

H. B. Sissel

The Church as Mission

Biblical Foundations for Social Action

IF ONE READS THE BIBLE IN ITS WHOLENESS, rather than in fragmentary snatches, and then seeks to sort out the threads that are consistently discernible in it, what he will find there will speak almost unmistakably of a God whose sovereign will rules in history, and whose choice of human instruments for the working out of his purpose in unconditioned by any outside elements in the instruments he chooses. Some of you are already familiar with Paul Minear's Book, *The Eyes of Faith*. He characterizes the God of the Bible in a parable that goes something like this: you are at a theatre with a group of friends, sitting in a box. You are absorbed as a spectator of the drama that is taking place on the stage below. Suddenly the author and director of the play steps out from the wings, and while the drama continues, shouts your name. "Joe Smith!" he calls. "Come down here on the stage and get into the act. I have a part for you." No one else hears him, but you are embarrassed because you can no longer be a spectator, but are called upon to make a decision. Will you go, or will you stay? Will you argue with the director, or will you ignore his sudden challenge of your status as a spectator? Or will you get up and leave the theatre?

And so it was with Abraham and Jeremiah, and Peter and James and John. Or sometimes the director of the play may dispatch two burly stagehands who, while you are absorbing the message of the drama, march into your box and drag you without warning bodily down on to the stage, pummeling you all the way, and fling you into the action. Again your spectator status has been changed, and you become a participant, looking to the director and author for instructions. Thus it was with Joseph and Paul, in fact, with Israel, and the early Church. Now when you get several people who have in common with each other the conviction that the director has so interfered with their life, has called them to participate, under his direction, in the drama of life, and when they share together their experience, and direct their eyes together to the One who has called them, you get not a conglomeration of isolated individuals, but a community, an organism, a body, in the sense that Israel was a religious community, in the sense that the early Christian Church was a community. They have a sense, these people, of destiny, a sense of corporateness, so that those who think about it can say "You are the Body of Christ" or "Once you were no people; now you are God's people." They have a pattern of life that is a part of their response to the One who has made them a community. They worship together, and their worship is directed toward this One who gives them their existence and renews their existence constantly. They have a certain kind of relationship to each other within the community, and they act together in response to the action that is taking place outside their community under the direction of the author and director of the play, which is history.

Israel knows this God who is sovereign, and knows that He chooses and rules, judges and redeems, and Israel's life and the life of the individual Israelite is absolutely qualified by this knowledge, so long as Israel has self-awareness as a people of God related to its God.

(continued on page seven)

Each year, the Christian Faith-and-Life Community directs attention to given areas of the life of the Church which reflect the inner structure of the Community itself. Three years ago, concentrated attention to the meaning of **corporate study** resulted in the unified curriculum. The following year, the group's concern was upon the meaning of **corporate worship**, which gave birth to the Community's Daily Office. The creative efforts were focused last year upon the meaning of **corporate living**, which produced the Community's Rule of Life, soon to be printed in Letter To Laymen. The present article by the Rev. H. B. Sissel is an initial effort to raise the issue of the current year as the Community research is brought to bear upon the meaning of **corporate mission**.

Letter to Laymen



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Edited by the corporate office of the Community: Allan R. Brockway, Robert R. Bryant, W. Jack Lewis, William H. Maclay, Joseph W. Mathews, Joseph L. Pierce, Joseph A. Slicker.



New faces in the corporate mission of the Community: Mrs. and Mr. Hal Germer, Mrs. and Mr. Robert Bryant, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen Brockway.

Mission: The New Year's Response

THE CHRISTIAN Faith-and-Life Community, still consciously an experiment after seven years of research in the area of lay theological training, began its eighth year this month by-passing the temptation to become any less experimental than the world-wide Lay Movement of which it understands itself to be a part.

The Lay Movement of this age has been likened unto the emergence of "islands of awareness" in the vast sea of active complacency that characterizes our time. Perhaps a better figure would be that of a peninsula growing out from the mainland of the Church and jutting into the turbulent waters of the twentieth century.

As an island, its origins are in the volcanic, subterranean depths where the question of the meaning of life melts complacency into the lava of decision. As a peninsula, the whole movement has grown out of the shaking of the foundations to which men in all times are subject. History will tell; but in either case, that which has emerged is the beginning of another concrete renewal of the Church in her mission to the world.

THE QUESTION of the *meaning* of that corporate mission will be the emphasis in the Community's explorations for the new year, planned with the same intensity as former research in corporate living, study, and worship.

The eighth year began with a special colloquy held for the board of directors who participated in the first course of the Community's unified curriculum under the same circumstances as the groups of laymen who come to the Community's Laos House. This was the first step in an attempt to offer the board

the opportunity to understand from the inside the meaning of the program of the Community. Here, it was discovered afresh that the radical word which confronts us in Jesus Christ ever remains an offense—even to His own people—and that each person must come to terms with this Word as he meets it again and again in every new situation.

The following week, eighty-seven University of Texas students, single and married, ranging from freshman through graduate, moved into the College House and its adjacent apartments for a year of covenant responsibility which would see them through the total curriculum, daily worship, and life together focused upon the question of the meaning of mission. A Feast of Beginnings culminating in the *Service of the Covenant* and attended by board members, parents, students, and staff launched the College House group upon its common venture.

WAITING TO GET UNDERWAY in October were the Parish Ministers' Colloquies, the Parish Laymen's Seminars, the Laic Theological Studies (announced in this issue), and several other projected experiments to be conducted before the end of May.

On hand to carry out the manifold program were three new members of the Community's group ministry, a seminary intern, and two new hostesses, with four international visitor interns scheduled to arrive from Europe over the next few weeks.

Complementing the interdenominational faculty are Allan R. Brockway, former minister to students at West Texas State College, and Robert R. Bryant who comes to the Community from a church in close proximity to Montana State University.

Brockway, a Methodist clergyman, was a parish minister before he entered student work and is a graduate of Hendrix College and Perkins School of Theology. He is married and has two children.

Bryant was formerly a student worker at the University of California in Berkeley and has been a parish minister (American Baptist) for a number of years. He is married, the father of four children, and is a graduate of Baylor and Berkeley Divinity School.

The third addition to the corporate office is William H. Maclay, a Presbyterian lay-theologian, whose work will be in the area of development (See page eight).

Harold Germer, son of an American Baptist minister, has been appointed by the Danforth Foundation as Seminary Intern to work with the Community for a year. The Seminary Intern Program in the Community will be reported in detail in a future issue of *Letter To Laymen*. Germer is a graduate in philosophy of Denison University where he was elected to *Phi Beta Kappa*, and has completed two years at Andover Newton Theological School in Massachusetts. He has served as president of the American Baptist Student Movement. He and his wife are living in the group of apartments for married couples acquired this year.

Mrs. Ruth Petitfils, a registered nurse, and Miss Jo Ann Thompson, a former resident of the Community, join the staff of hostesses which includes another Community alumnus, Mrs. George McCullough. Mrs. Petitfils comes to the Community from Schreiner Institute in Kerville. Miss Thompson has done graduate study at Harvard Divinity School since her residence in the Community. Mrs. McCullough has served as hostess in the Laos House for the past year.

The newly established International Visitors' Seminar brings three girls from Germany and one from Holland for an academic year as participants in the Community program and as workers.

ALL OF THESE PEOPLE enter into the Community's Rule of Life for the sake of carrying out the mission of the Church in this concrete situation. They freely submit themselves to this covenant for freedom, their own freedom as well as that of the persons to whom they will minister throughout the year. In this free decision, as in all present free decisions, this Community experiences its entire past and its total future, both of which are in the hands of the One who is the ground of all being. "The end is in the beginning."

the laic theological studies

Many reflective men and women today, caught in the transition between two worlds, becoming increasingly aware of the inescapable moral ambiguities in their daily lives, and burdened by the pain of making necessary decisions in every complex life situation for which easy moral answers of the past are no longer adequate, are urgently seeking a chance to reflect creatively in depth upon the meaning of the moral life and upon the labyrinthine process of decision making.

Many reflective men and women today, acutely aware within themselves of a deep, uneasy, lonely emptiness which tranquilizers, diversions, and counsellors do not cast out, and sick of the illusions, pretension, fake roles and masks by which they hide from life as it is, are yearning for the possibility of raising, in the company of similarly aware people, the question of what life is all about.

Many reflective men and women today, forced to face the breakdown of authentic human relations in their marriages and homes, are becoming aware of their participation in the widespread estrangement and alienation in all social structures of our day, and are inwardly longing to find a context through which they can enter into an open dialogue with other awakened people about what it means to live genuinely as human beings before one another.

Many reflective men and women today, of all ages and in all walks of life, successful or unsuccessful, experiencing an underlying purposelessness in their work and sensing themselves trapped by the tyranny of the economic processes of our time, are asking for a situation wherein they can express and grapple openly and honestly with their desire for a sense of participating authentically in history in general and in modern man's creative response in and to the brand new world about us.

Many reflective men and women today, inside and outside the Church, disturbed by the too easy answers which the Church offers to the ills and anxieties of life, and grieved by the apparent irrelevance of the Church to the actual life of twentieth century man, are searching with real importunity for a way to raise anew the question of the significance of the Christian gospel to the human situation in our age and an occasion to discover new ways to serve the Church in her mission in and to the world.

Many reflective men and women today, aroused and frightened by the realization that they and others of our time are caught in a maze of manipulative, subtly hidden conformist pressures, highly developed propaganda techniques, and educational processes that leave men somewhat short of a genuine education, are demanding an opportunity to discover what it means for a man to dare to think creatively for himself in the midst of a continuing conversation with others. All of this points to the meaning and purpose of the Laic Theological Studies

FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY TOWARD THE CONTINUING RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN HER MISSION TO THE WORLD



the laos house

christian faith-and-life community

austin, texas



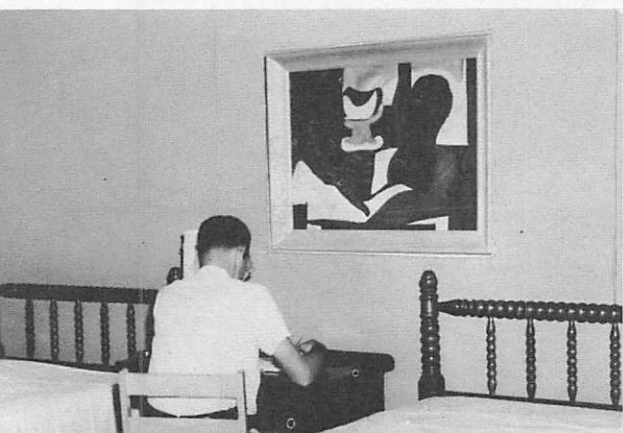
Meals are prepared and served by the Laos House staff in relaxed setting.



Seminar discussions: a dialogue with 20th century life in its many dimensions.



Current movies and other art forms focus upon modern man's perplexities. Accommodations for week-end participants are comfortable, inexpensive.



a theological education

"THE DECISIVE ELEMENT in the predicament of Western man in our period is his loss of the dimension of depth. . . What is the meaning of life? Where do we come from, where do we go to? What shall we do, what should we become in the short stretch between birth and death? Such questions are not answered or even asked if the "dimension of depth" is lost. And this is precisely what has happened to man in our period of history. He has lost the courage to ask such questions with an infinite seriousness—as former generations did—and he has lost the courage to receive answers to these questions, wherever they may come from."

— Paul Tillich

THE LAIC THEOLOGICAL STUDIES are stimulating, down-to-earth programs for men and women in all walks of life who are concerned to come to grips with the ultimate human problems as they present themselves in our day. In the studies, a group of adults with various backgrounds, unique insights, and individual concerns take part in the **vital theological awakening** that is present at the growing edge of every field of thought in our time. The program represents a **twentieth century approach** to practical theological education for persons who are awake to the perplexities of modern life and who desire to wrestle with basic issues of life in depth and breadth.

THE STUDIES INVOLVE both lectures and seminar sessions but the emphasis in time and intention is upon the latter. Since the entire program probes beneath the superficialities of life, **serious study** is required of all participating, in order to grapple with the meaning of one's own responses to the upbeats and downbeats of human existence.

THE STUDIES ALSO PROVIDE the opportunity for a **dialogue with culture**. Contemporary art forms such as movies, plays, short stories, sculpture, painting, and poetry make possible the discovery of new ways to experience our own lives. This interchange makes possible a deeper understanding of the manifold ways in which the different responses to human existence are expressed.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES of the studies is the chance to delve beneath the surface of our false relationships and wrestle with the problem of what it means to live before one another as whole persons. In our **common life together**, through open and honest discussion, the participants deal with the perplexities of friendship, contemporary marriage and family life, and social and business relationships in the midst of a world that is predominantly "**other directed**" with its many pressures of conformity. Serious attention is given to the **common symbols** through which one is enabled to become who he understands himself to be.

THE WHOLE PROGRAM is an endeavor to recover the possibilities of **genuine vocation** in this new world. Amid the many "-isms" that cry for our allegiance, the Laic Studies are an opportunity to regain the courage to dare to use our critical intelligence to decide and act in the light of our convictions, and thereby fulfill our legitimate responsibility to be free people in all aspects of our daily life.

toward an effective secular

THE LAIC THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

A unified theological curriculum for laics which deals with the meaning of being a free, critical, intelligent person in the midst of the orders of life from the perspective of the self-understanding of the Christian Faith.

	contemporary theology	biblical studies	church history	theological ethics
THEOLOGICAL CORE COURSES	I A The Meaning of Human Existence or The Problem of Faith	II A The Faith of the Covenant Community or The Gospel in the Old Testament	III A The Christian Movement in History or The Church's Witness in Various World Views	IV A The Meaning of Responsibility or The Christian Faith in Action
	I B The Modes of Human Existence or The Christian Life as Faith/Unfaith	II B The Self-understanding of the Early Church or The New Testament Gospel	III B The Role of the Church in the Modern World or The Local Congregation as Mission	IV B The Life of Freedom in Society or The Christian Community in the World
ADVANCED READING COURSES	I C Readings in Contemporary Theology	II C Readings in Biblical Theology	III C Readings in Historical Theology	IV C Readings in Theological Ethics
	I D Readings in Modern Thought	II D Readings in Biblical Literature	III D Readings in Church Problems	IV D Readings in Social Thought

Description of Courses

I-A The Meaning of Human Existence or The Problem of Faith: An examination of the ways in which the problem of life's meaning is raised in the modern world and how the Christian understanding of life addresses this issue; the study of such terms as God, Christ, Sin, Community, etc.

I-B The Modes of Human Existence or The Christian Life as Faith/Unfaith: The various ways in which man in the modern world is present to his existence in relation to nature and history; analyzed through the categories of freedom and unfreedom or faith and unfaith.

II-A The Faith of the Covenant Community or The Gospel in the Old Testament: After brief consideration of the origin and nature of the writings and formation of the Canon, Old Testament theology is explored through an inquiry into the various writers' views of man's self-understanding.

II-B The Self-understanding of the Early Church or the New Testament Gospel: An investigation of the various ways in which the Early Church articulated that which happened to them that they termed "the gospel;" through a study of the works of Paul, the synoptic writers, John, and the later New Testament authors.

III-A The Christian Movement in History or The Church's Witness in Various World Views: The response of the Church in and to the various historical times; through an inquiry into the writings of representative fathers such as Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Edwards, and Schleiermacher.

III-B The Role of the Church in the Modern World or The Local Congregation as Mission: An analysis of the new understanding of the Church in our time. The course will deal with such subjects as: the mission of the local congregation, the meaning of common worship, the place and nature of education in the Church, and the nature and function of Christian Community.

IV-A The Meaning of Christian Responsibility or The Christian Faith in Action: An inquiry into what it means to be a free, critical intelligent person in the midst of the events and structures of our age. This involves dealing with such concepts as responsibility, decision, selfhood, vocation, etc.

IV-B The Life of Freedom in the Social Structures or The Christian Community in the World: This course deals concretely with the social orders, their present ills, and what responsible participation in them involves: The family and married life, the state and citizenship, the economic order and vocation, are particular areas which will be considered.

I, II, III, IV, C and D—The Advanced Reading Courses are seminars in special subjects, problems and writers past and present under the general curriculum divisions indicated in the chart. The intention in the advanced studies is to deal with relatively compact areas in some depth. For example, one entire course may be upon a work of Camus, Luther, or Tillich, or upon worship, the sacraments, the mission of the Church, or upon marriage, race relations, the economic order, etc.

Faculty

The Laic Theological Studies are directed by an interdenominational group ministry of laymen and clergymen: Allan R. Brockway, Robert Bryant, W. Jack Lewis, William H. MacLay, Joseph W. Mathews, Joseph L. Pierce, and Joseph A. Slicker.

"I sense everywhere a great desire on the part of intelligent laymen for theological education . . . They are the persons who would like to know how they can minister in the crucial affairs of contemporary cultural and community life."

— Elmer G. Homrighausen, Dean,
Princeton Theological Seminary

The Christian Faith-and-Life Community was established in 1952 as an ecumenical research and training center for the purpose of pioneering and developing new ways and means in the theological education of the laity. Its several programs encompass residential theological education for university students (through the Community's College House) and a number of special programs for people of post-college age. The latter are conducted through the Community's Laos House. In 1959, the Laic Theological Studies were instituted to meet the needs of an increasing number of persons both inside and outside the Church who are seeking a theological education adequate to their desire for intellectual honesty and integrity.

"The most significant expression of the Church that I have seen in the United States is the Christian Faith-and-Life Community and the witness it represents."

— Dr. Hendrick Kraemer, founder
and former director, Ecumenical
Institute, Switzerland

CHRISTIAN FAITH-AND-LIFE COMMUNITY

W. Jack Lewis, Executive Director

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the laic theological studies

For the purpose of making the Laic Theological Studies available to increasing numbers of concerned persons, the same program is offered in two forms: on a weekly basis for people in the vicinity of Austin, and on a week-end basis for people of the Southwest.

WEEKLY

time

Three 6-week courses per year are held weekly on Thursday nights, beginning with dinner at 6 P.M. and lasting until 9:30 in the evening.

cost

Tuition is six dollars for each six-week course. The cost of the evening meals for the six-week period is six dollars.

accommodations

The course studies are conducted in the lecture and seminar rooms of the Laos House at 700 West 19th Street. Dinner is prepared by the Laos House staff and served in the dignified setting of the old mansion. When desired, arrangements for child care are made by the Laos House at the nominal cost of fifty cents per family.

procedures

Lectures, discussions, seminars, study sessions, movies, and other art form presentations serve to implement the Laic Theological Studies. Persons in all walks of life and of many different educational backgrounds participate in the studies.

WEEK END

Week end studies are held periodically throughout the year. Each program begins with dinner on Friday evening and continues through lunch on Sunday.

The cost is the nominal sum of six dollars per day for room, meals, and tuition; or twelve dollars for the full week end.

The week end studies are held at the Christian Faith-and-Life Community's Laos House at 700 West 19th Street, which is the old Wooten mansion. The nicely appointed rooms and carefully prepared meals along with the atmosphere of the old house provide a pleasant setting for the week end.

"LIFE IS ONLY GIVEN to me once and I shall never have it again; I don't want to wait for the 'happiness of all'. I want to live myself, or else better not live at all. . . . Where is it I've read that some one condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he'd have only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live. Life! whatever it may be!"

— Dostoevsky

FOR APPLICATION

write

Director of Studies

Christian Faith-and-Life Community

2503 Rio Grande

Austin, Texas

Telephone GReenwood 7-4471

The Church as Mission

C. H. DODD, IN HIS BOOK, *Gospel and Law*, discerns a clear pattern in the New Testament, most clearly seen in some of the epistles, notably Ephesians, Romans, Colossians, Galatians. Dodd says "The first part of these epistles deals with specifically religious themes, in the reflective manner that constitutes theology, and the second part consists mainly of ethical precepts or admonitions. The theological affirmations of the first part rehearse the common experience that made the community a community." That is to say, it relates the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ in response to which those who are now the Church in Ephesus or Rome found themselves to be the Church. The ethical admonitions which come later have meaning only and precisely because they are addressed to this community by one who claims to speak for the God who created the community. These ethical admonitions have no meaning and cannot validate themselves simply as abstract principles or moral laws posted on a public bulletin board for anyone who happens to pass by to see. When you turn from the epistles to the gospels, says Dodd, you find a similar pattern, but with this difference: as the ethical instructions in the epistles are related to theological doctrines or affirmations, the ethical instructions in the gospels are related to a narrative of events, and are, in fact, interspersed in that narrative of events. But the difference is not a significant one, since it is the series of events narrated in the gospels which forms the theology as it is affirmed in the epistles. In the gospels it is the events, the words, the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ that create the community of his disciples to whom he addresses his ethical admonitions and other teachings. In the epistles it is the reaffirmation of these events and their meaning, that reminds the community of its origin and its destiny. The community is the "Thou" to whom concrete, rather than abstract ethical instruction can be addressed—ethical instruction that comes from an "I".

Self Awareness

WHEN YOU READ THE GOSPELS, sometime note how frequently it is that Jesus is addressing his disciples, in comparison to the relatively few times he addresses a diverse conglomeration of people. When he speaks to those who have not become his disciples, he preaches good news, and healing, or he preached judgment and affliction, as in the case of the Pharisees and the money-changers. Only to the community of the disciples could he speak of ethical behavior, require of them a pattern of life. If you look at the apostolic preaching, as recorded in the sermons of the 2nd, 3rd and 7th chapters of Acts, and in Paul's sermon on Mars Hill, you will see that once again they constitute essentially a proclamation, rather than an ethical exhortation; they are indicative, declarative, rather than imperative or hortatory.

I raise this question. Is this not because the apostolic sermons as recorded in Acts were not addressed to a religious community that had self-awareness of its existence as a community of God, but rather to a group of individuals who happened to be in the same place at the same time for a variety of reasons.

If you turn to the Old Testament, you find a comparable pattern; in the historical writings, a narrative of events whose main actor is God. God calls Abraham out of Mesopotamia and makes a covenant with him. God makes of Abraham's descendants a people; He delivers Joseph into Egypt; He raises up a Pharaoh who makes this people slaves; and sends Moses back into Egypt to lead them. He delivers them miraculously out of Egypt, and renews his covenant with them. He gives Canaan into their hands, and raises up judges and rulers and prophets among them. He afflicts them by their enemies. He makes Saul their king, and then David. He visits judgment upon them, and miraculously delivers them again and again, until finally He destroys their existence as a nation under the Assyrians and later the Babylonians, so that they are without king, without land, and without temple. But He keeps them as a spiritual congregation, the Jews, who again and repeatedly break their covenant with Him. And then in the New Testament, He comes himself, as Jesus Christ. In the giving of the Law, the ten commandments, He first reminds them of who He is, what He has done, and who they are. The ten commandments are not stated as abstract moral principles, or as ethical precepts meant to stand in their own right and on their own two feet for "all rational men of good will." This was the way of the Greek philosophers and their ethics. The ten commandments begins not with a demand, but with a reminder or a declaration: "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee up out of Egypt. Thou shalt—" They originate with an I, and are addressed to a Thou, a people who know who it is that speaks, and to whom this I is speaking.

Peculiar Instruments

IN THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS you find again a similar pattern. The characteristic utterances of the prophets are completely alien to the kind of didactic ethics that begin "If a man doesn't live a good life, he will get into trouble, the good life consists of doing this and refraining from that". The characteristic utterances of the prophets are simply "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel. I am about to do a wondrous thing among you because you have done so and so, or have failed to keep my covenant, etc." In other words, Israel and Judah are reminded

again and again of who they are, and who it is that has made them a religious community, of what they have done or failed to do. This is interpreted to them by the One who made them through the mouth of the prophets. They are called upon to respond to Him in the concrete situation in which they find themselves. They are to break this alliance with Egypt. They are to stop that kind of buying and selling of land; they are to destroy these idols, make war on that people, and so on. They are to do this because they are related by covenant to the One who made them, who judges and redeems them, and who now speaks to them in this specific situation. The Law outlines the terms of the covenant, but it is not the Law to which they are to respond. It is God to whom they are related, and they are to make their response to Him in this I-Thou relationship. God is their God, and they are his people, and when they were faithful, they had enough self-awareness and sense of destiny to know it. When they got into trouble and came under judgment, it was not primarily because they broke the Law, although they did, but primarily because they lost their knowledge of the Lord, who gave them the Law, and hence ceased to care about Him or their destiny, or the Law. So that the prophets could say "My people perish for the lack of the knowledge of the Lord."

So far as the Bible is concerned, its God is the one that directs history and is active in every event in history. He is the one who chooses certain people in history to disclose to them his action, and to thrust upon them the agonizing responsibility of knowing themselves to be his peculiar instruments in history. The knowledge of their election, and their response in their election to this God who acts in judgment and mercy binds them together into a religious community that has self-awareness and a sense of destiny as a people of God. This community's business is with God. It is to respond to Him in its worship, in its relationship to the world in which He is acting, in the personal, moral behavior of its individual members, and in the corporate behavior of the community as a Body.

The life of the Old Testament religious community and the life of the New Testament religious community began with historical events, or later, the description and interpretive proclamation of these events, and was continually renewed by this proclamation, but it did not end there. This proclamation was the means by which God created the community of his people, and the proclamation repeated was the means by which God preserved and renewed the life of his people. But out of the proclamation issued response to God—response in worship, response in missionary activity, response in the giving of the goods of life, response in the individual moral behavior, and response in the corporate life of the community as it was related to other corporate entities in life outside the Church in the world where God was also working.

Loss Of Identity

NOW YOU AND I, AS THE CHURCH, are concerned about the behavior of the Church and its members, in worship and in stewardship, in evangelism, in missionary activity, in their personal moral behavior, and in what has come to be called "social action". We have all too often found it necessary, in order to achieve certain behavioral results, to employ gimmicks of one kind or another—visual and auditory stimuli in worship, "techniques" as they are called, in evangelism, turnover charts or professional experts in fund-raising, inflammatory speeches in social action, and so on. And we have found these gimmicks necessary not primarily to instruct people how to make an appropriate response to God—a response that we could assume they already wanted to make—but more characteristically, to put them under some kind of manipulation that would elicit the desire to respond, and elicit certain kinds of behavior. We want to increase our per capita giving, so we hire experts to help us get that increase. We want to do something about the race problem, so we use rational arguments and manipulative techniques to try to get people to believe and act as though they really accepted what we like to call the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man". We want to increase our membership, so we train people in what so say when they ring doorbells, so that those they call on may be encouraged to come to church.

Why do we do all of these things? We don't feel entirely easy about it, in spite of the fact that we interlard our efforts with liberal doses of prayer and frequent mentions of the name of Jesus Christ. We are an uncomfortable people, caught in a manipulative age, using gimmicks to produce the results that we think we want to see in our churches and in our Christian membership. Is this not because we have lost the awareness of our identity as the elect of God, and have lost our knowledge of the God who rules in judgment and mercy, and have lost our sense of responsibility to this God as He continues to act in international relations, in Supreme Court decisions, in labor-management strife, in politics, economics, the social forces of our day, just as He also acts in the worship of the sanctuary, and in the family life that all of us lead.

I have taken so much time on what I call "the Biblical foundations for social action" because I am not primarily interested in being caught, or in seeing you caught in this same pattern that seeks results, first, last and always. If the Church is to engage in social action, and I devoutly hope that it will, lest it cease to be the Church, let it do so in the full knowledge of the God to whom it is making its response, and full self-awareness of what it means to be a people of God, chosen by Him, burdened by and rejoicing in its election and the destiny that God has created for it.

MACLAY NAMED NEW REPRESENTATIVE

AFTER GRADUATION from S.M.U. in 1948, Bill Maclay, a Presbyterian layman, taught school for Two years at St. Mark's, a secondary school for young men in Dallas. It was a quiet and thoughtful period in contrast to his service in World War II with the 99th Infantry Division when he was captured by the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge. His experiences as a prisoner of war until 1945 raised serious questions that led him to give up teaching and begin a theological education at St. Andrews University in Scotland.

There, he became acquainted with the Iona Community and met Jack Lewis whose mission at St. Andrews was prompted by a similar disturbance of the soul. The Iona Community, one of the earliest lay centers, threw new light upon the perplexities of the age. Lewis returned to found the Christian Faith-and-Life Community, Maclay to seven years of serious reflection upon the ministry of the Laity while engaged in the world of business.

For more than six years, Maclay was a Southwest representative of British Overseas Airways Corporation and served in Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth.

On October first he joins the group ministry of the Community where his experience as a representative to the public and his theological training will be focused upon the development of financial support for the Community.

MACLAY IS A NATIVE TEXAN. His grandfather was a United Presbyterian minister. In college, he majored in geography and economics. Before he received his bachelors degree in 1948, he was president of the Westminster Student Fellowship, the Blue Key National Honor Fraternity, the Students' Publishing Society, and the Geographic Society, vice-president of the YMCA, member of the Student Council, member of the Epsilon Social Fraternity, and CYCEN FJODR (an honorary organization for senior men).

He moves to Austin from the Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, and is currently a lay-member of the Committee on Worship of the Presbytery of Northeast Texas, U.S.

In cooperation with Jack Lewis, Maclay will be helping in the organization of groups of friends of the Community across the state and nation. He will be calling upon you in person and by mail to lend your aid to the Community's several programs, and will be interpreting the continuing experiment of the Community to you through both public addresses and personal contact. Please receive him as the representative of the total Community.



Bill Maclay is welcomed to Community's corporate office by W. Jack Lewis: Memories of Iona and St. Andrews.

SUBSCRIBERS, PLEASE NOTE

Letter To Laymen is a journal for the Laity devoted to the continuing renewal of the Church in her mission to the world and to the interpretation of the Lay Movement of the present day which is a part of that renewal.

The primary function of this journal is to share the fruit of the research and reflection developed in the experimental work of the Community in the training of the Laity. It is open to any creative thought on the matter of the meaning of the mission of the Church in the midst of the current world-wide revolution within the Church and culture.

The journal is directed to a readership of adult persons in all walks of life, in the United States and abroad, who share a common concern that the Church recover with intellectual relevance and integrity her ancient and ever-modern ministry in and to the twentieth century world. This constituency includes both laymen and clergymen as well as people who are not associated with the Church but who are concerned to deal with the issues of life at depth. The journal is therefore geared to the nurture of persons who are awake to the new world that is bursting into being. Although there is an evangelistic element implicit in its contents, it is secondary to the task of ministering to the needs of such an awakened readership.

Your subscription covers less than the cost of printing and mailing. Any financial aid above the subscription rate will be genuinely appreciated. If you have not renewed your subscription either directly or through contributions to the Community, your renewal this month will be most helpful. When you write, your comments and suggestions, your reflection upon the matters of faith and the recovery of the ministry of the Laity, will also be appreciated.

Dear Everybody:

The past three months have constituted for me a liberal education in crime, its causes and the problems of law-enforcement in Texas. It has been a tremendous but sobering experience to come face-to face with fellow-human beings caught up in theft, murder, rape, sodomy, harlotry, embezzlement, swindling, driving while intoxicated and virtually every type of felonious act known to man.

July, August, and September found me meeting twice a week for six to eight hours with eleven other members of the Travis County Grand Jury. It was a fellowship of concern. We were charged to protect society on the one hand and the rights of the individual on the other. I have never before felt the weight of responsibility so directly on my shoulders.

The Grand Jurors with me were both white and negro, male and female, groceryman, insurance man, optometrist, journalist, druggist, housewife, advertising man and others of varied business experience. All were Christian laymen of several denominations.

Here was the church-in-the-world coming to grips with some of the most pressing problems in this or any other society.

Except the Church equip laymen for their mission in the world as grand jurors, city councilmen, businessmen, professional men, laboring men, with the understanding that they are in fact neighbors to all men and have responsibility for all men, the church fails to be the Church.

Finally, this means that within the church, men must come to a realistic Christian self-understanding so that they can bring their critical intelligence to bear upon the pressing social, economic, political and educational problems of our time, while at the same time dare with reckless venturesomeness to enter into all human relationships as men of faith responding to the gracious activity of God who meets them in the concrete situations of every moment.

The Church is mission and ministry in the world through the mission and ministry of laymen. At the same time the laity has the responsibility of serving as the "Intelligence Corps" for the church. On the basis of their intelligence reports from the midst of the world, the church militant can plot her strategy, equip her troops, make her beach-heads, die to herself and experience daily resurrection through the prophethood-priesthood-servanthood of the laity.

September, 1959

Christian Faith-and-Life
Community

2503 Rio Grande, Austin 5, Texas
W. Jack Lewis, Executive Director

Letter to Laymen

W. Jack Lewis

Letter to Laymen

WHEN THE WORDS "faith-and-life" were joined together in the title of the Austin Experiment of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community, the founders of the experiment were hoping to ward off the ever-present temptation to live in a dream world of theological abstraction. They also were aware that sheer concentration upon "life" would be an equal temptation that could destroy the purpose of the Experiment. The hyphenated verbal symbol was meant as a formulation that would increasingly point to the necessary double emphasis: reflection and thought genuinely tied to the everyday "stuff" of the real world, with no division between the two.

One aspect of everyday life in the real world which has the concern of awakened people in the Church is the plight of the modern industrial man. This concern has recently been concretely raised afresh by Dick Junkin, one of the College House alums who, after spending the summer in industry wrote the letter which follows, and by Hi Dong Chai, a College House Second Year Fellow, who wrote the reflections which follow Junkin's letter. Chai (a Korean student) has spent the past three summers in industry with the Ohio Power and Light Company.

Tied to a Machine — By Dick Junkin

The reason we are in Chicago is that I am taking part in the Ministers-in-Industry Program. Around forty of us seminarians have jobs of one sort or another during the day or night, and take part in a common meal in the evening, followed by discussions, lectures, etc., three nights a week, and worship one night . . .

I work at a candy factory which employs around 1500 people. It is not unionized. I work nine hours per day, starting at 5 A.M., which means I get up at four o'clock. I'm called a "candy catcher," which means that I catch candy in trays as it comes out of a very large candy making machine.

We have talked a lot about labor and management, racial problems in the inner city, housing, and so forth. Probably the most exciting evening was last Monday when Leonard Styche of the West Side Christian Parish (related to East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York) talked to us. He talked about the Church and its use of power in the midst of all the other power structures of the inner city—the Church as it had to get its hands dirty . . .

After this summer I'll know more what people mean when they talk about (1) the boring, monotonous life of the factory, as my job is highly repetitious; (2) the machine-like qualities of factory workers, as I am tied to a machine, or might as well be—when it runs, I run, and it doesn't stop because I might like it to; (3) production in quantity—we make around 25,000 pounds of chocolate covered cherries per day, only this doesn't include the chocolate which is put on in another process; (4) the fact that factory workers are human beings just as much as the good old middle class people in my home town . . . I've learned a lot that I should have learned before.

Reflections on the Mechanical Life — by Hi Dong Chai

All are absurd: the revolt of flesh against time, the world we live in, people around us, dogs, cats, and we ourselves. All are vanities! All are meaningless!

A worker gets up at six o'clock in the morning. He washes his face. He drinks a glass of orange juice, eats cereal, two fried eggs, three pieces of toast, four strips of bacon, a glass of milk, and a cup of black coffee. His wife packs him a big lunch. He takes a bus and rides thirty minutes to the factory where he works. He gets off the bus, walks ten minutes, opens the factory door, and punches a time card. He goes to his locker, changes his clothes, and then goes to work. He sits on a seat in front of a punch press and punches holes on a big metal sheet. One, two, three, four, five He punches; He punches! Five minutes, ten minutes, thirty minutes, an hour, two hours . . . He punches on.

(Continued on Page Two)



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Dear Everybody:

A decade on the Christian calendar, *Anno Domini*, is coming to a close. Only forty years remain in the Twentieth Century, but they are fraught with danger, promise, excitement . . . as perhaps no equal period in world history except the first forty years, A.D. Political leaders are calling for "new pioneers." Jurists, scientists, technologists are calling this the "Age of Exploration."

In 1952, the Community was established to help the Christian churches face the challenge of this new age through research and experimentation in training Christian laymen for their ministry in home, neighborhood, nation, and the uttermost parts of the world.

As we enter into a new decade, the Community's work is increasingly and rightly being understood as an ongoing experiment—the Austin Experiment. This name makes explicit that which has been implicit in our work from the outset:

1.) It is true to our understanding of our task in behalf of the Church in her mission to the world. Since our beginning early in this decade, we have been experimental. So we are now. So will we remain.

2.) The Biblical understanding and interpretation of history is that God is present in every situation, meeting man with both judgment and redemption, calling upon him to see with eyes of faith and respond in freedom to what on earth God is doing in that moment of time. Since our faith is a part of the historic Christian Community, the Church of Jesus Christ . . . that Body of which He is the Head, we understand that we are *where* we are as well as what we are because of what God has done in this moment of time and in this place. Austin, like Nazareth, Bethel, Bethlehem or Boston happens to be the specific place where the Faith-and-Life Community was called into being, the place where its experimental work is being carried on and from which our findings are being shared with the churches throughout the world.

3.) The name, "the Austin Experiment," carries no overtones of a monastic order. It does not imply sooth-saying or truth-saying as if by presumption we had constituted ourselves as a group of latterday oracles with a private pipe-line to the Almighty or a corner on a boxed-up gospel.

4.) The name helps distinguish between who is doing the work and the work itself. The group of persons bound together under a covenant and a common rule of life for the sake of a common mission is named "The Christian Faith-and-Life Community." The group includes all those who place themselves under the covenant, staff, certain College House and Laos House participants and alumni, international and seminary interns, and the families of all these people when they also choose to enter the rule. Their work, or mission, in providing concrete experiments in lay training finds a most appropriate title in "the Austin Experiment."

W. Jack Lewis

IRRATIONAL MAN: HE SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY

PHILOSOPHER, professor, author, and former editor of *The Partisan Review*, William (Irrational Man) Barrett, speaking this month to the College House community on any awakened man's favorite subject ("How does man understand himself?") considerably enriched the students' on-going conversation between modern culture and the Christian Faith by adding to the dialogue a delightful exercise in exegesis of the New Testament through which he was able to pull his own philosophical insights.

As one of the men who have recognized that a new world has arrived, his speech pointed to the radical revolution in the philosophical dialogue of our day which now is "able to cross the frontier from the Academy into the world at large." If philosophy has become relevant to the real world, so also may the scriptures, "long lost by philosophical abstraction, cross the bridge and recover their original vital relationship to man's actual situation." Barrett's brief exposition is reproduced here.

"You will remember the passage in the New Testament, after Jesus has appeared in the Temple, where his teaching astounds the people. The people marveled at him because he did not teach like the scribes but as *one having authority*. You know, you grow up with this language and it is quite moving and quite wonderful. One wonders if what you grow up with doesn't become a kind of dead shell or empty form in certain ways. For example, he taught not as the scribes but as one who had authority. If you read the Greek in this, it is something much closer to the American vernacular. For example: 'They marvelled . . . I suppose the closest expression would be, 'They were jolted out of themselves.' The task of bringing religion closer to our actual experience is involved here. You might say that Jesus *laid them in the aisle*. For he spoke not as one of the *Scribes*. The word in Greek means a man who has letters, which means he is able to read. The scribes, in this period when literacy was not general, were, as in ancient China, professional letter writers. One would get them to write or read a letter which

you wished to send or had received.

"The man who had letters in the Jewish community at this time was able also to read the Talmud, so we get a little closer to the meaning: Jesus did not speak as a Talmudist, but as one who had authority. If we look at the word for authority, one of the most perplexing words in the Greek, it means *substance*, and it means a super abundance of it. He spoke as somebody who had *real substance*, not as a man who had book-learning. The meaning then becomes something like this: He laid them in the aisles, and they said to one and another 'Man, this cat really knows what he is talking about! he didn't just read it in a book!'

"Actually what is involved here is the whole notion of what philosophy later called *existential truth*, a truth that belongs to a person in terms of his *whole* being, which is not something he simply picked up through a clever intelligence. It is precisely this kind of truth that the leader of mankind would be expected to divulge and to radiate.

"I hope that this little excursion in translation can show you that the truth of a religious statement is something which is not reduced when you bring it closer to contemporary expression in ordinary life. On the contrary, it is reinforced."

William Barrett: He laid them in the aisles.



continued from page one

THE MECHANICAL LIFE

He looks at a clock; two more hours to go. Five hundred, five hundred one, five hundred three holes he punches. Twelve o'clock! He eats the big lunch; he rolls a newspaper, puts it on a dusty cement floor, lays his head on the paper, and takes a nap. One o'clock alarm wakes him up. He stands up; he goes back to his old seat, and starts punching again. Seven hundred one, two, and three! He punches. Four, five, and six hours he punches. Five o'clock! He rushes to his locker, changes his clothes, and punches his time card. He walks ten minutes, takes a thirty minute bus ride, and comes back home. He takes a shower; he eats a hearty supper with his wife; he turns on TV and watches "Super-man," "Maverick," and the fights. He turns off the TV. He goes to his bedroom, takes off his clothes, and goes to bed.

Six o'clock in the morning he gets up. He goes through the same cycle again. Days,

weeks, months, and years, he does the same thing. Life is weary; his job is boring. But what can he do? He has to eat, buy his wife beautiful dresses, and pay taxes. What can he do? So he keeps punching holes.

One day he is awakened by the ringing of a soundless bell. "Where am I?" he asks himself. "What, in the wide world am I doing? Why do I punch holes everyday, every week, every month, and every year?" He thought he knew, but he finds that he does not know why. He wonders, "Why do I have to live?" After this moment of consciousness he finds it difficult to go through his daily routine again and again. He finds life is meaningless; he finds everything is boring; and he can not stand punching holes. At every successive punch, he finds it harder to do. He becomes desperate; he becomes frustrated. Finally, he shoots his wife and himself to escape from this absurd world.

Many people lead a mechanical life. They find weariness in their life. One day they suddenly find themselves sensitive to the meaning of life. They find that life is absurd. Here some commit suicide; some decide to live through reluctantly, for they are afraid to die; and some accept the absurdity of life and find meaning in this world of absurdity.

MONOGRAPH - 1

The subjects with which I am going to deal are difficult subjects. They have to be hard subjects because they touch life where it bleeds. They are therefore not matters which we can touch lightly, a skip and go business. Anything that anyone has to say here is something that must come out of the anguish of life. I can't and don't pretend then to have answers. All that I can hope to do is to communicate a bit of my own enthusiasm and try to tell you the way in which the New Testament is really a new New Testament for me.

Although I have been professionally as well as devotionally concerned with the New Testament for many years, I can truly say that it has never been for me so new a New Testament as it is now. It has never seemed to me so rich in insight and in understanding, so provocative, so bafflingly powerful, so alive as it does in this present time. As it stands over against me, summoning me at every point to decide whether I will understand myself in terms of the world or in terms of God, whether I will order my life in faith and in radical obedience, I know that it is truly God's eternal word. It hurts too much not to be God's word. For it tells me the truth about myself. It pricks and jabs. It stings and smarts. And as it destroys me, it builds me up. As it brings me down to death, it makes me live again. Moreover, it does this in its own way, which is not my way. Not by answering the questions which I put to it, but by asking me questions by way of reply to my questions. I am, therefore, relieved of the necessity of insisting that the New Testament is to be used wholly or primarily as a photographic recording of a series of historic events which took place in the first century. I am, therefore, under no necessity of approaching the Bible as a fixed body of final and infallible doctrinal propositions. I do not now need to regard it as a comprehensive and complete set of moral rules, nor yet as a setting forth, once and for all, of a divinely ordained pattern of ecclesiastical order. I think I know something of what Paul meant by his bold and brazen affirmation "For I through the law, died to the law, that I might live unto God." We must be equally bold and brazen to say "For I through the New Testament died to the New Testament that I might live to God."

Approaching the Scriptures

In introducing to you the subject which I wish to treat, "Dialogue and Encounter," I want to read to you a passage from the Old Testament. I shall, on the whole, be dealing with the New Testament, but I think some things can be more clearly illustrated out of the Old Testament. So I want you to read the first thirteen verses of the third Chapter of Genesis: "*Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God has made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'*"

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they know that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' and he said, 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.'

Now that you have read this scripture what are you going to do with it? You know that actually snakes are not more subtle than any other wild creature. As a matter of fact, they are fairly stupid. You know that snakes don't talk, and that they never did. I am afraid of them, but it isn't because they say "Boo!" Furthermore you know that there never could have been carried on between a snake and a woman any such conversation as is here recorded. You know also that in the botanical world there is not now, nor was there ever, a miracle tree, which would either make mortal man immortal, or reduce immortal man to mortality. Trees themselves, like men, are subject to the laws of birth, growth, decay and death, and in spite of their possible great longevity, they too crawl in beside their roots and die. You also know that there is no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The knowledge of good and evil and the distinction between the two is not so easy to come by as is the eating of fruit. And what tree can make us like God? Again, take this marvelous conversation which follows between God and the man and the woman. If you had been there with your tape recorder—but if you had been *where*? There is no "there" or "where". This has nothing to do with geography. Don't fuss about where the Garden of Eden is or was. There wasn't any such place. There isn't any such place. This garden is not in space-time. So, if you'd been there with your tape recorder, you'd have heard nothing. In this sense, God doesn't talk any more than snakes talk. And He is much less visible.

Now having gotten rid of the misplaced literalism in the interpretation of the narrative, I want to push a generalization to its extremes. The primary importance of all conversations in the Bible does not depend on whether they are of what we call fictitious origin, or of what we call historical origin. It does not depend on when or where or by whom they took shape. These conversations may have come from anywhere geographically, or from anywhere in the Bible, between Genesis and Revelation. Their primary meaning for us does not depend on whether they occur in J, E, P or D, or whether they occur in

a Mark or in a Matthew or whether they come from Q or Luke or Protoluke or any other named or unnamed source which literary historians may posit as the basis of our Scriptures. Their worth does not depend upon whether the origin is Palestinian or whether it is Hellenistic. Rather the conversations in the Bible are of primary significance only if and because they move us up into significant encounter. And encounter, that which makes us *aware of our own life*, means dialogue. I am concerned here to say, that the very essence of human life is and must be dialogue and encounter; encounter and dialogue.

The power of the Bible over us is due to a very great extent to the fact that from the beginning to end it is made up of dialogues which reach out and inescapably involve us. Paradoxically enough, the dialogues are *in* us before they are in the Bible. These dialogues which are in us and in which we are, are always three-directional. First, it is a dialogue between me and myself. It is also a dialogue between me and my neighbor. And it is a dialogue between myself and God. These are endless dialogues, which cannot stop as long as I remain alive. Yet for the most part we remain unaware of them and hence never really live. Surely one of our most important functions as Biblical interpreters is to get the Biblical dialogues out of the Bible, first into ourselves, and then into our world. And to make sure that this triangular nature of the dialogue is always maintained.

A Study in Dialogue

Now let us examine our study in terms of dialogue. First, between me and myself; and then between myself and my neighbor; and third, between myself and God. This dialogue was in me before it was in Genesis, and when I read it in the Bible, I see myself mirrored in it—myself, as standing before and under God. If then this is a dialogue between me and myself, I am the snake. The snake is not outside of me. The snake is inside of me. And I, the snake, say to myself: "Did God say you shall *not*?" And myself says to me "God did say you shall not, or you shall die." Then I say to myself: (Don't you say this to yourself every day?) "God doesn't *really* mean what He says. And anyway, why don't you try Him out? The risk may not be as great as it appears. You know: nothing risked, nothing gained. And it *could* turn out to your *advantage*. Myself needs only a little encouragement from me to enable myself to see that the forbidden fruit is good for food, a delight to the eyes, and even a desire of the mind, for what is wrong with being wise?" So, I eat, and I give my neighbor to eat, and in doing so I close the gap between me and myself and between me and my neighbor; I smother out the dialogue, so that neither am I in dialogue with myself, nor am I in dialogue with my neighbor. We are fully integrated. There is no me in myself; there is no me in my neighbor; and there is no me in God, because I have brought the dialogue to an end. I have shut it up. I have closed it.

This is not the end of the story. Something has gone wrong. I am too wise. I can see too much. I didn't think I looked this way. I can't be this kind of person. I'd better cover myself up. I'm not fit to be seen as I am. Here I sat, naked, before myself, before my neighbor. Naked and defenseless in the presence of God. So I must prepare myself a wardrobe, consisting of masks. Here, a switch occurs. Up to now I've been the snake. In the same sense, I must henceforth be the Lord God in the story. It is beginning to look as if I cannot escape from myself. If I close up the dialogue on the snake's side, it breaks out on the God side. We will, so we say, flee from the presence of the Lord God. We shall hide. But it is no use. The Lord God will open up the dialogue. He will flush me out. He will call to me in my hiding, and with a loud voice he will say "Where are you?" Not because He does not know where I am. Not because I do not know where I am, but just because I *do* know where I hide myself. (For I always hide myself in the place where I hadn't ought to be). The Lord God in the story calls because

it is only in the dialogue that I can effectively hear the question "Where am I?"

But the story is still not through with us. We have not yet had the dialogue between myself and my neighbor. When God says to me, when I say to myself, "What is this that you have done," Myself, the man, replies: "The woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate." While myself, the woman, says: "The serpent beguiled me and I ate." Once again, man or woman, I will try to close the gap and to bring the dialogue to an end by brash but unconvincing self-deception, absurdly insisting to myself that I am not the man you think I am. I am not the man you are looking for. Yet, I cannot get away with this. This is not really a way out. For even the woman is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. And if I am the snake, I am also the woman. There is no way that I can put responsibility for my sin on someone or on something outside of myself. From this standpoint there is no outside of myself. I do not deceive myself. I do not deceive God. Finally, there is no way out in cleverness of repartee, such as: "The woman *thou* gavest me." Nor can I escape the dialogue by blaming myself on another: "I am what you have made me."

Keeping the Dialogue Open

Our basic human problem is, then, how can we keep these dialogues open which we are always trying to close. There is no redemption for man as an individual, and for man in society, unless the three dialogues are kept open. They are there, but we do not know how to live with them, so we strive to escape them. I was fascinated by Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* as in his effective and I think penetrating fashion he was able to describe a whole galaxy of persons whom he describes as outsiders, whom I should like to describe simply as *persons who will not let the dialogue die*, who feel that it is of utmost importance to keep the dialogue open. For to close it, with any kind of happy, ready solution, is the way of death. And I have to say that for myself now using the language in the manner Wilson uses it, I should rather be alive with the outsiders than to be dead with the insiders. Here are people—who may be as we say, outside of faith, and there certainly is some sense in which this is so, but they are persons who keep the dialogue alive.

A Dallas paper gave the most ridiculous review of Albert Camus' novel, *The Fall*. It accused him of not giving an answer to the question of life. Now does it sound dreadful of me to say that I don't care whether or not this man has an answer to the question. Maybe it's better not. Maybe it's better that the outsiders have not become insiders. We become insiders too easily, too quickly. We tend to destroy life by becoming insiders prematurely. So I am going to say that I think that the only exciting manifestations of life and thought in the contemporary world are coming to us out of people who insist that the dialogue is open, and that—I wonder if they have learned this from the Bible—only as we keep it open, only as we can increase and not decrease the significant encounter areas of life and thereby maintain the dialogue, can we understand either the Bible, or the Christian faith, or life itself.

The Bible is peopled with these kind of characters, folk of never ending encounters and ever open dialogue. God speaks to them most powerfully when he bumps into them, so to speak. I worry a little bit about the words that we sing in such a hymn as "He walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own," because I vigorously object to this easy way of managing the situation. Jonah runs away from God, and when He takes a ship for Tarsus, he finds that he bumps smack into God. And how do you explain this fantastic language in the accounts of the conversion of Paul now, How do you explain this, except as a way of trying to get down in a language what it means for a man to bump into God himself; that is, to meet him in the encounter situation, which opens up dialogue. In the dialogue situation, we argue with God, talk back to God, if you wish. I like the way in which Jeremiah finds fault with God, straight out to his face; the way in which Job finds fault with

God, straight out to His face. No meek submission here. No mousiness here; but man maintaining the dialogue with God, even on to the end. From the standpoint of dialogue, think of the words "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" How wonderful that Job did not obey the advice to "Curse God and die." He kept the dialogue going.

What the Writer Says

Now I am going to suggest that in order to keep the dialogue alive in us, as the dialogue in the Bible confronts us, that we must approach the Bible in a certain way. It is a perspective of encounter and dialogue and is a matter of utmost importance. In doing this, I'll not be trying to tell you new things or different things, nearly so much as I'll be trying to reshape the things which you already know and which you have already worked with. Let us see if we do not find this perspective more significant than the perspectives which have dominated the study of the Bible over many decades.

A very broad foundation has been laid for us in the schools of Biblical studies of the 19th and early 20th century. These studies have cut away much brush and left us with 4 basic questions with which we can and do approach the scriptures: 1) what do the writers say, 2) what actually happened, 3) what do I say, 4) what is said to me, or what does God say. I wish to make the case that while all of these questions are legitimate and important, the first 3 are subordinate to the fourth and because such an approach makes possible the continuation of significant encounter and dialogue. This is to say that this way of handling the material opens the possibility of God bumping into the reader.

In approaching the scriptures then, we first of all ask this question: What do the writers intend to say? What do the texts intend to communicate? This point of view has been pursued for a century or two. And men have devoted an incredible amount of time and concern to the answering of this question: what is said? I think this is an important question. That is why I am interested in the problems of text, the problems in philology, patterns of thought, meanings of language, symbols, parable, metaphor, allegory, myth, all of the scientific methods of going at the understanding of the Bible, which have been produced in what we call "literary" or "textual" or "form" criticism. They have a very important place. But I want to get over it.

If anyone thinks that this is the be-all and end-all of the study of Scripture, it seems to me that something has died somewhere. Why do we ask this question about what the texts intend to say. Why do we care what the New Testament writers meant to say? Wherein is our obligation to find out what people two thousand years ago said? Is it simply because of *what* they said? Well, I'm going to suggest to you it isn't. It's not our primary concern. It's for our own sakes that we have to ask this question, not for their sakes. We have to understand people as they meant to be understood, as they wanted to be understood and not to force ourselves on them. We must not intrude into their private lives with our opinions, saying "This is what I believe, and this is what you must believe." Integrity demands that we attempt to discover, impartially, what Matthew, Mark, Paul, John and Luke have to say—to allow them to speak for themselves. And this is a significant enterprise and basic to the major question, but is not an end in itself. To make it such, to stop here, is but to create an idolatry out of past and hence to snuff out the dialogue of life, making genuine encounter impossible. The question of what the writers say is necessary for, but subordinate to, the basic concern which we must and do bring to the Bible.

What Actually Happened

The second question that we address to the Bible is: What happened? What were the primary impulses, the original events? What really occurred? Now there is such a thing as "happenedness." I have no patience with people who deny this. It is important for us to accept the fact of happenedness, that

which is outside ourselves. The reason why it is important for me is that here is one significant term, if you please, in the encounter situation. God speaks to me precisely in the encounter situations which I do not set up.

Yet I don't know how to decide what "happenedness" is, in an event. There is no such thing as an uninterpreted event. There is no event in which, if I describe it at all, I myself am not involved in it in some way or another. So there is a sense in which it doesn't make any sense for me to talk about objectivity. The historical interpretation of the Bible is the approach which has dominated the schools for a century and a half. I have entered fully into it; and so far as I see it to be significant, I continue to work in it. Yet I am not nearly as interested in this perspective as I once was. It seems to me that in this approach to the study of history, the really important questions drop through the meshes. Finally, I always come back with this: suppose I were able to reconstruct with infallibility the sequence of events which had to do with the establishment of the Christian Faith and the Church, all the events in terms of cause and effect, which took place in the first century, I would still have to say "so what?"

Hence when I deal with the happenedness, objectivity, historicity, as it concerns the events described in the New Testament and try to set this out, apart from my own prejudices and desires, I must not make an idol out of them. I must not worship this effort. It is not the end for which I am seeking. It is not the major issue or the primary question. When we make the recovery of the "objective" occurrence the *ultimate* concern, we are not only up a blind alley, we have also made the encounter situation impossible and cut off the dialogue of life. This question, at most, can only be a preparation for the important question.

What We Say

The third question which we bring to the scriptures is: "What do we say?" Now I am going to suggest that we have to take ourselves seriously. I have to say "God made me." Nobody would guess this by looking at me, but I'm under responsibility, as a creature of God. I cannot avoid saying, in this relationship, "I am". We all know how hard we try to melt into other people, and how we can't; how we're thrown back on our lonesomeness, on our isolation, on our own selfhood. We know that finally we must either affirm ourselves and say "I am" or else find some illusion about life in which to die. So under God I *have* to ask my own questions, questions which are peculiar to me, which perhaps nobody else can ask, because nobody's quite identical with me. I wish to stress again, we *have* to ask *our* question. We cannot deny ourselves, even in the presence of the scriptures. We are obligated to let Jesus be Jesus, to let Paul be Paul, to let John be John, and to let Matthew, Mark, and Luke be Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and not try finally to superimpose our views upon them, but let them say their say. But under God, we are also obligated not to deny ourselves but to *affirm* ourselves. If I cannot deny them, neither, under God, can I deny myself. This is not because I am God. It is just because I am I. In fear and in trembling, I have to say: God made *me*. Of course this is affrontery, this is presumption. The man who is in faith is always presumptuous. Again if I must make the wedge between what the Biblical writers say and the historical sub strata which is finally hidden from all eyes, I must also be willing to see the wedge between the first century man and the man of today.

We have to accept the responsibility for being 20th century people. Under God we *have* to accept this responsibility and to ask questions as 20th century people. So if you say to me: You do not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, but of a human father, not because you are a 20th century man but rather because you are a sinner," I can only say, "I am certainly a sinner." But I have to go on to say, that I am the kind of sinner who cannot believe in this. We can feel that we cannot bear this responsibility of living in the 20th century. Nevertheless *now* is

our time, and it is our only time. It may be a burden to bear, as living in any century is a burden, but in faith we can go on and say it is a gift. Our gifts are not to be apologized for, they are to be received, and used, in fear and trembling but courageously. So our question, what do we have to say to the Bible, is important. This is still not however the major question in approaching the scriptures.

What God Says to Us

The fourth of our questions is: what is said to me by the writings? What does God say to me out of the complex of the other three questions? This fourth question I have asked last, but it is the most important of all questions. The other questions have significant meaning only as they can be brought to bear upon this fourth question and therefore must be subordinated to it. What is important as I read the Bible is not that, in the first place, I obtain the answers to the subordinate questions. I may know little or nothing about what they are concerned about. I may have no system of theology by which I can gather together or organize material. Our students at seminary always have to write papers on their creeds "What I Believe." I'm sure this must be a profitable exercise, but in a way this is a dreadful thing. At any rate, it is not nearly so important to ask what shall I believe when I read the scriptures, as to ask what do I *hear*, what do I *see*, what do I *learn about myself*, what do I learn about myself in relation to myself, in relation to my neighbor, and in relation to God. This is the way I want always to handle—not simply the Bible—but every human expression which comes out of the total history of the world anywhere, any time, then or now, there or here. I want to bring these all into this encounter situation.

This approach to the Bible means that I am ever asking, as I read, how am I involved in the situation? Am I Cain, and am I also Abel? Am I Jacob and Esau both? The supplanter and the supplanted? The murderer and the murdered? Are both these kinds of people in me? Yes they are. Personally, unless I see this when I read the scriptures, I can't understand how the rest of the questions matter at all. If we read the Bible in such a fashion that it just displays for us so many wicked people and so many good people, if it doesn't really say anything to us—I can't see how the Bible matters much if something important doesn't happen to me in *my* situation. Now what do you say about that? Some of you probably want to ask "Well what about the historical perspective? Isn't it sufficient? Isn't it once and for all?" Well, sufficient for what? Sufficient to raise me from the dead? It really doesn't mean anything, does it, to say that a once and for all historical revelation is sufficient when nothing happens to me. Here is a situation where it isn't helpful to think of sufficiency apart from man as he is alive in his own situation. This is the only way, so far as I can see, to get the matter out of antiquarianism, academicism, sentimentalism and phantasy and to get it into the lives of us, who are here and now, acting, and whose destiny depends now on what we hear in our inner being.

Now I submit to you, the writings of the Bible are written from *this* point of view. When we read them from this perspective we are reading them from their own perspective. For instance, in the accounts of the betrayal, and the last supper, whether there is a shred of taped, stenographic, historical recording in these accounts. I cannot say either way. This matters from the standpoint of the historical approach but it doesn't from the standpoint of encounter and dialogue. Answer the objective problem if you can, but when you have done that, you will have to say, insofar as the central concerns of life are involved, so what? I cannot finally read this otherwise than with the question of what is said to me, the document will not let me read this otherwise. This isn't anything I do; it is done to me. I read these accounts and hear, "One of you shall betray me," and I'm stopped. Why can't I get past it? Of course, it doesn't need to go on. I know who the one is. I'm the one. I don't worry about Peter or Judas or any of the rest of them.

That's all ancient history. Then the story does go on and I must go on with it. Presently someone asks a question, and the person isn't named. Do you think that's not intentional? The person who is not named says "Is it I?" Why, that's *my* question! The importance of the dialogue is not in relation to the original participants. The importance of the dialogue is that I am involved in it. It is my dialogue. Wherefore, the overwhelming passages of power in the Gospels and these dialogues? Why? Because I cannot escape identifying myself. The encounter is present to the reader. The dialogue within him is disclosed as he is involved in the dialogue of the scriptures, and he lives.

Broadening the Encounter Points

All of this means that encounter points must be broadened and not reduced and the dialogue must be kept forever open. This of course applies to the Bible. For instance, here are the evangelists, four presentations of the Gospel, four portraits of Jesus Christ. What shall I do, shall I say "All of these must be reduced to a single integer?" Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all the same? And shall I reduce four encounters to one encounter? In the interests now of melting down and smoothing out and of easing the situation and of closing the dialogue—shall I do that? Shall I say that all the evangelists must in every point agree or that Jesus must agree with the evangelists and reduce all the encounter points into one. Why yes, if I am looking for something unimportant to do. No! I shall not do that, unless I wish to impoverish life. This goes even further. What shall I do with the people who are outside of faith, as we say, the people to whom the Bible does not speak? Shall I wipe them off as unimportant, insignificant to our situation. Or should I recognize them as being in the list of saints also? I'm willing to. Once again I suggest that our fourth question is the primary question, fundamental to all authentic living: "What is God saying to me out of this complex?"

Encounter points are everywhere in potentiality and the dialogue is everlasting. Now I ought to admit, that I used to believe that the dialogue ought to be brought to an end; that there must be an answer which would stop the questioning, destroy the encounters, reduce the tensions and bring life all down to some flat level in which all problems would be solved. Closing the dialogue is behind every attempt to discover some overarching pattern, some vast reason in the total scheme, whereby the totality of man's life, would be integrated into some kind of a seamless robe. This push towards monism in us, call it what you will, which drives us to try to explain everything with some kind of unitary principle is a deep-lying need in the human soul. I have great sympathy for these human needs which have expressed themselves in the great systems. But the great system, whether it be philosophical or theological, brings the *dialogue to an end* and eliminates significant encounter situations. That is to say, the system is but an idol of our fabrication for ourselves which changing, moving, and dynamic life will destroy, as surely as it destroys all idols that men make with their hands.

I now believe that life is questions, not final answers, life is dialogue and encounter, not the system. The perspective which I have described, I maintain is the one which is best adapted to set free what the Bible will say to our contemporary world. In giving the primary emphasis to the fourth question: "What will God say to us out of this complex?" I don't mean to be turning aside from difficult historical questions, philosophical or theological questions. I do want to be removing the grave clothes which prevent the Bible from getting out and walking in the history of our own time, recreating the world, making people to know that God is the God who raises the dead, who makes the things that are, out of the things that are not and who is *Lord of Life*.

This monograph is taken from lectures given at the Austin Experiment of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community by Dr. Fred D. Gealy, Professor of New Testament and Church Music Emeritus, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

Dear J. and L. ---

I'm alive, alive, alive! and I, a shade, even, may rise up and praise Him whose steadfast love was (and ever is) declared to me in the grave, and whose saving help came to me in the land of forgetfulness. Let my song come before Him, who chasteneth us His children sorely, but who has not given us to death.

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The world, in all its wayward, blasphemous life, has never seemed so dear as now. I am drawn to it more than ever, to the deep despairing heart of it in people. I believe that I see it much more clearly than ever; and yet it draws me in a great yearning. And it is very very plain to me that apart from the capacity to turn again to it in love and acceptance--- that follows my receiving of my sinful self in the Word of acceptance --- I could only find it a horror to shrink from. This choice to love --- only Christian worship opens it for me. So it is the most desperate and continuing necessity I know. And yet it seems to be not an end, but a means of loving that which apart from worship is utterly unlovely, and yet in the light of worship becomes the object of desire. What a puzzle-ment! What a wonder! ("But oh, the wonders that there are!")

I cannot live at all (indeed, I do not!) without the Church. But it is not the place of my belonging; that is this world, this world, that has become my home --- but this only because when I go away from it --- to worship --- I am told again that this is so. And so I find, again and again, that I can go home again, with gladness bursting in my heart, wide open to its beauty and its sordidness, being myself of the very same paradoxical stuff. And adding to Brother A's verdict of "good", only amen and amen.

--- D. Leach

BREAKING THE RISK BARRIER

IN THE SHORT PERIOD since Paul Tillich and other theologians began pointing to this generation as one which has lost the courage to ask the question of the meaning of life with infinite seriousness, something new may have happened, something that could tempt *avant garde* thinkers to play the role of Jonah under the gourd vine.

If, as Tillich phrased it, "the decisive element in the predicament of Western man in our period is his loss of the dimension of depth," the new element is a growing awareness of this loss and an increasing willingness to do something about it.

This is at least the experience of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community. Thus far, every new program initiated in the Austin Experiment has revealed a passionate concern on the part of both laymen and clergymen to break the "risk barrier," and participate fully in the theological awakening of our day. There are individual exceptions, but even some of these return or later write that their minds have been changed.

BY THE END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR, some six hundred persons will have participated in one or more of the Community's experimental programs. Three groups of about twenty clergymen will have gone through the four monthly sessions of the Parish Ministers' Colloquies and their wives will have come to one of two especially scheduled weekend meetings. Around sixty Austin townspeople are currently enrolled in the various courses of the Laic Theological Studies on Thursday nights, and more will probably enroll as each six-weeks session begins. Parish Laymen's Seminars will have brought various groups of around twenty laymen each from churches across the state. Such seminars are scheduled every other week until May. More than eighty university students (single men and women and married couples) are participating in the residential program of the College House. An international visitors intern program is now taking shape.

Even with this heavy schedule, the corporate ministry plans a new experiment for early December. Thus far, the weekend seminars for laymen have directly served local congregations of the Southwest through officers or groups of couples all of whom are from the same congregation. The December experiment will be for people from various congregations, so that churches which do not have enough members to fill a normal weekend seminar may send one or two couples or officers.

OF THE PARISH LAYMEN'S SEMINARS held thus far, one involved a return visit from the interdenominational Port Lavaca group that served last year as the pilot project for the entire Laos House experiment. (See *Letter To Laymen*, September, 1958.) Another was made up of members from Parkway Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, the second group from that Church to participate.

THE LIBERAL INSIGHT

OPPORTUNITIES to sit at the feet of front line scholars are rare for most of us who receive our education through mediating teachers, however excellent they may be. The College House community had such an uncommon experience in a recent Friday Evening Program with Dr. William A. Irwin, a giant in the field of Biblical scholarship, one who dared stand with the great liberal scholars on the threshold of a new world and without whose work the new theological movement of our own day would not have been born.

For some thirty minutes, the venerated teacher (Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Language and Literature, the Oriental Institute, and the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago, currently a Post-Retirement Professor at Perkins School of Theology, S.M.U.) revealed in history and autobiography the wrestling that took place among those who saw early the vast implications for the Church which had been given the twentieth century, with its new cultural wisdom, in which to proclaim the gospel.

"I REMEMBER STANDING one bleak January day, up in Ontario, on the third floor of my college, looking out across the snow covered roofs of the city below me. I was not seeing anything. I was thinking, 'Are they not going to leave me anything at all? Is everything going? This thing that Biblical scholarship is doing . . . it says no, and no, and no, that isn't true, you've been mistaken here . . . where do we come out? What about the Bible as the authority for our life and faith?'" One wonders how many times since then the same challenge has confronted others who would take seriously the gift of the new wisdom given to that age of scholarship.

The doctor's upbringing in a devout but literalistic home did not make it easy to decide against literalism. "It took me a long, long time. But I decided to live with the problem, and slowly I came to ask myself such questions as, What does it matter whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not, we have the Pentateuch just the same . . . and on and on through the years of development, the light broke through. Doubt was there, but the questing gave me the basis for firm faith. We must always keep the questing and questioning attitude, the willingness to accept new insight, and build it into our total understanding of life. That is why the important thing is not what I will now say about the Bible, but the thinking you will do for yourselves."

The man who had helped with the *Revised Standard Version* and who has just completed work on a revision of the American translation of the Bible spoke then upon "the supremely important thing that I must say if this is the only chance in all eternity that I have to talk with you," the Christian faith and the Scriptures.

At the end of his address, it was clear that the insights of the liberal movement have greatly enhanced the possibility for twentieth century man rightly to hear the gospel and to be able to relate it to his actual life. It was even more clear that he who attempts to circumvent those insights is not only deluded but will make himself ridiculous.



Dr. Irwin: The questioning attitude.



Board members Dan Priest, Helen Scott Saulsbury (left) and Chairman William Carrsow (right) greet new member of corporate ministry, lay theologian Bill Maclay whose work for the Austin Experiment is in development.

A PHILANTHROPIC EXPERIMENT

In the Christian Faith-and-Life Community, where theology has no relevance whatever except as it is related to the concrete situations in life, staff members and their families who are participating in the Austin Experiment (See "Dear Everybody," page two) have been grappling with the problem of benevolent giving, the problem of how to respond to the countless campaigns that are conducted in our society to raise funds for the voluntary social services and other worthy causes.

The Community is itself an experimental center that depends upon the benevolent gifts of contributors, all the more reason to try to come to terms with the question.

A recent report in *Newsweek Magazine* drew national attention to "the fund-raising muddle," the increasing complexity of philanthropic giving in America. Six billion dollars per year, of which some 250 million dollars is derived from voluntary charity drives, makes philanthropy an important subject in our economics-dominated society. *Newsweek* reported that the drives to raise these funds are in trouble because there are too many appeals. Many of the

estimated 3 million volunteers—who push doorbells and rattle contribution cans from one end of the nation to the other—are in revolt against being asked, sometimes as many as three times a month, to do this work.

There was no question about the legitimacy of the appeals. Regulatory action has made it almost impossible to conduct a campaign successfully if it is not grounded in genuine needs or if it does not meet a very real problem. Significantly, the report did not bother to reiterate the oft-spoken romantic complaint that our highly technical society has deleted the donor's personal sentiment for the recipient. It is also interesting that there was no question of the availability of resources to meet the needs. The problem of fund-raising for charity in wealthier-than-ever America was reduced to the donor's perplexity: To whom shall I give?

Newsweek capsuled all suggestions to meet the problem into two categories: either a mutual agreement to pool all appeals into two campaigns each year, or the establishment of a national council which

would publish a list of the relative importance of all the appeals. Both suggestions are commendable. Neither, however, reaches to the depth of the donor's problem. He remains in the situation of having to decide for himself which claims he will say yes to and those to which he will say no. This reaches down to our deepest question: how shall I understand my life in relation to all of the complex obligations, duties, and ambiguous claims upon my income.

Each appeal very subtly reminds us of our creaturely plight. Until claims come to us, we remain only dimly aware that all we ever possess in this life is the present moment. Our efforts to extend our time by storing it up in the form of money (the product of the way we have used our past moments) is called into question. All of us know what it means to try to escape this awareness.

Our families in the Austin Experiment have taken an initial step in dealing with this problem. Each family sets up its own small-scale counterpart of a philanthropic foundation. Details of this plan will be given in an article concerning our Common Rule of Life in a forthcoming issue of *Letter To Laymen*. In brief, each family sets aside a minimum of 1% per thousand dollars of gross annual income to be dispersed to various charitable appeals through the family's "foundation." Appeals for funds are treated much in the same manner as a charitable foundation accepts "proposals." That is, the appeal is given conscious attention in the light of the many other claims that are upon the funds, its claim is evaluated, and the amount decided upon. In this manner, it is assumed that more responsible decisions may be made than those which come out of feelings of pressure which distort or eliminate the ambiguous nature of all claims upon us.

The Faith-and-Life Community is one among many organizations that make appeals to you for funds. As you evaluate this claim upon your time, attention, and effort, we hope you will decide to share in the Austin Experiment on behalf of the Church in her mission to the world. You can do this by including the Community in your monthly or annual giving budget along with your church, the United Fund, Cancer Research, etc.

The urgent need for research in lay theological education has been reiterated in many ways over the past seven years. Your response has indicated that you understand the Community to be meeting this need in relevant ways. We urge you to begin, continue, and even increase this support on the basis of thinking through its significance in this "age of exploration" and in the face of your other obligations.

October, 1959

Christian Faith-and-Life
Community

2503 Rio Grande, Austin 5, Texas
W. Jack Lewis, Executive Director

Letter to Laymen

Chaplain Gene W. Marshall

Hqs. 24th Inf. Div. Trains
APO 112
New York, N. Y.

Hiram Williams:

the return to the image of man in contemporary art



Challenging Figure — by Hiram Williams

Art in recent years has worked with the human figure in distortion. Hiram Draper Williams of the University of Texas Art Department, working through a research grant from the Texas Research Institute, has endeavored to develop the image of man simply as contorted, overcoming the distortion.

This commentary is an excerpt from Williams' lecture-discussion at one of the Friday Evening Programs of the College House. The intention of the dinner programs is to create a living dialogue between the Church and the culture in which we live, with the conviction that such dialogue enables us to grasp the meaning of being a person of faith in the new world of the twentieth century and contributes to our ability to articulate the Christian faith to ourselves and other people.

Hiram Williams has lately received the highest award in the D. D. Feldman Competitive Invitational Exhibition. In the past, he has received two Texas Fine Arts Association awards, two former D. D. Feldman awards, and has twice surpassed the Ford Foundation's six state regional exhibitions.

THE FRENCH MASTER, Braque, has said that the wonderful thing about paint is that when applied to a surface, it becomes something other than paint. Picasso, when told that people thought his painting of Gertrude Stein was not a true likeness, said, "They will." And Picasso was right. To the world the greatest likeness of Gertrude Stein, and this includes photographs, is the Picasso portrait of her. This picture is reproduced the most frequently as the image of Stein. The artist projects his vision of the world upon the world, and upon the body of Art.

According to some psychologists, the subconscious paints the picture. It is my opinion that consciousness at least picks up the brush. Indeed, I believe that consciousness plays a great part in the creation of a painting.

The making of a novelty, or a strangeness is nothing. It is easy. But the creation of a new vision concerning the fundamental things in man's interaction with the objective world is something else. For true art deals with the stuff of life — our emotional relation to it — and is an invention intended to visualize and heighten our perceptions of life — an underscoring of experience.

An exciting feature of the creative process is the way the artist's personal experience of thought and environment appears in his art product. The artist himself may work in the firm belief that he is dealing only in art, only in material and technique and formal or descriptive idea, and yet when the thing is done his reaction to the experienced environment is there. Let me illustrate. Without knowing a great deal about the movement I find that philosophically I am some kind of existentialist. As I encounter existential ideas I find that I am in agreement. When evolving a way to present total configuration I was consciously concerned only with the problem. I tried to visualize, and I diagramed all sorts of combination views of the human figure. I chose to do the male image. I chose to clothe this image in ordinary business dress, the anonymous costume of a great share of our American male population. I sought methods of dealing with shape that would not be in violation of our current notion of the formal nature of the picture. Slowly I came to realize the overtones evolving. I began to see that I was making statements about *man's situation* as I feel it. My paintings began to *embody* my philosophy, and, of course, this is the important factor. My argument is clear. The paintings pivoted upon an idea for representing image; the overtones, the meaning, followed my engagement with this problem.

(continued on next page)

Letter to Laymen



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Dear Everybody:

A breakthrough is a gift that we acknowledge when we have been broken through. Ask those who have returned from the valley of the shadow in mental illness, alcoholism, family disruption, business failure and other personal or social crises.

Man seeks and seeks and seeks, saying to himself that he is seeking after some "good" and hiding from the necessity to look at his real situation where he is escaping from decision. If he will not look, will not decide, breakdown inevitably follows. If he decides before, during, or after the breakdown, there is instead a *breakthrough*. He discovers himself discovered, he finds himself found, he accepts his acceptance. And this enables him to accept his situation, whatever it may be, in all the "is-ness" of life. Is this not what the Church has always meant by judgment and redemption?

What is true of life is always equally true for the Church, if not more so, for the Church is the people who are kept in constant awareness of judgment and redemption.

These are exciting times, urgent and demanding, as new men seek to relate themselves to a new era in history and as the Church seeks to recover her role as Mission to a new world.

What is this new world? Who are the new men? What is the new image of the Church and how did it come into being. In this issue of *Letter To Laymen*, the corporate ministry of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community presents a compact review of the movement toward the long hoped-for recovery of the ministry of the laity, and of the *Austin Experiment* as one expression of the Lay Movement.

If you will look over the chart of the programs conducted in the Experiment by the Christian Faith-and-Life Community, you will not be surprised that it takes an annual budget of \$121,000 to conduct this corporate research.

To raise this amount of money, we have no one . . . no group . . . to turn to but you, Dear Everybody. As I have reported to you in this column before, we forged ahead in program expansion both because of the many people who wanted to participate in the lay training and because of the overwhelming requests from denominational agencies, lay centers, church congregations, pastors, college chaplains, etc., who were seeking the results of the research to adapt in other areas and in other programs.

We added three new theologically trained staff members, purchased new property for married students' apartments, added programs for Seminary Interns and International Interns, initiated the Parish Ministers' Colloquies, the Laic Theological Studies, the Parish Laymen's Seminars, and stepped up the publications, all only with the hope that you would undergird the work financially.

Read this issue carefully. You will see that your contributions have initiated experimental programs that are revitalizing the Church in her ministry to the man of the modern age. Then, assure us that you will sustain this research by sending as much of the \$121,000 as you can now along with a promise of regular support.

W. Jack Lewis

continued from page one

the image of man

A work proposing to be art can be superficial and insignificant, but no work becomes art apart from the insight and judgment of the artist — the work is that judgment, and it is idle to talk about technique apart from subject matter which that technique forms. Together, subject matter and technique express an artistic concept which itself implies a world view, an attitude toward man.

In order that you may understand the analogy to my work, I must say something concerning an artist's philosophical position today. Much recent welded sculpture reveals nature as a cruel, self-absorbed organization quite uncomprehending of man. In some versions man is excluded and becomes a spectator, a witness, and in others he has become one of the innumerable elements of that blind, unthinking nature. The symbols are there in metal — jagged, crusty organisms personifying the senseless twisting motions of aimless creatures, or plans capable of endless crushing movements over the countless bodies of living men. In instances the image of man is made an absorbed symbol — absorbed into these sculptured organisms having become one of them.

In 1849, Asher Brown Durand painted "Kindred Spirits," a landscape depicting a Catskill gorge with two bluffs of sedimentary rock topped by ash trees and overlooking a rock-strewn brook which pours through a vista of evergreen foliage. A painter and a poet, Thomas Cole and William Cullen Bryant, stand in gentle dress upon one bluff. Here is a scene of harmony. A nature of romantic grandeur and an equal grandeur of mind contemplating it. God has given his generous blessing to both man and nature. They are equal in his eyes. Cole and Bryant eye nature and nature eyes them (with the eye of God).

It was in the eighteenth century that European art became conscious of nature. England felt the romantic movement strongly by the 1720's while American art hardly felt the movement before 1800. Edmund Burke's "Sublime and Beautiful," published in 1756, considered the "Sublime" as the untamed aspects of nature, forbidding and terrible. The other romantic view of nature considered its peaceful, lyrical qualities. The discovery of nature meant at once the recognition of its dual aspect. Man was free to invite the friendlier prospect, and God would save him from the forbidding and terrible. Cole and Bryant could stand before nature its equal, because God was by their side and made up the necessary strength to more than equalize the balance.

Much recent welded sculpture reveals man's plight when God disappeared. The initial shock is still with us; worse, for now man feels that God was never there, and the unthinking grasses wave unceasingly in gusts of wind and the trees are no longer friendly and the rocks have never cared. Nature does not harbor man, is unaware of man, and man whimpers in self-pity. Not because of what he recognizes, but that nothing anywhere recognizes him. Man is intimidated, for there is no shelter from the "sublime." Here is man without God.

The image of man in "harmony" with nature goes back to the time when man was a wild element among other wild elements. But even then he sought refuge among his gods. To identify with and be lost in nature is to be lost in God. To discover that God was never there removes man's chance to come into harmony with nature.

Much recent welded steel sculpture reveals man's further plight. Certain images pose as

hostile nature, while others, as I have said, incorporate the image of man into a hostile image, making man an image as "sublime" as any other. Without God man can no longer trust nature, and without God, man can no longer place his faith in the eventual God-like goodness of men. All are organisms, as man is an organism, in but *apart* from nature. Welded sculpture tells us about this and offers no suggestion leading out of man's despair and into the realm of hope.

As the image of God disappeared from the mind of man, has the image of man disappeared from his painting? Not quite, for man-like images are discerned here and there in dim focus or terribly scarred and distorted. This painted image is never God-like when it is seen. It is the image of a victim. On the other hand, can we discern a heroic artistic attempt to reintegrate man — to make him whole? Is the image of man to reappear as a unified thing? It is apparent that in 1950-52 at least one artist, DeKooning, was not able to make the step. DeKooning painted a series of seven canvases using as his theme an ambiguous form called "woman." The artist himself points out that this image can be interpreted as a landscape. (Is this an effort to integrate man with nature?) The figure is recognizable, its features forbidding. Its body is caught in a wild frenzy of dissolution. It is symbolic of mankind coming apart at the seams.

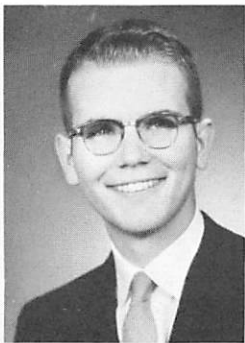
Art is an index to the emotional state of a culture, and in our culture only the naive artists, the "innocent," can propound integrated images of man. The sophisticated artist, the aware, circle about cautiously avoiding the human image — painting, painting, painting, but for the most part avoiding the representational human image. This image of man will continue to be avoided in most of our art until that day when man may become convinced that, though "without God," he is of "godly" stature.

My position is no better than that of DeKooning or the welders, for I cannot see man as a creature of godly stature. This means that unless some drastic intervention happens, I can only paint man's image as symbol of man spiritually lost — an ambivalent, indeterminate creature seeking salvation and not finding it. I am unable to reveal an image of godliness. Indeed, I find it hard to reveal manliness.

Perhaps it is time to remind you again that the visual arts are comprised of a world of forms and these forms have a metaphorical relationship to live experience. The Byzantine built his mosaics in firm belief that he honored his death. He created a metaphorical world of art attesting to the reality of his metaphysical experience. The Renaissance artist, lately came into a belief in *Man's* God-like visage and character, and showed this in his art. The 18th Century painter reveals to us his new found faith in something called science. Other arts than painting have, of course, also kept faith with their times.

That which calls forth responses in one age, lies fallow in another. Today's world is vastly different from our forefather's (what with differences in social organization, modes of transportation, building and housing, technology, philosophy, and so forth) these differences are highlighted in the forms our art has taken. The shape of things is seen in art — but only as idea.

The closer our concepts correlate with the *real* world, whatever it is, the *righter* we'll be, but who is to say when this happens? Art offers us a profusion of concepts — ways of achieving emotional grasp of our environment and selves. The arts reduce life to a perceivable level where aspects of the experienced world are readily felt and emotionally comprehended. To clinch these immediate remarks, let's say that men understand chaos when form is given to it.



AS FAR AS REALITY ABOUNDS

a seminar paper by James Moeser

The Austin Experiment is concerned that the students who participate in the University Theological Studies of the College House enter into first hand dialogue with the Church fathers, theologians, and writers of the past and present. Each week the students meet such men in their readings for the tutorial seminars.

The following is a paper prepared for a seminar discussion on Sin and Grace based upon the thought of theologian Paul Tillich in his well known essay, "You Are Accepted." The paper was written by James Moeser, music major from Lubbock, Texas.

IF WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND to any degree this essay by Paul Tillich, I think we must first take into consideration the text. Taken from the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, this is an often-heard, but rather obscure bit of scripture. *"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."* The context is a discussion by St. Paul of man's sin, the inevitable consequences of this sin, and the reconciliation of man and God through Jesus Christ. Phillips translates this 20th verse like this: *"Now we find that the Law keeps slipping into the picture to point the vast extent of sin. Yet, though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God his grace is wider and deeper still! The whole outlook changes — sin used to be the master of men and in the end handed them over to death: now grace is the ruling factor, with righteousness as its purpose and its end the bringing of men to the eternal life of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* What is this law that keeps pointing up the extent of sin? I believe that we can say in the context of what is about to be said, that the law is the awareness, the consciousness of reality. The words *Sin and Grace* are even more clouded with distorted connotations, and with this Tillich attempts to deal first.

Separation and Reunion

Sin, to Tillich, is not a question of morality; the word should never be rendered in the plural, but rather as the great, all-pervading problem of existence.

Sin is closely associated with (the idea of) separation. Sin is, in a sense, separation — separation from all other men, separation from the self, and separation from the Ground of Being. This separation is a universal, inevitable fact of life. This estrangement affects everything that exists, but it influences man in a unique way — with a *conscious knowledge* that it is there — that man is separated from something to which he belongs. This awareness is not a sudden revelation but it is an experience which comes through an active participation in life. In one sense it is a feeling of being bound by fate. Sin is therefore a state of being separated and our existence is a manifestation of this separation.

Grace is the converse of sin. Sin is separation and grace is unity. Tillich rejects a popular concept of grace (the willingness of God to overlook the shortcomings of his children) as destroying human dignity. Nor is grace a product of social forces. It is what happens *in spite of* the reality of separation. *As far as reality abounds, grace abounds further.*

Sin is a Fact of Life

There is a struggle between sin and grace, the tension between separation and reunion, between ourselves and our relationships to ourselves, to others, and to the "Ground of all being."

It is impossible to penetrate the core of another's being. Nothing, not even the strongest love, can reach to the depth the essence of another person. This is the separation of ourselves from others. The same walls which isolate others from us also isolate from us the essence of our own being. Now this isolation is more than mere lack of contact. It is a hostility toward that which we fail to reach, this essence of being. Tillich calls this a hidden hostility in the grounds of our souls which constantly reaches out for self-elevation, personal fulfillment at the cost of abuse to others or to our real selves. To understand this, he says, is to understand the meaning of separation of life from life, or the abounding of sin. (As distorted through 19th century metaphysical romanticism.) This hostility of man to man is evident all around us.

It should be made clear that this separation of life from life is extended to our own self. Life is a constant contradiction between self-

love and self-hate. We seem inclined to reject self-love, but what we really want to reject is the selfishness, the "me-firstness" that always pursues us and creates the hostility within us. Selfishness is correctly not associated with love for one's self — but rather with self-contempt that we all seem to have. If we are to overcome our hostility toward other men, we must first overcome it in our own lives. The depth of our estrangement lies, however, in this fact — *that we are not capable* of a "merciful, divine love" towards ourselves. In other words, we are incapable of bridging the gap that exists between our conscious personality and our unconscious personality. St. Paul called this estrangement "sin."

And yet, inasmuch as we cannot really be aware of the true essence of life, we cannot escape from the reality of our separation from it. This realization is characterized by despair — the escapelessness of life. This despair is perhaps more obvious in our time than at any other period in history. It is visible in all of the meaningless, emptiness, doubt, and cynicism that surrounds all of life.

The Power of Grace

In the light of despair, let us turn to the question of grace. St. Paul had had a direct encounter with the force of grace. At the climax of his separation with himself and his fellow man, St. Paul received the experience of acceptance. Tillich makes very clear what such an experience is *not*. He definitely rejects the concept of grace as being something abstract. It does not pertain to intellectual assent. It is not a case of moral progress involving an attempt to lead the perfect life. Grace is not associated with any amount of goodness on the part of the recipient. All of these things can become stumbling blocks. Yet, on the other hand, they never exist in our lives except as a result of grace. We can neither prevent nor cause grace. Now it may be possible for one to keep from experiencing grace (that is, not being aware of it), but nevertheless, it exists. It comes to us in our darkest moments of deepest despair. It strikes our consciousness just at the moment that we realize our own inadequacy to deal with our existence. (May I suggest that only at this point of total inadequacy are we ready for the experience of grace.) The experience of grace is the awareness of being accepted. No fixed concept of that which accepts you is necessary at this point.

The power of grace is reunion — reunion with all of that from which we were separated — ourselves, all mankind, and the common Ground of all being. In *being* accepted, we are able to accept everything, even that which is hostile to us. We discover a common source of acceptance. And we accept ourselves in spite of ourselves, live in the real world of our existence, and call it good. When we accept ourselves as we really are, then we acquire the only true peace — the peace that those who struggle for perfection always seek but never find in their struggle. Surely sin, separation, despair abound all around us, but grace always abounds more.

our prison

We are all conceived in close Prison; in our Mothers wombes, we are close Prisoners all; when we are borne, we are borne but to the liberty of the house; Prisoners still, though within larger walls; and then all our life is but a going out to the place of Execution, to death. Now was there ever any man seen to sleep in the Cart, between New-gate, and Tyborne? between the Prison, and the place of Execution, does any man sleep? And we sleep all the way; from the womb to the grave we are never thoroughly awake; but passe on with such dreames, and imaginations as these, I may live as well, as another, and why should I dye, rather then another? but awake, and tell me sayes this Text, *Quis Homo?* who is that other that thou talkest of? *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

Doth not man die even in his birth? The breaking of prison is death, and what is our birth, but a breaking of prison? Assoon as we were clothed by God, our very apparrell was an Embleme of death. In the skins of dead beasts, he covered the skins of dying men. Assoon as God set us on work, our very occupation was an Embleme of death; It was to digge the earth; not to digge pitfalls for other men, but graves for our selves. Hath any man here forgot to day, that yesterday is dead? And the Bell tolls for to day, and will ring out anon; and for as much of every one of us, as appertaines to this day. We die every day, and we die all the day long; and because we are not absolutely dead, we call that an eternity, an eternity of dying: And is there comfort in that state? why, that is the state of hell it self, Eternall dying, and not dead.

John Donne

SOME SIGNS AND CONSEQUENCES

The Church today is in singular need of research that has possibilities of gaining new insight into the dynamics of the life and faith of contemporary man. For, unlike times of crisis in the past when transformation took place over long periods, breakthroughs today are bringing very rapid changes in all the orders of life.

This need is pointed up by the correspondence flowing daily into the offices of the Christian Faith-and-Life Community, by the overflow invitations to staff members for consultation with educators and churchmen, by requests for monographs or other materials, by visits from professional and unprofessional people who are looking for a torch that may light the darkest corners of church life and throw a beam down the deeper shafts of our society's cluttered perplexities.

Just short of a decade in its explorations, the Austin Experiment has become a point of exchange in the renewal that is growing in Christendom. On almost any given day individuals or groups from around the United States, Canada, and abroad, arrive at the Christian Faith-and-Life Community to share with the staff in their own experimental thrusts in congregations, Church agencies, lay centers, student foundations, seminaries, or in whatever arm of the Church they may represent, and also to share in the fruit of the corporate research being conducted here.

The number and respective offices of visiting inquirers during the past month perhaps represent a rough cross section of the concern for Church renewal that is ever deepening in the Lay Movement today:

—The Right Reverend George Murray, Bishop Coadjutor of Alabama and two Episcopal college chaplains from the same state (Merrill Stevens of Auburn and Emitt Gribben, chaplain of the Episcopal student center at the University of Alabama) visited with the staff and observed the College House program at some length as part of their investigation into the possibilities of establishing a residential training center at the University of Alabama.

—Similarly anticipating a residential center for the University of Florida, John W. Wright, associate director of the Wesley Foundation on that campus, consulted with staff members about the experiences of the College House and its program of University Theological Studies.

—Harry Daniel, general secretary of the Student Christian Movement of India, and Bola Ige, former secretary of the Nigerian SCM and overseas secretary of the Athens (Ohio) Mission Conference of the National Student Christian Federation, conferred with the staff during their visit to the University of Texas where they were lecturing for the University Ecumenical Council.

—Other international visitors included the Reverend Samuel Horei, Chairman of Christian Education for the National Council of Episcopal Churches of Japan; and Mlle. Albine Isch, district secretary of the French *Alliance des Equipes Unionistes* in Paris.

—Stan Carmichael, warden of Thompson House, a Parish Life Center of the Episcopal Church, Webster Groves, Mo., spent several days observing the programs of both the Laos House and College House in anticipation of developing the Webster Groves center into a lay theological seminary.

—The Reverend Otto A. Bremer of Chicago, associate executive secretary of the National Lutheran Council, Division of College and University Work, scheduled a visit to confer about the developing experiment in the program of the College House.

—Jack Harrison, pastor of a Methodist church in San Pedro, California, brought news of his continuing work to establish a theological training program within his local congregation, utilizing aspects of the research of the Austin Experiment.

—Ruth Hughes, a national YWCA staff member on a special project in human relations, spoke in the College House, sharing some of her encounters in the deep South where she has been dealing with the problem of race relations.

Speaking engagements by members of the corporate ministry of the Austin Experiment are another means of outreach. In the past month, research has been shared at points around the state and nation as well as in the Austin area and on the Texas campus. Locally, staff members have addressed the YWCA, a number of sororities and fraternities on retreat, the Lutheran Student Association, and a group of alcoholics at the State Hospital. In the state, there have been conferences and addresses for the Southwest Texas Presbytery, the Dallas Council of Churches, the Methodist Student Movement at Texas



Bill Maclay (right) discusses his field work for the Austin Experiment with teaching staff member Allan Brockway.

Wesleyan College, Southwestern University at Georgetown, and various groups in local congregations in Waco, Temple, Belton, San Antonio, McAllen, and Port Lavaca. Outside the state members of the corporate ministry of the Community have spoken recently to a group at Mississippi University and to a meeting of United Presbyterian College Chaplains at Evanston, Illinois.

On every front, whether through visits to other areas, through guests who come here, or through correspondence, there appears a fresh climate of openness in church activity, a new mood of courage to risk new ventures in church life. Opportunities for gaining incomparable insight into the new world, the new man, and the new image of the Church as Mission, may be the product of this new climate.

With a new world piercing into man's being with a force and rapidity unknown in previous ages, the new venturesomeness is not untimely born.

The Austin Experiment participates in this spirit as a place and program where free and responsible inquiry can be made into the maze that faces clergymen and laymen as they attempt to find practical new ways and means to bring the Gospel into the actual life of the new world. Thus far perhaps, only a few "torches" have been lit. Everything that is done experimentally cannot have immediate application. But in all the experimental programs, matches at least are being struck against the sandpaper questions that face new men in a new world.

November, 1958

Christian Faith-and-Life
Community
2503 Rio Grande, Austin 5, Texas
W. Jack Lewis, Executive Director

Letter to Laymen

The Reverend L.E. Philbrook
Arlington State College Box 267
Arlington, Texas

new world
new man
new image
new experiment

breakthrough issue

what
the shepherds
at Christmastide
teach us
about
the ministry of the laity



And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

That was a very ordinary job, watching flocks by night. Convention would call it degrading work, and those so employed are thought of as riffraff. But the Evangelist highly commends the angels because they brought their news only to shepherds watching their flock by night. These shepherders! And what did they do? Why, they did as they were supposed to do. They remained in their place and did the work of their calling. They were pure in heart and content with their occupation. They were not jealous of high estate. After faith, this is the most exalted art -- to be content with the vocation in which God has placed you. I have not yet learned it, myself.

It is the very devil that no one cares to be guided by the shepherds. The married man wants to be single, or the nobleman to be a prince. It is, "If I were this, If I were that!" You fool! The best task is the one you have. If you are married, you cannot have a higher status. If you are a servant, you are already in the best situation. Be industrious, and know that there are no greater saints on earth than servants. Instead of muttering, "If I were," simply say, "I am." A maid who is always thinking to herself, "If I were someone else," will wind up with a sorry husband.

Look at the shepherds. They were watching their flock by night. And an angel came to them and made them apostles, prophets, and children of God. Caiaphas, Herod, and the high priests were not judged worthy. I would rather be one of the shepherds than that the Pope should make me a saint or the emperor make me a king.

-- Martin Luther

Letter to Laymen



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Dear Everybody:

One of the most exciting aspects of the Austin Experiment this year has been the establishment of a series of programs for persons who share responsibilities with the staff while they are themselves engaged in the programs.

The Seminary Intern Program is described in an article in this issue. There is also an article by Danforth Seminary Intern Hal Germer which I am sure will contribute vital insight into the problems of present day campus religious work.

Another intern program is for European nationals who are brought to America by the Austin Experiment for a year of study and work. Four young ladies are participating in this International Visitor Intern Program this year, one of whom arrived several weeks ago: Gerlinde Wagner from Germany. The other three have only recently arrived, all from the Netherlands: Hetty Heule, Mechteld Douwes, and Gerda De Leeuw.

Around the Community, they are known as the "IVIP's" and are already contributing greatly to the international atmosphere that has always been an important part of the Community's life.

The IVIP's are engaged in the University Theological Studies of the College House and participate in the overall student program of corporate life, worship, and mission.

Round-trip passage from their homes in Europe to Austin is arranged by the Community. Room, board, incidental expenses, and health-accident insurance is provided for them during their year of participation. The IVIP's pay no fees, but offer their services without pay as kitchen helpers, waitresses, and light maids under the direction of the resident hostesses.

During their stay, they have the opportunity to be in the homes of American people, to travel in the vicinity of Austin, to live in an American university environment, to come to know American students and to master the English language. In the Austin Experiment, they are in the atmosphere of a pioneering ecumenical movement of the Church, and have an excellent opportunity to think through for themselves what it means to be the Church in the world.

Already we have inquiries from seminary students at Yale and Princeton who desire to intern in the Community in the fall of 1960. The same is true of young women from Europe who are interested in the IVIP arrangement.

Seminarians must arrange their own scholarships at present, but we are attempting to provide \$1500 scholarships for the International Visitor Interns through friends of the Community. Any person or group desiring to help out financially at this point is invited here and now to speak up.

Adios for now. May you receive the New Year as God's gift, knowing always that the future is in God's hands and therefore it is GOOD.... it is very good.

W. Jack Lewis



John Alexander: "behind the lines"

THE GREAT NEW FACT in Christian experience today is the world-wide *lay movement*. It is one of the most exciting areas of thought and action, as we approach a new awareness and understanding of the layman's role in the Church's mission to, and encounter with, the world.

One figure that has been used to describe this movement is that of "islands of awareness." This is a good figure because it distinguishes the phenomenon from what is generally called a "movement." It is not a widespread organization of some sort, but is instead composed of groups that are widely separated from each other but whose interests in a recovery of the ministry of the laity and the renewal of the Church gives them a common spirit.

As "islands," the movement is situated in the vast sea of active complacency that characterizes our time, and its origin is in the depths of human selfhood where the question of the meaning of life melts such complacency into decision.

The current lay awakening, brought about largely by laymen themselves, is evident in developments in many different lands: The *Evangelical Lay Academies* in Germany; the *Iona Community* in Scotland; the *Ecumenical Institute* in Switzerland; the Austin Experiment of the *Christian Faith-and-Life Community* in Texas; *Kirk Week* in Scotland; the *Department on the Laity* of the World Council of Churches; the action and reports of the Evanston Assembly of the W.C.C. in 1954; and the action and reports of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in their General Council of World Presbyterianism held in Brazil this last year.

This common spirit in many separate bodies has many other expressions, and those I have listed are only a few examples of a rediscovery by the Church of the vital role of the Laity in the life and ministry of the Church.

I.

NOW THIS GROWING EMPHASIS in many parts of the world on the function of the Laity should not be understood as an attempt to secure some larger place or recognition for the Laity in the Church. Nor is it merely another "gimmick" to supplement an understaffed ordained Ministry. Rather, it springs from the *rediscovery of the true nature of the Church as the People of God*.

All of us may be greatly helped by a new clarification of what a church really is. A Christian church is not like an ancient pagan cult in which worshipers go one by one to some shrine. A Christian church is not a collection of people who, at regular or irregular intervals, sit as spectators while a minister preaches to them or entertains them, and then go home with the feeling that their "Christian task" is accomplished for the week.

No, we have finally and reluctantly begun to reconsider seriously the claim that the Church consists of and *is* the whole congregation or

THE GREAT NEW FACT IN THE CHURCH — the ministry of the laity

While the Church is never synonymous with any historical manifestation, it exists only in concrete expression the front line of which is always the local congregation, where two or three gather in the name of Christ for the sake of scattering as mission to the world. It is in the awakening of the local gathering that genuine renewal of the Church is to be found.

Increasing signs are at hand that the local congregation in our day is being re-vitalized, as many churches grasp themselves in the new image of the Church as Mission and discover for themselves the ministry of the laity.

The present article is from a sermon by the pastor of one such congregation, the Reverend John K. Alexander of the First Presbyterian Church in Liberty, Texas. Mr. Alexander is a participant in the Parish Ministers' Colloquy of the Austin Experiment.

"people" of God; that all together are the Body of Christ; that the layman who represents the Body of Christ has just as much responsibility and obligation as the clergy. The Church is *all* the People of God.

Yes, we need to rethink for our own day *what it means* when the Scriptures speak of the Church as "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Never in the history of the Church have the consequences of this simple but central fact of the New Testament message been fully thought out nor transformed into the total practice of the life of congregations.

There is a profound difference between *using laymen* to do the work of the Church and laymen *being the Church*, being the Body of Christ in the world. The Laity, therefore, should never be requested "to be so kind and good and willing" as to help the Church (no one thinks of speaking in such a way to the minister). Laymen should be appealed to simply on the basis of *what they are* by the nature and calling of Christ's Church as the People of God, sent into the world for witness and service.

To put it another way, laymen are not to be used to promote the interests of some agency called the Church; they are the Church and are doing the work of the Church as they live their lives as Christians and as they witness in the world.

II. ✓

LET ME ILLUSTRATE by comparing the Church to an army. Picture a war going on; what is our role, function, and place in this battle?

First, the layman is the front-line soldier. His is the most crucial role, for he is the one who is out where the battle is actually being fought. He is the spearhead of the battle.

Where, then, is the *front*? The front and the fight goes right through the place you yourself occupy. And can one not say that the Church succeeds or fails in its ministry according to whether or not something is happening in the name of Christ in your sector of the world and the battle?

The problem of the layman does not consist in seeking ways to assist his pastor in the pastor's ministry, but how to find the help and resources which he, himself, needs in order to stand up in the battle in his sector. Thus his worship, study, fellowship, and training must be regarded as the preparation for his real life, a "home base" from which he obtains the proper supplies and arms for his return to battle. Inside a country at war, everything is important in a subsidiary way because it serves the front. Similarly, the layman cannot fight his battle without the backing of an active organization which supports him and provides him with sustenance.

(continued on page seven)

the source of spontaneous witness



By Hans-Ruedi Weber

Hans-Ruedi Weber continues the discussion begun last month on the subject of the "cloud of unknown witnesses" in the early church.

It has been said that the explanation of the continuing missionary expansion of Islam is what to non-Moslems seems to be a superiority complex: the strong consciousness of Moslems to be the one elect and privileged *umma*, the one and only true community of God. Allah claims the whole world. All the areas which do not yet fall under the Moslem theocracy are therefore "areas of war," where the true worship has to be introduced whether by force or persuasion. Every Moslem, kindled by such a self-consciousness, becomes spontaneously a propagandist.

Granted all the differences between Islam and the Christian faith and therefore the quite different nature and exigencies of Moslem propaganda and Christian missions, there is here a revealing parallel: Christians also have such a particular self-consciousness, the consciousness to be "the people," *the laos*: "the chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (I Peter 2:9). If this self-consciousness is not embedded in an equally strong knowledge that we are God's people solely by the mercy of God, such a faith becomes intolerably arrogant. We know it from certain missionary practices not only of Moslem and Christian sects but also of respectable Christian churches! Yet, whether arrogant or not, such a self-consciousness is a strong missionary drive. It surely was in the ancient Church.

Those who were scoffed at by Celsus as being "persons of the most uneducated and rustic kind" knew that they were *the people*, and this inextinguishable conviction gave even these simple Christians "a direct politico-historical consciousness—in fact the most comprehensive, the most perfect and the most impressive one imaginable. Can one conceive of anything more lofty or more comprehensive than the ideas of 'the true Israel', 'the new people', 'the first nation', 'the people of the future' (i.e., of eternity)? Because they thought of themselves in this way, Christians were secure from all the arguments and veering opinions of polemics, and could march straight on to victory on all fronts. If they were reproached for being 'renegade Jews' they replied, 'We are the Church of the Messiah, and therefore the true Jews.' If they were reproached for being 'nothing but Jews' they answered, 'We are a new creation and a new people.' On the other hand, if they were reproached for being something new, they answered, 'Our newness is only apparent; in latent form we have existed ever since the beginning of time in every nation; we are the original people of God.' If they were told they did not deserve to live, they answered, 'We will die in order to live; for we are citizens of the world to come and are sure of our resurrection'" (A. Harnack).

This self-consciousness of early Christians has found a most beautiful expression in the much quoted letter to Diognetus (in the second or early third century): "Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life. . . . Yet, although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land. . . . They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. . . . To put it simply: What the soul is in the body, the Christians are in the world" (Translation by Eugene R. Fairweather in *Early Christian Fathers*).

We might suspect the unknown author of this epistle to Diognetus of

an excess of rhetoric. But he could point to realities which are no longer common in our churches today. The Christians showed their true citizenship by living in the world and not by withdrawing into a Christian ghetto, into Christian organizations, etc., as so many Christians are doing nowadays. They were different from others but not through "peculiar forms of speech" or in clothing and other matters of daily living (as so many Christians today, not only in Asia and Africa, but also in the West). They were different because of their peculiar *double citizenship*, because of their hope of the Kingdom to come.

This consciousness of being God's own people which became such a vital missionary drive, was intimately related to the early Christians' understanding of what happened in baptism and confirmation. Besides the forgiveness of sin, the reception of the Holy Spirit, etc., baptism was also considered as a military oath. A. Harnack showed how, in the world-famous Roman army, the decisive act of becoming a soldier was called the *sacramentum* and how the ancient Church soon took over this term in order to designate with it the act of taking the baptismal vows. In this connection, Harnack suggested also a new derivation of the term "pagan." The traditional hypothesis is that heathens were called "pagani" (pagans) because "paganus" means inhabitants of a village and because most Christians were to be found in cities. But the Latin word "paganus" means also "civilian," thus the contrary of a soldier. By becoming a Christian, by the *sacramentum*, the baptismal vows, we cease to be civilians (=pagans) and we all become soldiers actively engaged in Christ's struggle for the world. The New Testament and the early Church never admitted a distinction between active and passive members. Every one was a missionary. And every baptized person had the authority to be a missionary.

For baptism and the accompanying unction were also considered as some kind of an ordination, as G. H. Williams has pointed out: "The laic in the ancient Church had an indelible 'ordination' as priest, prophet and king, no longer in bondage to the world but freed through Christ to know the truth in the illumination of the Spirit, to exercise sovereignty over the inner temple of self, to join in the corporate thanksgiving of the redeemed, and to forgive the brethren in Christ's name." To put it in the words of Chrysostom: "So also are thou thyself made king and priest and prophet in the laver (of baptism): a king, having dashed to earth all the deeds of wickedness and slain thy sins; a priest, in that thou offerest thyself to God, and in having sacrificed thy body, and in being thyself slain also, for if we died with Him, saith he (Paul, II Tim. 2:11), we shall also live with Him; and finally a prophet, knowing what shall be, and being inspired of God and sealed. For as upon soldiers a seal, so is also the Spirit put upon the faithful. And if thou desert, thou art manifest by it to all. For the Jews had circumcision for a seal, but we, the earnest of the Spirit. Knowing then all this, and considering our high state, let us exhibit a life worthy of grace. . . ."

It would be futile to try to copy the spontaneous mission of the ancient Church. But we may at least try to learn a lesson; a lesson in the form of some questions, for we do not know the answers. Besides, many answers which might be given to these questions touch "hot irons" in the realm of Faith and Order, and Missions and Evangelism; those who are competent in these realms might perhaps help us further.

It is no secret that the strong consciousness of being God's own people has faded away, especially among the more respectable churches and where a church finds itself in a majority church situation. Only many sects and "Adventist" or "Pentecostal" or "Holiness" churches have maintained this "laos-consciousness." Accordingly their missionary zeal and missionary outreach exceed by far all the missionary efforts of the traditional Catholic and Protestant churches.

We are used to label this type of Christendom disdainfully "fringe sects." But Henry P. Van Dusen was right in asking whether these churches are also at the fringe of the true Church of Christ and not only at the fringe of ecumenical Protestantism. He answered his own question by pointing to many similarities between the ancient Church and this "new third major type and branch of Christendom," namely "spiritual ardour, sometimes but by no means always with excessive emotionalism; immediate experience of the living Christ, sometimes with aberrations; intimate and sustaining fellowship, sometimes with excesses; leading of the Holy Spirit, sometimes but by no means always with exaggerated claims; intense apocalypticism, just like the early Church, but hardly more extreme than what is the current vogue in some segments of respectable contemporary ecumenical Protestantism; above all, a life-commanding, life-transforming, seven-day-a-week devotion, however limited in outlook, to a living Lord of all life."

A far closer attention to what is happening in this third major branch of Christendom could surely teach us much about the nature of a spontaneous missionary church. We could learn both from the obvious aberrations and from the authentic Christian faith and love and hope in these new churches. They could give us a lead to answer our first basic question:

How can the strong consciousness among Christians to be the "third race" and "God's own peculiar people" be kindled again without leading immediately to sectarian aberrations?

This article from *Laity* will be concluded in next month's issue.

When any community, a family, a group, or any other collection of individuals, thrown together by whatever cause, becomes a worshipping body they formulate over a period of time their own devotional structures. These serve for this group as long as they are gathered as this group. The Christian Faith-and-Life Community has its family devotions each evening before the common meal. Our concern is to comprehend the role that family or group devotions play in our lives now, and can play in the life situations given to us in the future.

Like every service of worship, the daily office of the Community is composed of both fixed and variable elements. The fixed part of the office is at right. The variable part, which is changed each day of the month and on holy days such as Christmas, is on the opposite page.

The Scripture Lesson for Christmas day and a word of witness by Bill Cozart are printed below.

The Scripture Lesson

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11.)

The Witness

Sometimes I wonder if the Old Testament doesn't witness more to the Christ event than the New. The other day I was noticing in the tenth chapter of I Samuel the part that talks about Saul's being anointed king of Israel. And Samuel tells Saul that, as he leaves the place of anointing and travels home, he will be met by all kinds of people. These encounters will be signs—signs that everything that comes to him is an indication of the renewing presence of God in his life. As Samuel puts it,

"Now when these signs meet you,
Do whatever your hand finds to do,
For God is with you."

It seems to me that these lines belong at the end of the morning worship as a Benediction. I mean, here we are each morning as the Community of Christ which gathers together to remind each other, through a cluster of symbols, of our God-given identity in the world.

Then, at the end of the service, it seems like someone should say, "Now, these signs which we have just dramatized before ourselves, will be meeting us all day long in the form of people and objects that come our way. When these signs (people) meet you, do whatever your hand finds to do; that is, respond to the demands of the concrete situation, for you are meeting the will of God for your life in every succeeding encounter with your neighbor.

"Now, of course, being free people, you will not always do this, for you will many times slam the door in the face of your neighbor's need. In so doing, you bring upon yourselves just condemnation and death, and are trapped in the hell of your alienation. But here is the miracle: God does not leave the Adam-that-is-you naked; although you have rejected him, he is still concerned and provides clothes for you—that is, when you reject the comingness of your life by slamming the door in your neighbor's face, God sends him to you again, or sends another neighbor to you, and again, and again. There is no end to his continuing concern, only you're too afraid of life to believe it. Nevertheless, over and over again today these signs will be coming to you. When they do, don't be afraid to respond to them—openly, completely openly! (Remember, when you threw back the covers from the bed this morning and got up, you symbolized your decision to throw off every shred of protection and to live completely exposed to your neighbor's need).

"So, now, members of the Community of Christ, leave this worship service, and meet the signs that God sends your way today, doing whatever your hand finds to do, at all times rejoicing (especially through the tears), for your wounds are healed, your aloneness is visited, your emptiness is filled, your silence is given a voice. And again, I say, rejoice."

To make a long story short, this passage from Samuel could, perhaps, have real significance as a Benediction.

The Daily Office

Let there be silence as the Community gathers for the Office. At the appointed hour, the ministers shall enter and kneel in prayer. As the ministers rise, let the Community stand and face the Table. The ministers shall then begin the Office by saying,

In the name of the Father and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Community: Amen.

the office of confession

Then the Community shall face one another as the minister reads the penitential sentences for the day after which he shall say,

Beloved in Christ, let us confess our sins Unto Almighty God.

The Community shall then kneel or bow and the minister shall say,

Lord have mercy upon us!

Community: Christ have mercy upon us!

Minister: Lord have mercy upon us!

Then shall the Community repeat the prayer of confession appointed for the day. Following a moment of silent meditation, the minister shall say,

Beloved in Christ, our God hath had mercy upon us, as our fathers in the faith and the Holy Scriptures bear witness to us. Hear these words:

The minister shall then read the sentences of pardon for the day, after which he shall say,

Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, receive our humble thanksgiving for thy love in Jesus Christ our Lord, and enable us, by Thy Holy Spirit, to walk henceforth in true repentance and in newness of life.

Community: Amen.

Then the Community shall join in the Lord's Prayer as follows:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

the office of the word

The minister shall then say,

O Lord, open Thou our lips.

Community: And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

The Community shall then rise facing the Table as the minister says,

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

Community: As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Minister: Praise ye the Lord.

Community: The Lord's name be praised.

Then shall the Community, facing one another, read in unison the Psalm appointed for the day, after which the Community, facing the Table, shall sing the Gloria Patri.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Community shall now be seated and the appointed scripture lesson for the day shall then be announced and read, after which the minister shall say,

The Lord bless to us the reading of His Holy Word and to His Name be glory and praise.

Community: Amen.

Then the minister shall offer a witness to the Word, after which he shall say,

Praise the Lord all nations; extol him all peoples; for great is his kindness toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord is everlasting. Hallelujah!

Community: Amen.

of the Community

The Community shall then rise, face the Table, and repeat together the Apostle's Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

the office of dedication

*Then shall the minister say,
The Lord be with you.*

Community: And with thy spirit.

*The Community shall then kneel or bow and the minister shall say,
Let us pray.*

Then shall the minister read a collect appointed for the sacred season, after which he shall say,

Beloved in Christ, in communion with the saints of all ages, let us make bold to offer prayers of intercession unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father.

The Community shall then offer together the appointed prayer of intercession for the orders, after which any so moved by the Spirit of God may make known the particular concern of his heart and lead the Community in special prayers for the Church and the world. At the close of the common prayers, the minister shall say,

Let us pray especially for those who are in the midst of tribulation.

Then the Community shall join in the appointed prayer of intercession for the suffering, after which the minister shall say what follows; the Community remaining seated.

Beloved in Christ, let us offer our gifts unto Almighty God.

Then while the gifts of the Community are gathered and brought to the Table, the minister shall read the offertory sentences appointed for the day after which he shall say,

Let us pray.

Then the Community shall join in the following prayer:

Almighty God, Thou who dost give us all things, receive now the gifts of thy people. Help us to render unto Thee all that we have and all that we are that we may praise Thee with our whole lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Community shall then rise, facing the Table, and sing the Doxology.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The minister shall then say,

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Community: Grace and peace be unto you.

Here the Community shall remain standing facing the Table while the Peace, as an offering of our communion in Christ Jesus, is passed from one to another. The minister of the service shall first give the Peace to the other ministers officiating, who in turn shall pass the Peace to members in the pews. The minister shall then read the following grace after which the Community shall kneel or bow in silence, each departing as he is led of the Spirit of God.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.

Community: Amen.

THE VARIABLES

Psalm 50

Christmas Day

Penitential Sentences—Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is sorely troubled But thou, O Lord—how long? Turn, O Lord, save my life; deliver me for the sake of thy steadfast love. (Psalm 6:2-4.)

"Do not be afraid! I bring you glorious news of great joy which is for every man. This very day, in David's town, a Saviour has been born for you. He is Christ, the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11.)

General Confession—Almighty and all-holy Father; We confess ourselves unworthy of Thine unspeakable Gift. We have not loved Thee as we ought; Nor have we always been loving to one another; kind hearted, and forgiving one another; even as Thou, for Christ's sake, hast forgiven us. We have lived in selfishness and worldly pride; and the good gifts Thou hast bestowed upon us we have not used to relieve the burdens of others. Pardon and blot out our offenses, we beseech Thee, through the incarnate life and willing sacrifice of Thy Holy Son, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sentences of Pardon—For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6). He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the father. (John 1:10-14.)

Intercession For The Orders—O God our Father, who didst send Thy Son to be King of Kings and Prince of Peace: Grant that all the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdom of our Lord and learn of Him the way of peace. Inspire all men continually with the spirit of unity and concord. Let those who are offended forgive, and those who have offended repent, so that Thy children may live as one family through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Intercession For The Suffering—Father of mercies, who hast given unto us the gift of thy son, we commend to Thee the poor, the cold, the hungry, the lonely, and those who have no helper. So move the hearts of those to whom Thou hast freely given all things that they also may freely give; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Offertory Sentences—And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures they offered him gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11.)

For you were called to freedom brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants to one another. (Galatians 5:13.)

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10.)

LETTER TO LAOS HOUSE

In the November issue of *Letter To Laymen* Jack Lewis reported the response of several men who participated in a *Weekend Study-Conference-Retreat* at the Community's Laos House. A letter from a San Antonio business man who was in the group was received this month. He writes:

"I do not believe that I can put into words what happened to me on that week-end without getting melodramatic. On Saturday afternoon I was in my room for the study period. The lectures and seminars had my morale dragging the ground. I stood convicted without an argument left. There seemed no way out. All of a sudden a deep awakening started within me. Everything began to take shape; a great awareness was dawning on me. Miserable, wretched slob that I am, God was waiting for me to stand before Him stripped of my many coats of self deception. I no longer had to hide from others and from myself. I was free. A seemed to swell up and grow. The light seemed to get brighter. I looked out the window, smiling like a lunatic. A weight seemed to have dropped from my shoulders. I felt like running out and telling someone about it. But no, I'd better let it wash over me for a while and let me be permeated with it.

"The further lectures, discussions, seminars and worship service filled me fuller and fuller. Things fell into place that had never before had any meaning—doctrine, worship, scriptures, neighbors, faith, Christ, myself, the world. You said we wouldn't get any answers? I got answers to things I didn't even know there were questions for.

"You do not know how often I have wanted to confess the meaningless of my church life and to ask to be released from my vows—how often I have had the feeling of guilt about my motives, the quandary at being in a situation that I could not swallow, yet thinking that I must either be queer or the worst hypocrite in all creation. Now, it is entirely different. The things I say and do now are practically the same as I did before with one important—yea, vital exception. The difference is the meaning, the understanding. *What difference!* Believe me, it is like another world. I'm like a child that has had a new world opened to him. I'm just feeling my way and not walking very steady, but that fullness I was talking about is still there and I am going to have to share it or bust.

"Our course was designed for self understanding and, if it were like other self-improvement courses, it should end there with the enrollee more or less enriched as the course was more or less meaningful. However, here we have something different. Here we seek to know and understand ourselves and the impulse to spread our new found knowledge is overpowering. This compulsion is not one of seeking supporters for our new theories or to indemnify us of a possible mistaken theory by the weight of its adherents, so to speak. There is no certainty about any of it, yet there is more strength in that uncertainty than in the knowledge that I must be awake to write this letter.

"We plan to continue our study among the ten who participated in the course..."

The *Weekend Study-Conference-Retreat* provides the opportunity for concerned laymen in the local church to think through for themselves the meaning of the Christian Faith for their lives, the nature of lay leadership in the present day local congregation, and the mission of the Church in the world of the mid-twentieth century.

common life in the local congregation

(Continued From Page One)

It is interesting to remember that Martin Luther and John Wesley did not become interested in structuring the life of the Church until a great revival had already begun to take place in the form of a great tidal wave that needed structuring and channeling in order not to loose itself in its great momentum. Today, we seem to hope that a big program in the Church with detailed, intricate structures will somehow call into being a great revival movement. In some ways the Church seems to be the dying ashes of what was once a great fire. We urge each other into frantic activity in the hope that life will come back into the Church—forgetting that the Church has life only as God gives it life. We say to one another, "If we do not get new members the Church (as an institution) will die." We act as if the life and vitality of the Church were totally dependent upon the activities of men. Church life becomes a program to administer and promote. We are tempted to manipulate people to get the desired results of the "program." It is assumed that either the Gospel will automatically be preached or that it has been preached once and that we can now spend our time carrying out the program. It is also assumed that if the Gospel is preached, it can be measured as to its successful communication by the number who come into the Church. Each pastor is assigned to raise so much money for a given number of causes and a quota of new additions to the Church. It becomes a temptation to equate the will of God with the program of the Church. In this atmosphere, it is no wonder that the people sometimes decide to accept the money and membership quotas in relation to whether or not it will hurt the preacher's record or get him in trouble with his superiors. It is assumed that each church should be structured according to some pattern in an attempt to embody all the aspects of the Body of Christ in each local charge. This is impossible. The real situation of each congregation should determine the structure and the ministry of a particular Church.

With our laymen becoming intellectually more sophisticated and better trained in the Southwest and with the condition in the Church of no significant common study, the Church is going to suffer.

We must find ways of communicating the Gospel and making it meaningful to the every day life of laymen. We must communicate God's judgment against apathy and ignorance in the life of the Church and make known the joy of receiving His love. We must communicate that before God all of life is holy—that there is no such thing as "secular" part of our life outside the judgment and concern of God. We cannot think of ourselves

as charged to keep them happy, but we must think of ourselves as being responsible to God. We must not be prostitutes—selling ourselves to others and attempting (even unconsciously) to fulfill their responsibility to God.

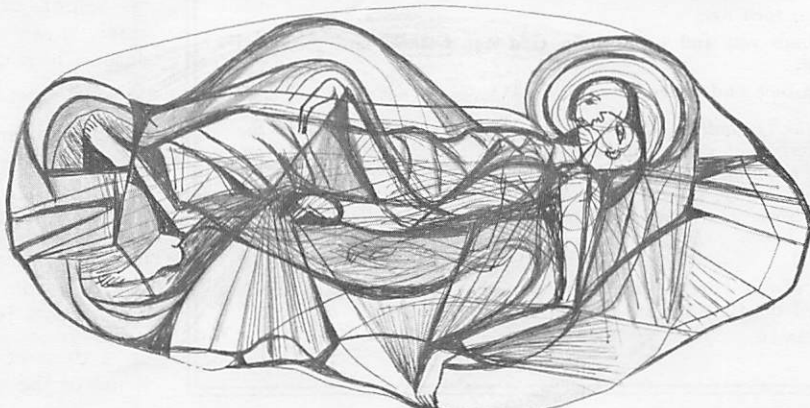
The central and climatic expression of the communal life of the Church is worship. In the structure of the service of worship we act out our experience in Jesus Christ—that is, we act out our faith in such a way that that which is remembered as being decisive in the event of Jesus Christ (namely: the revelation of the judgment and reconciliation made known in Him) can be appropriated by those subjectively involved in the worship of the Church. In worship there is always the open possibility that the communal memory about Jesus as the Christ can become my memory. There is always the open possibility of my finding new life in Christ. God will make such appropriation an open possibility (sometimes in spite of what we do); yet, we should self-consciously be aware that we proclaim our faith by the way we worship as well as by a direct confession of faith.

The common life of the Church should also express itself in common study. The minister needs to find ways of entering into a dialogue with the people of the Church. This would be good for both. We need genuine conversation with our parishioners in areas about which they are vitally involved. We need genuine conversation based upon mutual respect wherein we will hear them as well as tell them. Our Churches have grown so large that the minister cannot enter into a genuine conversational relationship with all in his charge. He can study with some (perhaps Sunday School teachers) who could share in study with others—perhaps within the structure of our Church School. Here, in the study of the Church, God will make known His Gospel just as surely as in the worship of the Church. In such study, the dimension of depth could be added to fellowship of the Church. Here, the people would become a community.

The common life of the Church should express itself in a common ministry to each other and to the world. This is the priesthood of all believers. We all are charged by God to proclaim the Gospel to one another. Our common ministry is to call one another into the awareness that we are before the Lord and that He is inexorably involved in our lives. This means that we stand in judgment against one another in awareness of God's judgment upon us, and that we comfort one another in awareness of God's love and concern for us.

This in turn enables us to go out into the world as either laymen or clergymen, to serve the world according to each person's talents, and to meet the need of all men for the saving Word of forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

Russell Owen is the pastor of The Methodist Church in Hennessey, Oklahoma.



DIALOGUE WITH DR. FRED GEALY

DEAR EDITORS OF LETTER TO LAYMEN:

I read Dr. Gealy's monograph (*Letter To Laymen*, Oct., 1959) with intense interest and entered into a dialogue with him at many points, but these particular words in his article opened up a line of thought I felt was worth sharing with you:

"What shall I do with the people who are outside of faith, as we say, the people to whom the Bible does not speak? Shall I wipe them off as unimportant, insignificant to our situation. Or should I recognize them being in the list of saints also? I'm willing to. Once again I suggest that our fourth question is the primary question, fundamental to all authentic living: 'What is God saying to me out of this complex?'"

Dr. Gealy placed the emphasis here on the importance and value of the "Faithful" listening to those outside the faith. I have no argument with this nor even with "Listing them among the saints." However this question—"What shall I do with the people who are outside of faith?"—has in my present experience been frequently asked (I might even say forced into my consciousness) in the context of evangelism—that is, in the context of my responsibility as a faithful Christian to gain a hearing from those to whom the Bible does not speak.

This whole business of evangelism is troublesome because evangelism has so often meant a kind of spiritual imperialism or a self congratulatory disrespect for those who don't happen to see things our way. Dr. Gealy has helped me to express the problem more clearly by defining the faithful, or the called, as those for whom *the dialogue is open*.

The called are those to whom God has spoken, is speaking, and (we hope and believe and perhaps fear) will speak. If then, we are the called, evangelism is simply our responsibility to those who are deaf, those who

the great new fact

continued from page two

What then is the task of the clergy? Their principal work is behind the lines, at the regrouping station, as kitchen soldiers, if you please, providing training, rations, arms, etc. They have been trained and put where they are in order to see that the front-line soldiers are adequately prepared. The function of the clergy is to train, equip, and help to sustain a *militant Laity*.

III.

AND YET NORMALLY, what person is the human symbol of the Churches in the minds of Church people and of those outside their ranks? What is he universally thought of as doing? Surely the answer is easily given: He is a *clergyman*, preparing or otherwise leading in a worship service.

But does this commonly understood symbol convey the full meaning of the Church? The full weight of the Evanston Report on the Laity speaks out with an emphatic "NO." Alongside it, the report lifts out another figure as the human symbol of the Church as a "Ministering Community." This symbol is that of a *layman*, busy in the secular occupation and life of the world. Our starting-point must always be the idea that it is the *Church as a whole which has a Ministry*, that has a service to discharge in the world. Scripture reminds us, "You are the light of the world . . . You are the salt of the earth."

But the passage above all to which we need to focus our attention is that in *Ephesians 4:12*. In Scripture, to be a Christian is to be a saint. This means all who have been called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and called into the Body of Christ, the Church. Therefore, "God has called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ." It is therefore not the Minister or clergyman alone who has a ministry, but the whole people of God. And in this sense, the clergyman's function is that of helping and equipping each member for his work of ministry.

Now there are different gifts among us, but the distinctions within the Church are only functional and instrumental, and *all Christians are called of God to a ministry*. A "mere" Christian does not exist.

We have been called to serve or to minister in the name of Christ, whether as clergyman, schoolteachers, soap salesman, TV repairmen, bank tellers, civil engineers, atomic scientists, or anything else. There are no different degrees of calling so that one person is a hobby-type, leisure-time Christian; and another person a full-time, professional Christian. We are all called to be "professional" Christians. The clergyman represents and realizes one aspect of this ministry, and the laity represents the other aspects, and both are integral to the whole ministry of Jesus Christ.

announcement...

The Laos House is available to groups of thirty or less persons as a conference center, providing comfortable living quarters and meals at very reasonable rates, and including the use of lecture and seminar rooms. It is located at 700 West Nineteenth Street, the old Wooten Mansion, and is open to groups when programs of the Austin Experiment are not in session. For details and open dates, inquire: Director of Studies, Christian Faith-and-Life Community, 2503 Rio Grande, Austin, Texas. GGreenwood 7-4471.

are refusing to hear, or, to use Dr. Gealy's words, those who have closed off the dialogue.

Can we then, or dare we, see ourselves as messengers sent by God to open up the dialogue?

Are we being presumptuous to read ourselves into Isaiah's situation when he was gathered up into God's heavenly meeting and heard God saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"

And indeed, can we avoid the obligation of making Isaiah's answer?

But then too, have we not also run away with Jonah to the sea to escape from it?

An exconvict of the Whale's Belly,
Gene W. Marshall
Chaplain
US Army

Laymen are beginning to recognize that they exert a ministry that is as valuable and important as that of the ordained clergy. It is as responsible and essential a ministry of the Church, as is the clergyman's. For every Christian has his own sector of world to influence, to change, to bring under the Lordship of Christ!

Every Christian is called of God. The World Council of Churches in Evanston resurrected the great term "the people of God." And the word "laity" comes from this same root word, which in the New Testament means *all the Christians*. In the New Testament, there is not a single report of people in the Church described as "only" laymen. Every Christian was expected to be a professional or have a ministry.

IV.

FINALLY, we must say that the *only effective means* through which the Christian witness can be made today is through the Laity, that is, all the people of God. The uniqueness of the Laity's vocation is to be a "point of contact." It is through its lay membership that the Church enters into real and daily contact with the workaday world, and shares in its problems and aspirations. It is in the life and work of the lay membership that the Church must manifest in the world its *regenerative and redemptive* power. For the layman is the *bridge* by which the Church crosses over into the life of the world. He is the means of access which the Church has to where men are. The layman is the point where the Church makes its main contact with the world.

As the Evanston Assembly reminded us so forcefully, "the real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties, and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television . . . in the relationship of nations." "Very often," the report goes on, "it is said that the Church should 'go into these spheres,' but the fact is that the Church is already in these spheres in the persons of its laity."

First Presbyterian Church, Liberty, Texas: To equip and sustain a militant Laity.



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Joyce D. Pierce

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Mr. and Mrs. Clayton W. Chance

A LETTER OF CONCERN

In the light of the concerted effort to secure funds for the Austin Experiment, announced in the last issue, the Community was pleased to receive a copy of a letter written to an outstanding figure in the state of Texas from a concerned participant in the Experiment's Laos House programs, and to be able to share it here with the readers of Letter To Laymen.

Dear _____,

Several times in the last couple of years I have sat down to write you a chatty letter, but have spared you out of kindness. Today you are not so lucky. I have two reasons for writing: to tell you of my most recent move, and to put a bug in your ear.

In September, I went back to the University and started teaching and working on a Ph.D.—again. It was a tough decision, since it cut my salary more than \$3,000.00.

I have never before felt so deeply how good life is. It all started when I happened to become acquainted with a group here in Austin which I am sure you remember, the Christian Faith-and-Life Community. At first, this Community was for college students. Then it began offering "colloquies" or seminars for Austin townspeople—as a part of its purpose of reviving the Church from within by giving theological education to laymen.

I attended a colloquy. It was like having a stick of dynamite exploded right by your head. The programs do not raise false religious questions and then give you phony religious answers. They do not speak in mystical terminology or deal with abstractions. They are not concerned with moralisms and sentimentality. Beginning where every man must begin, they go directly to the heart of every man's problem—the problem of how we are going to *live* life, and what it means to live in faith and unfaith.

It's a hair-raising experience to be forced to come clean on your living convictions, and to admit that you have never really understood what life is all about. It tore me up to admit that my life has been just one damned thing after another, and that for me it had no meaning whatever, except in terms of someday perhaps having pie in the sky. It hurt to face the fact that we have life here and now, in the midst of one damned thing after another, or we don't have it at all. As Marlon Brando put it, "You ain't living if you don't *know* it." Christ came to give us abundant life, now.

I found out a lot of things about what it means to be a responsible human being. I found out that it is possible to hide behind "religion." I found out why I believe the Church never really communicated the Gospel to me in all the years I have been a "Christian," and why it is failing to communicate the Gospel at depth to the world at large today....that in the midst of our situation we can dare to be what we are, and to live with courage.

Well, a man can't re-arrange his theological convictions without his life being re-arranged. And when it happened to me, it wasn't in ways



Corporate Ministry: Austin Experiment's Collegium now totals seven theologically trained members. Bill Maclay (2nd from right) is most recent addition, engages primarily in field work and development.

that I expected. I didn't give up smoking or develop an abhorrence for dancing and mixed bathing. Instead, I stopped lying to myself about many things, faced up to a number of the facts of life, found out that there is such a thing as inner integrity, and I continue to learn every day that there is a crucifixion for every one of us at every turn in the road, and that to "die" in this situation is to be born into a life that is real—an existence that is genuine.

Why am I telling you all this? My motive is altogether ulterior. What has happened to me is happening to others through the work of this Community, which is also known as "the Austin Experiment." People who have never been "reached" are coming to life, and are going back into their churches—Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, or what-have-you. These people are livening up the Church, recovering the meaning of historical Christian terms and stirring superficial Christians to new depths of understanding.

This "lay movement" is going on all over the world. The Austin Experiment is only one manifestation of it. I believe the Lord is in it, still telling his people that they can have life and have it abundantly. It is a new dispensation of the Gospel—one that has maning for publicans and sinners like me, who need it. It is offensive to the Pharisees, but it speaks *life* to the unwashed.

You may be aware that responsible people are supporting the Community. It is growing fast, mostly on faith, which brings me to the whole point of this. The Community needs money to keep going. It is trying to raise \$50,000 by January first. I'm not asking for any. I just want to let anybody and everybody know what I think of its work, plus the fact that it needs help.

I remember that a few years ago you brought a man out to my house and we got into a discussion of religion. I remember that he expressed some healthy doubts about whether 19th century religionism had a place in our world—whether it could any longer convey a true and worthwhile message to the world.

At the time, I thought this man was a bit anti-religious, and I sort of sat down on him conversationally. I, too, was a Pharisee. Now, I understand how deeply right he was and how valid a question he raised. I believe that he would be overjoyed to know what is being done by the Faith-and-Life Community. Responsible ministers and laymen are now raising the same question and are giving the Christian Gospel a new and meaningful application in the twentieth century. Theological education—the kind that makes mature Christians out of people instead of side-tracking them down the alleys of superficial moralism and dogmatism and doctrinal division—is the answer to many a mixed-up, wasted life like mine. I'm sure you can understand my concern, at this point, for the needs of the people who have helped me to find out what it means to "have life and have it abundantly."

May I, in all seriousness, put this bug in your ear—that if any charitable contributions are being handed out by your company or companies, you consider including the Community on your list? It couldn't be better spent.

Please give my regards to your family, and may the Lord bless you.

December, 1959

Christian Faith-and-Life
Community
2503 Rio Grande, Austin 5, Texas
W. Jack Lewis, Executive Director

Letter to Laymen