines recognize its exploding popularity with cover-story prominence, the time has surely arrived for Christians to be asking, "Just what is TM, and how should we relate to it?"

The authors of one current best seller on TM define it as "a simple, natural,

Ken McFarland is a pastor and free-lance writer living in Anaheim, California.

effortless technique that allows the mind to experience subtler and subtler levels of the thinking process until thinking is transcended and the mind comes into direct contact with the source of thought."¹

If such a definition seems a bit abstract, the benefits which are claimed to result from practicing TM are very real.

"Since I've been meditating, I've had almost unlimited energy," maintains Tom Rhodes, an Orange County, California, high school senior. "My grades have come up a lot because I'm able to remember things better. And I've quit smoking."

Leonard Beckwith, an Anaheim auto-parts salesman in his late forties, likes TM for a different reason: "I used to fight insomnia every night of the week," he says. "Now I sleep like a rock."

Other TM devotees claim that meditation has helped them in everything from losing weight to overcoming depression.

"Transcendental meditation," asserts a booklet entitled *Fundamentals of Progress* currently being distributed at introductory lectures, "brings measurable improvements to almost every area of human functioning, and consequently it contributes solutions to all the basic areas of human problems."²

According to our instructor, Larry Peluso, TM is "the only technique that improves every area of life. Most self-improvement projects—speed-reading, for example—improve only one small area of life. But TM finds its way to the very root of life and waters it; therefore the whole tree flourishes."³

The first awareness of TM's existence, for many, came in the mid-sixties when the Beatles, in search of an escape from drugs, made their celebrated pilgrimage to the Himalayas. There they turned on to the teachings of an Indian holy man, or guru, by the name of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

The maharishi, an ex-physicist turned Hindu monk, had in turn learned the meditation technique during thirteen years of study under the personal tutelage of an earlier teacher called Guru Dev, or Divine Leader. Determined to reach the world with the TM gospel, the maharishi soon realized that personally instructing small groups of followers was not getting the job done.



TM Now in Public High Schools

Last year—1975—the New Jersey Department of Education spent some \$40,000 in federal grants to conduct programs in transcendental meditation at five New Jersey public high schools. The monies originally came from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Americans United research director Albert J. Menendez, speaking at the Overseas Press Club conference held on February 18, said, "We are convinced that there is incontrovertible evidence that TM is merely a subtly disguised form of Hinduism. The state is prohibited from sponsoring . . . any religion. The conclusion is inescapable: The continuation of such programs clearly violates the Establishment of Religion clause of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment."

The high school course is said to include a mandatory initiation ceremony, complete with hymns of worship and other related trappings, at a nearby TM center.

Religious aspects played down. So in recent years, he has concentrated on personally certifying teachers who can pass along the good word through public lectures and personalized instruction. In addition, the religious origin and character of TM is being carefully de-emphasized. It is now promoted almost exclusively as a "scientific technique."

As a result of this new strategy, over a half million people are now meditating regularly in the United States, with 30,000 more enrolling in the course each month. There are some 370 TM centers around the country, staffed by over 6,000 instructors.⁴

The parent organization overseeing the propagation of TM in the United States is the World Plan Executive Council, headquartered in Los Angeles. Underneath this umbrella operate the various arms of the movement: Students International

Meditation Society (SIMS), for students; International Meditation Society (IMS), for nonstudents; and the American Foundation for the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), catering to businessmen. These largely replace the original Spiritual Regeneration Movement (SRM), under which TM was first introduced to America.

Steps for meditation instruction. As a would-be meditator, you must first attend the two free introductory lectures. Heavily advertised, these lectures are usually held in rented public quarters.

After the lectures, if you're still interested, you take the plunge. You are personally interviewed by the TM instructor, and you shell out a fat fee for the training sessions proper. This amounts currently to \$125 for an individual, \$200 for a couple or a family and their children under fif-

After placing your offering on an altar dedicated to a de- parted guru, your in- structor lights candles, burns incense, sings a hymn of dedication to three Hindu deities, and invites you to bow down with him in worship.

teen, \$65 for college students, and lower rates for high school and elementary students.

The next four steps take place at a local TM center. Although TM claims to be totally secular and scientific, the initiation ceremony—your next stop—is patently religious. To this ceremony, where you are to learn the secret of how to meditate, you are asked to bring an offering—a white handkerchief, six flowers, and three pieces of fresh fruit.

These are handed over to your instructor, who leads you to a small, private room. Before entering, you are invited to remove your shoes. Your teacher lights candles and incense and places your offering on an altar under a color portrait of Guru Dev—the maharishi's departed master.

Your instructor then begins to sing in Sanskrit a rather lengthy song. This song, or *puja*, is actually a hymn of worship unabashedly celebrating the deity of Guru Dev and identifying him with the three major Hindu deities—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

What you are never told is that the words of the *puja* are talking about how the offering you brought with you is being considered your own personal act of worshipful obeisance to Guru Dev and the whole pantheon of Hindu gods. And as one distinguished scholar of Eastern religions has observed, "A man is considered to be a Hindu in good standing, not by what he believes, but by what he does."⁵

At the conclusion of the *puja*, your instructor actually bows down before the altar, and in a carefully rehearsed gesture, invites you to bow down beside him. Not until this ceremony is complete do you receive any specific instruction in the practice of TM.

You may, for reasons of conscience, decline to remove your shoes and bow down at the conclusion of the *puja*, and you may still receive your instruction. But if you refuse to bring an offering, or if you object to the ritual being enacted at all, you will not be initiated.⁶

In view of the \$125 investment you have made, you will more than likely find yourself willing to go along with the Hindu trappings in order to learn the TM tech-

nique. Indeed, hardly anyone is even aware of the real significance of the initiation ceremony, and most consider it more a quaint bit of East-meets-West ritualism than the serious act of Hindu worship which it is.

Invoking "your" Hindu deity. After the *puja*, your instructor—still kneeling beside you—introduces you to your own personal *mantra*. The *mantra* is a pleasant sounding, fluid word which you will use in your meditation for the rest of your life. You are instructed never to reveal your *mantra* to anyone.

To you, the *mantra* may be simply a meaningless sound, such as "om," "rama," "hair-dhign," or "iyim." But within the Hindu context it has a definite meaning. The words for the *mantras* are taken from the Vedas, or Hindu scriptures. In Hindu religious tradition, a *mantra* is used to invoke one of the Hindu deities. Any one of the millions of good and evil deities in the Hindu system may conceivably be invoked, given the appropriate *mantra*.

Once your instructor is sure you have your *mantra* down pat, you are seated for a few minutes of instruction in the actual technique of transcendental meditation. After this initiation, you will later meet with other new meditators for three more group lectures, then you are entitled to a free monthly check-in at a local TM center to make sure you still have the hang of it.

Now you are a fully credentialed transcendental meditator. From here on, you spend two fifteen-to-twenty-minute periods daily, silently repeating your *mantra* until all your thoughts seem to cease, and you transcend to make contact

with the source of creative intelligence.

This means that your senses are withdrawn from their normal external field of perception, your mind is placed in neutral, and you are left aware only of contact with a supposed "cosmic consciousness."

Is TM for you? As a Christian, how should you relate to TM? The only way to satisfactorily answer such questions is to become informed as to the basic nature and teachings of TM.

For example, consider again the *mantra*. Few Westerners are aware that in Hindu meditation, the *mantra* is chanted in order to induce a trancelike state of self-hypnosis. The maharishi himself applies the same terminology to the experience of TM: "This path of enlightenment is, we could say, a path of self-hypnotism."⁷

As noted earlier, the *mantra* is a word which in Hindu religious practice is used to invoke one of the many deities of Hinduism. A Hindu worshiper seeks to have his entire being infused with the spirit of the god whose *mantra* he chants.

The presence of supernatural entities. Before her conversion to Christ, Vale Hamilton had practiced TM for five years, of which she spent one year as a TM instructor. In his revealing book entitled *The Meditators*, Douglas Shah asked Vale if she had ever noticed the appearance of supernatural presences during the practice of TM. Her answer:

"Yes, I did. We were advised not to pay any attention to them, no matter in what form they appeared. As an instructor I was told to tell meditators to leave these supernatural beings alone, and to go on with their own business. But I will never forget my experiencing the presence of supernatural spirits."⁸

One of the most dangerous things a Christian can do is to empty his mind of all thought and for all purposes leave it in neutral, as is the case in the practice of TM. Whenever anyone opens his mind to just whatever influence comes along, he should realize that Satan or any one of his evil spirits will be only too happy to move right in and take over. Christ makes this clear in Matthew 12:43-45.

Even though the public is led to believe that TM is not a religious practice,

How could a sincere Christian, informed regarding the real significance of the initiation, condone any of the TM rituals or practices?

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has gone on record as equating TM with prayer. Asked if TM could be considered prayer, he responded, "A very good form of prayer. A most refined and a most powerful form of prayer."⁹ The mantra is central in the "prayer" of TM, yet Jesus said, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do" (Matthew 6:7).

The "prayer" of which the maharishi speaks is certainly not directed to the God of the Christian. Despite the clever packaging of TM as a "mental or scientific technique," TM is practiced for the express and stated purpose of leading the meditator "back to the Source of all Being." And that Source is plainly not the God worshiped by Christians, but rather Brahma—the Hindu Absolute.¹⁰

It is doubtful that a sincere Christian, informed as to the true significance of the TM initiation ceremony, could participate in it even passively without compromising his conscience. The very first of the Ten Commandments reads, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). Yet in the initiation ceremony, you are by your offering of fruit, flowers, and a white handkerchief expressing your personal devotion to Guru Dev and a whole host of other Hindu deities. The Sanskrit words of the puja which your teacher chants acknowledge your gift to the gods.

Incompatible with Christ's teachings. A study of the religious teachings underlying the practice of transcendental meditation reveals clearly their incompatibility with Christian truth. Central to Bible Christianity is the historical fact of Christ's sufferings and death on man's behalf. Yet, says the maharishi, "I don't think Christ ever suffered or Christ could suffer. It's a pity that Christ is talked of in terms of suffering."¹¹

Not only does the maharishi dispense with Christ's substitutionary sufferings, but he teaches that salvation from sin does not come through Christ and that through TM, "very easily a sinner comes out of the field of sin and becomes a virtuous man."¹²

One would expect that having gone so far as to say that we are justified through TM, the maharishi might also claim that we are sanctified by the same means. And so he does: "Right action without a proper

basis is very hard, if not impossible. By transcendental meditation, however, it is easy to gain pure consciousness and thereby automatically to perform right action."¹³

What about all the benefits that are claimed for TM? TM literature appeals heavily to scientific research, which supposedly confirms the psychological and physical benefits of meditation. An extensive and careful evaluation of these various scientific tests was reported on in early 1974 by a team of three respected researchers. One of the three in reporting their findings wrote, "There are still a good many mysteries about meditation, and there are several versions of how it works. For this reason I think we should remain wary of the claims and selective use of scientific data by well-meaning but scientifically unsophisticated practitioners."¹⁴

After hearing the TM instructor at our introductory lecture recite all the fantastic benefits which are supposed to accrue to those who meditate, I suddenly realized that if all the claims he was making for TM were true, we would no longer need a Saviour.

No more problems, no more unhappiness, no more suffering. We can bypass the cross of Calvary, bypass the way of self-denial, and effortlessly meditate ourselves into perfection. This approach, of course, has immense appeal to the natural heart of fallen man, who prefers to lift himself up by his own bootstraps instead of humbling himself to accept salvation from Someone else.

One good question for any Christian to ask himself about any practice is whether it leads one closer to Jesus Christ or draws the heart away from Him. My first contact with TM came when a young couple in my church began to skip the midweek prayer

meeting because "it conflicts with our meditation time." Upon which, after all, should the meditations of the Christian center—the mantra or the Master?

The first Psalm speaks about the righteous man who finds joy in meditating on the law of the Lord day and night. Real Christian meditation involves the active use of the mind in pondering the Word of God until it is understood and can be applied to the daily life. How different this activity is from TM, in which the mind is deliberately withdrawn from the real world and cleared of any thoughts at all except a mystical awareness of "the source of thought."

How you as a Christian decide to relate to TM will be determined by the conclusions you reach after considering the facts about it, of which the few mentioned here are but a sample.

The sad fact is that thousands today sincerely believe they can find in TM the energy, peace, and joy which somehow they never found elsewhere. And it is our duty and privilege as followers of Christ to show them that what they are seeking can never be found in TM, or even in "religion," but only in knowing Jesus.

Oh, yes—the lady at the end of the row? Fortunately I managed to get her name and address, and this weekend I'm going to stop by her house and leave a new Bible and a copy of a little book about Jesus entitled *Steps to Christ*. Perhaps her long search for inner peace is almost over. ☐

¹ Denise Denniston and Peter McWilliams, *The TM Book: How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life* (Allen Park, Michigan: Versemonger Press, 1975), p. 36.

² *Fundamentals of Progress* (Fairfield, Iowa: MIU Press, 1975), p. 54.

³ Larry Peluso, Introductory Lecture, November 16, 1975, Orange County, California, Transcendental Meditation Center.

⁴ "The TM Craze: Forty Minutes to Bliss," *Time* (October 13, 1975), p. 71.

⁵ A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York: Philosophical Library, undated), p. 28.

⁶ Douglas Shah, *The Meditators* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1975), pp. 16, 17, and TM: *Penetrating the Veil of Deception* (Santa Ana, California: Christian Apologetics Research and Information Service, 1975), pp. 3, 4.

⁷ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Transcendental Meditation* (New York: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1963), p. 279.

⁸ *The Meditators*, p. 118.

⁹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (Bantam Books, 1968), p. 95.

¹⁰ Gordon R. Lewis, *What Everyone Should Know About Transcendental Meditation* (Glendale, California: G/L Publications, 1975), p. 73.

¹¹ *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, p. 123.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹³ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi on the Bhagavad-Gita* (Penguin Books, 1969), p. 294.

¹⁴ Gary E. Schwartz, "The Facts on Transcendental Meditation: Part II," *Psychology Today* (April, 1974), pp. 39-44.



To marry or not?

I AM NOT one of them, but—believe it or not—there are individuals who choose not to marry. They often pay higher taxes, pay more auto insurance, and suffer economic discrimination of various kinds because our commercial enterprise system favors quantity purchasing by family units. But these are minor inconveniences compared to emotional discrimination practiced by many people who generalize that the single adult is either (1) inferior and can't get married, (2) by choice sexually promiscuous and doesn't want to marry, or (3) is homosexual.

Enough single adults have complained to justify an emphasis in this column space for which the personal choice of noncelibacy may disqualify my credibility. Nevertheless I shall proceed on the premise that my way of saying it could be better than someone else's way of not saying it.

Samuel Johnson stated it this way: "Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures." The word *celibacy* means to abstain from marriage, and for the Christian would imply, among other things, abstaining from sexual indulgence. This likely is the intent of Mr. Johnson's sarcasm.

Celibacy is associated with priests and nuns, whose vow of celibacy is interpreted by some to mean that the quality of holy living is somehow enhanced by celibacy and total abstinence from sexual indulgence—a statement I question. This would imply that God gave man a handicap when He invented sex and instructed Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. On the other hand, the celibacy of Jesus would indicate that the command issued in the Garden of Eden need not be rigidly enforced until there is standing room only on planet Earth!

Are angels deprived without sex? Within marriage, sexual abstinence is on occasion practiced by mutual consent. But this need no more indicate depreciation of the love relationship than sexual indulgence guarantees a



strengthening of the love relationship.

It is my opinion that holy angels are not deprived without sex and holy humans are not depraved with it. Unholy angels, however, may sense keen deprivation. Could this partially account for satanic preoccupation with sexually oriented temptations? And unholy humans may presume they could live holy lives in the absence of sexual temptation. In other words, if they just wait long enough, they will get old enough so that sexual impotence will make it easy to be holy.

Such humanistic procrastination avoids conversion confrontation and puffs up sexual reality to unreal proportions. Sex was never intended to dominate human relationships. It isn't necessary for people to send out sexual signals all the time to prove personal adequacy.

Paul puts it this way: "I say this by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with pas-

sion" (1 Corinthians 7:6-9, RSV).

To read between Paul's lines, it may be that he anticipated heavenly celibacy by way of discovering earthly celibacy. He made it clear that it is a matter of personal choice.

The thought of heavenly celibacy need not inhibit the pleasure of loving, sexual relationships within marriage now. Nor does heavenly celibacy mean long lines at a complaint window in heaven. The celibacy of Jesus and of those today who choose celibacy demonstrates the possibility of abundant-life enrichment with or without sexual encounter on earth and beyond sexual encounter in heaven.

Our Creator never meant for sex to become a giant redwood tree on the landscape of life. Perhaps, instead, Jesus prefers to teach that sex is a fragile flower in a garden of plants. You can make your own choices without jeopardizing other delightful possibilities. Sex can become a tyrant and cause insensitivity to the variety of God's intended pleasures bestowed upon His human family. But it doesn't have to. God is famous for inventing sex—but it isn't the only thing He ever did.

Dick Jewett conducts a radio talk show and crisis-line service for troubled young people in the San Francisco Peninsula area. He works full time in this ministry.



Television makes such an impact on human minds today that sponsors of the most popular programs have to shell out as much as \$2,000 a second—\$120,000 a minute—for commercial time. What message does this have for us regarding the things shown on the programs themselves? by Edward N. Oliphant

TV—the mind polluter

I HAVE JUST finished wading through an impressive stack of research material dealing with the psychological effects of television viewing, and the result is a feeling of utter disgust.

Crime, violence, social and political unrest, religious intolerance, and an overemphasis on sex and nudity scream at me from every page. From all over the country—from every layer of society—comes the agonizing cry of uncontrollable change, human misery, and the desperate reaching out for a new set of values.

Society has transformed more rapidly than we ever expected. The complex problems that stem from wars and technological revolutions have by now outgrown our ability to cope with them. As a result, the new way of life tears at the old established concepts of decency, honesty, and a built-in respect for the rights of others.

It has often been suggested that values haven't really changed, but what with the refinement of communications, the absurdities of life receive more publicity than before. Consequently, those ideas that were suppressed in the past now vie for attention.

Many social critics now maintain that the change of behavior so obvious across the land is the direct result of the "coming of age" of the children of the mass media, and with condemning fingers they point

to television as a key culprit beyond a doubt. And the facts support their conclusion.

Commissions' findings alarming. During the past decade, two national violence commissions and an overwhelming number of scientific studies have invariably arrived at basically the same conclusion: that televised violence is a powerful way to teach, suggest, and even advocate extreme antisocial behavior. And in some viewers it can even trigger specific aggressive acts! It follows all the lines of the "monkey see, monkey do" principle.

Studies by McLeod and Associates of boys and girls of high school age found that those students who had a history of watching violent television programs were usually also the more violent and aggressive members of the student body. Other studies revealed that nine-year-old boys with a habit of watching violent television programs turned out to be more aggressive at age nineteen than those whose television habits had been severely curtailed during those ten formative years.

What's more, research has shown conclusively that children who are exposed to much television violence tend to become desensitized to it. This comes as no surprise.

What is surprising, however, is that the average child who begins to watch television in his fifth year will witness approximately 13,500 fellow humans "killed" before he reaches his fifteenth year. This means that a child who watches TV will probably see more violence than an average adult experiences in a lifetime!

Television has degenerated into a medium that now specializes in psychological horror. Morton A. Hill, head of Morality in Media, Inc., a New York-based citizens group, states, "You may see vicious dogs chasing people, women being dragged down dark alleys by assailants, families being held under siege by unseen and nameless attackers. It paints the world as a terrifying, dangerous, wicked place."

A study conducted by the office staff of John M. Murphy, congressman from New York, found that of the prime-time shows aired by the nation's television networks, NBC had violent sequences in 71 percent of its shows; ABC followed with 67 percent; and CBS, 57 percent.

U.S. Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld before a U.S. subcommittee commented that "the overwhelming consensus and the unanimous Scientific Advisory Committee's report indicate that televised violence, indeed, does have an adverse effect on certain members of our society. It is clear to me that the casual relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come."

Public anxiety is rising. Official indignation is on the increase. Yet, from watching the current television programs, one does not get the impression that anything is being accomplished.

In a February, 1975, article on TV

Edward N. Oliphant is a free-lance writer living in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Crime's connection to TV viewing

Evidence of the relationship between crime and television viewing can frequently be found in the daily newspapers. Four tragic examples establish this point sufficiently:

- In Los Angeles, police officials asked NBC to set up a special screening of a "Police Story" program that some believed may have inspired a killer to slash the throats of three derelicts on skid row. According to detectives, the plot of the show featured the same kind of crime.
- A fourteen-year-old boy, after watching Alice Cooper, a rock star, get involved in a mock hanging episode, attempted to reproduce the event. He missed—and hung himself.
- In England a youngster attempted to imitate his hero, Batman, by leaping from a cabinet in a garden shed. His neck became caught in a nylon rope hanging from the roof. His father blamed his son's useless death on a children's television show.
- A Boston television station aired a movie depicting a number of juvenile delinquents drenching a derelict with gasoline and setting him afire. Shortly after the show, a woman was transformed into a human torch under practically the same circumstances.

violence, *The Ladies' Home Journal* fingered some very disturbing facts that seemed closely related to our TV-viewing habits.

"If one looks at crime statistics, we find that we are by far the most violent of all the great Western nations," the magazine article pointed out. "Our homicide rate is about ten times greater than, say, the Scandinavian countries', or four times greater than Scotland's or Australia's. There are more murders a year on the island of Manhattan or in the city of Philadelphia than in the entire United Kingdom, with its nearly 60 million people. Violent crime has been increasing at six to ten times the rate of population growth in this country. And, interestingly, if one analyzes the content of TV programs in England, we find that their rate of televised violence is half that of ours; in the Scandinavian countries it is much less even than that.

"Thus one of the major social-cultural differences between the United States

with its high homicide and violence rates," the article concludes, "is the amount of violence screened on public television."

TV violence dilemma. This country faces a dilemma. And the psychologists who have been watching the close correlation between TV violence and the increase in crime statistics don't quite know how to solve it, even though to the average television viewer the conclusion is rather obvious. It just depends on which side of the fence you are on.

Dr. Joyce D. Brothers, TV commentator-psychologist, wrote recently in an article for *The New York Times*: "Television's audience is the family. Can it provide programs to please all, from Junior to Dad to Grandma, without offending any? Is this technological giant, with its great potential for art, entertainment, education, and social comment, to be relegated to the role of an inoffensive baby-sitter just because there are babies in the living room?"

With all due respect to Dr. Brothers, I

do feel the issue goes much deeper than that. It can indeed provide programs that will please *all* segments of the population without being offensive. The baby-sitting issue is indeed one of major importance, but it is not all. Statistics tell us that today's kids have put in approximately fifteen thousand hours of television watching by the time they have finished high school, compared to the eleven thousand hours they spend in the classroom.

Preschoolers between the ages of three and five, according to the Nielsen television Index, watch television an average of more than fifty-four hours each week—nearly 64 percent of their waking hours—thus passively absorbing material on which they will build their future characters and personalities.

Television is creating tremendous

problems for the younger generation. The average television-watching child is exposed not only to thousands of hours of violent programming but also to more than twenty-five thousand commercials in the course of a year. It is a mind-bending flood of hard-sell promotionals created with little concern for the child's right of choice. Vast pressure has been placed on the networks and the nonnetwork stations to curtail the commercials on children's programs, but thus far these efforts have not been too successful.

The Cost Factor. There is a natural reluctance on the part of station management to reduce commercial time, for they are in business to make money—not to provide the nation with responsible entertainment. A highly popular program "All in the Family," for example, is supported by advertising time that is being sold at the rate of approximately \$120,000 a minute! *Total advertising revenue reaped by the television industry is in excess of \$2.06 billion a year,* and well-paid executives are not at all ready to endanger their profit-making operation for the sake of a few thousand protests.

Their defense has been that it is unrealistic to expect them to cut down on their revenue while at the same time expecting them to come up with better quality programming. "It can't be done," one executive remarked recently when questioned about this. "We are a moneymaking operation. We have an obligation to our stockholders."

One may wonder why there is no money available for improved programming—without increasing the revenue—since at the same time the networks and their stations are reaping profits so large that they have been forced to redistribute their wealth into

publishing companies and baseball clubs to keep the dollars circulating.

It can be done! Commercials are not mandatory on children's television; in fact, many of the commercials that sponsor the crime programs could also be eliminated. In England, Holland, France, Japan, and many other countries, there are almost no commercials permitted on children's programs, which completely eliminates the hard sell that is a "must" on U.S. TV. What's more, the television industry in those nations does not just survive—it *grows*, without taking advantage of the public's gullibility.

Problems for religious programming. As television has become, to a large extent, an entertainment medium involving both old and young, network and station management is slowly beginning to regard religious programming as not so important. Prime time as a rule is no longer available for the religious broadcasters, and if it is, the per-minute rate has become so excessively high that no religious broadcaster can afford to buy it. Reports Les Brown, head of Variety's TV and Radio section, "Programs come into being to attract an audience. Not to feed their mind or to elevate them morally or spiritually, but to deliver them to an advertiser."

This is exactly against the philosophy of the Federal Communications Commission, the government agency set up to control the broadcasting industry. "Programming judgment by a station," says FCC member James H. Quello, "should be based on an overall ascertainment of community needs rather than on demands by

one or two groups that may represent a small percentage of the local population." And by this he seems to mean not only the irate citizens groups demanding better programming, but the station management as well.

The trouble with the FCC, however, is that its only enforcement power is to crack down on license renewals of the relatively few stations operated by the networks, for it is the networks that air most of the objectionable programs. Even this is not always possible. Any real intervention by the FCC in television programming might well be viewed by the courts as an infringement on the freedom of speech as guaranteed under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Do we need better and more responsible broadcasting in order to protect our children's mental and moral outlook on life?

We most certainly do. There is no doubt that we are involved in a war against *mind* pollution—a situation in which the child's mind is poisoned by the actions of those who have placed financial gain above the welfare of the nation.

True, it's time America takes another long look at the airwaves. But until then, Christians can solve the problem best by simply exercising their God-given rights to choose what will and will not be broadcast in their homes. Children of such parents will not resent these decisions, especially if they have a part in making them and share in the responsibility of carrying them out.

Maybe we can't stop mind pollution nationwide, but we certainly can clean up the "channel" running through our home. The solution is right at our fingertips—literally.





Christian book sales up

REPORTS from publishing sources indicate a veritable boom in the sale of religious books. The rise in sales has reached the point where at least thirty-six volumes have sold more than one million copies within the past five years.

A new survey claims that 42 percent of American families bought Bibles or other religious books last year—9 million Bibles and 12 million other religious books.

The Christian Booksellers Association reported a 66 percent sales jump by its member stores from 1972 to 1974.

According to CBA executive vice-president John Bass, retail sales of 1,850 CBA stores topped \$303 million in 1974, and direct-mail operations and sales by nonmember bookstores "pushed religious book sales well past the half-billion-dollar mark."

The National Religious Bestsellers newsletter observed that a few years ago a religious best seller was a book that sold 10,000 copies. "Now, even the No. 10 title on the cloth list sells better than 75,000 copies."

Publishers Weekly, in a special religious book issue in July, observed that "there are a half-dozen significant religious book clubs, numerous mail-order houses, church stores, seminary bookstalls, house-party jobbers, discount operations, door-to-door agents, and perhaps a dozen major national rack distributors."

According to the CBA's Mr. Bass, it all adds up to "stronger growth than in almost any industry in the nation."

Divorce Fever Widespread but Short-termed

"Divorce Fever" is raging—particularly among "middle- and upper-middle-class professionals thirty-five to forty-five years old, who are overqualified, overextended, and overstimulated," writes Erica Abeel in *New York* (November 4). Statistics back her up: "National figures show that the divorce curve soared 82 percent between 1963 and 1972."

The high casualty rate points to a new attitude toward the marriage commitment. "In Victorian times," said one psychologist, "'when the going got rough, people fainted. Now they get di-

vorced.' . . . Marriages are succumbing because only a perfect relationship will do. No one wants to settle or accommodate—everyone wants more. . . . Unfortunately for a marriage, though, 'more' often means more for *me* rather than more for *us*."

"Divorce is now honorable, a part of the human condition—some proselytizers argue it's a condition of being human. 'Sometimes outgrowing a relationship is obligatory,' says Alex Comfort in *More Joy*. There is even talk of a divorce mystique. It's like getting a Ph.D.—it's an achievement in growth and self-analysis. For some, divorce represents a necessary rite of passage to adulthood."

"Doubling the lure of the free-and-single myth is the simultaneous decay of an older myth: marriage and such ideals as family, a shared past, security, mutual dependence, and stability."

Despite it all, there are reasons to suspect that the epidemic will be short-lived. "The Bureau of the Census reveals that three fourths of all divorced men and two thirds of all divorced women remarry" on the average of five years from the date of separation. "Moreover, three fourths of all remarriages are lifetime propositions."

A New Nation, Papua New Guinea, Populated Largely by Christians

While 86 percent of the population of Papua New Guinea is listed as Christian, religion in the world's newest nation is as diverse as its seven hundred language groups, as exotic as the bird of paradise dominating its flag.

Western religion and tribal customs, stone-age culture and technology, nationalism and regionalism, all mingle in the Melanesian tropics. Some churches in the 180,000-square-mile region are well indigenized; others, like the economy, are foreign controlled. Cults and combinations of cults proliferate.

Expected to become the 139th member of the United Nations, Papua New Guinea gained official independence on September 16, 1975, as the Australian flag, which had flown in Port Moresby since 1906, was lowered for the last time. In its place went up a red-and-black

banner decorated with a golden bird and the Southern Cross.

The new nation includes the eastern half of the huge island of New Guinea and outlying islands, the major ones being New Britain, New Ireland, and Bougainville.

Youthful Suicides: First Casualties of Cultural Revolution?

American youth are developing a bent toward self-destruction, and the *National Observer's* Daniel Henninger says it is but the first wave of "social suicides"—casualties in an ill-fated cultural revolution.

"In 1950 the suicide rate for people aged fifteen to nineteen was 2.7 for every 100,000 persons; for the rest of the population the rate was 11.4. The suicide rate for young people remained stable until the late 50's, when it began to rise, and 7 of every 100,000 youngsters in that age group were suicides by 1973.

"For people aged 20 to 24, the incidence of self-destruction is worse. The rate for them in 1950 was 8.1, but by 1973 it had risen to 14.8, slightly above the national suicide rate."

Dr. Jerome Motto, former president of the American Association of Suicidology, attributes the suicides to the fact that "a lot of kids felt they didn't quite fit into the 'love generation'—the new, open, unfettered life-style made popular by rock music, Charles Reich's *Greening of America*, 'youth' movies, and advertising directed at the young.

"Some of the most sensitive and intelligent of the young detected a false note in all of this, weren't mature enough to assert their doubts, became depressed, and killed themselves."

These social suicides, says Henninger, are "people who made the long psychic swim out to those islands of personal happiness" promised by the sexual, drug, group-therapy, or feminist movements; "found they'd been oversold; and are now too emotionally wrung out to make their way back. These people are still among us, but they're drowning.

"There seems to be something in the American personality that makes us want to belong to anything that promises happiness without tears."



No work, no food, and no shelter. A mother and her malnourished children and an old man make their home on the sidewalks of a city in Bangladesh. They are among the thousands who make their living begging in the streets. There are no work, no food, and no shelter for them. They carry their worldly possessions with them, and the clothes that they wear are probably the only ones they own. Bangladesh has been battered by storms, war, floods, and famine—and these people are the victims.

Graham Sees the U.S. Nearing "Awakening" in Religious Interest

Evangelist Billy Graham said here he has found evidence that the United States may be entering a fourth "Great Awakening" of religious interest.

Addressing a luncheon at the Overseas Press Club, the famed preacher noted that the three historic awakenings in American history began in 1734, 1800, and 1858, respectively.

"I believe that we are now possibly in the fourth Great Awakening," Mr. Graham affirmed. "Evidences abound everywhere. One has only to remember the condition of the churches and religious institutions at the beginning of World War II. Church budgets could not be met. Churches were practically empty, and religion was not news. That has all changed."

Mr. Graham was asked to comment on the rise of what has been called new evangelicalism, as exemplified by such periodicals as the *Post-American* which are developing a leftist political thrust tied to an evangelical theology.

"I am orthodox theologically, but I do

not have a quarrel with a man if he is liberal or conservative in his politics," the evangelist stated, adding, "I do not consider myself a rank conservative sociologically or politically."

With regard to differing political movements among evangelicals, he commented, "I do see the possibility of splintering, and I hope that will not take place, because I think there will be splintering and dividing over the wrong things."

Mr. Graham said he had recently discussed the matter with his brother-in-law, evangelist Leighton Ford, and affirmed that he hopes to be able to act as a "healer" in patching up any rifts among evangelicals.

Smoking "Most Unnecessary" Cause of U.S. Illness

A federal government report on cigarette smoking was characterized as confirming that smoking "remains the largest single unnecessary cause of illness and early death," and Congress was urged to halt the manufacture of high-tar and high-nicotine cigarettes.

In issuing its ninth annual report on smoking and health, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare summarized current research in four areas: cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and "involuntary smoking," the effects of smoking on nonsmokers.

Scope of Gideons' Work Detailed at Convention

They distribute about a million copies every twenty-seven days.

That's the rate at which the Gideons International are getting copies of the Scriptures into the hands of people around the world.

Graham Burns, assistant to the executive director, reports that 13.5 million copies of the Bible were distributed last year. Since the organization's founding in 1908, he reported, the Gideons have given away more than 150 million copies.

For the fiscal year ending in June, the Gideons spent \$9.5 million on Scripture distribution in 107 countries in 43 languages.

A life out of balance

Stepping into her living room, he found cats everywhere—sitting in rows along the windowsills, curled up in the corners of chairs and couches, stretched out on rugs, and perched at the dishes. **by Leo R. Van Dolson**



WORK FOR CATS!"

That was how Mrs. Bond introduced herself to her veterinarian, James Herriot, on his first visit to her home. He tells what followed that rather defensive opening remark in his current best seller, *All Things Bright and Beautiful*.

He understood what she meant as soon as he stepped into her big kitchen-living room in North Yorkshire, England. He saw cats everywhere—cats spilling in cascades from every sofa and chair, cats sitting in rows along the windowsills. Even if he hadn't been able to see all the cats, the odor alone—the mingling of a distinctive pungency left by the toms and the sickly wisps from the big saucepan bubbling over with the next meal being prepared for the feline horde—would have betrayed their presence.

Mr. and Mrs. Bond, Londoners, apparently had enough money to buy an old house on the outskirts of Darrowby and to live quite well, even while supporting all those cats. Mr. Bond, though not opposed to his wife's fanatical zeal about taking in strays, just ignored them. Dr. Herriot pictures him—perpetually sitting in the living-room area in his shirt sleeves, reading his paper—"a lonely little island in a sea of cats."

"Of course," she explained to the amazed veterinarian, "all these you see here are the inside cats. I feed a lot more outside who are so wild that they refuse to enter the house."

No one can fault Mrs. Bond's big heart, which reached out to the unfortunate and neglected felines of the area. But we can't ignore the fact that her life and her home had become somewhat unbalanced owing to her obsession with cast-off cats.

In all probability, Mrs. Bond, at the very beginning of her career with cats, had simply been a person who liked them, perhaps owned one or two, and wasn't above slipping a snack to a stray now and then. Imperceptibly she began to veer, and somewhere along the line she passed the point of no return, to be eternally enmeshed in the care, feeding, cleaning, and

loving of scores and more scores of felines. In this area, at least, Mrs. Bond seems to have lost her sense of balance.

In doing so, she really wasn't hurting anyone, with the possible exception of the neglected Mr. Bond. She not only rescued feline unfortunates but undoubtedly added some interest to her neighbors' lives by providing a focus for neighborhood gossip.

However, lack of balance in one's life can be much more harmful than in her case. Sometimes it can be absolutely devastating, involving man's very existence. **Balance essential physically.** Human beings can maintain life only when the body cells are bathed in an internal environment of specific chemical composition. For instance, we normally need about ten milligrams of calcium to a hundred milliliters of blood for proper functioning of the body. If only about half that amount is supplied, the individual who is deficient will go into convulsions, which can be fatal. If, on the other hand, the calcium content should be increased by half the normal amount, the individual would show severe depression and would be likely to go into a coma. Thus our internal environment needs to be kept fairly constant.

However, we are subject to constant changes in our external environment which affect us internally. For instance, on a warm summer day we might step from an air-conditioned room with a temperature of about 72°F into an outdoor temperature of 102°F. But the body requires a temperature close to 98.6°F in order to function most adequately. There must be, then, body processes that keep the composition of the internal environment fairly constant in spite of variations in the rate of exchange between external and internal factors.

There are all sorts of amazing built-in, balance-restoring mechanisms that help keep our internal environment in a steady state. The tendency to maintain such internal stability is called homeostasis. Not all of the many functions involved in this process are yet fully known, even to scientists, but we understand enough to cause us to exclaim with the psalmist, "I am

fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Let's go back to our illustration of temperature to illustrate homeostasis. The mechanism responsible for regulating body temperature is the hypothalamus, located in the central part of the brain above the pituitary gland. The hypothalamus acts like a thermostat set at about 98.6°F. It responds to the temperature of the blood that bathes it and to the impulses it receives from temperature receptors in the skin. When the body becomes too warm, the hypothalamus thermostat signals the heat-regulating system to go to work. The sweat glands respond, and we begin to perspire, thus increasing heat loss by evaporation. The blood vessels of the skin also respond by dilating. This produces heat loss by conduction and radiation.

Dangers to mental balance. What we discovered to be true concerning the other laws of life and health discussed in previous articles in this series, the law of balance applies across the board to the physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects of our lives. All of us realize the necessity of balance in the mental dimension of life. In fact, we associate mental illness with mental imbalance.

We have also illustrated in previous articles how physical problems affect one's mental state. The same relationship occurs in the area of mental balance. Mind-numbing drugs, such as alcohol, obviously affect one's power of self-control and destroy the finely tuned balance that we describe as sensible and logical action. Fatigue takes the sharp edge off the mental faculties and often causes us to act in a way we would not ordinarily think best.

Beyond this, emotional strains interfere with mental balance. Many of these stem from the strife, tension, resentments, and bitterness created by our competitive way of life and the pressures of modern society.

Most of us are aware of these problems, but what can be done to keep our mental faculties in good balance? One of the laws of the mind reveals that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects on which it is trained to dwell. According to another similar

Leo R. Van Dolson, MPH, is an executive editor of "Ministry" magazine.

law, the mind will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar.

This law means that we can to a large extent control our individual mental balance by what we allow our minds to think about and concentrate on. In this area it is healthier for us to be generalists rather than specialists. If our area of concentration is too narrow—even in that which is beneficial—we may become one sided and unbalanced.

Often we hear of the genius who has devoted all his life and attention to the development of some specific concept or invention for which the world blesses his name. As we study his private life and social habits, however, we find that he has been woefully lacking in those social graces and concerns that would have enabled him to be a more well-adjusted and contented person. Even though we admire such an individual's contribution, we sense that there was a lack in his life that could have been supplied if he had not gone overboard, as we might say, in the area which absorbed his whole attention and interest.

A balanced social life. This train of thought leads us right into the area of balance in social activity. No one can really draw lines and say that a certain amount of social activity indicates good and proper balance, and excess leads to imbalance. Neither can we set the essential minimal amount below which there is a lack of balance.

Nevertheless, fellowship is essential to a well-balanced life.

Yet, who of us hasn't at some time or other gone to extremes in this area? When I first began to date the girl who became my wife, I wanted to spend every waking moment with her. This impulse seemed almost impossible for me to control, even though we both were in college at the time. I found it very difficult to concentrate on my studies, and the results were soon reflected in my grade-point average. After a while we began to see that if we were to stay in college, we would have to put our social life back into its proper perspective, and we did succeed in doing so.

Drastic results of minor imbalance. It doesn't take a lot of heavy imbalance to bring about drastic results; merely persisting in small imbalances can lead to grave

A fanatic is the one who has gotten so involved in the means of achieving the goal that he has completely forgotten what the goal is."

difficulties. Of course, little things have a way of snowballing until their consequences are earthshaking. By way of illustration, let's take a look at what happened in the Sahel region of Africa.

Five terrible years of drought resulted in the death of more than one hundred thousand people and some twenty million head of livestock. But drought alone does not explain what happened.

For centuries, tribal agreements limited the number of cattle and the amount of time they could graze in any one area. These old and delicately balanced grazing restrictions kept the near desert area from becoming part of the Sahara. But today the desert advances several miles each year.

When the drought began with the failure of the summer rains in 1968, this delicate balance deteriorated. Cattlemen began moving their herds southward in indiscriminate grazing patterns. At the same time, increasing use of bush fires to flush out edible desert rats resulted in impoverishing the topsoil; acacia trees that had formed much-needed windbreaks, and whose leaves made rich humus, the herdsmen now chopped down for firewood or lopped off their branches in order to feed the cattle—all of which contributed to blinding sandstorms that smothered newly planted crops.

Beneath the Sahel one finds a wealth of water in huge underground basins. The Sahel governments felt that tapping this water would provide the answer to their needs. A variety of foreign-aid programs helped them do this, and today the Sahel is crisscrossed with deep boreholes.

However, this effort caused more problems than it relieved. The large amounts of water attracted enormous numbers of herdsmen and cattle. This large migration ravaged the surrounding land by trampling and overgrazing the areas around the

boreholes so that most of them are now ringed by desert. The cattle have plenty of water but die for lack of food.

The only solution seems to be to turn once again to the balanced grazing practices of the ancient tribesmen and to combine them with modern range practices.

We can draw a spiritual lesson from the devastation of the Sahel. Spiritual deserts aren't usually caused by sudden dramatic or devastating circumstances. Such circumstances merely reveal the consequences of a process that has been developing for some time. In our spiritual lives we don't lose our sense of balance all at once. Just a little carelessness about our prayer life or Bible study or being a bit too tired to attend church may be the rather innocent beginning that leads inexorably to a spiritual famine before we're really aware of what is happening. It's not that the rains cease all at once, but they decrease a little at a time.

The imbalance of fanaticism. Of course, lack of spiritual balance isn't always caused by a gradual loss of interest. Occasionally we see the other side of the coin. Sometimes individuals, or even groups, get caught up in the one-sided, distorted religious emphasis that we call fanaticism.

The clearest definition I've heard of a fanatic is that used by Dr. Mervyn Harding, of the Loma Linda School of Health: "A fanatic is the one who has gotten so involved in the means of achieving the goal that he's completely forgotten what the goal is."

Applying this definition to one aspect of religious fanaticism, we sometimes find some individuals who become so intent on reading the Bible through a certain number of times each year that they never pause to consider how the words they are reading actually apply to their lives. Or we may find others who become so intent on their peers' accepting their understanding or interpretation of a Bible teaching that they use all sorts of un-Christlike methods in an attempt to force others to agree with their views. Of course these illustrations only scratch the surface of kinds of religious fanaticism, but they do demonstrate the need for balance in this significant life dimension.

So, physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually, a great law of life and health teaches us that in every area of life we must keep a proper balance.

by June Strong



Our door remains open

SURROUNDED as we are in this bicentennial year with reminders of our country's past, I asked myself, "What does being an American really mean to me?"

For some reason my mind went instantly to a Thanksgiving greeting card my husband, Don, received years ago from a business acquaintance. Instead of picturing the usual harvest feasting, it showed a small group of Pilgrims on a windswept beach, the *Mayflower* at anchor in the bay. Some of the new arrivals were kneeling in the snow; others stood, heads bowed in prayer. Water lapped, cold and green, against the rocks. Perhaps the artist would be pleased to know we use the card every year as a centerpiece on our Thanksgiving table.

I believe we need to think now and then of those men and women who first placed their feet on the Massachusetts shore, armed with the courage to face unknown dangers for the sake of freedom. I hope a bit of their blood still tingles in our veins.

Next, I think of a friend who spent many months in a concentration camp during World War II. Life was reduced to fear, dysentery, starvation, and loss of hope. There came that day, however, when American planes filled the skies and jeeps pulled into the compound. Almost too ill to respond, my friend huddled listlessly into a corner of the yard. A shadow fell across the dust at her feet, and she looked up at an American GI towering over her like some mythical god in his bronzed good health. He grinned, and she found a small answering smile flickering deep within, struggling to find its way to her parched lips.

When he lifted her in his arms as easily as if she were a child, the tears of her joy fell unchecked upon his green fatigues.

Very softly, his own eyes glistening, he said, "Don't cry, lady. You made it, and we're going home."

"Never had I understood before what it meant to be an American," she told me simply, years later.

Sometimes when I look about our own



table, I am reminded of another facet of America. The faces of our assembled family are not all Caucasian. Some of our six sons and daughters have come out of sorrow and war to these friendly shores. Though they bear the beauty of the Orient, they are now American. May the sounds of battle and dying never again be a part of their experience. I'm glad the lady with the torch in the New York harbor has never locked her gates against a troubled world.

I hear individuals chuckling about the clever ideas they have for evading their income tax. I hear other Americans lamenting the fact that we are "suckers" to help foreign nations when we have grave financial problems of our own.

While I'll readily admit that some areas of government may well be corrupt, that our tax dollars may not always be handled wisely, and perhaps we really cannot af-

ford to come to the aid of all the unfortunate around the globe, I'm still glad to pay my taxes as an American. I'd rather live frugally in this land than luxuriously in any other.

I'm proud we move in with clothing, food, and medical supplies wherever disaster strikes, even among our enemies. I'm glad we help countries shattered by war to struggle once more to their feet. I cannot be concerned with their appreciation or lack of it. There is a principle involved, a principle which Jesus Christ lifted to its ultimate clarity.

The day America hugs her riches to herself, closes her doors to the unfortunate, and looks with cool, indifferent eyes upon the problems of her fellow nations, I shall know we have betrayed those men and women kneeling on the cold New England shore. Until then, I shall fly the Stars and Stripes with a grateful heart.

June Strong, of Batavia, New York, is a popular lecturer and the author of the widely acclaimed book "Journal of a Happy Woman." She enjoys people and writing, gardening and sewing.



preserve

Our First Amendment guarantee of free exercise of religion is not the guarantee many think it is—it has been qualified by some two hundred years of judicial interpretation.

religious freedoms

by Robert W. Nixon

MILLIONS OF US Americans have already been caught up in the Spirit of '76 as we celebrate the Bicentennial of the American Revolution with countless special projects and with hundreds of parades featuring Old Glory, George Washingtons, Betsy Rosses, Uncle Sams, and bandaged drummers and piccolo players by the thousands.

But the big birthday party should mean more than marching bands, fluttering flags, crepe-papered floats, and exploding fireworks. It should be a time for us to ask ourselves, just what makes the United States such a great nation in which to live?

One possible answer is that our country is committed to providing maximum personal liberty to every one of its citizens. And one of the greatest liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of our Federal Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment is religious freedom.

Our religious freedom is founded on generations of sacrifice and the endless quest for a better way of life by men and women of many faiths. Many of the original colonists to this land knew from experience that when the state unites with a church—be it Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, or whatever—the result is apt to be religious intolerance or persecution.

So these international migrants sought something better for themselves—religious freedom. There were the Separatists and Puritans in New England, Quakers in the mid-Atlantic area,

Roman Catholics in Maryland, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Huguenots in the South—and scores of others in between.

But their concept of religious freedom was largely self-centered. Roger Williams, the Baptist father of true religious freedom in America, fled Massachusetts Bay Colony because of religious intolerance. And Jews were persons without homes until the governor of New Amsterdam discovered his salary was being paid in part by wealthy Jewish capitalists in Holland.

When the colonists sought to make one out of many after the revolution, the people agreed: They would unite if given certain guarantees, a Bill of Rights to the Federal Constitution. And the First Amendment, the very first, proclaims, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment makes the religious clauses of the First Amendment applicable to the states.

Results of church-state separation. One aspect of our religious freedom—

separation of church and state—has grown and continues to grow. First went the established churches, then religious oaths for public offices. Other religious traditions, however, have died more agonizing deaths—state-sponsored prayers and Bible readings in public schools, for example, which historically were Protestant oriented, much to the distaste of Jews, Roman Catholics, and others. And just three years ago the Supreme Court of the United States said No to those churches demanding that the states or the federal government finance their private schools. The trend today clearly seems to be toward greater church-state separation.

But the other aspect of religious freedom—"the free exercise" part—has not flourished quite so well.

The problem began with the broad wording of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law . . . prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. As our country and its churches developed and problems arose, the courts had to find a way to adapt the absolute "free exercise" concept of the First Amendment to everyday American life.

Religious freedom—almost. The result has been a balancing act. The courts attempt to balance free exercise of religion with the public welfare or the public interest.

Words indicating this balancing act appeared in a Sunday-law case in 1961, *Braunfeld v Brown*. Said the Supreme Court, "The freedom to hold religious beliefs and opinions is absolute. . . . However, the freedom to act, even when the action is in accord with one's religious convictions, is not totally free from legislative restrictions. . . . Legislative power over mere opinion is forbidden,

Robert Nixon is a lawyer and an associate editor of "Liberty," a magazine dedicated to the preservation of religious freedom.

The concept of religious liberty is founded on the idea of liberty of conscience."

but it may reach people's actions when they are found to be in violation of important social duties or subversive of good order, even when the actions are demanded by one's religion" (366 U.S. 599, 603, 604 [1961]).

Notice the language. Government may indeed restrict our religious freedom when it violates important social duties or subverts good order, even when the actions are demanded by our religion.

In 1963 in *Sherbert v Verner* (374 U.S. 398, 406 [1963]) the Supreme Court explained itself a bit more in an unemployment-compensation case involving a Seventh-day Adventist. The Court said a state must have a *compelling* interest before it can restrict the free exercise of religion.

How does the balancing act work? Judge for yourself.

Prohibition of polygamy was declared constitutional three generations ago, Mormon doctrine and practices notwithstanding. Polygamy, decided the Court, subverts social welfare and public order and morals.

Christian Science parents may be forced to vaccinate and X-ray their children. Public health and welfare are more important, reasoned some courts, than Christian Science teachings and practices. A Jehovah's Witness child will be given a blood transfusion over the religious objections of the parents.

An Orthodox Jew or a Seventh-day Adventist may be forced to close his shop or business on Sunday—regardless of his religious beliefs and the economic penalties.

On the other hand, the balance sometimes tips the other way.

Jehovah's Witnesses may distribute their religious literature as long as they observe reasonable laws involving privacy, traffic control, and public safety.

An atheist needn't swear or affirm belief in God in order to hold public office.

A state cannot deny unemployment compensation to a Seventh-day Adventist who refuses to work on the seventh-day Sabbath.

"Reasonable accommodation" required. The 1972 Equal Employment Opportunity amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 gives believers more employment rights than they've ever had before

in the history of this country. It prohibits employers and labor organizations from discriminating on a religious basis in hiring and firing and requires a "reasonable accommodation" to an employee's religious observances and practices unless accommodation would be an "undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business."

And so the religious liberty balance swings up and down. Some religious practices are protected; others aren't. The key supposedly is always whether the practice in question violates an important or compelling government interest.

So, religious dissenters, beware! Tomorrow—perhaps some tomorrow in the very near future—an opportunist politician or political party may succumb to an opportunity in a time of national distress to suppress activities of religious dissenters—or of all Christians or Jews or whatever—all in the name of the public interest—and a sympathetic Court could find sufficient legal precedent to declare the prohibition constitutional.

But that dark tomorrow, thank God, is not today. Today we Americans probably enjoy more religious freedom than citizens of any other country.

Why?

First, consider the historical and political reasons. The concept of religious liberty is founded on the idea of liberty of conscience. And it's the best way to keep a nation of many religious denominations from splintering into embattled, embittered, jealous religious ghettos—like we read about almost daily in news dispatches from Ulster.

Second, there are practical reasons. If we don't appreciate our religious liberty and seek to preserve it, it may wither and die. Also, Christ said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, RSV*). The more religious freedom

we possess the easier will be our fulfillment of the Gospel Commission.

Coercion not Christ's way. But there is even a better reason, a theological reason, for promoting religious liberty. God never coerces a sinner to come to Him. He is a God of love. Christ came as a humble servant, not as an absolute monarch, not as a dictator. He never asked Caesar to enforce His teachings. He said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Yes, the foundation of Biblical Christianity is the concept of man's spiritual free will. Christ doesn't use a battering ram. He asks softly, "Please, may I come in?"

Our part. How can we fly the banner of religious liberty?

We can keep informed about current events and trends and communicate to others—our friends, neighbors, fellow workers, and government officials—our belief in religious liberty. Contrary to what many think, the religious-liberty field is an active one. According to the latest litigation docket published by the American Jewish Congress, more than seventy cases in areas of church-state separation and religious freedom are currently pending in the federal and higher state courts. The cases range in subject matter from federal and state aid to church-sponsored schools to religious practices in public facilities, from tax exemption for religious institutions to abortion and sterilization, from rights of Sabbath observers to religious use of drugs, from communal living as a religious practice to religious rights of prisoners. Reports of such cases almost beg for letters to the editor supporting religious freedom and opposing establishment of religion.

Each of us can take a stand for everyone's religious freedom.

We can encourage our churches, clergymen, and religious institutions to stress religious freedom during the Bicentennial Year in parade floats, sermons, and public prayers.

And, finally, we can pray and work to preserve our religious freedom. Only if we dedicate ourselves today to pray and work to preserve religious liberty for every American will citizens of tomorrow know one of the basic meanings of the Spirit of '76.

*All Bible texts are quoted from the Revised Standard Version.

Bible discrepancies?

There are some things that puzzle me about the Bible. In discussing Peter's denial of Christ before the cock's crowing, Matthew, Luke, and John say the cock would crow once, but Mark says twice. Which is right?

In reading the Gospel accounts we must keep in mind that we are looking at the life of Christ through the eyes of four witnesses. Just as witnesses may report an accident somewhat differently because they saw it from different angles, so it is with the Gospel writers. But the various accounts will supplement and complement one another. In the Gospels, sometimes all four writers will mention the same detail. On other occasions one writer may mention a detail which the others will leave out. In this instance Matthew, Luke, and John simply record the thrust of Jesus' statement that before cock-crowing time Peter would deny Him. Mark records the detail that Christ said specifically the denial would take place before the cock would crow twice (compare Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34; John 13:38).

Some of the literature I have read concerning the second coming of Jesus leaves the impression that Christ could come tomorrow. Yet, is it not a fact that several momentous events must yet take place before He can return?

There is a certain tension in the New Testament writings regarding the second coming of our Lord. Some statements suggest the imminence of His return. Others indicate a period of time during which certain events will take place prior to the actual return.

For example, Jesus told His disciples: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:35-37). The apostle Paul gave similar warnings: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). "But this I say, brethren, the time is short" (1

Corinthians 7:29).

On the other hand, both Jesus and Paul referred to certain events to take place before consummation of the age. Jesus made reference to the great era of the Dark Ages with its multiple persecutions which would elapse before His coming could be said to be imminent (Matthew 24:21, 22). The apostle Paul likewise, in harmony with the "little horn" prophecy of Daniel 7, foretold that same period and the centuries-long development and career of apostasy in the Christian church, finally to be terminated by the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8).

How then can the apparent contradiction be resolved? The answer seems to lie in the fact that an individual has only his present life in which to prepare for Christ's return. Therefore, the Bible continually urges him to live in reference to an impending advent. The fragility of human existence underscores the shortness of his time to prepare. The Christian, on the other hand, does not lose hope in the actuality of Christ's advent, although it may not immediately take place. He realizes the prophecies call for certain developments. He is content therefore to leave the

knowledge of "the times . . . [and] the seasons" of the Second Advent in the Father's hands and to live in "patient waiting for Christ" (Acts 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).

Please explain Psalm 51:7: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Do we know what hyssop was? Was it applied internally or externally?

The English word *purge* in this passage is somewhat misleading to modern minds. It tends to conjure up a picture of something akin to castor oil, a purgative to cleanse the intestinal system! This was not the case.

The Hebrew word translated "hyssop" probably refers to the gray-green marjoram (*Origanum maru*), a small plant blooming with a mass of tiny white flowers.

We find hyssop first mentioned about the time the Israelites were to leave Egyptian slavery. Before the last plague devastated the land, God instructed each Israelite family to take a bunch of hyssop and sprinkle the blood of the Passover lamb on the lintel and doorposts of the house (Exodus 12:21-23). Later, in ritualistic cleansing ceremonies, the hyssop was used to sprinkle blood or specially prepared water on lepers who had been healed, houses that had been pronounced free from plague, and certain persons who had become ceremonially unclean. This signified their cleansing (Leviticus 14:6, 7, 51, 52; Numbers 19:9, 17-19).

Because of its association with various cleansing rites, the hyssop became a symbol of divine cleansing from sin. In the Psalm, David uses the symbol in pleading for God's forgiveness and cleansing. Like the ritual he pleads, "Take hyssop and sprinkle me, that I may be clean" (Psalm 51:7, NEB*). By employing the terminology of the rite the deeply repentant king pleads with God to forgive and to pardon him for the great transgressions which have stained his life.



In this column Pastor Frank B. Holbrook answers questions regarding spiritual truth, ethical behavior, and Biblical understanding. Write to him c/o THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Names are confidential. If a personal answer is desired, please send an addressed envelope. Only questions of general interest are published.

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Readers respond to March article

As a special service to our readers, *THESE TIMES* shares just a few of the many, many letters sent to our office in response to Pastor David Neff's article in March, "Who Killed Viola Sandberg?" See also following article.



I am grateful for your eagerness to hear from those affected by the article "Who Killed Viola Sandberg?" (March, 1976). Last night I took my ninety-two-year-old father out to dinner. I was terribly proud of him. He said, "I don't know why the good Lord has left me around for so long, but He must have some good reason." I know that reason. We need him.—**Esther V. Strickland, Silver Spring, Maryland.**

As a nurse caring for and in charge of forty-one geriatric patients, I can readily relate and agree with your conclusions. I plan to give the article to my co-workers to read. If only there were a way to give it to the families.—**Mrs. Ann Giarusso, Berrien Springs, Michigan.**

Your article really got to me. I made a decision that I would respect and not ignore my parents (as I usually do). I'd like you to put out some more articles like it. I really like the way they get to you.—**Karie Brown (age 10), New Orleans, Louisiana.**

There were many old people I took care of for many years in nursing homes that could no more be taken care of in their families than you can grow wings and fly. We are the same when we get old as we were when we were young, only a little more set in our ways.—**Gertrude Philipps, Dallas, Oregon.**

I am twenty-nine years old, and I am ashamed to express that I have never really been around elderly people. Are we our brother's keeper? Yes, we are! Yes, I am! Neglecting our precious elderly brethren has been, on the part of many, pure ignorance. I am willing to reform, and I genuinely appreciate enlightenment.—**Arlenice Sanchez, Belen, New Mexico.**

There is, of course, another side. Older people need to try growing old gracefully. There is nothing worse than a crabby, cynical old person. And of course health has a lot to do with that. Oh, what a field of missionary work to do for older people!—**Don C. Chamness, Nashville, Tennessee.**

We all need three things: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. Children deprive their aged parents of all three, and they die brokenhearted. It is as simple as that.—**Jewell Murphy, Odin, Illinois.**

My mother was eighty-five years old when she passed away. I never regretted one visit I made to her. It gave me much joy just to see the lovely smile on her face.—**Mrs. Esther Finch, Akron, Ohio.**

A lot of the patients in our nursing home see their relatives once a month. That "once" is the day the government check comes. "We'll take care of dad's change for him," they say. "You know how dad has been lately."—**A Kentucky nursing home. Name withheld by request.**

The real problem as I see it was that they placed complete faith in family. The same faith in God would have solved their loneliness, and He would have given them a close friend who knew Him.—**Goldie Weinberg, Spokane, Washington.**

The article was not what we want to read but what we should read.—**L. W. Lindh, Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.**

Surrounded by caring, Christian staff members who are dedicated to letting life be meaningful, I have seen remarkable improvement in the

physical condition and mental outlook of numerous residents. Nursing homes do not have to be dreary, gloomy, and smelly places where death overshadows life. And the good ones aren't.—**Rev. Howard Larsen, Jasonville, Indiana.**

I am sixteen, and I often think of the elderly—especially in homes. My reaction to this article? Bravo! Keep them coming like this one. **Lindsay Rees, Waverly, Pennsylvania.**

Personally I did not realize the extent to which the human body could respond to revived hope and love. Thanks for an article to remind us of our responsibilities in this area.—**Jewel Edwards, Ellisville, Mississippi.**

I have worked as a volunteer at a local hospital, washing, setting, and combing hair for women—most of them very old. It is amazing how such a little thoughtfulness will brighten them up. It gives me a great feeling knowing I've made, in some small way, another person's life a little happier and easier to bear.—**Virginia Jayne, Dundee, New York.**

Few families are physically or emotionally equipped to cope with twenty-four-hour care of an aged relative who is ill, depressed, whining, complaining, confused and/or senile. Nursing homes can give the skilled care necessary to the elderly, freeing families to work at "relatedness" without the fatigue and tensions often produced by total care.—**Mrs. John P. Simmons, Columbus, Indiana.**

I am a Christian—a young housewife and mother—but am just really starting to grow in my new life. I went today to a home for the aged, and they gave me

Who killed Viola Sandberg?

The death certificate signed the cause of her death as terminal cancer, but some believe it was another, something better by David Neff

It was a hot day in the summer of 1976 when I was a young man, and I was sitting in a nursing home, waiting for my mother to be released. I was sitting in a room with other people, and I was feeling very lonely. I was thinking about my mother, and I was wondering how she was doing. I was thinking about the future, and I was wondering what I was going to do. I was thinking about life, and I was wondering what it was all for. I was thinking about death, and I was wondering what it was like. I was thinking about everything, and I was wondering what it was all about. I was thinking about my mother, and I was wondering how she was doing. I was thinking about the future, and I was wondering what I was going to do. I was thinking about life, and I was wondering what it was all for. I was thinking about death, and I was wondering what it was like. I was thinking about everything, and I was wondering what it was all about.

a woman to visit. I pray now that I will keep wanting to go see her and do things for her, not for my own glory and self-gratification, but for her happiness and life. Thank you for your story, and please pray that the Lord will fill me with love.—**Mrs. Ritz Cox, Fayetteville, Arkansas.**

I believe that our educational system should teach those from young up to prepare for old age. Cultivate hobbies, read, sew, have a pet, join a club—anything as far as strength will allow. Always take care of your health by proper exercise, rest, and trust in God. Jesus is nearer and dearer to me each year, and I have lived almost seventy years now.—**R. A. S.**

I'm afraid you may have stirred up guilt feelings in many people who have had to place their parents in an institution because they could not cope with their senility.—**Mrs. R. Olsen, Tomahawk, Wisconsin.**

Granted, there are legitimate reasons for a dear one to be kept in a nursing home, when nursing care and skills are needed which can't be given at home; but for those who don't fit this category, it is a sad commentary on our advanced civilization that too many useful citizens are "put away" to rust out rather than keeping them with the family to "wear out." How we long for that heavenly land with no more aging, loneliness, sickness, or sorrow.—**Barbara S. Wyman, College Place, Washington.**

I have worked for geriatric patients in both hospitals and nursing homes and can personally testify to the astounding results of personal interest in the lives of those committed to my care. There is much fulfillment in becoming involved with others,

including (especially) the aged, since their wisdom and experiences can add meaning to our lives.—**Mrs. Rise Wright Colson, Dayton, Tennessee.**

The church of Jesus Christ has so much to offer our "senior citizens" in its ministry. Thank you for calling the attention of the church to this short-coming and showing opportunity for ministry.—**Rev. Kenneth R. Wezeman, Muskegon Heights, Michigan.**

Without love, no lonely person at any age can long endure. The exception becomes bitter, unfriendly, and uncooperative. I took care of a lady who came home from the hospital to die. Doctors gave her one month to live. Bone cancer took its toll, but she lived a year and a half instead of one month because of TLC (Tender Loving Care).—**Mrs. Ellen Disbro, Cleveland, Ohio.**

I read your article "Who Killed Viola Sandberg?" I was so touched; I never realized that families could be so cruel to their mothers and fathers. I talked with my four-year-old little girl and explained to her what has happened to the "grandmas." So starting Tuesday, she and I will go to a nursing home and fulfill the promise I made to God five years ago. Thank you for your article. You opened not only my eyes but my heart too.—**Mrs. J. Bishop, East Point, Georgia.**

Do I love my family, young and old alike, and tell them often—daily? Do I have some conversation with them, praise them sometimes? Help old people to keep in circulation. When they feel forsaken—in the way—they lose interest in living. I am eighty-eight years old, still active, and happy

with my family.—**Mrs. Heath Hitchcock, Dinwiddie, Virginia.**

When one is working with the elderly the assumption that they do not understand is a false premise on which to operate. Older people often have a greater capacity to accept and adjust than we sometimes feel they do. Honesty they sense and desire.—**Joseph J. Sastic, Sewell, New Jersey.**

I supervised in nursing homes for about twelve years, and I have found that although the nursing-home staff may be kind and compassionate, this can never take the place of love and concern and attention from family.—**Edna VanWagner, Hinsdale, Illinois.**

I am very moved by your story. "Gray is beautiful," and there is one thing more beautiful; that is a smile from the people whose hair is gray.—**Debbie Russell, Knobel, Arkansas.**

When I finished reading your article by David Neff, I was in tears. My father is eighty-six and the apple of my eye. I can't bear the day I won't have him to visit, take out to dinner, be my friend and confidant. Thank God I still have him to love and can do things for him which he enjoys.—**Mrs. Carl R. Jones, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.**

If this article can't touch someone's soul, nothing can.—**Mrs. Daniel Messner, Lutz, Florida.**

The editors wish to thank all our readers who responded to this article. We enjoyed reading every letter and only wish we could have included more than the sampling above. The regular "Letters" column will return in the next issue. Please address your correspondence for this column to Letters, THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, TN 37202.

Statistics about the elderly:

- In 1975, 10% of the U.S. population was 65 or older.
- By 1990, 15% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2000, 20% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2010, 25% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2020, 30% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2030, 35% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2040, 40% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2050, 45% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2060, 50% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2070, 55% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2080, 60% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2090, 65% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.
- By 2100, 70% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older.



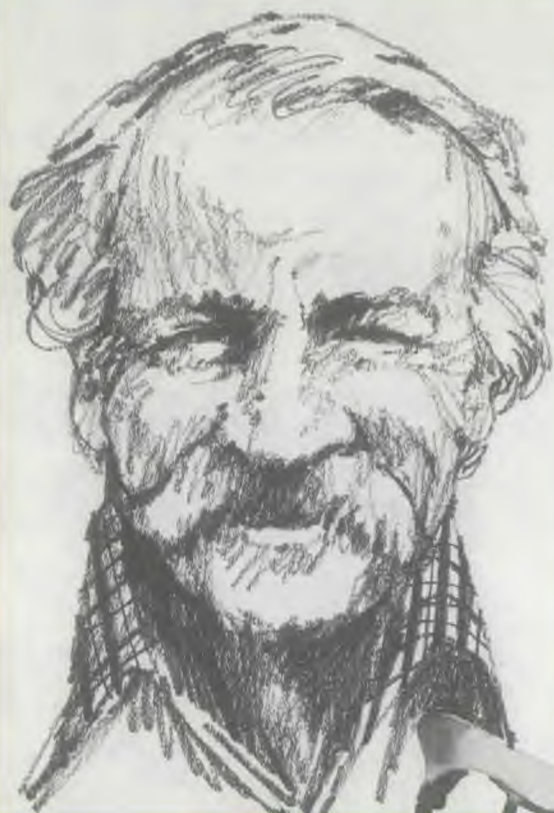
Older people (just their children and grandchildren) is the top of the list of culture giving, those who are great in life.



Public order rules on the side of the law. They are not only with today and tomorrow, but also with the past. You no longer have a choice.

What is your reaction to this article?

Wanted: Retirees for useful volunteer work



DS

Along with a sixty-fifth birthday comes mandatory retirement. Does this mean the retiree has nothing left to offer for mankind? Certainly not! This article hopefully will help many in the sixty-five-plus group to put their talents back to work helping others.

WHAT DO you do?" That's the question you are asked most often when you meet someone new. Your answer helps identify you, tells the other person how you spend a big hunk of your time, maybe establishes some common interest.

The newly retired person often finds it a painful question. Even those who are thoroughly enjoying sleeping late and living an unscheduled life don't like to keep answering "Nothing" or "I'm retired." Maybe that's partly why a great many retired people do volunteer work. A recent Louis Harris poll revealed there are 4,500,000 older people now engaged in volunteer activities in the United States and another 2,000,000 who say they'd like to be volunteers.

Don't think that volunteer jobs for retirees are limited to envelope-stuffing or telephone-canvassing. Volunteer work can be more exciting and interesting than the work you did before you retired. For example, senior volunteers help scientists on research expeditions to exotic and often rugged locations. They present slide shows and lectures for museums and art galleries, lead tours for zoos and state tourist bureaus, assist teachers in public school classrooms. They help run cultural arts productions, conduct consumer and ecology research and activist projects, serve as probation aides and counselors for prison inmates, hold story hours for youngsters at local libraries, serve patients in hospitals.

Many retirees acting on their own have seen a special need and organized their own group of volunteer workers to fill it. But it is usually an existing organization that gets a volunteer project going by lining up jobs that need doing, finding people to do them, raising necessary funds and keeping the operation on track.

If you're interested in volunteer work, there are hundreds of offices across the country that will steer you to jobs. The quickest way to get into volunteer work is to check with an agency that coordinates these programs. Here's a rundown of leading agencies, the kinds of volunteer jobs

they have and how you can get in touch with them.

National Center for Voluntary Action.

The purpose of this national organization is to help individuals and organizations with volunteer projects. It serves as a clearinghouse of information and training materials for local Voluntary Action Centers or Volunteer Bureaus in 300 cities and for associated contact groups, such as local community fund offices, in nearly 1,000 others. These local offices keep tabs on which organizations and institutions need what jobs done and can match you with a volunteer job that suits your talents and interests. Some will train you for specific jobs. Look in your phone book for "Voluntary Action Center" or "Volunteer Bureau." If none are listed that way, write to Volunteer, Washington, D.C. 20013, for information on programs in your area. If you want advice on how to start a volunteer program yourself, write to the National Center for Voluntary Action, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

ACTION. This government agency administers the following federally supported programs that need volunteer seniors.

► **Peace Corps.** Now in its second decade, it sends volunteers to work on two-year social and economic development projects in developing nations around the world. About 6% of Peace Corps volunteers are retirees. Costs of basic needs, such as food and shelter, plus transportation overseas are provided.

► **VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America).** A sort of domestic Peace Corps, VISTA dispatches volunteers to disadvantaged areas, usually in their own communities, to work in self-help antipoverty projects. Volunteers receive a living allowance during their tour of duty; about 10% are retirees.

► **RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program).** This is a coalition of hundreds of different service programs. Volunteer seniors usually work in community group projects, providing many kinds of services for

people of all ages, including telephone reassurance and meals-on-wheels for shut-ins and serving as teacher aides. Out-of-pocket expenses for things like car fare often are covered.

► **Foster Grandparents.** Volunteers age 60 and older who meet certain low-income requirements can participate in this nationwide program, which pays nominal stipends. They work five days a week, offering companionship and guidance to emotionally, mentally or physically handicapped children.

► **Senior Companion Program.** Also for low-income seniors only, volunteers in this program give aid and companionship to other adults, especially the elderly and shut-in. A small stipend, transportation and other benefits are provided.

► **Program for Local Service.** This is a program for volunteers of all ages who live and work full-time with the people they serve in antipoverty projects in their own communities. Volunteers receive a living allowance and insurance coverage.

You can get particulars about these ACTION programs or be referred to a local contact agency program by writing to ACTION, Older Americans Volunteer Programs, Washington, D.C. 20525. Or call ACTION's Washington headquarters toll-free at 800 424-8580 or a Federal Information Center if one is listed in your phone book.

SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). Administered by the Small Business Administration, SCORE dispatches qualified retired business men and women as free consultants to starting or ailing small businesses. SCORE volunteers operate through SBA field and regional offices and often work in league with business student volunteers and paid professional consultants. Out-of-pocket expenses on assignments are sometimes covered. You can get more information from one of the 90 SBA field offices or a Federal Information Center, or write to SCORE, Small Business Administration, 1441 L St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20416.

What some volunteers do

● Harold C. Larsson, a retired New Jersey executive of Chemco Photo Products, served as an International Executive Service Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone in West Africa. He helped train technicians and assemble equipment for the expansion of a native printing firm in Freetown. As a result, the firm was able to handle a contract to produce a 1975 calendar for Barclays Bank that featured a reproduction of an old painting of the community. "The local branch of the bank wanted the calendar printed in Sierra Leone rather than in England," reported Larsson. "They were so pleased with the results that they tripled their order, for distribution to other countries." Before he returned to the U.S., Mr. Larsson was personally thanked for his efforts by the president of Sierra Leone.

● A school board in Kentucky uses the talents and experience of senior citizen volunteers to conduct enrichment courses in the high schools and provide specialized tutoring for students referred to the program by their teachers.

● Mrs. Elfreda Brandt, 81, is a Foster Grandparent in Indiana. She spends her mornings at a children's home and her afternoons at a child-care center with foster grandchildren assigned to her. "The love a child has for you is what keeps you going," she said. "It bolsters you up. It keeps you young."

● Mrs. Hattie Esserman Rives, 73, who at age 14 played piano accompaniment for Keystone Cops movies in a Rome, Ga., movie house, is a Foster

Grandparent at a Georgia retardation center. One of her favorite duties is playing ragtime music for the children at the center. "This is my whole life," said Mrs. Rives.

● A number of RSVP retirees work at an aerospace museum in California, restoring old aircraft, cataloging a rare collection of aeronautical books and photographs, and making parts that are no longer available. They are so enthusiastic about their volunteer work that most put in full five-day workweeks.

● Mr. and Mrs. Alford, both nearing 70, left their home and joined the Peace Corps. During their tour in Belize (British Honduras) they helped the local people develop a farm co-op, introduced chicken to their diet, helped make chick production a mainstay of the local economy and an export commodity, and started the first 4-H Club in the country. Said Bea Alford, "The idea of traveling and doing something good for someone at the same time really appealed to us. We knew we'd be roughing it and there would be discomforts, but we figured we could adjust. We've been working all our lives for our children and they were raised. We couldn't see going to work collecting material things, so we decided to collect experiences instead by living in another culture."

● In a joint project of a local public library and a government-sponsored program, a group of retiree volunteers in Texas helped accumulate a taped record of the experiences of senior citizens living in their community.

International Executive Service Corps. This is a nonprofit organization that sends volunteer business men and women, most of them retired, on business advisory assignments in developing nations. Assignments usually last from two to three months, and travel and living expenses of volunteers and their spouses are covered. IESC averages 700 to 750 assignments annually in scores of countries from Latin America to the Middle East and South Asia. For more information, write to IESC at 622 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Educational Expeditions International. Another nonprofit organization, EEI funds scientific expeditions by matching interested volunteers of any age who have the

financial wherewithal with research projects in need of funding and volunteer manpower. Expeditions range from archeological digs to underwater explorations.

Here's how the plan works: Each year EEI compiles a list of expeditions it will support and indicates a per-person price tag for each one. You can select one you want to participate in by accompanying the expedition scientists and helping them with the fieldwork. The cost to volunteer assistants runs from about \$500 to \$1,000 plus transportation to the site and back. This money covers not only your food, shelter and local transportation but helps meet the costs of mounting the expedition and the expenses of the scientists. For more

information, write to EEI at 68 Leonard St., Belmont, Mass. 02178.

Other places to check. Churches, health and welfare agencies, service and civic clubs, hospitals and nursing homes, unions, a senior citizens group, such as the American Association of Retired Persons, all are good sources of leads to volunteer jobs. And if you've always harbored a wish to lend your time and talents to a public institution but it doesn't have a call out for volunteers, get in touch anyway and offer your services. You just might wind up initiating yet another project for volunteer retirees. 🍷

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Trial of Jesus

Did Jesus receive a fair trial? Did He commit criminal acts worthy of a capital offense? by William A. Herin

Part 1

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THEY ACCUSED Him of playing God. Forget that history has passed judgment on His trial and condemnation. Hear the arguments of counsel, the testimony of witnesses, His defense, the decision of judges, as if the case is on appeal. You are the judge. You will decide it.

Review the facts, not to resurrect hatred but to bury it, for in His defense and in His appeal to the Supreme Judge of the universe, Jesus spoke words of love, of forgiveness, of healing. The religious intolerance of His accusers, the servility of the judges, the violations of legal proceedings—these speak lessons sorely needed to be relearned in this day of man's inhumanity to man.

As He walks into the courtroom of your conscience you see a man of above-average height, brown eyes set beneath

expressive brows, a sturdy aquiline nose, firm lips compressed above a well-trimmed beard. His erect bearing—untainted with arrogance—and the clear, level gaze speak of royal blood.

Charged with blasphemy. He is charged with playing God—a sin under Jewish law but no crime under the civil code of the occupying Romans. You recall the evidences of His deity: the prophecies of the centuries fulfilled in His life and mission; His ministry—proof, He said, that the Father Himself loves mankind; the miracles of grace and healing. You hear Him as a twelve-year-old telling His parents that He must be about His Father's business; with the Samaritan woman at the well you wonder at the "living water," of which one may drink and "never thirst again"; as her accusers slink away, you look with Him at the woman caught in adultery and hear His gentle words "I do not condemn you either. Go, but do not sin again" (John 8:11).*

* Bible texts quoted are from Today's English Version of the New Testament. Copyright, American Bible Society, 1966, 1971.

But always there are His accusers, members of the threatened Establishment, sly men skilled in casuistry, seeking to trap Him with subtly constructed questions. And always there is the cloud over His tomorrows: "The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death" (Matthew 20:18).

What was His crime to warrant the death penalty? What legal protections sheltered Him? Did Roman and Jewish law include a Fifth Amendment, the right of appeal, confrontation with witnesses?

You are the judge. Here is the case for your review. (The author is indebted to the late George W. Thompson, onetime Professor of Law at the University of Florida, for his research on this subject. Reference is made to his book *The Trial of Jesus* [Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1927].)

Tried under Jewish law. Accustomed as we are to take pride in the protection that our Anglo-American law throws around a person accused of crime, we may be surprised to learn how solicitous the Jewish

William A. Herin is senior circuit judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. Judge Herin completed his legal training at the University of Florida in 1933. He is a member of the United States Supreme Court Bar and the Miami, Florida, Bar.

law was for human life. Under its provision there could be no conviction for a capital offense on the testimony of less than two witnesses. One witness was the same as none. The accused had the right to employ counsel or have counsel appointed to defend him. He could not be required to testify against himself. Even his voluntary confession was not competent for conviction. Circumstantial evidence was not admissible. The accused was presumed innocent until tried and convicted.

The accused in a capital case was required to be tried in public, and no evidence could be produced in his absence. No capital case could be tried at night, on a Friday, on the Sabbath, or on a feast day; and no sentence could be carried out at these times. Sentence on a verdict of guilty could not be pronounced until the third day after the verdict, and then only after a second vote with the same result.

All witnesses were admonished to remember the value of human life and to take care that they should forget nothing that would tell in the prisoner's favor. In order to add greater certainty to their testimony, all witnesses against the accused were required in case of conviction of a capital offense to take an active part in inflicting the death penalty; and a witness testifying falsely was subject to the same penalty as the accused. Witnesses against the accused were the only prosecutors and the only executioners.

The first object of the entire proceeding appeared to be to save the accused. It was an axiom that the function of the court was to save and not destroy human life.

The Jewish supreme court was the Great Sanhedrin, whose origin was ascribed to Moses. Jesus was tried and convicted by this court, which had, among other things, original jurisdiction of crimes punishable by death. This court of seventy was called Grand Council, Council of Ancients, Great Synagogue, or, in Greek, Great Sanhedrin. It had two presiding officers, who alternated, and was made up of three chambers: a religious chamber (23 priests), a law chamber (23 scribes), a popular chamber (23 elders). Jesus referred to this court when He said to His disciples, "I must go to Jerusalem

A unanimous verdict of guilty indicated a conspiracy against the accused—that the verdict resulted from insufficient deliberation and a lack of proper defense. Such a verdict should have meant an acquittal.

and suffer much from the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. I will be put to death' " (Matthew 16:21).

Extreme care was used in the selection of the personnel of this great court. No man interested in the result of the trial could sit as judge. All members had to be Hebrews versed in the law and familiar with the language of the surrounding nations, although not necessarily rabbis or learned doctors of the law. All sessions were held in Jerusalem; it was a violation of the law to meet elsewhere. Twenty-three members composed a quorum in criminal cases. Members could not act as accusers or prosecutors, but they were required to protect and defend the accused. Serving as both judges and jurors, they had the sole duty of determining the question of guilt or innocence according to the law and the evidence.

The procedure of trial was somewhat similar to ours. Following the hearing, a summary of the evidence was given by one of the judges, whereupon all spectators were removed from the courtroom and the judges proceeded to ballot. Two scribes tabulated the votes, one for acquittal and the other for conviction. For conviction, a majority of two or more of the quorum of twenty-three was required; and if any of the members desired additional evidence before voting, the number of judges was increased by adding an equal number of priests, scribes, and elders until the full council of seventy was reached.

If a majority of the court as then constituted voted for acquittal, the accused was set at liberty; but if a majority voted for conviction, no announcement of their determination could be made at that time.

At least one day had to intervene between the vote of conviction and the pronouncement of the verdict of guilty and the sentence. During this interval the judges could not be occupied with any matter that would divert their minds from the case. After the morning sacrifice not later than the third day following the vote, the court returned to the judgment hall and proceeded to take another vote. A judge who voted originally to condemn might now change his vote to one of acquittal. One who voted for acquittal at the first hearing, however, was not permitted to change his vote.

Court's duty. It was the duty of the court to defend the accused, and a verdict of guilty without some member of the court having interposed a defense was invalid. Therefore, contrary to our law, a unanimous verdict of guilty indicated that there was a conspiracy against the accused, that he had no defender, and that the verdict was reached without mature deliberation. Such a verdict had the effect of an acquittal. The court was bound to protect the accused from insult or injury, and indignities committed against him subjected the tormentors to the same punishment as if directed against any innocent citizen.

It will be recalled that Israel was not a democracy, with church and state separated, but a theocracy, with church and state united. Those in authority, believing that Jesus would assert His claim to be the Messiah and attempt to usurp their power, used every means to discredit Him, finally arresting and accusing Him without any legal authority.

Jesus was bound and taken into the judgment hall of the high priest. The chief priests, elders, and scribes had waited all night, anticipating the illegal arrest following the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. It is believed that the quorum was made up chiefly of the priestly clique, whose hypocrisy Jesus had publicly denounced. Certainly all of the quorum were conspirators in a plot to put Jesus to death and therefore disqualified to sit as judges. If

not, why were they holding this session shortly after midnight and on a feast day, in violation of law?

Under the law, the first step was the arraignment of the prisoner—the reading of the charges in open court by an official corresponding to our clerk. The record is silent as to any lawful accusation on which it might have been based. Instead, the record says that the court “tried to find some false evidence against Jesus, to put him to death; but they could not find any, even though many came up and told lies about him” (Matthew 26:59, 60). Perjurors in the crowd who sought the death of Jesus were unwilling to risk the dire consequences of a false accusation—death for the accuser himself.

Two witnesses. “Finally two men stepped forward”; “but their stories did not agree” (Matthew 26:60; Mark 14:56). One stated that Jesus said, “ ‘I am able to tear down God’s temple and three days later build it back up’ ” (Matthew 26:61). The other swore that He said, “ ‘I will tear down this temple’ ” (Mark 14:58). On this the “prosecution” rested. What Jesus did say, referring to the temple of His body and not the Jewish Temple, was “ ‘Tear down this house of God and in three days I will build it again’ ” (John 2:19).

The witnesses not being in accord on the charge, Jesus was entitled to an acquittal, without being questioned as to His defense or compelled to testify against Himself.

The high priest called upon Jesus to make His defense. “The High Priest stood up in front of them all and questioned Jesus, ‘Have you no answer to the accusation they bring against you?’ ” (Mark 14:60). Jesus made no response.

Judge becomes accuser. Instead of defending the accused, as required by law, the high priest himself became an accuser on a different charge, in violation of all law. He sprang to his feet, shouting, “ ‘In the name of the living God, I now put you on oath: tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God’ ” (Matthew 26:63). Jesus, though He could have remained silent, chose to speak: “ ‘If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I ask you a question you will not answer’ ” (Luke 22:67, 68). This excited the whole assembly, which cried

By law, one who falsely accused another could suffer the same fate intended for the accused. This rule undoubtedly made it difficult to find credible witnesses against Jesus.

out, “ ‘Are you, then, the Son of God?’ ”

Courageously Jesus signed His death warrant with the words, “ ‘So you say’ ” (Matthew 26:64). Though under Jewish law Jesus could not lawfully be convicted of a capital offense on His voluntary “confession” alone, the high priest announced the judgment of “conviction”: “ ‘Blasphemy! We don’t need any more witnesses!’ ” (verse 65). Seeing the high priest rend asunder his judicial robe in token of his horror of blasphemy, the crowd knew that Jesus had been found guilty, and they shouted, “ ‘He is guilty, and must die’ ” (verse 66). There was no longer fear of a public uprising, for the mob, who had acclaimed Jesus with “hosannas” only a few days before, had been turned against Him.

This first hearing before the Sanhedrin concluded about three o’clock on Friday morning. The court adjourned only until daybreak, although the law required that one full day intervene before the second hearing. No lawful sentence of death could be pronounced until the second hearing, with the result of the second vote the same as the first.

Pending the second hearing, Jesus was, in the eyes of the law, presumed innocent; the court might still acquit Him. Although entitled to safeguards about His person, He was nevertheless subjected to violence and insults at the hands of the crowd in the courtyard. Later, in the guardhouse, He was struck with rods and fists. Members of the Sanhedrin were present, but they made no move to stop these outrages

against the Jewish law and against the Man not yet legally sentenced.

At the second hearing, following the morning sacrifice on Friday morning, at about six o’clock, Jesus was dragged into the hall of the Temple, where the judges were assembled for the final hearing. “When day came, the elders of the Jews, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law met together, and Jesus was brought to their Council” (Luke 22:66). The session was perfunctory. No witnesses were called. Again the law was violated by requiring Jesus to testify in answer to the question, “ ‘Are you, then, the Son of God?’ ”

He replied, “ ‘You say that I am’ ” (verse 70). “ ‘But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Almighty, and coming on the clouds of heaven!’ ” (Matthew 26:64). The whole assembly shouted, “ ‘We don’t need any witnesses! We ourselves have heard his very own words!’ ” (Luke 22:71).

The votes of the judges were registered and final judgment was rendered without removing the mob of spectators, although the law required that the chamber be cleared. More brutality followed—even at the hands of some of the court members. The record recites, “ ‘They all voted against him’ ” (Mark 14:64). Since no judge defended the accused, as required by Jewish law, the unanimous verdict was invalid as evidence of a conspiracy.

Under Jewish law, death by stoning would have been the sentence imposed. The Roman army of occupation, however, alone had power to pronounce the death sentence. The Sanhedrin merely had authority to make an accusation before the Roman magistrate, who had the sole power to determine the matter. Having destroyed the reputation of Jesus and turned popular indignation against Him, “early in the morning the chief priests met hurriedly with the elders, the teachers of the Law, and the whole Council, and made their plans. They put Jesus in chains, took him away, and handed him over to Pilate” (Mark 15:1).

(To be concluded next month)

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Sure! Some non-Christians appear happy on the outside. But a follower of Christ has reasons for joy, happiness, and peace that a nonbeliever could never hope to equal.



Let's make

JOHAN HAD BEEN RAISED in a Christian family, but now that he was finishing high school, he was no longer sure his father's religion was for him.

"I believe in Christianity," he assured me one day. "And when I'm forty I'll be the best Christian you've ever met."

His eyes narrowed. "But I don't want to be a Christian unless I can do it right," he said. "Besides, right now that would mean giving up everything I really enjoy."

John's idea of Christianity is shared by a lot of people. The good Christian, they think, sits aloof on his holy mountain far above the tainted atmosphere of the world below. He neither eats (much), drinks (except pure water), nor is merry (ever).

Pity the ignorant Christian, says the laughing worldling. Hairshirts and eunuchs, Puritans and Victorians, have all passed away. Christianity is a relic of the past.

Good-bye, Mother Church, we won't miss you! Without you we've found the real joys of living. Excitement, beauty, sex, harmony, taste. Good friends, good food, good times! Now that God is obsolete, we can rediscover the physical world!

And more and more, fun-loving Christians slide off the Mountain of Mortification into the Voluptuous Valley below, never dreaming that both are wicked perversions of God's intentions for this world.

The apostle John, writing to the Christians of his day, says he sends his message so their "joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

David, greatest king of Israel, tells his people to "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

Paul, evangelist of the early Christian church, advises, "Rejoice in the Lord

always" (Philippians 4:4).

And Jesus Himself tells us, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Is Christianity a drag? Where do we get the idea that Christianity and painful deprivation go hand in hand? The process began six thousand years ago in a perfect world with two perfect people in it.

Eden was Paradise, bliss, the Garden of delights. When Adam planted a seed it grew into a beautiful tree with no worms, bugs, or snails to chew up its leaves and fruit. When Eve arranged her home she had no worries about insulation or double-bolt locks. Best of all, Adam and Eve loved each other and found nothing but joy in each other's presence. No fights, no hurt feelings, no nursed grudges, not even lonesome times of separation.

"God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). And it was beautiful too. God could have made everything clay-brown. He could have used only straight lines and sharp angles in His design. He could have devised tasteless nutrition and asexual reproduction. But God is a God of joy and pleasure.

And because God wanted His people to be happy forever, He gave Adam and Eve a warning. "There's a devil loose in this garden," He said, "and he would like to wreck your happiness and make you miserable. But I've confined him to the area around one particular tree—that one over there. You stay away from that tree, and you'll never have a thing to worry about."

Adam and Eve thought they knew more than God about how to enjoy life. Perhaps the forbidden fruit looked a little riper and juicier than all the hundreds of other fruits that God wanted them to eat. Regardless, Eve finally decided that God was withholding something from them that would improve their present state of

existence. And Adam joined with her in disobedience for reasons of his own.

Because of their willingness to believe Satan instead of God, the devil acquainted mankind with his idea of a good time: thorns and thistles, pain and sickness, infertile soil and marauding pests; all of which would culminate in death—spilled blood, rigid corpses, grieving survivors—something the universe had never before seen.

"Look at this mess," Satan gloated.

"Obviously God wants you to be miserable." And men continued to divorce the God of happiness from the once-perfect world He had created.

Then God tried again. He sent His Son to our miserable world and through Him brought hope and peace to thousands. Jesus healed "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). He raised the dead son of an indigent widow and the dead brother of his friends Mary and Martha. He passed out food to hungry crowds. He quieted storms for terrified sailors. He gathered children about Him and told them stories. All in order to show the world that God earnestly wants them to be happy.

Yet, ironically, the mood of the world had changed. For many years people had lived with the devastating effects of sin, and now they could see no farther. Sin had always existed and would always exist, as far as they were concerned, and anyone who enjoyed life was suspect. They accused Jesus of being a glutton and a winebibber—we might say a pig and a drunkard—and of keeping company with society outcasts. And the one Person who could have led them out of their misery into a restored Eden was instead led out of their city to a splintery cross.

Friday afternoon Jesus died. But early Sunday morning He rose again—not as a shadowy, ghostly figure but as a real flesh-and-blood man. He took pains to

LaVonne Neff is a pastor's wife and free-lance writer living in Walla Walla, Washington.

by LaVonne Neff

a joyful noise



emphasize His humanity to His followers. He encouraged Thomas to touch His wounded side. He ate with His disciples. And one morning, feeling sorry for several of His friends who had fished all night, Jesus barbecued fish for their breakfast.

Yet within only a few years of Jesus' death and resurrection, so-called Christian teachers began telling people that Jesus could not have been truly human or He would have been corrupted, since the physical world is evil. Further, anyone wishing to be holy would abstain from food regularly, avoid sexual intercourse, endure physical torture.

Were these teachers following an accused glutton and winebibber? The Creator of the world who made all things good? The Redeemer who came that all good things might be restored? The Messiah who "was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7), who enjoyed the simple pleasures of family and friends and a midnight sailboat ride across the Sea of Galilee?

Paul warned the Christian communities against such false teachers. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving," he told Timothy (1 Timothy 4:4). Away with teachers who forbid marriage and demand fasts in the name of Christianity!

John warned against them too. "Many deceivers are entered into the world," he wrote, "who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7).

But many of the early Christians didn't listen. Giving up things they needed seemed so much easier than following in the footsteps of the Master.

Introduction of celibacy. Before many centuries went by, celibacy—living unmarried and supposedly with no form of sexual release—was considered advisable, if not prerequisite, for the highest church offices. Provision was still

made for marriage, but only for the common people. The folks who had really arrived simply didn't need it.

Seeking to escape the Voluptuous Valley, men and women fled to the deserts and the mountains and lived in solitude. The more they denied themselves, they reasoned, the purer they would become. Some went for twenty, thirty, and forty years without ever speaking a word to another person. Some beat themselves with whips, trying to destroy bodily desires. Most subsisted on infrequent, scanty meals. Many tried to do without sleep, allowing themselves only two hours of sleep out of every twenty-four.

To be sure, the ascetic regime wasn't for everybody. Most Christians lived rather normal lives—eating, drinking, making love, raising families, doing business. But always flowed the undercurrent of belief—if I were really pure, I wouldn't enjoy this so much.

A few men and women left large families behind so they could devote their remaining days to mortifying the flesh, to atoning for the enjoyment life had already brought them. The soul is good, but the body is evil, they believed. The spiritual is heavenly, but the physical should be destroyed. Many people assume this is a fundamental Christian belief. It is not. It is a diabolical belief, an invention of the devil, a true proverb from hell, that has taken root and dominated almost every society *except* the true Christian group!

Influences from Eastern religions. Today many Westerners are enchanted with Eastern philosophy, metaphysics, and religion. Hare Krishna converts, with their flowing robes and bizarre hairstyles, distribute literature in public places. They preach love, universal understanding, peace—but they also preach that the soul must be separated from the body, that physical desires are to be outgrown, that true peace comes in the absence of all desire. It's the common thread of most

Eastern religion.

Of course, during the Dark Ages most people were not monks, and today most are not imbued with Krishna consciousness. Most, in fact, have thrown out religion altogether. Secularists are again discovering that matter is not evil. The physical world is beautiful, delightful, enjoyable. "We're happy, healthy, alive," sing the new hedonists. "Look at you Christians, still tormented by guilt, still trying to outdo one another in avoiding evil. We have outgrown our need for religion."

The new hedonists have grown beyond a popular caricature of religion. But they are not beyond Christianity. In fact, they are so far behind real joy, real pleasure, real sensual awareness, that they don't begin to suspect the truth—that apart from genuine Christianity, there is no real or lasting happiness on this earth!

Wait a minute, you say. I know that Mr. A is happy, and he's never set foot in a church in his life. And I've never seen anybody so well-adjusted as Mrs. B. She used to be a Christian but dropped out. And of course you know C, relentlessly cheerful. His only religion is water-skiing.

Unsurpassed joy. Yes. Many non-Christians seem happy, even happier than some Christians. But a follower of Christ has reasons for joy that a non-Christian can never dream of, nor hope to equal.

First, he knows that God created this world and called it good. No matter what the popular opinion of the moment may be, the Christian is not swayed. He knows that the physical world was given him for enjoyment. When he sees a display of natural beauty, whether it's a glorious sunrise or the twitching whiskers of a tiny deer mouse peeking out from behind a leaf, the Christian knows whom to thank.

Second, the Christian knows that God created him for a purpose. He is no

Man searches for happiness

Like Ponce De León's search for the elusive Fountain of Youth, men and women today pursue happiness for years and never really find it—because they fail to explore the right place.

Some people try to find happiness by surrounding themselves with loving family members. A loving family is a gift of God, but what will these people do if their relatives die, move away, or turn against them?

Some try to find happiness by working hard at a fulfilling job. It is wonderful to use one's gifts effectively, but what will these people do if they are fired, or if a colleague does consistently better work, or if they lose respect for their employers?

Some try to find happiness by collecting money. Money is necessary to any kind of life, but what will the hoarders do when the stockmarket crashes or inflation eats away their savings or a fire destroys their possessions?

random accident, no spontaneous arrangement of molecules, no momentary phenomenon hurtling through the universe on its way to destruction. The Christian cannot share a popular author's bewilderment: "I've been honestly puzzled, at times, trying to decide whether I had any function at all in nature, other than as one of the ambulatory creatures to which burrs cling, thus enabling certain weeds to get their seeds distributed" (Vance Bourjaily, *Country Matters*, New York: Dial Press, 1973, p. 4). He knows that he was created in God's image, to increase God's joy, to add another island of happiness to a harmonious, God-loving universe.

Many Christians who thank God for creating the world and for putting them in it continue to observe the Biblical Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. During creation week God rested from His labors and commanded man to do likewise. The Sabbath-keeping Christian, with his weekly reminder of God's creative love, has an added aid to enjoying God's physical world.

Third, the Christian knows that since he is made in God's image, he is called to creativity. Whatever his gift—design, painting, music, literature, engineering, running a household, gardening—he treasures it as a gift of God, as something he can share with God and use for Him. A Christian cannot say, "My gift is my own; I'll use it as I please." He is obligated by the Giver to use it to make the world a happier place. Christian creativity sends out waves of beauty and happiness that affect all of us, if we believe the gospel or

even if we've never heard of it.

Fourth, the Christian knows that the future is in God's hands. What does this have to do with joy? Just this—it gives him peace at the very center of his soul that sees him through all kinds of situations. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound," writes Paul, "for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:12, 11).

Happiness in Christ. Almost everyone tries to find happiness in one way or another. This is normal and right. But only the Christian, who finds his greatest happiness in Christ, has a place to turn when the rest of the world falls apart.

Christian contentedness in no way resembles the Nirvana of Eastern religions. It is not even distantly related to "absence of desire." It is rather based on one intense, consuming, passionate desire—the fulfillment of our Lord's words when He said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

The Edenic world of beauty will one day be restored, and all those who truly love Jesus will be resurrected to enjoy it. Again nature will be perfect, free from decay, and uniformly beautiful. Again the wild creatures will be friendly, and human beings will live together in honesty, openness, and love for one another.

Christians long for this new land so strongly that, if necessary, they will happily give up present satisfactions to hasten its coming. That is why so few Christians are rich. Not because they think money is evil, but because they are busy sharing it so other people can live

happy lives. That is why Christians guard their appetites and stay away from habits that endanger health. Not because their bodies are evil and must be punished, but because they value their bodies so highly that they want to keep them in top running condition. In fact, that is why Christians will give up anything if necessary to help somebody else, but never for the sake of giving up alone.

There's one more reason that Christians are happier than non-Christians. A non-Christian may study ways to be happy. He may, like Solomon, admit, "I kept my heart from no pleasure" (Ecclesiastes 2:10, RSV), yet come to the conclusion that "all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (verse 11, RSV). You see, God created the world with happiness in mind. He also made the rules, that is, He explained what man should do in order to find happiness. Man has spent the next six thousand years trying to improve on the rules. And from Adam to Hefner, nobody's been able to do it.

John, the high school senior who didn't want to give up the best things of life, eventually tasted the ashes and decided to try religion again. But he turned to the Mountain of Mortification, not to the living "God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3). The air is rare on that ascetic peak, and it wasn't long until John plummeted back into the Voluptuous Valley, still plaintively wondering, "What's it all about?"

It's about rejoicing, John. It's about giving thanks; gladness; singing; thanksgiving; praise; blessing.

You can read about it in the hundredth Psalm or the first chapter of Genesis or the last two chapters of Revelation or the first thirteen verses of Philippians 4 or the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah or . . . For that matter, that's what the whole Bible's about.

Don't listen to the poker faces, John, or to the pleasure-seekers. Neither group knows where "it's at." Come to Jesus, the One anointed by God to give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3).

Find happiness, John.



Joe Namath does it. The Beatles, Mia Farrow, Ted Simmons, Bill Walton, Clint Eastwood, swear by it. Over 600,000 Americans practice the ritual "almost religiously twice a day and every day." What is it? Critics call TM (Transcendental Meditation) the "McDonald's of Meditations."

According to *Time* magazine for October 13, 1975: "TM is the turn-on of the '70s—a drugless high that even the narc squad might enjoy. All it demands of its practitioners is that they sit still for twenty minutes each morning and evening and silently repeat, over and over again, their specially assigned Sanskrit word or mantra. This simple exercise is the cure-all, its adherents claim, for almost everything from high blood pressure and lack of energy to alcoholism and poor sexual performance. 'I use it the way I'd use a product of our technology to overcome nervous tension,' says Stanford Law Professor John Kaplan. 'It's a nonchemical tranquilizer with no unpleasant side effects.'

"That recommendation alone is enough for many people in this Valium-saturated age, and the TM organization can scarcely keep up with those seeking nirvana by the numbers. Some 30,000 are signing up every month—more than three times as many as a year ago. There are now 370 TM centers around the country, and around 6,000 TM teachers."

Most Christians will agree that we need to take time for meditation. A colleague of mine once said, "Meditation is the better part of prayer, for in prayer we talk to God, but in meditation we commune with Him." Those who have accomplished anything for time and eternity have been individuals who took time to be holy. John Wesley said he did not have time to be in a hurry. Pascal remarked, "One half of the ills of life come because men are unwilling to sit down quietly for thirty minutes to think through all the possible consequences of their acts." The saintly Robert Murray McChesney declared, "A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man."

The question, therefore, is this: Is TM an acceptable form of meditation? Is it harmful? Is it Biblical? Can TM provide a fundamental healing of the spiritual sickness of man? Is TM a religion? Is India's Maharishi Mahesh Yogi its God? What about demonic effects in devotees?

Although many Christians feel that TM is harmless, others believe that it is the wisdom of man at best; the devil's clever counterfeit, a perversion of truth, at worst; and that the potential problems loom larger than any promised benefits. What is the truth about transcendental meditation?

THESE TIMES, as always, attempts to provide Biblical solutions to problems that confront people today. Ken McFarland, a bright young minister-writer, attended two introductory TM sessions, did considerable research, and has come up with a significant article on the dangers in this mind-soothing yoga discipline called transcendental meditation.

All Ken asks is that you consider the facts. Why not turn to his article on page 2 right now?

Kenneth J. Holland

Presenting Jesus Christ
in all His fullness to all the world.

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to be the authoritative Word of God,
Satan to be our great adversary,
Jesus to be our all-sufficient Saviour,
and the coming Christ to be our only hope
as the world nears its cataclysmic end.

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Who cares?

In our search for acceptance we organize bridge clubs or join street gangs, protest groups, country clubs, service organizations, and even churches themselves—yet we remain unsatisfied. What is the answer? by John S. Oldfield

A STUDENT in a huge multiversity flunks out. Who cares? A white-collar worker in a towering office building goes bankrupt. Who cares? A punch-press operator in a sprawling factory dies in a rush-hour traffic accident. Who cares? A tenant in a modern high-rise apartment commits suicide. Who cares?

Depersonalization, estrangement, isolation, the lonely crowd—these are the terms that characterize our age. We play the role. We pretend that it doesn't matter. But inside we're alone, desperately alone.

We seek acceptance and identity in strange ways. We join street gangs, beatnik societies, bridge clubs, peace marches, protest groups, country clubs, service organizations, even churches. Yet we remain dissatisfied, unfulfilled, unloved.

Beneath our thin façade of sophistication we battle disconcerting doubts, haunting fears, and crippling anxieties. Silently we cry out for someone who will listen, who will understand, who will care. Many of us conclude with the Psalmist of old, "I look to the right and watch, but there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me, no man cares for me" (Psalm 142:4*).

Is there, then, anyone who cares? Is there perhaps someone beyond the world who cares? Is there even anybody out there? If there is, is it possible that

He, the great infinite God of the universe, is even *aware* of the individual member of the species *homo sapiens* on His microscopic planet Earth, let alone concerned?

Jesus Christ—who, confessedly, must be a liar, a lunatic, a legend, or the truth—once asked, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36, KJV). He plainly implies, in other words, that the soul of one man outvalues the combined worth of all the world's treasures.

He asked, moreover, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31). Not only is the God of the universe aware of us, He has numbered the hairs of our heads.

Jesus asked, finally, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' Even so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine [self-] righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:4-7).

To God, the individual matters, matters so much that He "gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:14, 15).

To become one of "His own" you must abandon the façade and admit you, too, are a lost sinner. You must repent of your sin, be willing to turn from it. You must ask Jesus Christ to become your Savior from sin. You must invite Him to become your Shepherd, and your Lord. You must ask Him to make you a child of the heavenly Father. You must believe that He will.

To deny God's ability or longing to meet your deepest needs is to deny the authority of His Son. It is to deny the unanimous testimony of His children down through the centuries.

To accept His offer of love is to find your hope for real peace and real assurance in this age of insecurity. To do so is to find authentic personal identity. It is to find a Friend who has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Who cares? God does. He sent His Son to die for you. He raised His Son to live in you. He brought this message to you.

"Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you" (1 Peter 5:7).

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* All Bible verses are quoted from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

John S. Oldfield writes for *The American Tract Society, Oradell, New Jersey.*