

by robert e. neale

the teller of tales

The story existed from the very beginning. The response of man was simply a telling of the story. It was told in dance and song, in poetry and art, in liturgy and philosophy. In the telling of it man discovered who he was, what he should do, and why he existed. The story brought order out of chaos and delight in life. Then

man began to question his telling of the story, seeking to know whether the story was true or false, whether one story was better than another, and even whether he himself was the creator of the story. It soon happened that the story was perverted by taking it literally or that it was dismissed as a mere fraud or sign of limited intelligence. Man no longer participated in the story. He argued about it rather than told it, and the order and delight of his existence was diminished. The ensuing discomfort led him to suspect that the loss of the story was not as advantageous as he had thought, and to seek recovery of that which he had discarded. He has not found this an easy task.

It has been common for the modern intellectual to state that a myth at its best is creative fiction, and at its worst sheer superstition. The universal understanding of myth, however, is precisely the opposite. At its very best, a myth is a matter of superstition in the classical Latin sense of the term—as a "witnessing" or "standing over." "Superstition" implies an experience of transcendence, and it is this peculiar awareness of the "beyond" which so infuriates the modern man. We prefer to hide from the mysteries of life by erecting a screen of philosophical, scientific and theological terminology, but that which is transcendent is and will remain a mystery. We must begin our examination of the nature of myth with the humble realization that it cannot be fully analyzed.

The Nature of Myth

A myth is a story, but not all stories are myths. The difference between myths and the plethora of fables, fairytales, legends, and "isms" which abound in ancient and modern cultures is not easily ascertained. The traditional response that it is myth alone which "deals with the action of gods or beings conceived as divine or possessed of divine attributes"¹ provides a definition and a means for classifying the stories of man. This objective approach, however, is quite useless for examining the current "isms" and the very primitive stories told over long periods of time in cultures where gods and divine beings were unknown. A more legitimate and fruitful approach is to seek to discover what the story means to the individual who tells it. Susanne K. Langer makes such an attempt in *Philosophy in a New Key*,² and in doing so illustrates the dangers faced in attempting to understand the primitive mind. For example, she asserts that the distinction between myth and fairytale lies in the fact that the former is oriented toward reality and that the latter is only a form of "wishful thinking."³ Unfortunately, many of her arguments concerning fairytales could be applied to myth also (as her authority,

S. Freud, knew full well). It seems likely that any story can be reality or wishfully oriented according to the way it is used by the teller. It is also important to note that while modern man who has greater stories, takes the fairytale very lightly, it does not follow that the primitive man who has only the fairytale will treat it with identical lightness. Contrary to what Miss Langer implies, no matter how small primitive man's stories appear to modern man, they would undoubtedly seem big and of mythical status to the primitive. So, to identify any particular story as a myth is nearly impossible unless one has access to the individual telling the story and the ability to understand him.

A definition of myth can be useful however—as long as it is not taken too seriously. What is significant about a myth is that it is **my** story and that it is my **whole** story, telling me who I am, what I should do, and why I exist. A more formal psychological definition may be cautiously suggested—not to be accepted as the "truth," but simply as a spur to thinking. **A myth is that story which is the product of the union of the images of the unconscious and the words of consciousness, being autonomous from and the precondition of all human activity.**

This definition assumes the necessary but somewhat artificial hypothesis that man possesses both consciousness and an unconscious. The distinguishing attributes of human consciousness are sociability and reason. Man's consciousness develops out of **contact** with its environment and its lifelong desire is to relate itself to the rest of existence. It is by means of reason, its ability to organize existence, that consciousness can standardize and sustain this relationship. The chief product and tool of the conscious state is the word: speech is basically a gesture to another person, and it is the reasonable grammar of speech which allows for meaningful conversation. The work of our philosophers and scientists attests to our highly developed usage of our unique consciousness. This, however, is not the whole of the matter; consciousness is only "part" of man.

The unconscious, even though it is asocial and illogical in its behavior, serves a crucial role in our lives. The unconscious is concerned about survival, and this refers not only to particular needs such as nourishment, reproduction, and protection against harm (all of which have been over-emphasized by modern psychology), but also to the organism's basic zest to live, to grow, and to enjoy existence. And as consciousness produces words, the unconscious creates images. These images may appear in man's dreams or during his meditations; but we rarely meet them, for they arise in their pure form only when the consciousness of man needs to be confronted with its limitations. When this happens, the image may be of a mineral, plant, animal, the heavens, or gigantesque men and women, but the feeling accompanying the image is always that of "awefulness" and "overpoweringness." The feeling of "holiness" that surrounds these products of the unconscious is seductive, and some have been persuaded to place a premium on this experience and become "mystics." The result tends to be a permanent retreat from existence which is in absolute opposition to the real intent of the unconscious.

Thus, neither the unconscious nor consciousness is sufficient in itself. Our current tendency to idolize the unconscious is as foolish as was our past worship of consciousness. It is only the complete union of these two "elements" that creates the whole man. By words alone, we may become creative philosophers or scientists. By images alone, we may become creative artists. Only by the transforming union of images and words may we discover a sacred story for creative living.

The full union of consciousness and the unconscious is the

prime experience of man, and the resulting story is both autonomous from and the precondition of all human activity. The autonomy of the sacred story implies that this story cannot be wilfully created, changed, or destroyed by the conscious "part" of man. Nor can it be successfully analyzed by that small portion of the individual we call "reason." If the sacred story is truly autonomous, it follows that the participant in it gains some measure of autonomy himself, rising above the demands of mind, emotion, and law.

That the sacred story is the precondition of all human activity implies two things. First, the participant in a myth becomes an **actor** in a divine drama. Myth is thus the prime source of full human **action**. Images or words alone prompt one to act, but do not provide the power or direction for such action in the face of brute existence. It is only a myth which may move man to act creatively in the world and sustain this movement. Secondly, the sacred story is the source and guide of all activity, of philosophy and science, for example, as well as of religion. Part of the problem of modern man lies in the fact that he tends to associate the story only with the realm of religion; and then, observing the current limitations of this all too human enterprise, he concludes that the story itself is meaningless. Fortunately, certain philosophers, scientists and statesmen are becoming aware of the role myth plays in "secular" realms. The "secular" responds to and serves a sacred story. The time when the religious response to myth can claim ultimacy is past, and the current balance of power between religion, philosophy, and science in this matter can more easily contribute to a better understanding of the "meaning" of myth.

Participation in Myth

The preceding discussion has at least one similarity to most others on the nature of myth—a pedantic acquiescence before the niceties of intellection. We seem to be like flies caught in honey. Because intellectualizing is sweet we do not want to give it up, and yet the more we become involved in it, the more we are confined and frustrated. The sacred story cannot be contained by our clever categories, our remarks hold it no more than a paper bag holds the wind. The only way to "define" a myth is to step into it, act out its drama, join in its utter disregard for the things we usually "take seriously." By this means we may avoid the dilemma of Ouroboros, the sick serpent who sought sustenance from his own tail.

The return to participation in the sacred story requires a discipline which could be described most adequately by one who was fully acquainted with the dynamics of current psychological therapy, the traditional disciplines of the Christian Church, and the vast storehouse of practical experience contained in oriental literature. Such an informed scholar has not yet appeared to accept the challenge. But the preceding discussion has implications on this matter which may be tentatively offered.

Practice for participation in myth involves a **retreat** from the usual concerns of daily living. This is only a temporary retreat, however, for the goal of the discipline is a return to fuller relationship to existence. It is no more a running away from his life than is the preliminary action of a broad-jumper running away from his final goal. And the nature of this retreat is more drastic than is commonly realized; it entails the removal of cultural, religious and philosophical concerns. Obviously this drastic removal will never be fully achieved, nor does it preclude eventual return to these concerns, but such retreat is a direction necessary for growth required by the fact of the complete **autonomy** of myth.

The area for exploration of the sacred story is exceedingly broad, covering not only those stories related to the

This requirement of a retreat from cultural, religious and philosophical concerns should not be construed as fostering an entirely negative attitude. It is no more negative than the typical reader's relations to poetry, novels and drama; in fact, it is suggested that the follower of this path of discipline relate to the story as he naturally and easily relates to fiction. The proper intellectual response is that of mystery and awe rather than definition and classification. The appropriate emotional response is that of fun, joy, and rapture. Accordingly, the discipline is quite definitely an activity for leisure time and should be accepted as a form of recreation. Thus, it is being affirmed, that if the explorer does not enjoy what he is doing, he is missing the entire point of the discipline, and, indeed, a most basic quality of all sacred stories. For the way of the Spirit, however neglected by modern American Protestantism and the Christian tradition as a whole, is the way of **playfulness**. Spiritual discipline must not be caught by the current negative and restrictive overtones of either "spiritual" or "discipline." The required retreat is not only a retreat to reality but also a retreat to joy.

Tellers of Divine Tales

It is concluded then that the real tour-de-force of the human animal is his "superstitions"; that it is our destiny to become tellers of divine tales. This is a destiny of which we are little aware. Modern man is like the tiger cub who was raised by goats to bleat and nibble grass.⁸ One night, when the cub was nearing maturity, an old tiger attacked the goats. Seeing that caricature of the real thing, the old tiger demanded: "What are you doing here among these goats? What are you chewing there? Why do you make this silly sound?" Before an answer was possible, the tiger seized the cub, carried him to a clear pond, and forced him to look at the reflection. "Now look at those two faces. Are they not alike? You have the pot face of a tiger; it is like mine. Why do you fancy yourself to be a goat? Why do you bleat? Why do you nibble grass?" The old one continued his educational program by forcing the frightened cub to eat a bleeding piece of raw meat. The morsel was tough and caused difficulty, but just as he was about to make his little noise again, he experienced the taste of blood. A strange feeling traveled through his body, his lips smacked, his back arched, his tail lashed the ground, and then, from his throat came the awesome, exultant roar of a tiger. The old tiger, gruffly accepting the transformation, responded: "Come, we shall go now for a hunt together in the jungle." Modern man's nibbling on intellectual fodder and bleating of "existential" complaints has led him far astray from his true destiny and rendered him a caricature of his true nature. What is required to start him on his pilgrimage is a taste of the sacred story. And it is never too late for this pilgrimage to begin. For, as Thomas Mann has observed, "while in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one."⁹

¹Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged (Springfield, Mass.: G. & G. Merriam Company, 1941).

²Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1958), pp. 148-174.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 151 ff.

⁴Heinrich Zimmer, as quoted by Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* (New York: Harper & Brother, 1960), p. 245.

⁵Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955), p. 22.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1951), pp. 5-8.

⁹Thomas Mann, "Freud and the Future," *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (New York: George Braziller, 1960), p. 372.

WOMAN'S



dr. m. eppright comments . . .

"The role of woman as a participating member of the labor force is rapidly becoming the norm in the United States, rather than the exception." This statement, made by Dr. Margaret A. Eppright, chairman of the Department of Home Economics at the University of Texas, was directed to the participants of the Ministers Wives' Colloquy gathered in Austin in November. In speaking on the emerging role of women in our culture, Dr. Eppright emphasized that the American woman "finds" herself filling the roles of manager of resources, of an informed and watchful consumer, and of a wage earner. What is needed is clarity that this is, in fact, the case, and the decision to correspond to these roles within herself as a functional mode for modern life.

With a life span longer than that of men, the established pattern of early marriage and childbearing, (twenty-six is the average age when childbearing is over for the mother), and the increasing divorce rate, girls should prepare themselves to be self-supporting.

Dr. Eppright listed numerous factors which contribute to this complex: the parental subsidy of early marriages, the swift and radical change in American middle class morality tied, in her opinion, to the changing economic situation (the middle class is widening its limits), sweeping technological changes sharply reducing geographic and time barriers.

If she is not to be "taken in" by extravagant hucksterism, the woman must become a sophisticated, knowledgeable consumer. The culture no longer repeats or even believes the common sense maxims which once gave the homemaker a more jaundiced ear to the testimonials of the sales force. Nobody says "waste makes want" any more. It might be difficult to make a case for it in an affluent society. The re-

Judeo-Christian tradition and the Semitic culture from which it has sprung, but also those of the primitive and oriental worlds. It includes the stories told in classical style and also those that are currently described as "isms". It would seem advisable that a member of our culture, with its cult of creed and cogitation, begin by seeking wisdom outside his tradition, that he explore the primitive stories which are simply told, clear of non-mythical elements, and sufficiently foreign to remind us of the wonder and joy they communicate. That this retreat from contemporary culture need be only temporary has been expressed by the orientalist, Heinrich Zimmer:

" . . . the real treasure, that which can put an end to our poverty and all our trials, is never very far; there is no need to seek it in a distant country. It lies buried in the most intimate parts of our own house; that is, of our own being . . . And yet—there is this strange and persistent fact, that it is only after a pious journey in a distant region, in a new land, that the meaning of that inner voice guiding us on our search can make itself understood by us."⁴

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE . . .

"Tell me a story" is an imperative that mirrors man's condition not only as a child, but at all times of his life. It is not just primitive man surrounded by darkness except for the light of his fire, who participates in his life-in-the-world by recounting the story that embeds him in history. Modern scientific man, no less than primitive man, has within him the unslaked thirst for a sacred story. How else does he hold his precious and very precarious humanity? The author writes, "By words alone, we may become creative philosophers or scientists. By images alone, we may become creative artists. Only by the transforming union of images and words may we discover a sacred story for creative living."

Teaching, preaching, theologizing in the Church centers around the gospel story. Mr. Neale sees a story as dead when it is either literally believed or dismissed as fictitious. Thus it seems that in the current conversation of the Church about the Christian story, neither idolization of the proclamation in itself, nor a dismissal of the story in a mist of relativism is the live option. In "Man: The Teller of Tales" we, as twentieth century scientific men, are being recalled to the possibility of participation in the story on a new level, one other than our necessary and continual analysis and probing for meaning and truth. We offer this article as provocation and substance for the continuing dialogue.

Robert E. Neale, the author of this article, is a lecturer in the Program in Psychiatry and Religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York. This article, originally given as a part of two lectures at Riverside Church, New York, is reprinted from the January 1962 issue of *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* by permission of the editors.

The definition of myth as the product of the union of the unconscious and consciousness implies that it unites the private and the social and is thus the source of community. A retreat from religion is not opposed to this understanding. For the contemporary Church seems trapped by its attitude toward dogma and creed. These tools to inform, entice and correct those who have only partially realized the story in their lives are essentially secondary and negative in function, but they have often become more significant than the story itself. One result is the frenzied activity of the institutions which masks the lack of community. Beliefs are not necessarily destructive, but they do not lead to participation in myth and community. Instead they tend to replace it. The sacred story is autonomous, and to participate in it is, in some measure, to live beyond secondary formulations. It may be reasonable then for the explorer of myth to retreat from the stultifying atmosphere of the contemporary religious societies, temporarily ignoring these frustrating attempts to create community.

Regardless of where he begins his exploration, the first

spiritual products of his endeavor will be childlike and primitive. For just as in the growth of the unborn infant, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, so also does spiritual growth duplicate the evolution of mythical understanding. The explorer will find himself participating first in stories about plants and animals, later the cosmos and human society, and finally, perhaps, the story of a savior will become meaningful. These stories will become consciously meaningful to him and influence his behavior. As the explorer participates in them, he will be enabled to participate in the elements of existence to which they allude. Thus, as he grows in participation, his environment will become more and more an epiphany for him, a "thou" to which is granted uniqueness and respect. Furthermore, since a good story is one that cannot help but be told, the individual will witness to his experience. Obviously, a good story is told for its own sake, not to "convert" listeners. The real story-teller has always presented the story because he simply can do no other, allowing the listener to react as he pleases. When a positive reaction occurs, when others realize that the story is also their story, the teller of tales will be brought into fellowship with his fellow men and a community created. Thus, the retreat from religion may eventually lead to the creation of a Christian community out of the rubble of contemporary religious organizations.

That myth is autonomous from and the precondition of all human activity suggests that philosophy is a most perilous enterprise. When such questions as "Is the story true?", "Is there only one story?", and "Who creates the story?" are taken seriously, they are a sign that the inquirer does not and cannot possess what he desires. Such serious questioning requires an abstract, standing-off from the sacred story and cannot lead to participation. The symptom of a loss cannot be used as a means for recovery. It is possible that primitive man had a more sensible approach to the problem. The popular assumption that he held to his stories quite literally cannot be supported. It is now acknowledged that the primitive mind was not so credulous as the modern mind has chosen to believe, and was, in fact, fully aware of this so-called "modern" problem. Johan Huizinga, in his story of the play element in culture, points this out:

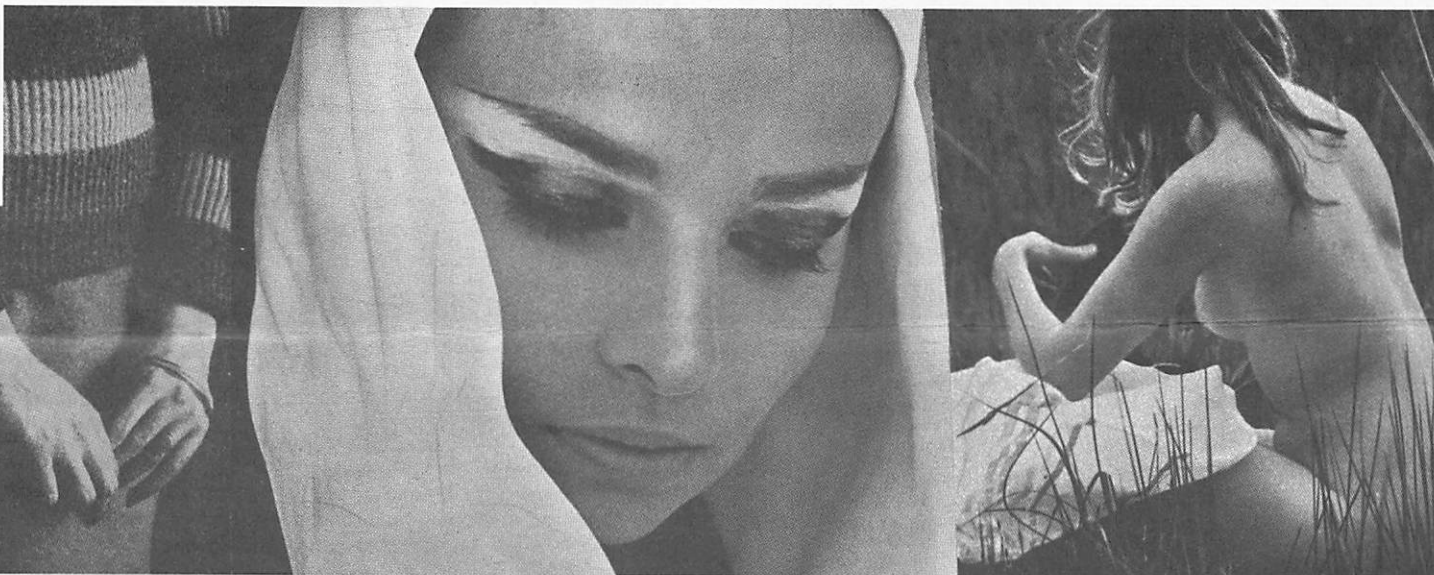
"As far as I know, ethnologists and anthropologists concur in the opinion that the mental attitude in which the great religious feasts of savages are celebrated and witnessed is not one of complete illusion. There is an underlying consciousness of things "not being real."⁵ Further, he quotes the authority, R. R. Marett:

"The savage is a good actor who can be quite absorbed in his role, like a child at play; and, also like a child, a good spectator who can be frightened to death by the roaring of something he knows perfectly well to be no "real" lion."⁶

The primitive was fully aware of the questions modern man raises and was not distributed by them. Indeed, a very "sacrilegious" scoffing was sometimes included as an important part of a sacred ritual!⁷ It may be surmised that the primitive surmounted philosophical concerns by concluding that they were secondary and that the more relevant question pertained to whether or not an individual participated in a story.

Thus, a story that is dead is either literally believed or dismissed as fictitious, while a story that is alive transcends the question. All this is not to imply that philosophy is totally irrelevant to the explorer of myth. For the one who participates in myth, philosophy may become what it was intended to be, not a deadening and perverse struggle for belief, but a playful and grateful offering to the sacred story.

• work, role, image



sult is that she must bring her critical judgment to bear on the total economic structure of her family life. She must know the products and be decisive in her management of the household.

The managerial function extends beyond consumption to such things as the choice of schools for children and participation in cultural opportunities. She stands as the mediator between the culture and the family unit, especially during her children's early years.

Beyond this, today's woman has the time and capacity for playing an important leadership role in the community. This opportunity is more and more being grasped by the American woman not just as an outlet for her talents but also as an effective instrument for shaping the American scene.

world trends . . .

One factor every part of the world seems to share in common is the rapidity of the change in the role of women. "The customs of two thirds of the women of the world are changing to a greater extent in our lifetime than during the past 2,000 years." Another factor shared in common is the subjection of the structure of the family to new stresses and strains, and an uncertainty about its function.

"If the present demographic trends continue in Europe, it is likely that the number of married women who wish to take up part-time employment will increase further while employers may in some cases be obliged to extend part-time work because of the smaller supply of single women who wish to work full-time."

In some parts of Africa, in return for the bride price, the wife is expected to make her own contribution to the

maintenance of the family, but in the cities, where the raising of food, etc., is no longer possible, the wife may work outside the home as her way of fulfilling her traditional obligations.

In Japan, a recent survey of some 2,000 highly educated housewives showed that "almost all were eager to make their qualified contribution to their country."

In the U. S. A., one of the motives listed for employment outside the home was that a woman makes it possible by her earnings to allow her husband to hold a socially useful but less remunerative job.

The study made in Great Britain of working mothers in the Bermondsey District of London spoke of a welcome closer partnership between father and mother, a new sharing of home and work interests as finding expression in improving and beautifying the home through the double earnings, . . . and joint decision making about the children's upbringing.

A comment from New Zealand refers to "evidences of a wonderful companionship developing as between the parents in the care of their children . . . In these new forms of cooperation we see the extraordinary opportunities all through the changing family life in Asia."

In East Germany, in view of the demand for part-time workers, "housewives brigades" have recently been organized. These brigades contract with certain enterprises to furnish regular workers, and then distribute the work between the members of the brigade.

In Holland, many new employment offices have been opened especially for part-time work. The Labour Inspectorate of the Netherlands is now exercising control over part-time work, which is evidently the first known instance of government action as regards part-time work.

—Excepted from Laity, November 1962.

RECENT VISITORS

During the past few months, many persons from various parts of the world have visited the Community. Their differing points of view, experience, and life tasks made their sojourn fruitful as a contribution to the continuing conversation about church and world.

In November, **Pastor Christophe Birmele** from Alsace-Lorraine visited in Austin. He is on the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Akademie in Liebfrauenberg. This academy is located just outside of Strasbourg, France.

Participating in a week-end seminar at the Community in early December was **Dr. Werner Simpfendorfer**, a staff member of Bad Boll Evangelical Academy in Germany.

Dr. Chang Yul Kim, in the United States for further training in student YMCA work, and **Rev. George Gunn**, Presbyterian Minister to Students, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, visited the Community at the same time. Dr. Kim is from Seoul, Korea.

Another campus minister at the Community for a short visit in February was **Rev. Duane Hutchinson**, Associate Director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of

Nebraska in Lincoln. Mr. Hutchinson is in the process of establishing a residential training program on that campus.

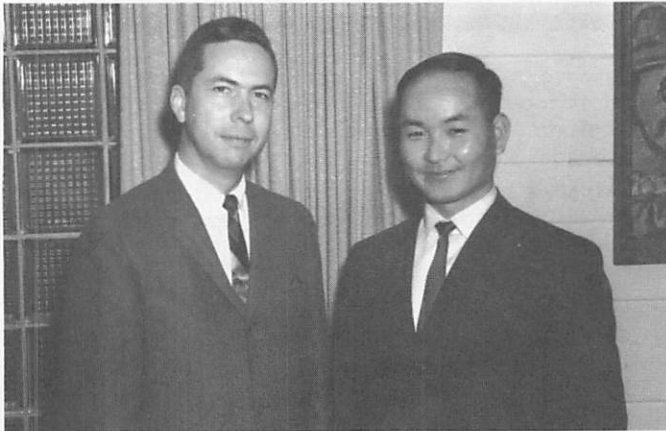
Dr. Charles Feilding, professor of historical theology at Trinity College, Toronto, Canada, participated in a session of the Collegium study.

Dr. John Oliver Nelson of Yale Divinity School and **Dr. Milton Froyd** of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, New York, were in Austin in February and had conversation with a Collegium representative.

Another representative of the seminary communities was **Rev. Thom Hunter**, Vice-President of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Hunter is a former minister to students at the University of Texas in Austin.

The Commission on Ecumenical Voluntary Service of the National Student Christian Federation met at the Laos House, February 16-23. Twenty leaders from major denominations and the National Council of Churches met to evaluate policy and conduct screening sessions for voluntary service candidates. At their invitation, **W. Jack Lewis** addressed the group on the present work and emerging image of the Community.

Peter Paul van Lelyveld, associated with lay training centers in Holland and presently in the United States for graduate theological study at Union Seminary in New York, participated in a lay week-end seminar and attended the spring semester College House Retreat in early February.



Dr. Chang Yul Kim, in training for student YMCA work, from Seoul, Korea and Reverend George Gunn, Presbyterian Minister to Students, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas.



Pastor Christophe Birmele from Alsace-Lorraine talking with W. Jack Lewis in the living room of the Laos House.

A POEM

Take care what you say
Listen—How did you say it—
For once a thing is said
Brother you've said it!
You've taken what just grows
Changed it Arranged it
Colored it Candied it
Junked it Gelled it
Murdered it Made it
Like I said

You've said it
And! What's more

It's
said
you

—Ruth Petitfils

RUTH PETITFILS is Food and Housing Director of the Community. This poem was written as a part of a Community House Church study assignment during that group's study last fall of art and language as expressive models of the symbolic dimension of life.

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SPRING SCHEDULE PARISH LAYMEN'S SEMINARS

Course	Date
CS I A.....	March 15-17*
CS I A.....	March 22-24
CS I A.....	April 19-21
CS IV C.....	May 3-5

These seminars offer forty-four hour short-courses for laymen over the state and nation; including lectures, seminars, study periods, group conversation and art form presentation; articulating and probing the serious questions of life in the world and life in the church..

Course offerings from the Community Curriculum are as follows:

CS I A: "The Possibility of Full Humanity," is an attempt to clarify the basic structure of human life, to clarify the meaning of the root words of the Christian Faith, and to hold human structure and Christian language together in such a way that Twentieth Century man is presented with the actual possibility of full humanity.

CS IV C: "The Dynamic Image of a Contemporary Christian Style of Life," is an advanced seminar studying the forms of life in our time which embody the radical faith decision in the various dimensions of culture, giving special attention to the questions of family and vocation being raised in the changing world.

*All seminars will be held in the Laos House at 700 West Nineteenth Street in Austin, Texas, except the course for March 15-17 which will be offered in Norman, Oklahoma.

Dear Everybody:

A friend of mine used to quip, "Things aren't what they used to be! In fact, they never were." There are obviously several interpretations possible for this little aphorism, which could be applied to the Community at this point in our history.

It is our deepest conviction that one of the fundamental characteristics of reality is its aliveness, and this means the dynamic process of change, of beginnings and endings, even in the midst of a sustained continuity. During the past year, the Board of Directors of the Community has been called for three special sessions in addition to its two regular meetings. This fact alone could be clue enough for anyone that this is a year of review, examination and projection. The basic consideration has been, and is, the vocation of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community as an institution of the Church in the world. In the light of this, program, staff, finances and properties have become the raw material to be shaped toward the future.

In November, the Board gave the Collegium a mandate to focus its efforts in the spring and summer months toward the delineation of a Community program for 1963-64 which would emphasize adult theological education. At its most recent special meeting on February 16, the Board authorized the consolidation of the educational program for laity, clergy and university students

on a unified campus at the 1900 block of Rio Grande, on properties already being purchased by the Community. The administrative offices and the Memorial Chapel will also be relocated in this area. It is anticipated that we shall begin September 1963 in these united facilities.

It is expected that this move will make possible much valuable interchange in the several facets of the program, previously conducted on separate properties, enable the staff to engage in more intensive study and extensive teaching, and bring about greatly increased efficiency and economy in finances.

All of this only hints at the many other aspects of the Community program undergoing subtle or direct transformation. Recently, in a book on General Semantics, a chapter titled, "Whatever you Say It Is, It Is Not," caught my interest. Perhaps at this point you can understand why! During the past months, participants in the advance lay seminars and ministers colloquies, and visitors who have come from over the world, have sensed trends of transformation here. The forms and manifestations of this are in the making; many are yet unknown.

In this alive world, does not the living God call forth from living men fresh, new responses every day?

Robert R. Bryant

For the Corporate Ministry

IN MEMORIAM

The Corporate Ministry of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community takes this means of marking the life and death of **Mrs. Camille Virginia Lightner** of Brownsville, Texas. Her death in December brought to a close a vigorous life of wide interests and concerns. The Community has been the recipient of two very significant grants in the last three years through the Earl C. Sams Foundation, endowed by her father. A gentlewoman in the fullest sense, she savored her years and met her death with courage and dignity.

W. Jack Lewis represented the Corporate Ministry of the Community at the service in her memory.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

REX BODOIN

The Corporate Ministry of the Community

J. R. BLAIR

Mr. and Mrs. B. V. Duncan

Mr. and Mrs. Blake L. Duncan

BEN F. BREWER

TOM M. PRIDEAUX

MEMORIAL LOAN FUND

J. M. Moxley

FRANK CARGILE

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letter to laymen

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THE EMERGING EMPHASIS

JAMES W. WAGENER

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH-AND-LIFE COMMUNITY? Formulas are usually too pat and therefore inadequate to cover the reality they point to or mirror. The one that follows suffers this limitation, yet it is useful in trying to look more clearly at the reality known as the Christian Faith-and-Life Community. With its roots in the European lay movement, the campus ministry, pioneering efforts in unified or core curricula for lay theological education, experimentation in new forms of teaching and life together, the Community now stands to frame a fresh definition of its unfolding in this moment of history.

The descriptive phrase most commonly used these days is "A Community of Learning in Theology and Culture." This does not deny the implication of a former phrase, "A Community Experimenting on Behalf of the Church and the World." Its pioneering nature, its quest for new modes and methods are a part of the heritage. Nor does it deny the aspect of a disciplined, rigorously covenanted community as a sign in the midst of a culture Protestantism where rigor connotes illness rather than discipline. As important as this influence has been in the awakening we have been living through, its final historical outcome may be an arbitrarily limited corporate life, which may serve as a dramatic sign and enrich the cultural life through writing and teaching, but finally cannot serve as a life prototype for the secular man of the 20th century. Indeed, the whole dimension of the cultic is being questioned by history, let alone the monastic! All of this, nevertheless, is a part of the Community's rich living heritage.

The ripening insight that this world is an organic reality underlies the idea of "A Community of Learning in Theology and Culture." **One does not get outside the world to do something to it.** One "does" something to the world because he "is" the world. He is a part of the organism in such a way that his every action and thought actualizes the malleable nature of reality. He "makes" the world because he "is" the world. Doing is a projection of being. On the other side of the coin, man is not the victim of the organism.

If this be true, the whole educational enterprise becomes an immersion in this world. But of a special kind. This participation is an opening up, an "uncovering" of authentic being (to borrow from Martin Heidegger). Whenever and wherever this uncovering occurs, man's life is opened up, his "world" is extended, his breathing space is greater, his horizons are pushed out, he is more human. Learning is not a moth ball operation on facts; it is a receptivity to the many faces of the "now."

Continued on Next Page

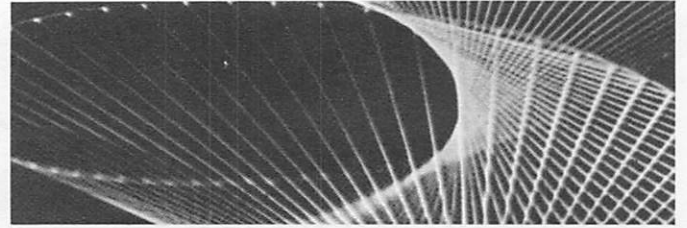
FOREWORD TO THIS ISSUE

The theme of this issue of *LETTER TO LAYMEN* is "THE EMERGING EMPHASIS." It is our hope to shed light on the thinking which is constantly going on within the membership of the Staff and the Board of Directors, and to delineate the policy and program direction for the year ahead. Beyond this, we hope that the reader who finds himself less immediately related to the Community as institution will garner something from the Community as a part of one stream within that nebulous reality termed "the lay movement."

It is necessary for any enterprise to stop on occasion, draw an arbitrary circle around its past, reflect upon it, and draw another just as arbitrary circle into which to project its future. The article which begins on this page is one staff member's effort to encircle the Community dialogue at this time.



Cryptically put, the emerging role of the Christian Faith-and-life Community is first of all evangelistic. This is the continuing concern that the fundamental Christian life-commitment be expounded and witnessed to in terms as contemporary and as relevant as possible. Second is the educational role. This is the task of exposing and trying to keep open the life questions which all men have at one level or another. The third is a role in the sphere of ethical construction for our time. This may be expressed as care for the world.



FOCUS.....

The cultural moment gives the clues to the shape of curriculum and program. Being true to the world in its dilemmas, its half-formed insights, its jumbled crossword speech, and its keenest wisdom is no mean accomplishment. It is an aspiration which any person living in the 20th century must heed. What kind of world are we living in? How is the present moment delineated? At what points is the cultural broth thickening? These are not just speculative questions but form the base for any kind of program construction. The answers, however tentative and unsure, form the agenda for any planning that is true to its name and task.

The following realities or happenings seem to be the ones which have the most to say to us in projecting the Community into its twelfth year:

1. The problem of belonging, or "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?" A descriptive word here, although much over-used these days, is **mobility**. Everything from the records of home ownership to public school placement attest to the fact that movement is normative for the American family. City planning on whatever scale is pushed to devise new solutions to population movement, to counter shifting neighborhoods, to face up to a more rapid and diverse "aging" process in city function and structure. As one critic puts it, tongue in cheek, "urbanization today is not just limited to the cities."

Accompanying the fact of mobility is the new **leisure**. Added non-work hours mean the quest for time investments of all kinds. The cultural explosion, however Philistine it may actually be, underlines the fact that time is available to persons on a larger scale than ever before for activities that are not directly remunerative. The opportunities for short-term intensive adult education efforts in all kinds of settings and in all sorts of formats abound. Although no common situation prevails, there is wide interest in educational projects which do not eventuate in advanced degrees or other marks of academic status, but are not, on the other hand, counterfeit or pseudo-educational. **A way to know this world and to take part in it more fully is desired.**

Mobility prevails in the university community as well as in suburbia and exurbia. The many loyalties of the college student and the many claims for his time, the interdisciplinary efforts within the academic community and the counterpush for specialization, the opportunities to engage in political activity of all shades, can macerate the student's life if he has no pattern for multiple loyalties.

"Theology" and "culture" are the two frames of reference through which the Community will immerse itself and its participants in the "learning" or "opening up" process. Theology is the handmaid of the Christian cult or the church. Culture is the symbolization or projection of the meaning of this world through the artifacts of painting, novels, poetry and drama on the one hand, and philosophy broadly conceived on the other. The fine arts and philosophy are the handmaid of culture. **Every language community implies a life stance**, whether it be that of Christian theology in the form of Karl Barth's **Church Dogmatics**, or that of 20th century culture in the form of James Joyce's **Ulysses**. Life stance means the basic attitude an individual takes toward his ownmost participation in his world. Attitude is not a matter of the mind alone, but the leaning of the whole person into his history. It is the way he deals with the fact of his beginning and his ending foreshortened into the present moment with the question, "How will I stand in the light of what today is giving me?"

A **faith stance** (or "life stand") is not the private province of theology any more than it is of literature. Indeed, it is the province of both. Church language and its explication by the theologian, and the culture language with its explication by the philosopher, the literary critic and the musicologist are each windows to view the same reality. To speak mythologically, God has not left himself without manifold witnesses, and it is a moot question whether those who speak with a religious tongue speak any more truly than those who speak the tongue of the world. They are speaking finally of the same thing.

Along with "theology," "culture" and "learning" something needs to be said about **"community."** The usual image which comes to the mind of the gas station attendant when the word "community" on your credit card must be explained, is a close-knit, sequestered group of religious after the pattern of the Middle Ages. Even persons who are better acquainted with the monastic experiments in the contemporary lay movement usually have some confusion about the meaning of the word.

Our usage of the term in its present mutation points to the **context** or **container** for the ongoing educational enterprise of the Austin Community. The Community is comprised of a staff bound together to do its task as a corporate ministry. This human container or basket made of men is the vessel into which participants are placed that they may uncover their ownmost questions, sensitivities and life visions.

The word also implies something about polity or the dispersal of power through decision making within the corporate ministry. Contrary to the medieval pattern, there is no abbot who holds the final decision about an issue. Contrary to the bureaucratic pattern, there are no specialists or managers whose functions are atomized within the total enterprise. Each member holds responsibility for the entire endeavor. The mark of this is his vote on all issues, although this is in no wise the extent of his responsibility. These two dimensions of community—the **task dimension** and the **political dimension**—point up the present usage of the term.

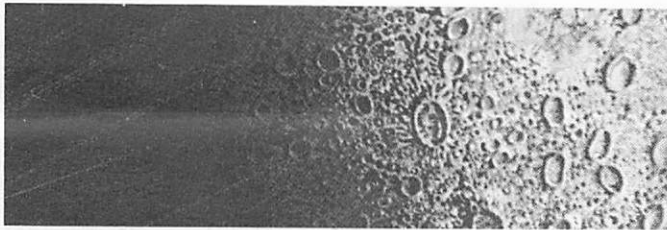
2. **The problem of knowing, or "WHO SAYS SO?"** In the face of this, there is not, and probably cannot be, some overarching, comprehensive universe of discourse under which all other endeavors, interests and ways of seeing are subsumed. This kind of super-perspective, though perhaps a genuine possibility in past times, is not a foreseeable option in this time of technological complexity beyond description.

The implication of this conviction for the life of the Community is that a residential community on a university campus cannot provide a comprehensive perspective any more than any other community. The prime need of the time is to know the relativity of all frames of reference, and with this knowledge to be bound finally to none. Yet this position is taken without getting "out of" or "above" the limited concrete perspectives through which one sees and in which one acts. The transcendence is immanent.

In a world come of age our concern is with existing communities, order, groupings; it is not to create another one. No one language community can provide relief from the vertigo of shifting points of view.

This fact (of epistemological relativism) plus the fact of a pattern of life which is mobile and has a great deal of leisure time included has led us to project our engagement with campus laymen as well as post-college laymen in the week-end seminar pattern. This will mean the holding of **Collegiate Lay Seminars**. These are not intended to create a permanent fellowship or fixed community. The participant re-enters the complexes of family, city, university and work, not from the vantage point of a newly-created community, but with the measure of clarity which frees him to be at home in these very life structures without extraneous community. His community is present there indigenously. He knows again that he is fed and sustained in that world. **He can trust the world.**

From time to time it is necessary for one to have a place where he is reminded again of that posture in which a man is **in** but not **of** the world, a place where new forms of the old question can be faced and received. The Faith-and-Life Community can provide for some this occasion and this place.



A third shaping reality has already been said implicitly:

3. **The problem of faith, or "HOW DOES RELIGION PARTICIPATE IN FAITH?"** Integral to the present discussion about the mission and role of the contemporary church is the conviction that the world as a whole and not the ecclesiastical order alone is the arena of "the saving works of God." This means that not every awakened man will find his way into the Christian cultus or parish church as his primary community. He may instead feed on that bread of the world called secular.

Are there not secular cults (in the sense of the caring, cultivating communities) which are concerned to sustain and "renew" the cultural enterprises of our era? One thinks of the "cults" within political parties, social groupings, the arts. It is argued that all of these have only limited concerns. But the question that is hardest to answer is whether or not a

universal cult is possible in the atomistic universe in which we live. Can the 20th century world be "covered"? Is it not more adequate to say that the universal is met in the multifarious forms of the particular? Or, to put it differently, is not the cult of the transcendent met in the very particular historical cults?

This does not bring to ebb our concern for the renewal of the parish church as an authentic cult, yet our attention must also be turned to the cultural enterprise in all its variety. Through the arts, the imaging of man's being in the world takes place. They help to focus man's destiny for him in relation to his time and place, piecing him into his environment and speaking beyond words of his humanity and the human vision. It is the arts which given him whatever measure of synthesis is possible in a world which is like a child's toy plastic ball. When opened it reveals another ball inside, which when opened reveals another ball inside, which when opened...

This concern with the arts should not be confused with the kind of affectation that often passes as "art appreciation"—a pose confusing artiness with art, whose counterfeit ring rightly offends the George Babbitts of this world. Peter Viereck, the poet, cautions us to beware of the man who disparages art as well as the man who hugs it to death.

There is also the cultural counterpart of **diakonia** or **Christian service**. A glance through the pages of a metropolitan telephone directory yields the names of agency after agency which exist for the sake of alleviating human suffering and need. Most of them bear no mark of identification with the Christian church. Critics of the Peace Corps who decry the loss of these potential missionaries to a secular agency, seem not to be aware of the moment in which we are living. The western world has been secularized. That service which the church once instituted now moves without its hand or blessing, supported by many who "ideologically oppose" the Christian church but who, in fact, stand as its secular emissaries. This is neither to be praised nor lamented, but rather faced as what is happening today.

The kind of cultic relativity to which these phenomena point imply a larger concern in the Community's program for the baptism of its participants in the streams of culture. That they can begin to live in their own moment, fully immersed in the forms lifted up by the artist and in the services rendered by the world to its members—this gives the grand skeleton of theological clarity its fleshy richness.

Dialogue with the cultural celebrations of the arts continues through disciplined theological inquiry and expression. The Christian Faith-and-Life Community is and remains a lay training center with a basic theological concern. Short-term intensive experiences in the theological dialogue about those living questions which culture asks of the church and the church asks of culture are a vital part of the Christian's life in the world. We are utterly concerned with the theological skeleton.

4. **The problem of deciding, or "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE RULES?"** Ethical pluralism, i.e., the presence of many, many points of view about what is "right" and meaningful, is being decried today. Nonetheless, it is part and parcel of the climate described earlier. Just as there is no clear sense of neighborhood or universal community or commonly held way of seeing, there is no clearly understood notion of bounds or limits. Most Americans today know they are unzipped, but they do not know whether to be proud or ashamed.

The threat is not occasioned alone by broken codes and rules. It is also the passing of all frameworks or backgrounds

for codes and rules that takes our breath away. The expression on today's face is not just one of shock at violated morality. It is one of great unease at the general climate of normlessness. The clash of norms and notions about the fitting thing to do leaves many moderns with little more than inner terror and outward sophistication. We are not so much troubled by broken rules as by a lack of order at all.

Perhaps as a people we are still weathering the adolescent overthrow of an outworn and deteriorated puritanism. This painful growing up is necessary and welcomed. But it leaves us with the adult task of **ethical re-construction** beyond this. The directions for such a task are indistinct and hazy, but two things at least are clear. Ethical postures based on any kind of works righteousness are utterly doomed. Any systems imposed from the outside are doomed. There is no word from "above" or "beyond" or "out there." Constructs in ethics must come from "within" existing groups. Alternation from group to group must be contained within the individual—a very untidy and cluttered arrangement of things, similar to piecing together many jumbled jig-saw puzzles at once. Whereas a past epoch expended itself trying to tidy up ethically, the task at hand is to contain the untidiness.

The Community understands that its task in regard to ethical formulation is to provide occasions for representatives of these groups to come together to explore their dilemmas and affirmations.

5. The problem of communicating, or "WHAT ARE YOUR WORDS SAYING?" Jargon of all kinds has come in for its share of criticism. "Speak plainly" is an oft-heard injunction. Many times this demand is legitimate. Plain English is hard to write or speak. But the problem goes deeper than cloudiness of expression, jumbled and dangling sentences, abstruse verbiage. The problem touches the organic nature of our language itself. Because there is no contemporary worldview which unifies the civilization in such a way that it can be called a civilization in the traditional sense, there is no common language, no 20th century Latin to transcend the walls between all the specialized camps of learning. Instead, there are many lingos and near-private dialects which give rich meanings to the initiated but are babble to the outsider. The complexity of human disciplines today makes even the best educated man an outsider in some circles. Translation from one universe of discourse to another requires living in the strange household long enough for the nuances and implications and expressive shadings as well as the more apparent things there to become one's own. It is a staggering feat then to "tell" this in another tongue which has not grown up holding the dimensions of the alien interest. No new Latin is on the horizon.

As if this were not enough, it has been pointed out that by and large **the languages of Western civilization are noun centered**, rather than verb centered. They express static, analyzable phenomena rather than things-in-process. There is a subject and a verb in the sentence form. It is desirable if one is to be "true" in his expression to meld the subject and verb together. This will present a meaning-happening rather than something which can be known in and of itself apart from the rest of the sentence, which then does something through the verb. ("Red-feather-whoosh," for example, rather than, "The red bird flew by me fast." But even this does not solve the problem because one still separates "red" and "feather" and "whoosh" functionally and experientially.)

The import of all this for the Community's work is to continue to hunt for live expressions which "locate" linguistically the great, traditional words of the Christian faith in common human experience. We are also concerned with incarnating this word structure in other dimensions, or better, with try-

ing to discover where this incarnation is already revealing itself outside the temple.

6. The problem of education, or "WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE 'HAD' A COURSE?" What it means to be educated is implicit in this problem. **Knowing is a happening, not a possession**, and our understanding must move in this direction or be swallowed up by a new scholasticism—that which threatens a world dizzy with new perspectives on infinite space, and weak-eyed from squinting at infinitesimal units of matter.

Everyone is aware that he does not necessarily "know" the play *Hamlet* even if he can recite it line for line and has read all the textual notes and commentaries in print. "Knowing" *Hamlet* is to know myself "spoken to" out of this play in such a personal and irrefutable manner that I see my own human life as if for the first time. It is this "first utterance" which restores to me the concrete rather than abstract quality of my own life so that fresh spontaneity is made possible. The historic nature of my life is given back to me. Without this spontaneity my life is dead even though I can repeat all the most adequate formulas for living richly and fully. It is to meet or encounter *Hamlet* (or be met by him) rather than to possess him that is the mark of the educated man.

Against this background, **lay theological curriculum** takes on a different color. The "happening" understanding of education must be held predominant over the "possessing" aspect of it. The educative process must be viewed in a dynamic and live fashion. One must see that he has not "had" a course when he finishes a stipulated amount of study, but rather that this study has plunged him into the ongoing dialogue which the question holds. He has been put into the stream, rather than given an answer or even a new isolated question.

The life-dialogue can be stated around three centers or fields: **the reflective dimension, the participative dimension, and the celebrative dimension**. No human being is complete unless somehow he is functioning on all three of these cylinders of being (to mangle a figure!).

A person must be introduced to the reflective or thinking process and be enabled to carry it on in his own epoch. He must think about his life-in-the-world to appropriate his full humanity. In addition to this he must be helped to participate in his own life-in-the-world. He must enter into the savoring and ordering of the dynamic of his time. He must be helped to love the world in all its manifoldness and responsibly hold it in being for his neighbor. He must "make" the world through his affirmation of being in the world. Beyond this he must be helped to "play" at being alive. That is, he must be shown that **the celebration of life is not optional, it is mandatory for fullness**. A man speaks words to no end, except, to be a man implies word-making. He paints pictures that "are not good for anything beyond themselves." He dances his joy and "games" with his fellows. He makes music and tells stories. He worships. **These doings are not niceties engaged in when the real business of living is over; they are blood and bone of the real business of being human.**

The curriculum is designed to plunge a person into these three vortexes of life. A course may be in an area which is only one part of the total typography of what one knows as possession, but so far as he is given first utterance about his life, it is "all" he knows as happening. Such an understanding as this forms the base for the continuing curriculum development of the Community.

(Continued on Page Seven)

A GUEST OF LIFE

— JOHN DOUGLAS

Always the church has but one thing to say to me. It is such a simple message that I forever marvel—and groan—at the utter complexity and confusion that it manages to generate in its effort to say this word. It has been a measure of my maturing in the ways of faith to realize that what makes the need for this redundant, difficult and sometimes tiresome business is that **man's needs are not simple**. However beautifully and effectively he may be given the word of life, he manages too soon to find the message trite or not relevant, or for one reason or another, to be impervious to the way it is stated. Thus in order to speak to different men at different times and be relevant to their different needs, the message must be rephrased and restated in myriad forms and words and symbols. Indeed, the entire task of our Community is an attempt to communicate the word of life in always fresh and effective manner. This is a task which is never completed. To work at it constantly is a job which carries a continuous demand for creativity on those of us who would be mission to our fellows.

A response to this continuing need has been in me of late. The phrase that points to this response is, "a guest of life." It derives from the same thinking that speaks of receiving life as a gift. However, phrases that are heard again and again do become too familiar clichés and no longer evoke a creative response, that is, to participate in them with imaginative exploration.

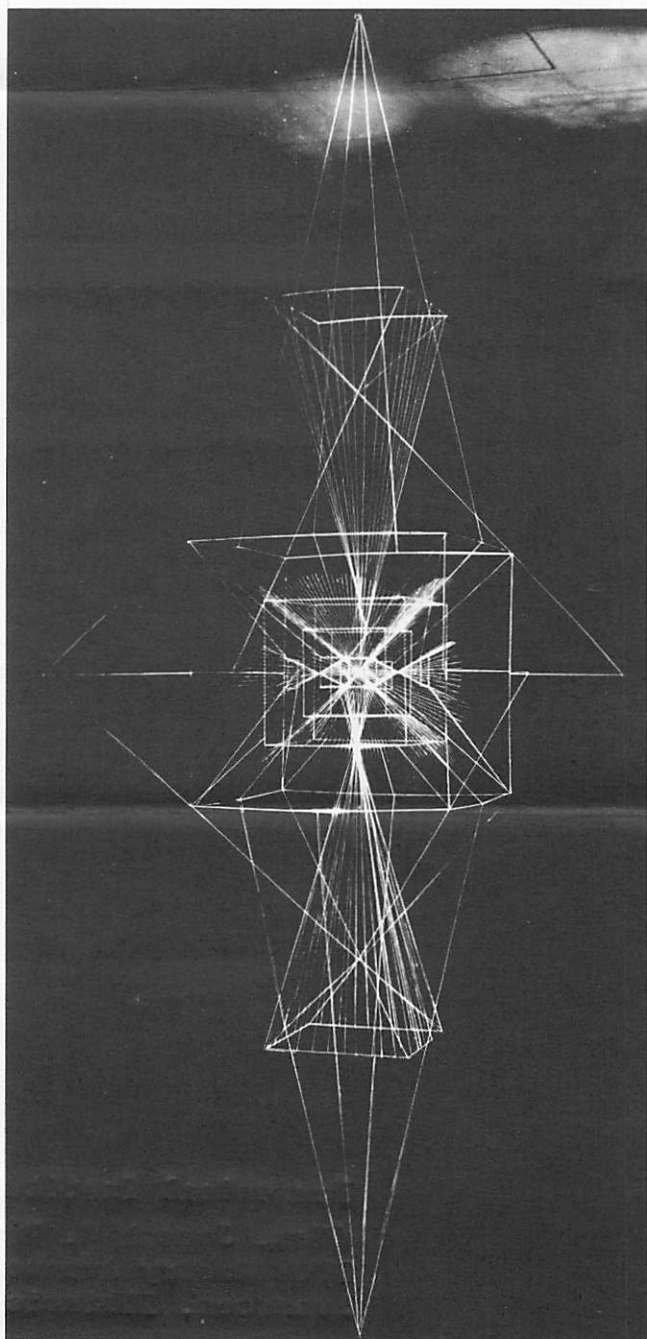
A while ago I came upon the reflection that there were times when a certain repeated set of circumstances evoked a response in me quite different from most other times. I realized that they were times in which I was a guest to a situation, and yet not all guest situations qualify. These were unique situations. They consisted of events in which I was almost an uninvited guest to an event which was for me unplanned or unexpected. Usually this happened with people I knew slightly or not at all. Also the event that I happened upon was a unique one in that the feeling of sharing a privileged situation was there.

All these elements are important. They describe a kind of guest status which can only happen occasionally. It is necessary to the situation to feel it is unearned and perhaps even undeserved. In short I must have no sense that this is due me as a just right. It is a bonus, a totally undue gift. It is a necessary ingredient to this kind of "guesthood" for the situation to be unexpected and unplanned so that it is suddenly encountered with no preconceptions, no schedule or itinerary. This guest status holds a sort of September mood, like coming to a new school in the fall. Part of the anticipation is that it is all new; you can yet be anything you want to be in those relationships to come.

Remember, this discussion is trying to recapture the mood of that rare moment of a real life situation in which you suddenly experience the wide world of "freedom to be," and an intensity of trying to live with zest on the razor's edge of possibility. I am aware of how well I remember living such a moment fully, as a rare privilege that I knew would soon be gone. I felt bigger than myself and more capable. I was free of my standard confines and I tried harder and lived more. I was living in the realm of possibility and it was good. I only mean with these words to somehow stimulate your own memories of this special type of guesthood.

I began to wonder what it would really be like to be a guest in my life. What would it be like to be the guest in your life? To receive each day as this kind of guest means you realize that you have no legitimate demands on the day. It owes you nothing. It is a special bonus; all the relationships are new and all the old preconceptions are discarded. This day is just as long as it should be, no more, no less. I witness to the fact that for myself, when I come as a guest to this day—unearned, unprepared and free of preconception—I find it good.

JOHN DOUGLAS is an Austin physician. His range of interests projects a broad spectrum: from skin diving to piloting an airplane to contemporary literature. This witness was given in a worship service at the spring Board of Directors' meeting.



Richard Lippold: Variation Number 7: Full Moon.
The Museum of Modern Art. (Photo Soichi Sunami)

report of board of directors

Working under the leadership of Chairman Russell P. Roberson, the Board of Directors of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community met May 10-11, bringing to a close the eleventh program year of the Community, a year which also included a complete evaluation of the first ten years and projection of the general direction for the institution in the immediate future.

Officers for the Board for 1963-64 were elected as follows (all are from Austin):

Chairman: Russell P. Roberson, Attorney,
Disciples of Christ

Vice-Chairman: Rev. James W. Morgan,
Clergy, Methodist

Secretary: Mrs. Jack F. Ritter, Jr., Housewife,
Episcopal

Treasurer: John E. Douglas, Physician, Methodist
Elected to the Board as the Class of 1966:

Miss Anne Appenzellar, Director of University YWCA,
Presbyterian, Austin

Mrs. Floyd Bettis, Housewife, Methodist, Midland

Rev. Claude Black, Clergy, Baptist, San Antonio

Rev. Lee Freeman, Clergy, Baptist, Austin

Mr. William Hilgers, Attorney, CPA, Disciples of Christ,
Austin

Dr. Dan G. McNamara, Physician, Episcopal, Houston

Mr. Dan Priest, Real Estate, Episcopal, Austin

Rev. George Ricker, Clergy, Methodist, San Angelo

Rev. Fred Swearingen, Clergy, Presbyterian,
Corpus Christi

Mrs. William O. Walker, Jr., Housewife, Presbyterian,
San Antonio

Elected to fill unexpired terms in the Class of 1965:

Mr. H. S. Wallace, Contractor, Baptist, Austin

Mrs. Robert Waugh, Housewife, Disciples of Christ,
Norman, Oklahoma

Rev. Richard Wheatcroft, Clergy, Episcopal, Houston

Elected to fill unexpired term in the Class of 1964:

Mr. Joe Vaughan, Business, Methodist, Dallas

Reports from the Standing Committees on Program, House and Grounds, Finance and Budget, Personnel, Development, Legal and Bylaws brought before the Board a review of the past year as well as items for action toward the future. The Rev. Richard Wheatcroft, Rector of St. Francis Episcopal Church in Houston, was elected from the Board to serve as Chairman of the National Advisory Council. Tentative dates for the meeting of this Council were set for October 4-6, 1963, with the annual Feast of Beginnings and Sixth Perspectives Lecture on Friday, October 4.

Elsewhere in this issue James Wagener begins a discussion with our readers concerning an understanding of the role of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community in the life of the secular and religious world of our time. This discussion will be continued by other staff members in future issues. During its spring meeting the Board of Directors were deeply involved both formally and informally in conversation around this question.

Also, in this issue, readers will find a condensed Program Report and Program Preview which was prepared recently for distribution to participants and contributors, bringing them up to date on the movement of the Community's program. This report reflects the discussion and decisions of the Staff and Board during the past year and offers clues to the range and direction of current thinking about program, property and finances.

progress report and program preview 1963-1964

RELOCATION: The Laos House at the corner of Nineteenth and Rio Grande will now be the educational center for all Community programs in Austin. All seminars and colloquies for laymen, clergymen and students will be held in this building. As of August 15, the administrative offices will be at 1906 Rio Grande. The Community properties at 2500 Rio Grande have been leased to the International Hospitality Committee to be used as a residential orientation center for International students at The University of Texas.

TEACHING CONCENTRATION: Thirty seminars and colloquies have been scheduled for this year. The staff will center its teaching in these intensive forty-four hour sessions. Last year 450 persons participated; we expect 750 this year. Last year a new curriculum form was tested; five new courses were offered. Continuing development in content and style will go on.

CAMPUS PENETRATION: A new approach to the university community is being instituted. Weekly seminars for students will be held involving approximately 25 students in each session. They will be selected from existing campus groups and organizations and will move back into these groups to deepen the level of concern and conversation aimed toward responsible life on campus and in the world beyond.

EXPERIMENTATION: Inter-age seminars will bring together teenagers, college students and adults to encounter one another in common study on basic questions of faith and life. Limited testing of this last year disclosed tremendous possibilities and need for this kind of confrontation. Rigid images can be shattered, barriers in communication broken through, and fresh understanding and respect emerge.

MOBILIZATION: Last year two experiments with lay seminars outside Austin were attempted, one in San Francisco, another in Norman, Oklahoma. These ventures were encouraging and informative, and limited expansion of the "mobile seminar" has been included in the schedule this year.

FINANCIAL STABILIZATION: The changes in property utilization and a thorough examination of all expenditures and bookkeeping procedures has brought about greater fiscal efficiency and closed some of the loopholes which have caused deficits in past years.

PROGRAM EXTENSION: A program is being launched this summer which will provide regular visits by Community staff to several major areas of the state for program recruitment, educational follow-up and financial development. Alums of Community programs in each area will be utilized more directly to assist the staff in this task.

PUBLICATION: Letter to Laymen will continue to be published six times a year on a bi-monthly basis. Increased attention is being given to the selection of articles and the writing of articles by the staff in order to present a journal that is significant, readable, relevant, and understandable to the lay theologian in the secular world.



program schedule

PARISH LAYMEN'S SEMINARS

Aug. 31-Sept. 2	CS IA
Sept. 27-29	CS IA
Oct. 18-20	CS IA
Nov. 15-17	Advanced
Dec. 6-8	Advanced
Jan. 3-5	CS IA (Youth)
Jan. 17-19	CS IA
Jan. 31-Feb. 2	Advanced
Feb. 7-9	CS IA
Feb. 21-23	Advanced (Inter-age)
March 20-22	CS IA
April 10-12	CS IA
May 1-3	Advanced
May 8-10	CS IA

COLLEGIATE SEMINARS

Nov. 1-3	CS IA
April 3-5	CS IA

MOBILE PARISH LAYMEN'S SEMINARS

(Norman, Oklahoma)	
Dec. 13-15	CS IA
March 6-8	CS IA

PARISH MINISTERS' COLLOQUY (Group VI)

Oct. 7-9	CS IAB
Nov. 4-6	Practicums on the Pastoral Vocation
Dec. 2-4	Practicums on the Pastoral Vocation

PARISH MINISTERS' COLLOQUY (advanced)—open to wives

Jan. 20-22

NATIONAL CAMPUS MINISTERS' COLLOQUY

April 19-22	CS I, Practicums on Vocation of Campus Minister
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LAIC THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

(2 sessions of 7 weeks)

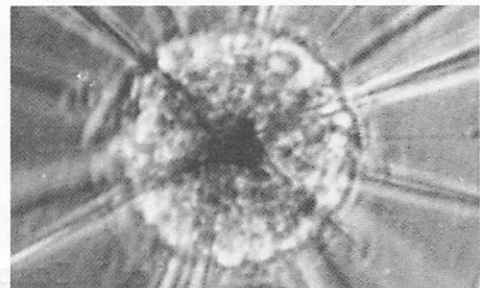
Oct. 10-Nov. 21	Advanced courses
Feb. 27-April 9	Advanced courses

All that has been said may be summed up in the easily misunderstood phrase, "the secularization of the gospel." This does not mean the melting of the church into the world. The church does not become the world nor the world the church. Rather the Christian life-commitment is embodied in "non-Christian" forms. Linguistically, it means keeping the universes of discourse separable in our minds as distinct ways of talking about and appropriating the same thing. **We know one thing—the world.** But the dialects we use in talking and reflecting about our relation to the world are multi-form. We are concerned with seeing reality through each frame of reference on its own terms.

A "Christian anthropology" may now be a possibility. This points to a corresponding facet of "the secularization of the gospel" and is as easy to misinterpret. The time has come when the shape or cast of being human (i.e., a secular Christian) may be delineated. It is the structure of the human being, the irreducible framework, the configuration which has a form that be known, but which does not reduce the infinite variety of human expression to a single mold or picture. It is the living form of man, the moving shape of man-in-process. It is the field of energy, the space of man-being-man that is the subject of this concern. **To be a man is no longer a confession but an act of joyous thanksgiving and worthy dedication.**

The secularization of the gospel means the gospel can be expressed in non-religious terminology and concern. It is no less a gospel if expressed in many tongues and embodied through many institutions and causes. **A Christian anthropology** means man can be himself without reduction or amplification, and this humanity can be "worded" or spoken. "I am the life" is more than a sermonic chestnut from the New Testament.

The trends pointed to may change. A unifying and synthesizing worldview may appear. But whether a worldview jells or not, the Christian mode of being in the world can be lived out in either case. The human being finally is the locus of the fragmentariness of this world. It is in the human being that this fragmentariness is held either creatively or suicidally. The many causes and cults and enterprises must be "gathered" in him. It is to the way of gathering that the Community addresses itself in the days ahead.



Dear Everybody:

What relationship, if any, should we maintain with our Laos House participants? This question, peripheral as it may seem, has a persistent way of re-presenting itself to us for our deliberation and decision, and a sensitive evaluation of the history of the Community will expose this question as one of prime significance. We have lived and died with it for a long time.

Our answer to this question will have to be tentative and qualified, for the matter is as thorny as it is significant. Indeed the manner in which we choose to relate (or not to relate) to our Laos House alums is an important theological issue in and of itself. We trust any action or reticence on our part will arise not from sociological expediency, but from a particular understanding of and commitment to a relevant form of the church.

There are those who are fearful of any continuing relationship which we might sustain with our alums. These are they who would seek to prevent us from invading the domain of the local parish. There are others who would encourage us to channel the new born energy of our participants more directly into mission and/or fellowship groups, either within a local church or directly related to us.

These views (both of which are held by many of our strongest advocates) represent authentic concerns yet as you can see, they are contradictory. Where does this leave us? It leaves us as always with the task of remaining sensitive to "broader implications" while at the same time being courageous enough to move concretely. It will remain to be seen whether we are sensitive—whether we feel with any accuracy the pulse beat of the present situation. As for our courage to act concretely, I would refer you to Jim Wagener's article in this issue "The Emerging Emphasis." And now to my remaining remarks.

Our present response to the question of how we relate to our alums will be an attempt to hold a balance between lack of contact and over-involvement. This we hope to accomplish through our "extension program."

This past month Bob Bryant and I have traveled to San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and Corpus Christi. In each of these cities we have constituted and met with an "extension committee." These committees are led by chairmen who in turn will work directly with the staff as we move toward implementation of the program.

The program involves two basic facets: One, the work of the committee itself, and two: the monthly (or bi-monthly, as the case may be) extension trips made by the staff to the cities. Through advance planning and coordination by the committee chairmen, it is anticipated that significant work can be done by the staff visitor in the areas of personal follow-up, recruitment and development, this in addition to the various types of alumni gatherings.

The time commitment on the part of the staff toward these extension trips represents a basic shift in policy, the total implication of which is beyond the scope of this column. Perhaps the extension program

will provide a time when we shall be meeting you. If this be so, one of our privileges will be to share these matters more fully.

Wm H. Smith.

William H. Smith

shining at the sea's heart,
Dancers, rise:
silverly flash, Fish, shimmer!
your sibilant seas confide
in their crystal whispers
(o what buoyant mysteries?)
O Splendor!
forever abide
on the singing of waves.
my shorebound eyes
measure your sapphire distance:
you skim the heart's dark tide
above what joyous fathoms,
what azure graves?

singer at our heart's shore,
Islesman, praise: praise
your heart's own Desert, praise Him!
no sanctities call from the deep
to the flotsam of the world,
we shoreless who keep
these masks of our tinselled appearances:
his name is written in water
who sleeps in the wounds
of the world.

high waves of our ceaseless sorrow
mutter on and on: what manner of
Wind
cast us dry here?

---cleo f. cobb

MRS. BILL B. COBB is a former member of the Board of Directors and a frequent participant in the Austin Lay Theological Studies.

letter to laymen

Ecumenical Institute
(Mrs. Joseph W. Mathews)
1742 Asbury Avenue
Evanston, Illinois

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of the
Christian Faith-and-Life Community
2503 Rio Grande, Austin 5, Texas

December 16, 1963

Dear Everybody:

This is the late-late issue of *Letter to Laymen* which should have reached you in October, but then it would have been a different letter. One day, one event, one moment can and often does change the course of history . . . social, political, personal history. Sometimes, in the midst of a traumatic moment, there is acute awareness that things will never be the same again. Actually, things never are, but we are often oblivious and insensitive to subtle change, detecting it only in retrospect.

Few would be unable to point to Lincoln's or Kennedy's assassinations as history-changing events. For centuries men have pointed to the Event of Jesus The Christ as the watershed of history, although not one recognized that fact who witnessed the events of the Friday of the Crucifixion. And how long must it have been before that Friday was called "Good" . . . and how quickly was it sentimentalized to pull out the stinger.

So it is that change is the anticipated "constant" in our lives as we move into an unknown future. Only by faith in the unchanging love of the One who gives us our life and our death are we able to affirm that Life is Good, even though it may mean a cross in our future. Strange paradox: To die is to live; Daily *living* requires daily *dying*. Aye, there's the rub. Yet it is *Judgement* pronouncing the death sentence on our illusions which opens ever new possibilities for us to *live* as real persons. Only Faith, illumined by a disclosure-situation, would call *Judgement* the Love of God. To say Christianly that we as a nation have been *Judged* by the event of November 22-25 is to say we are *loved* and to affirm that the future is open as the world moves into 1964 A. D.

CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY

The Faith-and-Life Community has undergone many changes since it was founded in 1952: First a single residence for men students at the University of Texas, then adding a separate program for women finally combining them into a co-educational community for theological study, worship and life

together oriented toward responsibility in the world. Scores of similar programs were catalyzed across the nation by the pioneering efforts undertaken here. Next, in 1958, the Laos House was established as a short-term residential training center for laymen, later adding colloquies for parish clergymen and campus ministers. Teenagers were brought into special seminars in 1961. Early in 1963, by accident, college-age and middle-age participants were thrown together in an inter-age seminar that sparked the current emphasis on inter-age participation in all our basic courses.

Increasing economic pressure and concurrent program evaluation led our Board of Directors and Staff to move toward consolidation of all programs for all ages in the Laos House in September, 1963, utilizing the sharpest tool we had developed over an eleven year period, namely, the forty-four hour intensive seminar. Approximately 700 laymen from 16 to 60 will be involved in one or more such seminars this year. Parish ministers have already had two of three 48-hour colloquies, Austin laymen have completed their advanced study in a six Thursday night series, while dove-tailed into the total effort is the new "Provocational Dialogue" for former participants (known as Colleagues) in Houston, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Dallas and Austin led by CFLC faculty on a monthly basis.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE GRANTED

Now, for another factor in the ever-changing scene. I have been granted a leave-of-absence, beginning January 1, 1964. Since the agonizing decision made in October, 1949, and executed in April, 1950, to pull up stakes, take the family to Scotland and study at the University of St. Andrews while investigating the lay-movements in Britain and on the Continent from Denmark to Greece, I have been so single-mindedly involved in the birthing and nurturing of this Faith and Life offspring that I am in need of a break, not so much to rest as to gain perspective on whence we have come and whither the next step for me vocationally. I have some clues, about which more later in this letter.

Already, as of an October 10th decision by our Executive Committee, I am on special assignment to dispose of our surplus properties where we formerly conducted our residential student program. The sale, when completed, should clear up all short-term indebtedness and provide a small reserve. Our Fiscal Year is being shifted so as to coincide with the calendar year, beginning January first. The new budget will not exceed \$60,000. and will be less if at all possible. My "leave" is on a non-salaried basis and will lower the budget accordingly.

THE CONTINUING STAFF

Three full-time faculty members will continue the teaching, planning and service of the Community, working under the policy-setting Board of Directors. Robert Bryant, an American Baptist clergyman, is the elected chairman of the faculty and works in the dual role of teacher-administrator. He is in his fifth year with the Community. James Wagener, a Methodist clergyman and member of the Texas Conference of the Methodist Church, is completing his third year on the staff and combines teaching with editing of CFLC publications. William Smith, an Episcopal clergyman from the Diocese of California, started his third year with the Community in September. Added to his teaching role is the organization and development of the extension or "Colleague" program. All three are now working as a team in teaching, extension and fund raising, and they have their hands full. They work well together and are highly capable men.

Two secretaries, Pat Sackrey (my eldest daughter) for bookkeeping and finance (in fifth year with CFLC), and Nancy Banister for program and correspondence, complete the office staff. Mary Lou Smith (wife of faculty member, Bill) took over the role of Hostess in the Laos House in September, bringing her beauty and graciousness to this important position. Charles Smith, first employee of CFLC (July, 1952) continues as kingpin of food and maintenance operations, steady as a rock and versatile as daVinci. His wife, Dorothy, whose association with the Community dates back to 1953, works with Charles to keep the Laos House in apple-pie order and provide the food service.

In all, then, eight persons will carry on the work of the Community with capability and dedication under the Board of Directors. They need your prayers and your continuing support. They are pictured here for your cognizance or recognizance. All have growing families comprised of an aggregate

of seventeen children, a sure-fire factor in keeping the parents duly humble and humbly dutiful in the years ahead.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board plays a key role in setting policy, providing guidance, counsel and stability to the continuing work of the Community. Its members are themselves members of seven denominations in the main stream of American Protestantism. All have studied in the seminar programs of CFLC and thus have "inside information" as to the thrust of the curriculum and the revolutionary possibilities within it in proclaiming the Gospel in fresh ways to 20th Century men. Each serves a three-year term on a rotating basis. The whole Board meets twice annually while the Executive Committee meets monthly to handle interim business. Russell P. Roberson, Austin attorney, is in his second year as Chairman and is an active member of The University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). J. W. Morgan, Pastor of University Methodist Church, is Vice-Chairman; Dr. John E. Douglas, M. D., also a Methodist, is Treasurer; and Mrs. Jack Ritter, Jr., Episcopalian and former undergraduate member of the CFLC College House program, is Secretary. They, together with thirty-two other men and women make up the current Board of Directors.

FORMER BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

Since 1952, more than 100 men and women have served terms on the Board and fifteen have served varying lengths of time on the teaching staff. It is impossible to calculate the contributions each made toward the support and development of the Community. Suffice it to say each left his mark in the ongoing history of this pioneering organization.

The first five Chairmen of the Board epitomize the steady leadership provided by all Board members. Dean W. R. Woolrich, then Dean of Engineering at U. T., served 1952-55. Dean W. Page Keeton of the University of Texas Law School took over the reins 1955-58, followed by attorney William B. Carsow from 1958-60. Fourth in line was businessman Glen E. Lewis, 1960-62, bringing the Community to its present leadership under Russell P. Roberson. While declining to be considered for Chairmanship of the Board again and again, an indispensable member and strong supporter since the beginning has been William J. Murray, Jr., without whose faith and encouragement the Community could hardly have survived.

Teaching staff members in order of their association with CFLC were

Charles Roberts, now an Episcopal clergyman at Taylor, Texas; Mildred Hudgins, currently head of the Department of Religion in Randolph-Macon College in Virginia; John Lee Smith, recently appointed as Resident Theologian at Cornell University; Harry S. Wise, serving now on the Ex-Students Association Staff of the University of Texas; Joseph W. Mathews, Dean of the Ecumenical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, since July, 1962; Joseph A. Slicker, Joseph L. Pierce, Donald R. Warren, Allan Brockway, Bill Cozart and David McClesky all of whom form part of the team ministry in Chicago with Mr. Mathews; and Thurston Barnett, who is now directing Adult Education in a Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. This latter group with Mr. Mathews is engaged in a difficult and daring communal experiment composed of a dozen families in the heart of a densely populated section of Chicago, occupied predominantly by negro families. The group, we understand, has taken over the campus of an abandoned Seminary in the heart of this area and is operating as a worker-clergy-teacher team from that residential center. Elaine Lubbers, Betty Stewart and Doris Neal, three fine theologians in their own right, served brief terms as resident tutors in the women's residence of the College House. Elaine now teaches in Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, Betty went on to L.S.U. to accept a post-graduate scholarship and Doris married Marine Corps pilot, Robert Ingram.

MANUSCRIPT CALLED FOR

Now that a dozen years have sped by since the organizational days of the Community, the time has come, and is really overdue, when the history, development, changes and evaluation of this work must be set down in manuscript form. Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., New York City, wrote me in October asking that such a manuscript be submitted, hopefully for publication if it has merit. I have elected to do this during my leave of absence and have secured permission from the Board of Directors to have full access to files and materials for this purpose. Early in the process of gathering data and organizing the manuscript, I will be writing alumni of both the College House and Laos House for their reflective insights and critical evaluation of their participation in our various programs. The preparation and the writing will probably take most of 1964 to accomplish. The readership of *Letter to Laymen* is invited to make observations and suggest questions and areas for consideration in preparing the manuscript.

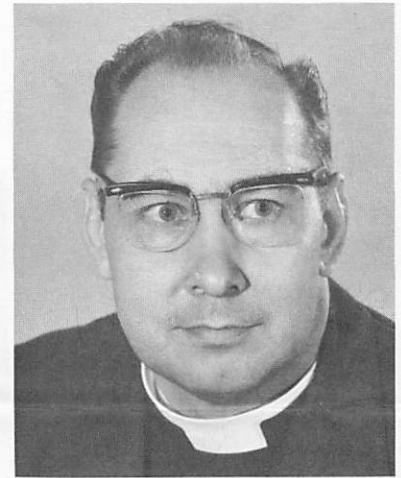
CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE COMMUNITY
FACULTY AND STAFF



ROBERT R. BRYANT
Teacher



JAMES W. WAGENER
Teacher



WILLIAM H. SMITH
Teacher



PAT SACKREY
Finance Secretary



W. JACK LEWIS
Founder: On Leave Jan 1, 1964



NANCY BANISTER
Program Secretary



MARY LOU SMITH
Hostess, Laos House



CHARLES SMITH
Chef and Maintenance Man



DOROTHY SMITH
Assistant, Laos House

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE COMMUNITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(as of January 1, 1964)

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Russell P. Roberson, Attorney, Chairman
Disciples of Christ, Austin

J. W. Morgan, Minister, Vice-Chairman
Methodist, Austin

Mrs. Jack F. Ritter, Jr., Secretary
Episcopalian, Austin

John E. Douglas, M.D., Treasurer
Methodist, Austin

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Mrs. Harlan M. Burns, Teacher, Baptist

Lee J. Freeman, Minister, Baptist

Jane Greer, Manager of Women's Residences at University,
Methodist

Cecil H. Hale, Chemist, Methodist

William B. Hilgers, Attorney, C. P. A., Disciples of Christ

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Earl C. Scott, Jr., Seminary Professor, Presbyterian

Edwin P. Shaw, Director of Wesley Foundation, Methodist

William Tamminga, Architect, Professor, Presbyterian

H. S. Wallace, Contractor, Baptist

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A. S. Black, Businessman, Episcopalian, Houston

Claude Black, Minister, Baptist, San Antonio

Mrs. C. P. Donnelly, Director of Christian Education,
Episcopalian, Corpus Christi

Franklin P. Frederick, Businessman, Episcopalian, Houston

John W. Griffin, M.D., Baptist, Port Lavaca

Dan G. McNamara, M.D., Episcopalian, Houston

Robert Raquet, C. P. A., Presbyterian, San Antonio

George M. Ricker, Minister, Methodist, San Angelo

Mrs. Joseph M. Rowe, Methodist, Dallas

Mrs. Helen Scott Saulsbury, Presbyterian, Temple

A. Fred Swearingen, Minister, Presbyterian, Corpus Christi

Joe L. Vaughan, Businessman, Methodist, Dallas

Mrs. William O. Walker, Jr., Presbyterian, San Antonio

Steven H. Ware, M.D., Presbyterian, Corpus Christi

Mrs. Robert Waugh, Disciples of Christ, Norman, Oklahoma

G. Richard Wheatcroft, Minister, Episcopalian, Houston

Joseph C. Wright, Major, U. S. Air Force, Presbyterian,
Amarillo

John Yochem, Businessman, Episcopalian, Corpus Christi

Naturally, I will seek the help and counsel of all present and former staff persons whose intimate association with the Community and contributions to its development really set its course and provided its major influence across the land. My own role as founder, public interpreter and fund-raiser leaves much to be desired in a depth-treatment of the curricular areas of our various programs since I have seldom filled the vital position of "teacher." However, I can possibly be a bit more objective at this point, with the help of present and past colleagues and the collected data sent in by alums.

I am seeking a personal grant from a Foundation to underwrite expenses in the preparation of the manuscript in 1964. The hour is late to be doing this, but the time for it is now. No solicitations for support during my extended "leave" will be made to any person, group or foundation currently sending gifts or grants to the Community. The need for continued and regular financial undergirding of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community was never greater. Since my services as special fund-raiser are being terminated, the continuing staff will shoulder that burden in addition to teaching, administration, publishing, recruiting and extension work. Therefore, I ask you who read this letter to begin, continue or renew some sort of regular monthly or annual contribution to the significant work of the Community as a center of learning in theology and culture in service to the Church and the world.

THE "SHARE" PLAN

The continuing staff has worked out an excellent "share" plan to help contributors see how their gifts sustain the budget. Here is the way it works. . . .

Value:	1 share	= \$240 annually,
		or \$ 20 monthly,
	½ share	= \$120 annually,
		or \$ 10 monthly,
	¼ share	= \$ 60 annually,
		or \$ 5 monthly,
Budget for 1964: \$60,000		
Shares needed: 250		

At this writing, 90 shares have been pledged for 1964, mostly from alums in Houston, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Dallas and Austin who have heard about the plan from staff members personally. Many of these full shares and fractional shares were pledged in the sure-fire form of Automatic Bank Drafts (ABD) which provide the only certain monthly income the Community has. I do hope scores of you readers will want to "share" in this way and soon.

BEYOND 1964

The "leave" I am about to take represents a new turning in my own life and work. If a man may be allowed

regrets, my only regret is that I didn't do this in June, 1960, when Mary and I went to Europe for nine weeks to participate in the World Council of Churches Consultation on Evangelism in Switzerland and the European Lay Academy Directors Association meeting near Helsinki.

The past three years have been restless years in some ways. I have come to see that a founder is like a father. When a child matures to an age of accountability, it is best for poppa to take his hands off lest he begin to possess rather than release to personhood and adulthood. The parent who possesses his offspring grows hypercritical and often paranoid. It happens in families and it happens in institutions. Better that the parent finally takes hands off and move into other areas of creativity. The problem of middle-age and old-age is often the failure to be oriented toward the future and simply to cling to some past memory or achievement.

What, then, is beyond 1964 for Mary and me after the manuscript has been written, whatever its fate. First, it is my belief that the year of research and writing will bring clarity and fresh perspective on where we have been and where we *are*. New insights into corporate worship and contemporary theology which have flooded my being through the experimental work and study of the Community the past several years are indeed revolutionary for me. They will be *foundational* as we move beyond '64.

In August, 1962, the Executive Committee of the Community chartered a second non-profit corporation with the Secretary of State, entitled: Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). The name had been coined earlier in '62 when the staff was doing some experimental television work at N. B. C. in New York, utilizing the art-form approach to do a pilot videotape discussion of the film, *Judgment at Nuremberg*. ICA has no "religious" connotation and was chosen to be a kind of umbrella under which the broad spectrum of human relations could be dealt with through a secular approach to secular man. To date, ICA has remained merely a "paper" organization.

DREAM FOR ICA

Beyond 1964, it is my hope that we can activate ICA as an independent organization having no organic connection to the Community except the common theological stance which holds such existential impact for late Twentieth Century men. The Community and its continuing staff will carry on the ba-

sic work of an educational institution, sharpening and shaping the curriculum, intensifying the extension program through "Provocational Dialogues" in the field, serving the Church and culture as a theological bridge between the old world and the new (i.e. pre- and post-World War II).

Thus, if plans materialize, my leave will be extended on a yearly basis just as has been done by my Presbytery since 1950 when I was given permission to "labor outside the bounds of Presbytery" as a post-graduate student in Scotland and later as Founder and Executive Director of the Christian Faith and Life Community. Ties are maintained, roots are firm, but there is freedom to branch out responsibly into the unknown.

Beyond 1964, I would like to project the next dozen years in outline so as to share with you some areas of vital concern which might be developed under The Institute of Cultural Affairs:

- 1.) Pilot Seminars for *occupational groups*, beginning with doctors, lawyers, educators:
 - a.) Theological grounding in the *secular* meaning of the Gospel
 - b.) Ethics and the decision-making process
 - c.) Existential case-studies, using group process

For each occupation I hope we can set up a *control* group and an *experimental* group for the sake of validating and testing what we do. Purpose would be to publish our findings for distribution, adaptation and use in medical, legal, educational associations and of course in the church itself.

- 2.) Pilot Seminars in the *Liberal Arts*: sociology, psychology, natural sciences, history, philosophy and the fine arts. The plan would be to select highly competent professors in these areas, give them a brief contemporary theological grounding to be used as a screen through which they prepare short-courses (44-hour seminars) which would capsule each discipline so that a layman could lay hold (both specifically and relationally) on that aspect of his modern world. Again, control groups and experimental groups would allow evaluation, publication, dissemination. Service to the church in the next 20 years could be incalculable. I believe the church will become the "small university" which not only proclaims the Gospel but acquaints its members with the *real* world in which it is to be proclaimed.
- 3.) *Probative* Seminars for persons crippled by events or habits.

- If these five projections could achieve some degree of maturity in the next fifteen years, developing a mutual exchange of ideas and experience with related endeavors in the USA and abroad, I feel that significant service can be rendered to both church and culture. The work should remain small, flexible and qualitative in all aspects.

Once again I urge your beginning, continuing or renewed support for the Christian Faith-and-Life Community. Your regular "sharing" in this unique educational institution will release the staff to do their very best work in teaching, writing, preparation and extension. You will *not* be asked to support me or the new work I hope to initiate

W. Jack Lewis



Christian Faith-and-Life Community
1906 Rio Grande, Austin, Texas 78705

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FOREWORD . . .

Persons who have participated in a Laos House program occasionally express themselves in one form or another on paper in a way that we think our readers will find interesting.

The poem which constitutes the bulk of this issue is an example. *No Sphere*, by Betty Woods, was written some time ago. A brief note about the author is given on page six.

Faith in God, an article by Joe Hardegree, will be featured in the next issue.

We invite manuscripts of any sort from our readership which they feel point up issues or present points of view which the readers of this journal are struggling with, or should struggle with. Articles cannot be returned and, because of a limited budget, no payment can be made for their use.

Sometimes seminal issues can be opened up for reflection and discussion more effectively by those who consider themselves amateur writers than those who have some professional status. At least, this has been our experience.

letter to laymen

JOURNAL OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH-AND-LIFE COMMUNITY IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

No Sphere

BY BETTY WOODS

A sphere encased my world,
And all I knew was fastened to its wall;
My home and family,
My church and garden club,
My government and court house,
My oceans and continents,
My Cuba and Congo,
My sun and moon,
My Bank of Commerce.

Each day I looked up and down and all around
to see that my sphere was unbroken.

Each day I checked
to see that everything remained firmly attached,
anchored to the spherical wall,
securely.

And each day it was.

But I worried just the same.

The wall was beginning to look thin in places
and I feared it might break
and my world would be lost.

One day the president of the garden club
found fault with the keeping of the minutes.
The secretary raised her voice and declared to the president,
"You have weeds in your roses!"

The garden club shook and one side ripped a hole in my sphere.
I bought some all-purpose glue at the drug store
and patched it.

Another day I saw a kitten run into the path of my car
and felt it die.

A little girl sobbed
until her mother led her into the house.
Where her tears had fallen I found it necessary again to
patch my sphere.



Then when my husband realized the new job
being created in the company
would go to a younger man
He paced about the house, slamming doors and
shouting at me and the children.
A corner of the house pulled loose, and I
glued a patch over it.

I bought another tube of glue,
And then found a better kind,
And darted anxiously from
house to club to
church to grocery store to
PTA to friend to
doctor to paper back novel,
Adding new patches and repairing old ones.

In the morning I hurried out to check
the damage of the night,
and in the evening
I lay exhausted, hoping that all would stay fastened and secure
till morning.

Then one dark afternoon
Robert, my middle one,
Stepped off the school bus and ran around front
and out into the street to cross to our house.
Cars are supposed to stop when they
approach a halted school bus, but
one did not. Robert's body
was thrown back against the side
of the bus and the children inside
screamed.

I was waiting at the window
and
simply
shut
my
eyes.

I must have kept them shut for many days
Because I saw nothing and knew nothing
but gentle words and kindly arms
to guide me from
bedroom to bathroom to
kitchen to
bedroom
again.

I feared that if I opened my eyes
what had happened would turn out to be true.
But something—my mind, I guess—kept insisting
it didn't matter:
open or closed, my eyes
had nothing to do with what went on.
So I began to see things again,
not because I wanted to, but because
that's the way it was.

I hoped I would see a way to die.
Each day I thought, "Perhaps today I can die."
But the thought only served to keep me alive
and it angered me.

I thought about it and lived on, angrily.
I stayed in my room and thought and the anger became
unbearable!

I ran out of my room and
through the house and
into the street and
fixed my eyes upon the spot
where Robert had died and
DEMANDED A
MIRACLE!

Nothing happened.
Nothing!
NOTHING!
NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING!
Nothing was happening!
Nothing would happen!
Ever.

Nothing to see, nothing to
do, nothing to feel, nothing
to say, nothing to hope for,
nothing, nothing, NO THING!
No thing to care about the anger
shooting out my eyes as
I stood up and turned toward the house.
And I stopped.
Stunned.

My sphere was gone.
My house was not fastened to anything.
My street was not fastened to anything.
Grass, flowers, all in place. But
NOT FASTENED TO ANYTHING!

My mind swelled inside its skull and throbbed.
I ran into the next block. The sphere was not there. I
looked up and down and all around. The sphere was not
there. Houses, stores, cars, people — all as usual.

But NOT FASTENED!
Above, below, endless space, endless
nothingness.
I found my garden club.
It was not fastened to anything.
I found my bank.
Not fastened to anything.
I brought out my foreign aid and
my struggles against communism.
Not fastened.
I searched desperately and came
to my church. It was
not fastened.

"How nice to see you!"
I looked up. Again,
"How nice!"
I squinted my eyes against the sun.
The voice was Jane's, my dearest friend. Yet
it came from out there somewhere,
out of the void.
"Over here, my dear. Do you feel like talking today?"
Above and behind me. Turning,
I witnessed a sight far too astounding
to be mere imagination.

Jane and all her world had come to visit me.
She brought with her her house and down the street, mine.
There was the grocery store where we often encountered
each other among the frozen foods. I saw
the children's school and
people and traffic and
hills and mountains and
kangaroos in Australia.
In orbit, so to speak, around Jane.

It looked much like my world, and a fearful thought gripped me.
I glanced quickly about. Yes —
my house, Jane's
our bank, the school —
all here too.
Two complete, identical worlds
resting side by side,
with Jane the nucleus of one and
me of the other.



I tried to ask a question, but could think of none to encompass the situation.

Instead, I ran home and into the house and flung myself on the stairs and held tightly to the railing.

But a thought smashed into my mind and ricocheted crazily about:

"Why hold on? It's not fastened to anything."

A wild notion leaped across my brain and carried me outside again and down the street toward Jane's house and, without a pause to knock, through her kitchen door.

She stood at her stove, stirring oatmeal.

I sat on the kitchen stool and kept my eyes on her.

Jane put down the spoon and turned off the heat.

"Perhaps you didn't hear me," she said cheerfully.

"I repeat, 'do you feel like talking today?' "

"Jane," I heard myself whisper, "Jane, what—what is it?"

A smile that lit the room came on her face.

She understood!

She knew!

I held my breath.

"Your sphere is gone," she said.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"It means," she replied, "that anything you hold to for security in your world is not fastened down."

"Has this happened to you?" I asked. She nodded.

"Do you remember how sick I used to get?

The times I spent in the hospital and they couldn't find anything wrong? Carl warned me we couldn't afford imaginary illnesses and I thought him cold and cruel. Then when the money was gone

Carl left too.

No one was there

to care about my illness.

I wanted to be sick enough to die!

I was on my way to the hospital when

I first noticed my sphere was gone and my hospital wasn't fastened down.

"But your world—out there—" I pointed.

"Everybody's world is 'out there,'" Jane replied. "Come."

We stood in the back yard and looked.

A world floated into sight.

"Hello," said a man's voice.

"Hi, Tom," answered Jane.

"Tom Wilson," She explained to me. "Don's math teacher."

This was too much.

"You're joking!" I said.

"This is a giant joke!"

"He's out there and

you're out there and

he's here and

you're here and

I'm here and

you refer calmly to 'everybody's world'!

I'm getting out."

"Where do you plan to go?" Jane asked pleasantly.

"What do you mean by that remark?" I was angry again, and tired.

"You are in my world," Jane said, "just as

I am in yours.

You have your now-sphereless-world in which

I appear to you.

Likewise you appear to me in mine.

But my world is mine and yours is yours and we're stuck with them.

There's no getting out of your world into somebody else's.

We can't go world-hopping."
I sat down on a lawn chair.
"Whose world am I in now?" I asked weakly.
"Yours, of course," Jane replied.
I felt better.
"And I'm in mine," she added.

A rubbery globe moved into view.
It bore an unfamiliar name on its convex surface.
"That," explained Jane, "is a sphere.
Inside is a whole world—
you,
me,
sun,
stars,
everything.

Its nucleus is a person.
Suddenly she grasped my arm. "Watch!"
A crack had appeared in the sphere.
It widened and lengthened with lightening speed.
Noiselessly the sphere tore apart and fell away.
There in the center of the new-born world
lay a man face-down on a dingy street.
Ragged and unshaven men shuffled by, their course altered slightly
to avoid stumbling over him.
He moved a bit, then raised his head, I saw
in his eyes
an alcoholic glaze.
In agony he rose to his knees.
For a long time he looked down at the sidewalk,
then spat on it,
got up,
and walked away.

Suddenly he stopped. Before him
was the bar he had so recently left. He saw
the emptiness beneath, above, and all around.
His eyes shrunk into their sockets,
his head into his shoulders,
and in this hunched position
he searched wildly around him.
Then his body quivered;
it shook violently.
He grasped a telephone pole and
sank again to the pavement.
Then he did a strange thing, considering
the situation.
He began to laugh.
He laughed loud and then hysterically and then
he laughed softly and then
he began to cry.
No one looked at him.
He sat there and cried quietly,
all alone.

I wanted to touch him.
I wanted to reach out to him and say, "I have a sphereless world too."
But I said nothing.
A question had formed in my mind, and I turned to Jane.
"Is it better this way, Jane? Without a sphere?"
She thought a moment.

"Would you like to have your sphere back?
Would you like everything encased within,
securely attached as before—
your home, your friends,
your rivers and streams,
your problems and joys,
your children—"

"Robert!"
"Yes, Robert. Would you like it all back
as before?"
"Oh, Jane! How? How?"
"Forgive me. You can't my dear.
But think about it.

Betty Woods is a resident of Corpus Christi, Texas. Betty has attended several lay seminars at Laos House and is a regular participant in the monthly Provocational Dialogue in that city. She is the wife of S. S. Woods, the mother of two children, as well as author of several children's books.



Could you bear your life within the sphere,
 aware of what it was?
 A year from now—could you bear it?
 Two years from now—what then?"

I started home with these words in my ears,
 unable to voice an answer.

An answer to my life was not here.
 Dull and silent globes bearing names, familiar and unfamiliar,
 that neared my world and then went their way;
 other worlds—the sphereless ones—
 that greeted me as they passed:
 this was my awareness now.
 And I was aware above all
 that this awareness was
 no answer.

But I knew that all of these—
 the sphered and sphereless alike—
 appeared also to me in my own world!
 Suddenly I felt very excited!
 I would seek out the sphereless ones—the aware,
 the ones who from their worlds
 shouted greetings to me as they passed. And together
 we could help the others to become aware also! We could
 remove the spheres, and,
 under my direction,
 my world would free them all!
 My world
 might become the
 nucleus of them all!
 My world—

I stopped.
 I felt very dizzy.
 And rather sick.
 Then, like the alcoholic man, I began to laugh.

My world!
 What profound words!
 Exactly correct.

Mine.

Even in my own world when I appeared to those about me
 I appeared to them in
 their worlds,
 not
 mine.

What empty words.
My world!
 What a nauseating trick!

"Hello. Been out for a walk!"
 This was my husband's voice as I entered the house.
 He rose and came toward me,
 concern in his face.

"Are you all right, dear?" He asked gently.
 I looked at my husband and searched his face and wondered if
 I really knew him at all.
 He had been a part of my world for many years,
 but all that really meant was
 that I had been a part of his
 for just as long.

What kind of world was this
 of which I was a part? I longed to know.
 Was it encased in a sphere, and did he labor
 to keep me securely fastened down,
 thinking to help?
 Or was he free of the shell,
 aware of things as they are?
 And our Timmy, our little one, and Laura, our eldest?
 What of them?
 And the family next door,
 and those next door to them?

I looked at my husband. His world,
which I knew of but not about,
was my working place. Only in his world
did my actions have meaning
to him.

Only in Jane's world did my actions have meaning
to her.

Only in the lonely alcoholic's world
would my actions have meaning
to him.

Only in my neighbors' worlds could my actions have meaning
at all.

And this meaning, what would it be?

What ever they would have it be!

But from those who **knew**—the sphereless ones—
I would draw courage.

And those who lived in spheres would soon know me as one who
would not stay fastened down, as one who
tore the walls and
unstuck the glue and
broke the patches and
worked with all my will to
set them free!

I smiled at my husband and with all my heart
I loved his world, whatever it was.

"Are you all right?" he repeated.

"I'm fine," I replied.

"I'm ready to live."



On this and the following page are scenes from some of the first sessions of the monthly Provocational Dialogues held in five Texas cities. Above left is the group gathered in Houston in October. The pictures to the right depict a San Antonio Dialogue and those on the next page show scenes from a Corpus Christi gathering. Meetings are also held regularly in Dallas and Austin.

The Dialogues, although flexible in format, generally involve a directed discussion of an area of concern raised by the reading of a paper of cultural or theological interest, a recent happening in the world, a movie or other art form, or a lecture. Two staff members are generally present so that the larger group may be divided into smaller groupings.

The Dialogues are made up of persons who have at some time participated in the Laos House or College House programs and are participants in the share program of the Laos House Community. Also, a few interested guests are present at each gathering. Many of these guests, introduced to the Laos House venture through these meetings, have gone on to attend regular week-end seminars in Austin.



Since most of those attending already share the perspective dealt with in the week-end seminars, they have something of a common history or self-understanding out of which conversation can proceed. Because of this, conversation can move rather quickly to the heart of the issue at hand. These two and one half hour meetings also

provide the occasion for acquaintances to be renewed and a locus for the "community" within the area of these cities.

The staff understands the Provocational Dialogues to be an "extension" of their work into these areas in an important form, and not merely an adjunct of the week-end seminar emphasis. Many persons have asked about the possibility of scheduled personal or group consultation with staff members during these trips. Efforts are being made on the part of the staff to formulate a plan whereby the cost of such consultation can be determined and the service made available.



Advanced Seminars Offered This Spring

Two advanced week-end seminars have been announced for the Laos House spring term. These Austin week-ends are open to anyone who has completed the basic IA course. They begin at 6:00 P.M. on Friday and conclude at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday.

February 21-23, **MAN IN FAMILY** will be offered. Our culture and our religious traditions assume the destiny for men and women to be the bond of marriage. Seldom, if ever, do we examine the human meaning of the marriage relationship. This course will give attention to the changing cultural patterns in the contemporary family and marriage. Its major concern will be to explore the deeper questions and promises in marriage which lie below the surface of statistics, romantic idealism, or religious clichés.

On April 17-19, a reading course will be offered. From time to time a book comes forth which uniquely disturbs us in our dogmatic bareness, and tantalizes us with fresh promise for daily aliveness. Such a book is **GOD IS NO MORE** by Werner and Lotte Pelz. Such chapters as "The Promise of Committal," "The Promise of the Neighbor," and "The Promise of Lawlessness" offer a compelling analysis of the human predicament. They point equally to a compelling human promise—a promise that is much more than an answer.

Registrations for either of these courses may be sent to Laos House Administrative Offices, 1906 Rio Grande, Austin, Texas 78705.

Beginning Week-end Seminars

Three IA basic course seminars are open to interested persons during the next few weeks. March 20-22, April 3-5, and May 1-3. No educational prerequisites or advanced preparation is necessary for a person to attend any of these seminars. The \$16.16 fee covers meals, room, linens, and curriculum materials. Austin is accessible by bus, rail, or air. Persons planning to attend should pre-register prior to their coming to Austin.

letter to laymen

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