

ISSUES...

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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HUMANISM



ISSUES...

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TEACHING THE WORD IN A HUMANISTIC SOCIETY

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IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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Editor's Notes

The philosophy of humanism permeates the value system of our society. Many of its emphases have appeal for Christians and atheists as well. Its concern with human welfare has a ring of authenticity and relevance which lead many to believe it provides the right answers to all of man's needs. This ISSUES identifies both humanism's potential and its shortcomings. The goal is to provide material which may help our readers see more clearly which approaches may lead them to teach and preach the Gospel message more effectively to those whose lives, knowingly or unwittingly, are being influenced by humanism.

THE EDITOR

CAN HUMANISM BE CHRISTIAN?

The word "humanism" and the wide varieties of meanings which it has come to convey is an emotion-laden word. Anyone who attempts to address the subject of "humanism" without first giving proper attention to readers' visceral responses to the word is kidding himself and is not providing the necessary conditions to assist his readers to think critically about the subject of humanism. Even the most limited store of historical knowledge will probably contain information concerning the positive contributions bequeathed to the world by Renaissance humanism, which reintroduced the world to classical languages and cultures. Among other benefits of this bequest, Biblical studies in the original languages were greatly enhanced. Yet these recollections of snippets of history, while positive, are offset by the negative remembrances that one of the leading humanists of the Reformation era, Erasmus, wrote a treatise entitled the *Freedom of the Will*, which Luther totally rejected in his treatise *The Bondage of the Will*. For Luther, Erasmus had a much too positive perspective on the inherent powers and natural goodness of man.

The much needed emphasis on trying to protect the value of the individual human being in a technological, data-oriented, categorized by number, impersonal and dehumanizing world is balanced by the memory of the 1933 *A Humanist Manifesto* which called on men to rely on themselves rather than God, to seek human rather than Biblical values, and to accept and use scientific discoveries for the best possible reshaping of the world.

If by "humanism" people can come to mean a concept of man which is Biblically based and which confronts honestly the *positive elements* concerning man like the facts that the Creator "made man a little less than God" (Ps. 8:5), that the Creator continues to "knit together" child after child in mothers' wombs (Ps. 139:13), and that human reason can produce civil good works (Apology IV); and the *negative elements* concerning man like the facts that man is unable to be deemed righteous before God because of man's righteousness of reason (Apology IV), that even regenerated man finds sin dwelling in him and harmfully influencing his life (Rom. 7:18-20), and that the beautiful handiworks of God's knitting process in mothers' wombs end up being maimed or demolished through wars, accidents, and man's general inhu-

manity to man, then this writer would agree and his emotional response would be extinguished. Reality suggests, however, that Christian humanism, if it is indeed a possibility and definable in Biblical categories, will of necessity have to remain truly Christian, but will be constantly tempted and often persuaded to be truly human. History suggests that when humanism becomes truly human it is no longer Christian.

ALAN HARRE

CHRISTIAN MANIFESTOS I AND II

This past fall newspapers across the country reported the signing of Humanist Manifesto II by 120 religious leaders, philosophers, writers, lawyers, social scientists, and scientists representing a movement that claims 3 million members internationally and 250,000 within the United States. The statement declared among other things:

1. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.
2. We believe that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.
3. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self actualization and from rectifying social injustices.

The precise 1973 document updates the more general statement of values of 1933, stressing especially individual freedom and specific social action in fields including nuclear arms, population, racism, sexism, and pollution. It generally criticizes religious dogmatism and asserts that humans alone must solve their problems on earth.

Humanism as represented in this document sees religion as the enemy and detrimental to the well-being of man. It finds the organized church and especially the Christian denominations to be more hurtful than helpful. Its logical creed is the golden rule. And its note of confidence and freedom appeals to the natural instincts of us all to do our own thing. Thus humanism exerts a continuing great influence on society and the actions of men. It naturally causes some negative reaction from among the churches, enhanced by the sharpness of its language and attack.

editorials

Rather than mounting a counterattack, let me suggest that we in the churches look to the Christian Manifestos I and II—the great goals of Scripture itself succinctly stated by St. Paul in 2 Timothy as "making men wise unto salvation" (Christian Manifesto I) and training them in holy living (Christian Manifesto II)—and make them the focal point of word and action.

If the churches are to become more relevant again they will need clear statements of both Manifestos. It is not too difficult for non-Christian humanism to salt the earth more effectively than a nonhumanistic Christianity. The churches can easily fall into the trap of actions speaking so loudly their words, and God's Word, cannot be heard. We in the LCMS, too, need to take care. Let us not be "hearers of the Word only, but doers." Let me suggest that among the statements in our Christian Manifesto II would appear the following:

1. We ought to obey God rather than man.
2. No man that God has cleansed is unclean.
3. It is God's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom, and He wants all to be His.
4. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
5. We believe that truly Christian men are the salt of the earth and the light of the world—discipleship is no accident.

Among the precise statements would be those dealing with our response to the fatherless, widows, hungry, poor, naked, and cold. Included would be statements about the nature and actions of the spiritual leaders in churches and denominations. Certainly foremost among these would be the statement that, "above all they must be men of God." It has been said that it is as easy to become a father as it is difficult to be one. The same is true for a child of God, a pastor or teacher, and a truly Christian community. Perhaps if each of us in our own church, LCMS, were to write down his Christian Manifestos I and II we would rediscover the broad middle ground of agreement which has been the backbone of our united witness and action to a world in need. We might also find cooperation in many areas more productive than conflict and pleasure and burying the hatchet in each other's backs. And, we might contribute to saving man from "saving" himself, a practice whose failures bombard us with every news report.

GILBERT DAENZER

CIRCULATION POLICY—A copy of ISSUES is sent free to each church, school, and District and Synodical office in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In addition, bulk mailings are sent to high schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @ 75¢ each; Subscription @ \$2.00 per year; Ten or more copies mailed to the same address @ 35¢ per copy.

THE ALLEGORICAL ADVENTURES OF MILTON, JAN AND GRACE

It was twelve-thirty. In half an hour they would have to go back to work. These lunch time conversations never became arguments, but Milton and Jan always took them seriously. So did Grace. It was standard procedure for them to deal with the issue of the day as carefully and completely as possible. Neither Milton nor Jan expected each other to concede or offer compromise. They simply saved the last five minutes of the lunch hour for Grace. As an older woman — no one really knew exactly how old — she seemed always to understand the issues in the debate and to have a solution that made so much sense it could not be disputed. But Grace was sensitive and polite enough not to intervene until Milton and Jan were ready. Perhaps she had inherited her gentle kindness from her father. She came from a good family. Her father was very well-educated, a perfect Renaissance man, knowledgeable on any subject. Grace seemed to have inherited her father's wisdom as well as his good manners.

"The Declaration of Independence says we're all equal. Are you going to say Thomas Jefferson was wrong?" Jan knew that politics was Milton's weak point. The subject made him emotional. But he sensed the trap in her question and blocked the opening she was trying to make.

"I'm not talking about political equality. It's a moral issue. Philosophical. The nature of man, the essence of humans, like in Plato. Are we all the same underneath, in our basic nature, or are some people better than others?"

Now it was Jan's turn to be cautious. Milton had studied philosophy. She had majored in physical education with a minor in history, so she concentrated on finishing her lunch instead of responding. Besides, they both knew Grace had been listening. For the moment, the trio was satisfied to sit quietly on the hill above the factory. They watched the shadows move very slowly as the sun began going down from noon toward the inevitable evening.



Humanists are formidable opponents for religious people or churchists. With few

exceptions, they have refused to organize and establish a body of dogma that is distinctly humanist. Since they do not meet in convention, they offer no resolutions for debate. They operate freely without the discipline of bylaws. It must be said to their credit that because they do not publish a newsletter they also do not solicit funds for their cause. At the same time, however, they have failed to provide their opponents with an acronym or name for themselves which might be used for construction of puns and sneers. Humanists mingle freely and anonymously with anyone else who happens to share the luncheon table with them.

There is a greater frustration for churchists who oppose humanists. Humanists are *nice*. They are gentlemen and gentlewomen (except for a scruffy minority among them who prefer outrageous naiveté to dressing politely and holding down a genuinely American job). Because they are nice, humanists do not openly laugh at churchists. Usually they do nothing worse than tolerate the churchist inclination to dogma, ritual, and the trappings of metaphysics. However, neither do they seem bothered by our warnings that God will get them at the end.

How then shall we oppose humanists? We must oppose them, of course, because they are not us. But how shall we do it? We hold no property in common with humanists, so we cannot threaten them. Since they are not officially organized we have no recourse to courts of law. Since they do not believe as we do, not even in essentials, we cannot demand that they forswear themselves.

Only the traditional weapons are left. We can continue to rebuke them for infiltrating our ranks disguised as churchists. We can note — and duly inform God — of breeches in humanist etiquette which occur when a revolution of theirs fails to produce democracy. We can deal swiftly and thoroughly with any churchist who commits humanism, and we can warn our daughters of the basic nature of humanists.

At the same time we must steadfastly maintain our moral superiority over humanists. We need not wallow in confession that we once were as depraved as they are now; that was a long time ago. We can simply assume confession is taken care of in our dogma on sin. Instead we ought to continue emphasizing the present nature we enjoy. By virtue of right thought, started by miracle which no longer seems necessary, we have developed into *better* people than humanists. More than *decent* and *correct* in attributes, we are cor-

rect and decent in our very nature. As evidence thereof we need only point to our preoccupation with other matters than *nice-ness*. Therefore, because our roots are more pure, we can be assured that our fruits are *better* than their fruits.



As Grace looked at her watch, Milton and Jan began to pick up the picnic things and fold the blanket. The figures in the parking lot below the hill were beginning to move toward the factory and the afternoon.

"Is it true that some people are better than others? Inside, basically?" asked Milton. Because of the time he addressed his question directly to Grace.

"No." Milton and Jan had come to expect Grace to be direct. They no longer doubted that she was correct whenever she spoke. So there was no need to use many words. Still, Milton felt they had time to press the point.

"How about humanists and churchists. No difference there?"

"There is no innocent work because there are no innocent people, underneath it all, that is. Take everything else away and everyone's the same. No one in his nature is better than anyone."

"That's terrible," Jan managed to whisper. "Not when you think about it," said Grace. She looked at her watch, and the three of them began to move down the hill toward the factory.

JAMES NELESEN

THE MORALITY OF OUR HUMANISTIC SOCIETY BY KEN FRERKING

In their fascinating attempt to project the course of the final third of the 20th century, Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener of the Hudson Institute "think-tank" manage to do so with only a minimal reference to religion. This they do on the assumption that 20th century cultures will continue to be increasingly "sensate" — a term coined by the late Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin and defined by Kahn and Wiener as "empirical, this-worldly, secular, humanistic, pragmatic, utilitarian, contractual, epicurean or hedonistic, and the like."¹ In that rather formidable list of adjectives the church finds its challenge for years to come. This is the humanistic society in which we are called to minister.

The following article will be concerned with tracing some of the roots of this humanistic society, particularly as they relate to morality and ethics. These roots include a growing anti-supernaturalism, relativism, rational-empiricism, and humanitarianism. The article will conclude with a brief survey of manifestations of humanistic morality in our contemporary society.



Anti-Supernaturalism

The day has passed when ethics could be regarded as a comfortable thing apart, given at the hands of God as an inscrutable "moral law implanted in the hearts of men," a thing to which social science could hand over all its problems of values. The old, aloof ethics has evaporated, and ethics today is but a component of the cravings of persons going about the daily round of living with each other.²

So wrote Robert S. Lynd in his book *Knowledge For What?* So what else is new? "Has not the development of science been, to a very great extent, an attempt to outgrow and get away from such sterile and mystical concepts as 'God' as explanatory devices?" asks Leslie A. White in *The Science of Culture*.³

The "new" element, I suppose, is that some theologians are attempting to hop aboard this scientific bandwagon. With Dietrich Bonhoeffer's famous "man come of age" as their text, a flurry of theologians in the midsixties began using such dramatic formulations as "God is dead" and "the post-Christian era." Thomas Altizer assures us that "we must realize that the death of God is an historical event, that God has died in our cosmos, in our history, in our *Existenz*."

In *Honest To God*, Bishop of Woolwich, J. A. T. Robinson, picks up the theme and notes with approval that contemporary man is discovering that for most practical purposes he manages quite happily by himself. The religious presupposition, that one cannot get by without invoking the gods, has yielded to the secular. Contemporary man finds no necessity to bring God into his science, his morals, his political speeches. Only in the private world of the individual's psychological need and insecurity is room apparently left for the God who has been elbowed out of every other sphere.⁴ If man has truly come of age, says Pierre Berton in *The Comfortable Pew*, he no longer needs the father-figure of a God who must protect him in his loneliness, fill the gaps in his science, and provide the sanction for his morality. "We no longer need to cling to the daddy on the cloud," writes Berton. "We need to revere the spirit within ourselves, and in the world around us, which represents ultimate reality."⁵

The Antecedents

This anti-supernaturalism has its antecedents in the rational-empiricism and relativism that has been growing in popularity and influence through the centuries. Already in the 17th century attempts were made to show that Christianity is a reasonable faith without rejecting revelation. This was followed by the rationalism of deism which did reject revelation. The next stage was the rejection of all dogmatic assertions, thus leading to the rationalism of skepticism. The final step was from rationalistic skepticism to atheism and various mechanistic philosophies.

The rational-empirical approach, according to its advocates, is superior in every way to both romanticism and dogmatism. As over against the romantic and the dogmatist, we are told, the empirical-rational approach tries to build on all the facts both pleasant and unpleasant in the endeavor to plumb life's meaning by seeing it whole and as it actually is. Unlike the dogmatic, the empirical-rational does not begin with an infallible principle, but "leaves the hound of reason free to follow any scent of Truth."⁶ Furthermore, the empirical-rational approach "has no illusions about finding an absolute and final answer." The thinker who follows this view knows that exactness is possible only in such sciences as mathematics and formal logic. Yet, confident that he can move in the direction of truth, he takes the middle way between an easygoing skepticism and an overconfident optimism or dogmatism.

This "no illusions about absolutes" provides the background for relativism, one of the foundation stones of contemporary morality. The concept of relativity has peculiar power for our time. This is illustrated by the extraordinary degree to which Einstein's theory of relativity captured the popular imagination when it was first proposed. Few understood the physical theory, but most people had an intuitive feeling for its significance. The 20th century was ripe for understanding it. The acceleration of historical change, which Alvin Toffler documents so well in his *Future Shock*, plus the disillusionment that has robbed modern man of any easy confidence in his tradition have contributed to the compelling importance of relativism. The form in which the principle of relativity has influenced religious thought has been the historical and cultural relativism of the social sciences, the general thesis of which is that the ideas and morals and institutions of any historical epoch are a function of the socio-historical situation in which they arise.

Sociology and anthropology provide a storehouse of information to back up the "gospel of relativism." In anthropology a person learns about the strange customs and beliefs of other cultures. One tribe goes in for cannibalism; another for headhunting. In one society the elderly are honored and tenderly cared for; in another they are turned out to freeze. It seems that almost everything is respectable somewhere: cannibalism, suicide, human sacrifice, torture, war, polygamy, polyandry—you name it!⁷

In view of this wide range of human behavior, ethical relativists claim that it is useless to attempt to discover a meaningful standard for ethical behavior. It is impossible, they say, to find a method which would enable us to discover whether any particular decision is right or wrong. Right and wrong are determined by society, by economic forces, by the particular class or party to which one happens to belong, or even by the subconscious. There is no experimental approach to ethics, for every situation is unique.

Philosopher Abraham Edel has summed up the dilemma in the words of a simple poem:

It all depends on where you are,
It all depends on when you are,
It all depends on what you feel,
It all depends on how you feel,
It all depends on how you're raised,
It all depends on what is praised,
What's right today is wrong tomorrow,
Joy in France, in England sorrow.
It all depends on point of view,
Australia or Timbuctoo,
In Rome do as the Romans do.
If tastes just happen to agree
Then you have morality.
But where there are conflicting trends,
It all depends, it all depends . . .

In view of these difficulties the ethical relativists suggest with the Greek sophist Protagoras that "man is the measure of all things." One opinion is as good as the next, and everybody has to establish his own ethical standards which then will be true for him and nobody else. In other words, right is what I think is right, and wrong is what I think is wrong. There are as many "ethics" as there are people, and there is no way of judging objectively which of all these systems is more right than any other.⁸ The best we can do is to make a statistical count to see what the majority of people are actually doing. This, then, becomes some measure or standard of what is right in a given locality. Our nation's obscenity laws operate with this basic presupposition. A statistical "is" becomes a moral "ought."

This approach is extremely popular in our time and has the advantage of being considered both scholarly and objective. It is held by all those who claim that they are trying to be impartial and unprejudiced. Vilfredo Pareto in his work *Mind and Society* says, "The term 'ought' does not correspond to any concrete reality." All moral judgments become statements of the speaker's feelings, mistaken by him for statements about something else, namely, moral standards, which do not exist.

In all fairness it should be said that not all anthropologists and sociologists are happy with the extremes of relativism. Some of them are now in quest of the universals which exist, despite a welter of contradictory customs. Already enough research has been tabulated to reveal that some attitudes are almost worldwide. Claude Levi-Strauss, the French structuralist, gathered thousands of myths from different cultures and demonstrated that beyond their great diversity were even greater similarities. At the deepest level, believes Levi-Strauss, there is an implacable pattern ingrained in the human intellect, and this pattern has not changed since primitive times. To humanists and others who believe that both man and society are perfectible, Levi-Strauss extends small comfort. "Humanism has failed," he be-

lieves. "It has lent itself to excusing and justifying all kinds of horrors. It has misunderstood man. It has tried to cut him off from all other manifestations of nature."⁹

Much important work remains to be done by social scientists looking for norms beneath the bewildering surface of customs and attitudes. In any case, news of this more recent trend to look for universals has scarcely begun to filter down into the average classroom or to the man on the street. There relativism is still king and god. It is one cause of the lawlessness of our times and of the Machiavellian nature of our politics. At least one Watergate defendant appealed specifically to the relativistic ethics he had learned from a college chaplain as justification for his participation in that nefarious incident. Relativism is not just a theoretical question to be bounced around among society's intellectuals. It has very grave practical consequences. One of its more popular contemporary manifestations can be found in the so-called new morality or "situation ethics."

The New Morality

Joseph Fletcher, popularizer of the new morality and author of *Situation Ethics*, openly acknowledges his debt to relativism. "Perhaps the most pervasive culture trait of the scientific era and of contemporary man is the relativism with which everything is seen and understood. . . . We have become fully and irreversibly 'contingent,' not only about our particular ideas, but about the very idea of ideas themselves (cognitive value) and about goodness itself (moral value). The situationist avoids words like 'never' and 'perfect' and 'always' and 'complete' as he avoids the plague, as he avoids 'absolutely.'"¹⁰ The self-contradiction involved in this statement is obvious. In the name of openmindedness we are dogmatically informed that there are no absolutes!

John A. T. Robinson, Fletcher's transoceanic partner in the promotion of the new morality, endorses the same point of view. "The moral precepts of Jesus," he assures us, "are not intended to be understood legalistically, as prescribing what all Christians must do, whatever the circumstances, and pronouncing certain courses of action universally right and others universally wrong. They are not legislation laying down what love always demands of everyone; they are illustrations of what love may at any moment require of anyone."¹¹

Social Humanitarianism

While the abandonment of moral absolutes led to situation ethics and the new morality, the abandonment of the supernatural led to a rational science of morality and social humanitarianism. One of the basic tenets of rationalism was that nature contained an order of natural moral law, to be discovered and followed like any other rational principle. This meant that the principles of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, were incorporated in the scheme of reason and science, and it was generally held that the science of ethics was as independent of

any theological or supernatural foundation as any other branch of human knowledge. As a result, the same standards of rationality and naturalness as were commonly employed in other fields were applied to the moral traditions of the West. The end product was a morality of reasonableness that emphasized those elements in the Christian ethic that seemed sound and useful for the ordering of the good life and discarded whatever seemed irrational or unnatural.

This faith in the principles of Christian morality taken apart from Christian theology is common to many American campuses. Espoused by many faculty members, this faith attracts those who are devoted to "the moral teachings of the world's great religions," shared by all persons of good will, but who honestly see no need for theology, or the church, since historically these seem to them to have been more the enemy than the friend of morality. Accordingly, their position is to retain the morality and let the theology go. The plain teachings of the Sermon on the Mount or the golden rule, they say, are, after all, the essence of Christianity, universal self-evident ethical principles, separable from the "weird" frame of first-century theology in which they are found, and valid even apart from the authority of Christ. The idea is to join the crusade to put these principles into practice in the area of human rights, race relations, economic justice, and world government.¹²

It should be clear that this kind of social humanitarianism has its own hidden theology—taking "theology" to mean an affirmation of faith about what is ultimately true and good in the universe. The "theology" behind humanitarian ethics may be faith in progress, or science, or pragmatic success, or reason or any of the other components of the humanist syndrome. The real protest, therefore, is not against theology as such but against some particular version of Christian theology.

The influence of social humanitarianism was quite strong among early American sociologists. One of the basic assumptions of early American sociology was the acceptance of "melioristic intervention." A clear illustration of this early reformism is found in the books and articles dealing with one selected social problem or social problems in general. For example, Charles E. Ellwood's once popular text, *Sociology and Modern Social Problems*, interrelates the acceptance of melioristic interests with the other presuppositions of natural law, progress, and individualism. Ellwood assumed both the inevitability of the process of social evolution and the ultimate attainment through social progress of a society characterized by harmonious adjustments among individuals, by efficiency of members in performing their social roles, and by social survival. Sociology was to assist in the achievement of these ideal social conditions by developing and applying scientific knowledge about social organization and social evolution.¹³ Although this concern for melioristic intervention rises and wanes on

the sociological scene, it stays alive in the humanitarian outlook of "men of good will."

Manifestations of Humanistic Morality in Our Society

The melioristic intervention of the humanitarian has as its goal the happiness of mankind, individually and collectively. In modern times this collective happiness most often takes the form of utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is the revival in modern times of the pleasure principle which ancient Cyrenaic and Epicurean ethics projected as the rule of life. Champion of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, "evaluated Epicurus as the only one among the ancients who had the merit of having known the true source of morality."¹⁴

The supreme rule of life for utilitarianism is neither the short-term nor the long-term pleasure of any individual as such, but rather *the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people*. If the Cyrenaic formula is the pleasure of the moment, and the Epicurean the pleasure of a life, the utilitarian is the maximal earthly pleasure of *all* lives. It is altruistic with a vengeance, proposing a scheme of action which secures for all men the greatest preponderance of pleasure over pain. Whatever promotes the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number of human beings is morally good, and what does not is not!¹⁵

In its less altruistic form, the search for happiness becomes a very self-centered and personal matter. Both ancient and modern hedonists are strictly egoistic—that is, solely concerned with their own personal pleasure. For some this pleasure must be immediate. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." For others, the "long run" happiness is what counts most. Epicurus represents this kind of hedonism. He counted the cost and played his cards accordingly, but always with his own welfare in mind.

The search for happiness has been a part of our society since the beginnings of the American republic. The Declaration of Independence proudly announces that the "pursuit of happiness" is one of man's inalienable rights. What has happened, however, is that this pursuit of happiness has become increasingly frenzied. The expectations of happiness as a goal to be achieved in one's own life have been steadily rising since the coming of the industrial revolution. The coming into widespread acceptability of a hedonistic sexual ethic is a good example of this process. The rising divorce rates are Exhibit A in this hedonistic ethic. The divorce rates reflect two basic social processes, one economic, the other moral. The economic process is the one which, since the coming of industrialism, has transformed the family from a producing to a consuming unit, with the logical consequence that its ties have been weakening, since one will divest oneself much more easily from a fellow consumer than from a partner in production. The

other process is a moral one—the victory of a moral ideal of marriage as a union of deep congeniality, an ideal which naturally raises very high all levels of expectation. Divorce is the expression of an indomitable hope in the future and of a stubborn conviction that happiness, in the fullest sense of the word, is not only possible but is one's inalienable right.¹⁶

Behind this optimism lies a technology that assures us that all things *are* possible, including the achievement of happiness. The technology of our mechanized world is leading our generation more and more to believe in a dogma which Helmut Thielicke describes as the doctrine that "everything can be made" (*Machbarkeit aller Dinge*), that ultimately there is nothing that man cannot do.¹⁷

Many factors in modern life encourage this optimism. There is the *historical* factor about which J. K. Galbraith writes in his book, *The Affluent Society*. He reminds us that throughout history the masses of people in all nations have been very poor; poverty was the all-pervasive fact of their life. In the last generations, however, in Western Europe and in North America, even the common people have begun to enjoy an unprecedented affluence.

Again, there are *political* factors, notably the materialistic philosophy of communism with its utopian promise, as well as the socialist emphasis on the growing welfare state which presses for a more equal distribution of the world's wealth. Then there are *social* factors, such as advertising, where "hidden persuaders" deliberately confuse our needs with our wants and try to convince us not only that certain luxuries are desirable but that they are absolute necessities. With our wants constantly stimulated by highpowered advertising, we measure our success—and happiness—by what we are able to buy. Most powerful of all is the *psychological* factor, the mood of sheer cupidity and covetousness which drives us "to spend money we cannot afford to possess things we do not need in order to impress people we do not like."¹⁸

What effect the ecological crisis and energy shortages will have on this secular optimism remains to be seen. The "happiness" aspect of humanism may also come in for revision, not by design but by necessity. But for now the humanistic perspective seems to be so deeply entrenched in the American ethos that it is not likely to disappear overnight. This is the society to which we are called to minister in these latter years of the 20th century.

NOTES

¹ Peter L. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 1.

² Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge For What?* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1939), p. 191.

³ Leslie A. White, *The Science of Culture* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1949), p. 109.

⁴ John A. T. Robinson, "The Debate Continues," in *The Honest To God Debate*, ed. David L. Edwards (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 271.

⁵ Pierre Berton, *The Comfortable Pew* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965), p. 126.

⁶ Arthur W. Munk, *Perplexing Problems of Religion* (St. Louis, Mo.: The Bethany Press, 1954), p. 27.

⁷ Chad Walsh, *Campus Gods On Trial* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 26.

⁸ George W. Forell, *Ethics of Decision* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1955), p. 29.

⁹ Quoted in *Time*, April 2, 1973, p. 80.

¹⁰ Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 43 f.

¹¹ John A. T. Robinson, *Honest To God* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 110 f.

¹² Waldo Beach, *Conscience on Campus* (New York: Association Press, 1958), p. 14 f.

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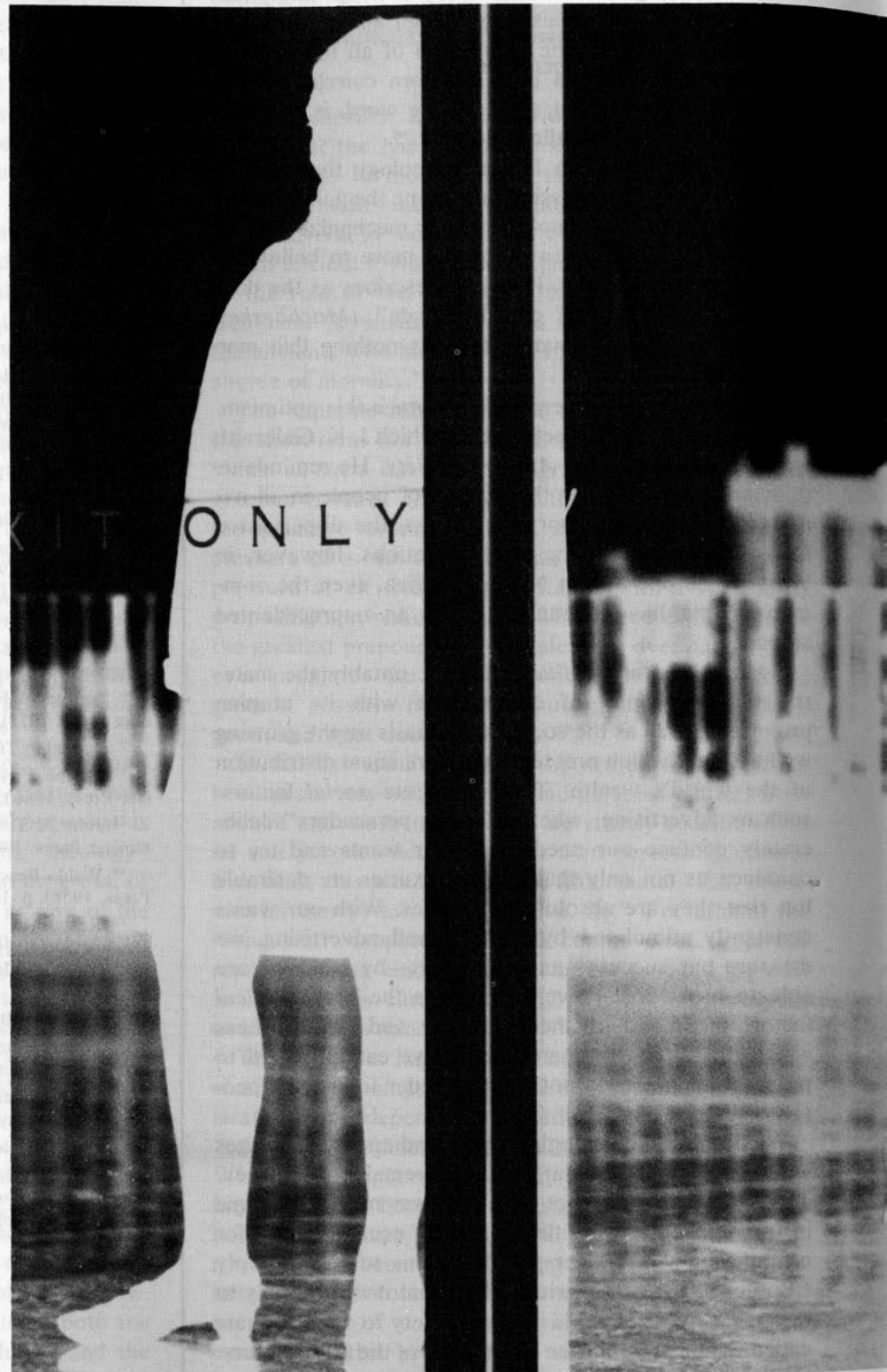
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BY DAVID P. MEYER

THE DILEMMA OF THE CHRISTIAN IN A HUMANISTIC SOCIETY

Introduction

Corliss Lamont has defined humanism as a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world according to the methods of reason and democracy.¹ Moreover, humanism will affirm man's worth and value, his responsibility, and his need to be free. To that extent humanism is a constitutive element in the Christian task of doing ethics in the world. In other respects the humanistic interpretation of life is the very antithesis of the Christian faith. So it is that Christianity is obliged to commend and reproach humanism. This constitutes the problematic dilemma in which the Christian finds himself in today's world.

A Christian Approach to Ethical Decisionmaking

Justification Is a Fact

Christian ethics begins with a statement about God. Humanism begins with a statement about man. Christian ethics begins with a dogmatic statement and ends with a dogmatic statement. Christian ethics begins with the doctrine of justification and ends with it while humanism would still be asking if a particular act was "right" or "wrong." While humanists and moralists debate the relative values of good pears, good cherries, and good persimmons, Christians ponder the paramount truth that only "a good tree brings forth good fruit."²

By our very approach to ethics, so humanism urges, Christianity thwarts any possibility of a genuine interest in man. Humanism has urged repeatedly that dogmatic and religious concern cannot coexist with concern for rectifying social injustice, defending human rights, and obviating social, economic, and political evils. For a Lutheran, Martin Luther himself provides a classic counter-example to humanism's claim. Luther's dogmatic interest, though enormous, did not stifle and cancel out his ethical, social, political and economic interests. It perpetuated them.³ If one of the chief contributions of the Reformation and Luther was a recovery of the New Testament understanding of ethical decision-making, then we can do no better than to turn to Luther for instruction and guidance.⁴

The Gospel Promotes Confidence

The Christian life not only begins with justification, but for Luther the end of man is not "perfection" but being the "justified" man, the man who lives before God and men, from beginning to end, totally out of the resources of the Gospel. Luther was concerned with motivation, the beginning of Christian decisionmaking, far more than he was with the consequences of an action. For Luther "good works do not make a good man but a good man produces good works."⁵ The good man is not the man who lives by law but the man who lives in right relationship with God, a positive and constructive relationship through God's saving deed in Christ. A re-

lationship founded on law destroys faith and love; consequently, it destroys well-doing altogether. A right relationship to God founded on grace brings freedom and well-doing. Luther described this well when he said:

When a man and woman love and are pleased with each other, and thoroughly believe in their love, who teaches them how they are to behave, what they are to do, leave undone, say, not say, think? Confidence alone teaches them all this and more. They make no difference in works: they do the great, the long, the much, as gladly as the small, the short, the little, and that too with joyful, peaceful, confident hearts.⁶

Moreover, Luther insisted that where doubt infested a human relationship (the relationship of God and man as well), the result was that well-doing became a chore and burden, and doubt and despair harassed the conscious mind of the doer.⁷ This fundamental insight of Luther into the nature of the Christian life under God in the world shook not only the doctrinal structure of the church but all political and social structures as well.

Luther's doctrine of justification was a clear refutation of the hierarchical apparatus of the penitential system.⁸ Luther's doctrine of justification erased the cleavage between "religious" life and "secular" life. For if the whole person was justified without his forsaking his occupation and daily work to become monastic, then the Christian's whole life, including his daily occupation, was justified.⁹ While no Scholastic theologian in the Roman Catholic Church would have considered secular activities, e. g., being married, having a job and raising a family, as evil in themselves, such activities were little better than morally neutral.¹⁰ For Luther such activities were "religious" because it was precisely within them that God in Christ summoned men to obedience to the Gospel.¹¹ But in such activities God also confronts us with the demand of law. Here the needed distinction between Law and Gospel in the Christian doctrine of vocation comes into play.

Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the Law is to offer and present our goods to God. We cannot offer anything to God unless we have first been reconciled and reborn. (*Apology/IV/310*).¹²

The worship of the Gospel and the worship of the Law is expressed in Luther by his distinction between the kingdom of the left hand and the kingdom of the right hand, the kingdom of creation and the kingdom of grace. For Luther, in the kingdom of creation man is called to a life of service to his fellowman and in the kingdom of grace to a life of forgiveness, faith, and Godly living.¹³ Our being Christian is a gift of God from moment to moment. Speaking of this reality, Gustav Wingren in-

sists that discipleship is a dogmatic statement of faith and not an ethical demand.¹⁴

Insofar as it is God's gift, we may and must describe our state as Christians as a state of *being*, which now simply operates and out of the power of God brings forth "fruit." . . . But . . . the new life . . . (is) only realized in that we are called day by day to *act* in accordance with the new manner of life.¹⁵

Christian action, Christian decisionmaking, and Christian ethics take place in the context and framework of our being in Christ the "justified." But in Christ we are summoned to act, to choose, and discover the will of God for us in our job, our time, and our place. Discovering the will of God is not easy. This is part of the Christian's dilemma. This fact humanism is ignorant of when it criticizes *The Commandments* because they are so negative, but as Luther demonstrates, the "Do Not's" are there to underscore the "Do's," e. g., Do trust, do love, do care, do serve, and do work. But the "how" of loving, caring, serving, and aiding the neighbor in need is not so transparent. For while the commandment may prohibit "stealing," it accuses me before God for the germ of larceny within me. The commandment by itself does not provide the answer as to how I conduct myself when my very role in a corporation indirectly contributes to the rising unemployment rate, my job contributes to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and my decisions directly effect the livelihood of families.

Questions for Christians

At the risk of falsification through simplicity, I suggest the following as necessary questions as the Christian seeks to do the will of God: (1) Is my boldness and confidence before God the result of my knowledge of the "letter of the Law" or God's good gift to me in Christ? (2) Am I open to see the poor and needy as our Gracious Master's suing for alms, "Give as I have giv'n to you" (LH 442)? In a corporation this means not only the customers, the employees, but the stockholders, large and small. It means the underprivileged in society, the racially disenfranchised and the economically disinherited, and the peoples of the struggling and emerging nations. (3) Have I searched Scripture for a clear Word of God? Have I searched it for examples of saints and men of God? (4) Have I been ready to hear out the counsel and aid of the church in the past, hearing out both its failures and glory as it sought to discover God's will for it? (5) Have I sought out the counsel and aid of the Christian community, the body of Christ manifested in my congregation? (6) Have I genuinely given careful consideration and attention to the facts of the matter at hand? This may mean my searching out responsible Christians, familiar with all aspects of the job, and working with them in problem solving. (7) Have

I been open to the Spirit's guidance through the Living Christ in prayer as well as open to the imperatives set before me by the situation at hand? (8) And finally, having come to a decision, do I recognize all over again that when I have done all things necessary, I am but an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10)? Am I humbly aware of my inadequacy and boldly confident of the sufficiency of Christ? Luther is a man recklessly bold as he writes:

For if we have Christ, we can easily establish laws, and we shall judge all things rightly. Indeed, we would make new decalogues, as Paul does in all the epistles, and Peter, but above all Christ in the Gospel (*Disputation Thesis*, September 11, 1535).¹⁶

But Luther is quick to add, lest he fall into enthusiasm and antinomian tendencies, that we are inconstant in the Christian life; the old Adam is still with us so that we are still self-willed and self-seeking men.¹⁷

The old Adam continues to work by the principle of work-righteousness; and consequently, the writings of the apostles and prophets are needed, lest the church be torn apart and lest consciences be unnecessarily burdened by commands and demands outside of the Word of God.¹⁸ For that reason Lutheran thought has preserved a deep respect for the so-called Third Use of the Law (cf. *Solid Declaration, The Book of Concord*, Art. VI). Having asked all of the previous questions, can I as a Christian be certain that I am doing the "right thing"?

Historically the church has not always been careful in asking the previous questions. At times the church has recklessly sought to impose her opinions on the humanistic world, doing more harm than good. Humanism is most eager to provide case after case in which the organized church by her presumptuous legalism stood in the way of human welfare, e. g., prohibition against birth control other than by natural means. Thus, it can be said, that the church may well learn from as well as be instructor to the humanistic world. The church and its people act in boldness and in humility. Paul Althaus spoke well of this, saying:

Knowledge of what God commands can take on the form of unshakable certainty . . . but far more often it remains a matter of seeking and asking again and again—a seeking that will not be rewarded with complete certainty in every instance, but may well remain in a state of groping. The presence of the Holy Spirit does not in any way guarantee that one will be delivered from this situation . . . but it can also be a mark of maturity as a Christian that one is no longer so sure of one's own thinking or knowledge of the will of God as he was at the beginning, but rather is humbly aware of the limits of one's knowledge. A mature Christianity will not speak of "guidance" so easily and with such a deadly sense of security as a certain brand of pietism does.¹⁹

Relating the Purposes of the Church to the Humanistic Society

Types of Humanism

The church ought to be bold in the expression of her life in the Gospel and humble in expression of her life in the Law. With boldness there should be a readiness to dialog with the humanistic mind. Before such dialog begins, the church need be mindful that humanism expresses itself in a variety of ways: (1) Religious humanism either refuses to use the word "God" or substitutes a whole new meaning to the term; (2) Atheistic humanism simply denies the existence of God; (3) Theistic humanism defines God as the sum of human ideals or the personification of all human aspirations; and (4) "post-atheistic" humanism accents the affirmation of man rather than the denial of God.²⁰

There is a further complication, the fact that many Christians claim that Christianity is the ultimate and ideal form of humanism.²¹ While humanism would call for exaltation of man by focusing on man as we find him in the world, Christian Humanists, e. g., Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Paul Lehmann, *et alii*, would point to the Christ-event in which God condescended to take upon Himself manhood, die, and be resurrected so as to reconcile man unto Himself. Because mankind has been the object of God's love in Christ, man has become a thing of inestimable value.²² As might be expected, dialog between Christian humanists and the other types has been most energetic. Much of the effort has been to convince non-Christian humanists that Christianity cares about man.

Christianity and Natural Law

While Roman Catholicism has retained a high regard for the notion of natural law, Protestantism neglected it to its own detriment. Luther did not seek to develop a systematic treatment of natural law, but it did play a significant role in his understanding of Law and Gospel.

For Luther all stations of life, ecclesiastical, domestic, economic, and political, embody in institutional form particular commands of God. As such the stations are universal and are addressed to all men, Christian and non-Christian alike; and the extent to which men are aware of such particular commands is due to God's revelation expressed in them.²³ Since God's demands were expressed through such orders, matters of jurisprudence, civic virtue, and public morality could be delegated necessarily to those with the expertise to administer such matters, leaving the church free to perform her function of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.²⁴ This separation of the functions of church and state was not due to an Anabaptist fear of contamination by the secular order, but due to a confidence that God could preserve the fallen world from chaos, injustice, and anarchy through His will mani-

festated in the orders.²⁵ God's Law revealed in nature was so lucid for Luther that he could judge what was moral and what was ceremonial law simply on the basis of the law of reason.²⁶ For the Reformer the message of the church was not a new insight into law, the world already had that, but a message about God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Self Criticism of the Church, *Nostra Culpa*

Boldly the church confesses her Gospel and her faith, but the church must humbly acknowledge her faults. When the church has failed to be her own conscience, humanism has become her most severe critic. Today the church is ready to admit that the atheist may well pronounce God's judgment on our sin, albeit unknowingly done. The church is ready to admit the following: (1) She has preached the Gospel at times in such a way as to excuse Christians from loving concern and forgiveness toward the neighbor.²⁷ (2) She has identified herself too much with the power structures, political and economic, so as to still her voice of judgment on the dehumanizing aspects of those structures.²⁸ (3) She has often mirrored rather than molded the unbaptized culture.²⁹ (4) She has been hesitant to explore ways in which she might use her own "structures" to come to the aid of the people oppressed by economic and social structures.³⁰ (5) Finally, she acknowledges that though her "city" is in heaven and that she can never attain salvation in this world, she has failed at times to preach salvation "by word and deed" (Rom. 15:18).³¹

Specific Plans for Action

While the church laments the anti-Christian aspects of much of humanism, she is thankful that humanism has been a stimulus for repentance and reevaluation within the church and its people. As a result of that stimulus a number of steps to action have been undertaken by the church. In brief these five steps are being undertaken and implemented in many sectors of the church.

First, congregations are taking a more active interest in applying the Christian absolutes of love, mercy, and justice to the complexities of business, parenthood, ecology, citizenship in the world of politics, and the economic structures; and while full establishment of justice is not expected in man's future (only God's), it must be established if only provisionally.³²

Second, Christian moralists are becoming more sensitive to what is called the "good reasons" approach to ethical thinking, the contribution of philosophers, ancient and modern, to the complex issues of society. Often the church can avoid the disaster of repeating the mistakes of the past by dealing with ethical philosophy which has already "mapped out" the "dead ends" and "blind alleys."³³ As a result the church can be more positive toward moral education in the public schools, professional organizations, and social or civic clubs,

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because as Luther reminds us "such belongs to the domain of reason" and law. The church does not disregard "civil righteousness" but encourages and supports those who uphold it.

Third, Christian adult education has become a "must" lest the church become merely a retreat from the conditions of daily life.³⁴ Special interest classes designed to meet the needs of occupational and professional groups in the congregation and community are growing, but more are needed.³⁵

Fourth, the church cannot be satisfied with the status quo in business or society simply because things can never be perfect; nor can the church withhold her love until the ideal has been attained.³⁶ Fifth, the church through her educators is recovering a prophetic zeal, a readiness to preach Law—not in vague generalities, but through specific cases and situations in business, commerce, social, and political spheres.³⁷

The new directions in Christian thought, in part stimulated by humanism and in part stimulated by the church's own self-criticism, are not to be confused by the "Social Gospel Movement" which was short on Gospel and long on Law. The church does have a duty to proclaim God's commandment for the social orders.³⁸ We do uphold "social law." For the Christian the Gospel alone brings the motivation and power for a new regard for fellow human beings, so that we no longer look at men from a human point of view (2 Cor. 5:16). But as Gottfried Voigt has said, "We strive, along with our non-Christian fellow human beings, for the best that is possible in the world of Adam."³⁹ Insofar as humanism and Christianity share common interest in the ethical, Christianity and humanism can be co-workers; insofar as Christianity hopes in a future inaugurated by God alone and humanism does not, there can be only irreconcilable conflict between the two traditions.

We cannot proclaim the love of God to alienated fellowmen and remain indifferent toward them. We cannot announce that God intends to make everything new, and at the same time leave everything in its state of disintegration.⁴⁰

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²⁰ The first three classes are suggested by Georgia Harkness, *The Modern Rival of the Christian Faith: An Analysis of Secularism* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), p. 80 and the fourth by Paul S. Schilling, *God in an Age of Atheism* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 57.

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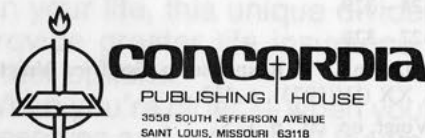
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HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: A Christian Interpretation, by John A. Hammes. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1971.

Humanistic Psychology does a good job of saying in technical language what many pastors and teachers have been saying all along: "A good scientist can be a good Christian, and a good Christian an excellent scientist" (p. vi, Preface). If you need reinforcement on that point in the area of psychology, look into this work of Roman Catholic John Hammes.

The author makes it plain that he intends for the book to be used as a college text in the field of psychology. It seems to this reviewer that it would be good as such since it has a valuable bibliography that is quoted extensively, and in the first two parts of the book it gives compact summaries of the various views of the nature of man along with the several leading methods of the study of man.

In the third part of the book Dr. Hammes makes *applications* of the Christian humanistic view that he espouses. This very valuable section of the book takes leave of the jargon of philosophy and in plain language speaks about healthy emotional adjustment, tracing the steps from childhood through adolescence into adulthood. "Emotional growth is a lifelong process and one that requires continual shaping" (p. 125). Especially interesting and helpful in chapter 11 is an elaborated checklist of 24 ideas for adults to use in developing healthy emotional adjustment on an ongoing and ever-growing basis. This section should be particularly useful for counselors and teachers of mental health and effective living.

In the fourth part of *Humanistic Psychology*, Dr. Hammes writes very specifically of his Christian views of the origin, purpose, and destiny of man. In detail he lays out his "God-revealed" perspective of God and of man and the relationship between them through Christ. He claims a code of morality based also on objective divine revelation. No subjectivism here! A human being must responsibly follow this code to effectively live with God and people. This reviewer feels that *sometimes* Dr. Hammes goes beyond what Scripture says on morals and becomes unrealistically pietistic (see pp. 148 and 151). On page 150 there seems to be a rather drastic misapplication of 2 Cor. 12:9.

The author's strong, explicit Christian

view will likely keep this book from being used extensively outside of Christian environments. More likely it will appear on supplementary reading lists with some professors referring to it as a curious relic of an odd view of psychology and other Christian professors referring to it as an example of a view similar to what they personally hold. We could pick apart and quibble about some of Dr. Hammes' points of theology and morality, but in general it is this reviewer's opinion that in the larger perspective most of us would say, "That's where I stand!"

GORDON GROSS

NEW PATHWAYS IN PSYCHOLOGY: MASLOW AND THE POST-FREUDIAN REVOLUTION, by Colin Wilson. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1972.

An excellent book for anyone desiring a frame of reference in the somewhat confused world of psychology today.

This book contains many insights into the development of humanistic psychology. Part One sets the historical stage clearly and concisely. In Part Two, Maslow's life and contribution to understanding human potential are covered, from a timid Brooklyn High School Jewish boy through his anticipated study and synthesis of human self-transcendence at the time of his death.

The psychological concept of the will, the significance of peak experiences and religious experiences in human development are stressed. Emphasizing intentionality, sense of meaning, and higher ceilings for human potential, Wilson maintains that "Maslow's importance is that he placed experiences of 'transcendence' at the center of his psychology. . . . They bring a glimpse of 'the source of power, meaning and purpose' inside himself." (p. 189)

"Where Now?" is the title of Part Three. Wilson here outlines and develops Maslow's theories into practicable psychotherapy which he defines "as a process of encouraging the patient to seek for a suitable self-image—one that is consistent with the highest level of self-esteem and creativity."

The writer found this book fascinating, lucid, and helpful in putting together many interrelated aspects of psychology. It is particularly helpful to anyone interested in human potential.

GLENN O. KRAFT

I'M O.K.—YOU'RE O.K., by Thomas A. Harris. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969.

I'M O.K.—YOU'RE O.K. is a very refreshing book on several counts. Besides being a book by a member of the psychiatric profession which takes a positive view of the importance of human worth (e.g., Glasser's Reality Therapy), it is the first book read by this reviewer which goes beyond a neutral to a positive position in regard to religion and moral values.

Harris treats the doctrine of grace as the "I'm OK—You're OK" position. This position is the healthy one in contrast to the other three positions, "I'm OK—You're Not OK," "I'm Not OK—You're OK," and "I'm Not OK—You're Not OK," which are symptomatic of various mental illnesses. This reviewer believes, however, that one must be careful not to become confused and regard the "I'm OK—You're OK" position that a person may take in transactions with fellow humans as being included in such an application of the doctrine of grace. Harris does not make a clear distinction in this regard. It is true that the believer has a positive relationship with God because, as the Lutheran Church would state it, by *Grace alone* the believer can approach God with the "I'm OK—You're OK" position. I'm OK in my relationship to God, because Christ's death and resurrection has won redemption for me.

Harris should not be unduly faulted for not going more deeply than he has into a topic no one else has even approached. This book is important reading for those in ministry because of the description of TA (Transactional Analysis), because the book is free of technical psychiatric jargon, and because of the provocative treatments in Chapter 12 and 13 of P-A-C (Parent-Adult-Child in TA) and Moral Values and of the Social Implications of P-A-C.

J. D. WEINHOLD

Book reviews are continued on page 20.

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Is public criticism of church and educational leaders bad or good? The question is appropriate because for a long time these kinds of leaders, unlike political leaders, were relatively immune from the harsher types of criticism in public print. In recent years, however, unofficial publications have sprung up which unabashedly attack church and educational leaders by name and whose methods sometimes make the harsh methods of the secular press seem mild.

How about this growing practice? Is it justified? Is it proper? Does it edify the church? Does it facilitate the achievement of the goals of Christian education?

People will take different views on this, but I happen to believe that church and educational leaders should not be immune from public criticism. They are public leaders and the stewardship of their responsibilities may properly be criticized (a better word may be "critiqued" or "evaluated") in public print.

Let it be understood, however, that the word "properly" in the previous sentence is of the greatest significance. I am not talking about worldly people criticizing religious leaders. I am talking about Christians criticizing each other. It is of the utmost importance that when Christians hold up their own brothers and sisters to public criticism, they go to great pains to demonstrate that they are criticizing *in a Christian way*. People must understand that the way Christians criticize each other is different, reflects a different spirit, and even a different procedure from the often impersonal, nonsympathetic, inaccurate, even harsh and malicious criticism found in secular publications.

What are the canons of Christian criticism? They include both do's and don'ts.

The most important "do" in Christian criticism is found in the apostle Paul's exhortation to "be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." People who assume the awesome responsibility of attacking their fellow Christians in public must try particularly hard to imbue their writing with recognizable Christian kindness.

Similar in importance as a "do" is the requirement of accuracy. Christians who undertake the task of publicly criticizing their fellow Christians must be pledged to a procedure of meticulous and unimpeachable accuracy. No Christian should ever accuse or denounce his fellow Christian in public unless he has *checked and double-checked* his facts for accuracy, checked both with unbiased sources and with the brother or sister being accused. Christian publishers who argue that deadlines do not give them enough time to do this should either extend their deadlines or omit every reference that has not been checked in a Christian way. The printing of rumor-based, unverified criticism (known in secular circles as journalistic irresponsibility) should be recognized in Christian circles as nothing less than sinful conduct.

The "don'ts" of Christian criticism involve chiefly the misuse of language. Language is such an intricate and manipulable instrument that it can be made to appear to tell the truth even while it is disseminating lies. Christians who truly love the fellow Christian whom they feel called upon to criticize must make every effort to avoid the distortive tricks that language can play, if the writer is willing to let it do so.

Let me name a few of the pitfalls that a Christian critic must strive carefully to avoid.

1. Labeling: Christian writers should not lead their readers to judge people on the basis of labels. Labels are such oversimplifications that they more often hide the truth than reveal it.
2. Mixing truth with falsehood: This is a highly effective propaganda technique because it takes the reader off his guard. Seeing something that is clearly true, he assumes the rest of the paragraph has the same veracity. Christian writers should avoid this procedure like the plague.
3. Half-truths: This is another devastating propaganda tool. Telling only part of the story makes it sound one way. If the whole story were told, it would sound completely different. This is clearly deceptive and should never be used in Christian criticism.
4. Guilt by association: Christian writers should not leave the impression that to agree with a person on one point means that one accepts his whole philosophy.
5. Innuendo: Christian writers should not resort to the use of subtle innuendos against brothers and sisters in the faith, planting seeds of doubt though proof is lacking.

Is the practice of criticizing religious leaders good or bad? It can be good if the canons of painstaking accuracy and considerate Christian courtesy are meticulously followed. It will be bad if they are not. Writers who ignore the do's and don'ts of proper Christian criticism deserve greater criticism than the people they are criticizing.

LAST WORDS

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book reviews

PARENT EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING: THE TESTED WAY TO RAISE RESPONSIBLE CHILDREN, by Thomas Gordon. New York: Peter H. Wyden Inc., Publisher, 1970.

Effectiveness Training Associates of Pasadena, California, have developed a no-lose method of problem solving that has broad application in the family, church, and world. Though humanistically conceived, P.E.T. forces a Christian to re-assess his value structures in his own relationships in his family, on the job, and throughout his daily living. Dr. Gordon is a licensed psychologist and the founder of Effectiveness Training Associates, a worldwide network of professionals offering training programs for parents, teachers, administrators, and others working in human relationships. Tom Gordon credits Carl Rogers as being the biggest influence in his development and philosophical orientation.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has "bought into" the program via an Aid Association for Lutherans grant to the Board for Parish Education. Hundreds of LCMS people have received the instructor training and are now involved in P.E.T. (Parent Effectiveness Training) and T.E.T. (Teacher Effectiveness Training) classes. Some of the class cost is underwritten by A.A.L. also.

Theological Responses submitted by Dr. Marvin Bergman, Dr. Samuel Goltermann, and Rev. Thomas Green, all of whom attended the training meetings, have been examined by the writer and found to be supportive of the concept and approach of P.E.T. for Missouri Synod (and all) people. Dr. Goltermann, cognizant of complex realities, concluded:

What words to say when I want to communicate Law and Gospel to an individual person in a particular situation on a given day is still my most difficult and important "theological" assignment as parent, teacher, or friend!¹

It is my profound hope that what we can profitably learn from PET/TET about listening and speaking, about communicating and sharing and relating, joined to what God's good Spirit teaches us about His love and grace in Jesus Christ will bring a whole new life and vitality and blessing to the ministry we share.²

Rev. Green echoes the concern of most Lutherans relative to the use of authority and parent's power over the child. "Parental Authority in the Biblical sense is God's means to protect children, to lead them to

wisdom, to bring and to keep them in the saving faith."³

In a day when "Speaking the truth in love" is considered passé, one is reminded of the injunctions found in Matthew 18 and the process of communication engendered by our Lord Jesus. Where has the church been? Where has the church gone? Is not the kingdom of God within each of us? Let us, in the body of Christ, establish a "no-lose" policy in communication and problem solving. Presently, this is difficult because winning has become more important than resolving conflicts in love. The methods of P.E.T. encourage disagreement which focuses on the points of conflict and solution rather than on proving or disproving authority. The "no-lose" condition can be reached only when members of the body of Christ learn to express their feelings and to listen to one another.⁴

¹ Dr. Samuel Goltermann, "Theological Response to P.E.T. and T.E.T. Workshop, Memphis, Sept. 16-23, 1973," p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Thomas Nelson Green, "Theological Response to P.E.T. and T.E.T. Workshop, Pittsburgh, August 12-17, 1973," p. 8.

⁴ *The Lutheran Witness*, Nov. 18, 1973, pp. 12-13.

GLENN O. KRAFT