A LAYMAN'S VIEW OF THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY
by Mr. W. Robert Stover

It is a distinct privilege for me to have the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon - not about the problems of the ministry or the virtues of either calling, but the perspective of one layman as he looks at the relationship between clergy and laity. Most of you in your lifetime will have the experience of serving both as layman and minister. So that you might properly evaluate my words, let me share with you that my 16 years as a Christian have all been in the Presbyterian Church - 13 years as an Elder, service on each of 10 departments, a Pulpit Committee, a Building Committee, and various committees of Presbytery. These years and my association with the men I have met constitute one of the great privileges of my life.

I. WHAT DOES A LAYMAN SEEK FROM THE CLERGY?

Obviously, he seeks many things depending on individual human need. Some of these are well understood: comfort, understanding, friendship. But there are several, I believe, that are generally overlooked.

1. A layman would like to have the same consideration to a cause and to a person that he sees in his minister. He suspects this might never really be available to him because he is not in the ministry. The definition of ministry to him as it relates to his career is unclear. He sees himself as a theological Walter Mitty, but he realizes it can never be. In our concern not to take advantage of his interest or to abuse him, we sometimes shelter him from the full meaning of discipleship. We could do him no greater spiritual harm. The greater the cost of discipleship, the deeper the commitment. No man should be robbed of this involvement. I believe this is a major factor contributing to the lack of deep personal involvement of the laity across our western world. We have not because we ask not. Furthermore, most of us only get excited after we respond with our wallets. Seventy percent of all the conversations and illustrations of our Savior had money or possessions as their principal subject. He realized that this is where we live. And once faithfulness comes here, it comes easier in other areas.

2. A layman is seeking equality. In one sense he feels somewhat like our minority groups - he can never really catch up. On the surface he seems more willing to accept a second-class spirituality. In most cases he is more than glad to step aside and let a clergyman "return thanks," or "lead in prayer." I rather suspect that for some ministers this is actually encouraged, even quite innocently. The proper selection of a religious phrase or a pious demeanor will remind an already suspecting layman that he really is inferior. To ever attain the ability to stand alone or to achieve maturity, he needs help from you. He must have genuine encouragement; he often must be taught 1) how to pray, 2) how to study, 3) what to read, and 4) how to articulate. If you mean business he

MR. W. ROBERT STOVER is a member of the Board of Trustees of PTS and President of Western Girl, Inc. of San Francisco. This is a copy of an address given at the Fuller Seminary Alumni Association luncheon on June 11, 1964.
What is the purpose of Fuller Theological Seminary? Apparently the school was initiated with the idea of training Christian workers. This was its mission. It was organized and structured around the gathering and educating of students. Therefore, the students were probably central in all that was done. Without students the school would have no function. The faculty's responsibility lay in seeing that those who were graduated from the school were ready to carry out their part in the mission of the Christian Church.

Perhaps this is an oversimplification of the school's purpose. From the time plans were undertaken to organize a theological seminary the vision seems to have included gathering a scholarly faculty who would write and publish books and articles of high quality. Thus Evangelicalism would have in Fuller a respected proponent, and Fuller could at the same time help to reshape the evangelical position and thus minister, as well as from, the evangelical community. Fuller's two-fold purpose, therefore, is to educate students to take their part in the Church's mission and to minister to Evangelicalism and to the world.

A goal presupposes a means to reach the goal. To fulfill the purposes decided upon, organization and funds for operation were needed. To secure these funds Fuller needed a constituency, and the seminary had to make contact with people who would appreciate the projected nature and purpose of the school.

However, the editors feel that somehow the attention of the school has shifted too much away from the students, if it ever was sufficiently directed toward them. There seems to be competition between the means and the goal. To too great an extent the goal is being compromised. Classes of 70 or 80 as a common occurrence are simply too large. Smaller classes which provide the framework for more intimate contact between the students and faculty are all too infrequent. When the student seeks to meet the problem by personal contact with one of the faculty, too often he is aware that the time he is taking is being given grudgingly at best. At other times he is fitted into a schedule of appointments so that he can almost hear the faculty member saying, "NEXT."

Recently several steps have been taken to facilitate more intimate faculty-student communication. Dr. Hubbard has initiated a student open-house on Sunday evenings in his home. Also the faculty has shown interest in the problem and conceived of the idea of Faculty Invitationals. Over a period of weeks students will be invited to faculty homes for fellowship and interaction. The opinion encourages faculty and students to take full advantage of these opportunities. But this is at best only a partial solution.

The pressure on the faculty to publish and to involve themselves in the education process of the students come into conflict. To do justice to both tasks seems beyond the capacity of a faculty and staff the size of ours, and the students seem presently to be losing out. The ideal answer is more operating funds to increase the faculty and staff, but at present these are just not available. We must operate with what we have. Therefore the conclusion is that we are attempting too much. We should curtail our activities in one of the two goal areas. Is not the student the central concern of any theological school?

The term of the current opinion staff expires with this issue. Any student interested in working on the opinion staff for the coming year, please contact any one of the present staff members immediately.
will stay with you. He will not accept second-class spirituality. If you force it on him, he’ll yawn through your sermons, have you marry his daughters, send you occasional checks. But will he involve his life with you to the hilt? To encourage real equality, those who have must help those who do not have. All that he seeks is not necessarily good.

3. Some men seek a personal involvement with their pastors as an outlet for their needs or as a substitute for their deeper involvement with the Savior. The temptation is to do, or to give, something personally to a friend who has helped them. You say, "I'd certainly like to have that problem." You will. The reasons behind this are many. Suffice it to say that it can be dangerous to both men. Stewardship belongs to God, not to his servants. Loyalty should be directed, not accepted. Many feel that a minister should personally refuse any substantial advantages unless they come through the church judicatory. The reverse can be true. It is possible that outstanding citizens may be invited into board responsibilities because of the prestige they bring. We should be careful that our church boards are balanced, so that we might have the pulse of the community, and that no one is invited for accomplishment to the sacrifice of Christian commitment.

II. AN OBSERVATION ABOUT COMPENSATION

Thinking laymen are concerned with church salary structures. These men believe the minister should once again be the distinguished and respected leader of his community that he was a hundred years ago in America. Of course, many ministers have this respect now. But low salaries give the community the right to feel a man is worth what he receives. As a pastor, do not be afraid to accept realistically good salaries. Good stewardship is the only requirement in acceptance along with general financial empathy with your congregation. As a layman, do not be afraid to approve salaries that exceed your own. There is no rule that a clergyman should receive the average salary of his congregation or the median salary of the community. Low salaries are neither a measure of a man's piety nor his commitment. I remember one fine elder threatening on the side to leave the church if a minister's salary was increased above his own. He completely forgot that the minister in question was at the top of his profession while he was near the middle of his. I'm sure he would not have used the yardstick on his company's president with comparable responsibilities.

In this age I am concerned that some of the potentially fine Christian leaders are seeking opportunities to serve God in secular fields because of the uncertainty and financial insecurity of the ministry. Let us resist the temptation to be critical. In this day, the Church needs the finest minds in the land. Let us not permit unnecessary barriers to service.

III. WHAT DOES A LAYMAN NEED FROM THE CLERGY?

1. I believe the first need is for spiritual leadership. Nowhere does the Bible teach how to become a leader. We are only taught how to become servants. So we must assume that to become a leader we must become a servant. To my knowledge, seminaries spend too little time in this phase of the ministry. How do you give leadership to the business executive and the laborer on your board, or the college professor and a near illiterate, or the extreme right and extreme left? Each one is conscientious, and each one is facing life's problems in an almost completely diametrically opposite way. Some men feel that more men elected to a governing board will create more leaders. This merely encourages group leadership and less individualism. In a group of seven or eight, generally all participate. If the group is extended to twenty or thirty, usually seven or eight still speak for the group. Leadership starts with respect. Your laymen need to respect you.
I did not say like you, but respect you.

Leadership goes hand in hand with honesty. Our society exerts a good deal of pressure to encourage us to conform. Add to this our natural desire to be liked and we find men willing to do whatever the pastor wishes. This makes a man dishonest. The temptation is to encourage it for the sake of expediency. It is rather difficult to open for general discussion some of the thorny, emotional issues such as curriculum, benevolence giving, and social pronouncements. Far better to discuss in an atmosphere of free interchange than to drive our feelings underground. It is not a condition of Christianity to believe alike, but rather to accept each other with our differences.

2. A layman needs acceptance. He needs acceptance for what he is as a person, as an individual for his own abilities. Most of us don't bring very much. There are more one-talent men than ten, believe me. Occasionally a layman comes along with unusual abilities. This sometimes presents a challenge if this ability is in the area of teaching or public speaking. One church in our area had a layman with a class of several hundred while the minister's class at the same hour had a fraction of that number. This didn't mean that the church liked the layman better. It just meant they liked his teaching better. The minister was wise enough to use this man with great effectiveness. If you have a man who exceeds your abilities in any one field, be grateful to God. Congregations do not expect you to be supermen in spite of Pulpit Committees and their profiles. The skillful utilization of the abilities of others is the heart of good organization.

3. The greatest need of all is for the message. Most of you in this room have spent a substantial part of your life in preparation for your service to Jesus Christ. This preparation has included a wide scope of subjects, techniques, homiletics, and a deep penetration into the Word of God. May I share a personal word. Last month, quite suddenly, my mother died a long way from home. We had enjoyed an extremely close relationship. She alone, as a widow, had raised me through great sacrifice and poverty. The first realization that I would never touch her hand or hear her voice again on this earth was nearly unbearable. Yet through this sorrow, the Gospel of Jesus Christ drifted softly but with assurance and peace. In my Father's house...I am the Resurrection...Peace, I leave with you, My peace...Let not your heart be troubled...I am the way, the truth. There will never be words like this. I did not know what the Gospel really had given to me.

The Church is struggling today with world problems. There are social and economic inequalities that must be met and solved. There are political disturbances and there are moral questions. The Church should be involved, but let us always remember that the first message of the Church is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that our Savior loves us and cares for us and has redeemed us forever to Himself through the cross. No matter how sophisticated we become, this is the message in its simplicity that our world needs. Don't feel after ten years, or twenty, or thirty that you need a new message. You may need new material, but the message is the same. And never let us forget that the first message results in the second message working through our lives.

IV. THE FUTURE OF THE LAITY

To a certain extent this lies in your hands. Christianity today needs leadership in such quantities that if it is to come, it must come through the laity. The clergy are limited to the size of their pulpit and their strength. They simply cannot reach the people. There are too many of us. How do we really capture the layman? How do
we deepen his involvement? How do we qualify his prime energy and vision?

Perhaps Fuller Seminary could spearhead a program that would help kindle interest across the world. We should re-evaluate our ministry to laymen.

1. I am delighted to hear that we are at least talking about the possibilities of expanded classes that would include seminarians and businessmen in evening classes. The interaction could be stimulating for both.
2. Some thought could be given to summer utilization of campus and library facilities in much the same way management groups in the East are using college facilities for seminars that run several weeks in duration.
3. There could be some restructuring of summer conference grounds with an educational format rather than an inspirational one.
4. Institutes could be conducted where business, political, and labor leaders might be brought together to discuss the issues of the day within the Christian framework. One group is doing just this. Planned for the spring of 1965, twenty corporate presidents will meet together for three days with northern California seminary faculty members to discuss Christian ethics and morality as it relates to them and to their responsibilities.
5. We might take another look at some form of church service for young men and women after they complete their secondary education. A year of service here could change the direction of the next fifty years of life. To be effective there must be opportunities for leadership development at all levels.

V. A FINAL WORD

The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, to make Him known and followed as Savior and Lord. Clergy and laity stand hand in hand in this most exciting responsibility in all of the world. They need to listen to each other, to respect each other, and to share together their lives in service to God and their fellow men.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN

a student version by Paul Balisky

A certain student made his way be degrees from BA to BD. As he made his journey, he fell into intellectual doubts which stripped him of his faith, pummelled him with depression, leaving very little spiritual life in him. It so happened that a certain professor, by chance, recognized the dilemma of the student. But rather than forsaking his professional dignity, he passed by on the other side of the hallway. Likewise a fellow student also came to the understanding that very little spiritual life remained in his buddy, but he quickly dispensed his responsibility with this advice: pray harder, don't miss any chapels, and tithe to the Fuller Student Fund. After this he, too, passed by on the far side of the hallway.

But by chance, a certain janitor came upon the distressed student. He called him by his first name. "John, something is bugging you. The way you are moping around the hallways, you are sure to end up in the Pasadena Counseling Center. Won't you come have dinner with my family on Sunday."

So when Sunday came, the janitor set John in his car, took him to his house, and had his wife cook the finest T-bone steaks the Alpha-Beta sold. The steaks were just as good as Mother cooked, but the understanding hospitality was what broke the ice.

PAUL BALISKY is a senior at FTS. He received an AB in Literature at Wheaton College in 1962.
Soon John forgot about the insurmountable problems he had with the ontological argument, epistemological dualism, and the dilemma of the tragic moral choice because he knew at last that someone understood him and loved him.

Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the student who fell into intellectual doubts? ...Then go and do likewise.

*TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF MIRACLE
by Monte Swanson

The expansion of scientific understanding in the Christian world since the Ren­naissance has made the miraculous nature of the Christian religion highly objectionable to Western minds. Whereas the Biblical record seems to indicate that signs and wonders accompanied Jesus and the apostles for the purpose of adding credence to their message, the modern mind finds the whole subject of the miraculous a great stumbling-block to belief in traditional Christianity. This is clear not only from the great movements of non-miraculous rationalism in Germany over the past 150 years, but it is also true for a large portion of contemporary theology from Bultmann to Brunner. William Hordern, in describing the liberal-fundamentalist debate over the question of God's transcendence and immanence, has pinpointed the problem of modern man with regard to miracles:

The fundamentalist insisted that miracles were necessary as proof of the revelation and of Jesus' divinity. But the liberal found himself trying to preach Christianity to a world in which, far from proving Christianity, the miracles were a chief reason why men abandoned it... (the liberal maintained that) such acts no longer have apologetic value. (William Hordern, The Case for a New Reformation Theology, p. 108).

The general problem of modern man's predisposition against miracle has been compounded for conservative Christianity by the adoption - especially during the fundamentalist era - of a highly defensive gap-apologetic. The nature of this apologetic, according to Hordern, stemmed from using the miraculous as evidence for God. Miracles were defined as that which science has been unable to explain. The obvious problem with this sort of defense is that as scientific explanation increases in its scope and depth, the area of the miraculous and inexplicable has been continually reduced. In the mind of modern man science has now explained all that was once relegated to the real of the divine. Hence there is no longer a need for theological explanation.

In this article I shall examine some common definitions of miracle and some of the ways it has been used as an evidence for Christian faith. I shall also attempt to come to some meaningful conclusion regarding its ultimate worth as an apologetic tool and theological event.

We may first take up the problem of miracle by investigating the origins of the word for miracle and then by seeing how the prejudice against the miraculous has arisen. In the New Testament the words used in reference to the miraculous seem to cluster around a basic expression for wonder at the display of the powerful and unusual. Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the writer saying the the message of salvation was "first declared by the Lord, and... attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles...".

MONTE SWANSON is a junior at FTS. He received an AB in Philosophy from Wheaton College in 1964.
The Greek words here are sameion which means sign, mark, token or proof; teras which means portent, signal, act, or wonder; and dunamis which means power, strength, ability. From these definitions it can be seen that there is a range of meaning from the significance or meaning of an event to the power or unusualness of an event (unusualness as it relates to the infrequency of this event as over against other events.

It will be observed that these terms were not used by Christians only, but were drawn from the linguistic-cultural milieu of the day. This means that the terms were used by pagan Greeks to signify the workings of their gods and by people of other religious backgrounds to denote unusual and startling events of many varieties. It is therefore possible for us to imagine an important ambiguity for these terms which might have arisen in this circumstance: In a day when communications were slow and superstition was high a man might have seen a volcanic explosion - by all our categories a merely natural event. If he were near the eruption and lived through it, he would have used the terms we have mentioned to describe it. It being a very unusual and powerful and impressive event, we can well expect him to have described it in terms of awe and power, and - if he had some beliefs about the activities of the gods - in terms of religious significance. Since communications were poor and scientific observation was minimal he may have heard of only two or three such events having occurred - all with many divine significances having been attached to them. And if by chance he were to come across a foreign traveler who had heard of six or seven other eruptions, our friend would have undoubtedly concluded that the gods were unusually active in some other part of the world. The point is to observe the ambiguity with which the ancients used the words signifying divine activity in the natural realm. For if we assume for the moment that some divine intervention into the natural order had at some time really taken place, then these people will be found to have used these terms of wonder and power to describe not only those divine activities, but also other phenomena like this eruption which, because of subsequent scientific observations, are now known to be regular events in the natural order.

At this point it may be profitable to sharpen my use of the terms natural and divine. By natural order, I refer to what we commonly mean by Nature when we think of her as we observe the fullness of rocks and trees and men and geological processes and comets and toads. The natural order is then the process by which these things interact considered apart from any intelligent beings who might exist without dependence upon our universe.

By divinity and God I henceforth refer to a single intelligent being existing independent of Nature, the being upon whom nature is dependent.

We have described the ambiguity with which the ancients undoubtedly used the terms for the miraculous, but, as we have noted, this ambiguity has been set in relief against the advancement of science. Specifically it has been set in relief historically in relation to the concept of natural law. Tennant, after a study of the meaning of natural law since the 1700's and a concurrent study of Christian apologetics concludes that "the one function which was then generally deemed essential to miracle... (was its) evidential value...." He further states, on this view, that "in order that a miracle may have any significance for dogmatic theology it must have incompatibility with natural law...."

Since modern-day understanding of miracle almost always assumes this form it will be well to observe the alternative concepts of natural law which have developed historically.

The first clear scientific definition of natural law having significance for theology arose in the Cartesian tradition and was evidenced especially in early deism.
It was, frankly, an a priori concept which depended upon the certainties which philosophic rationalism was supposed to have achieved building on the mathematical model. According to Tennant, it had its real roots in Spinozan pantheism.

If divine law pervaded the entire natural order by the immanence of God in nature, then if the sure foundation of rationalistic philosophy can give us certain understanding of divine laws, we shall also have perfect knowledge of natural law and the way things must happen in the natural order. On this understanding of natural law, it is clear that natural law preceeds the facts of the natural order. Hence the laws, known ever beforehand, would determine what could or could not happen in nature; and any event which violated this known natural order could be known automatically to have a non-natural cause. By arguing in this way theists felt they could vindicate supernaturalism.

The second tradition in the understanding of natural law arose after Hume and became solidified in the era of Mill and his understanding of induction. Now scientific induction would on the surface be a method highly antithetical to a priori rationalism in determining natural law. And in its main outlines it is clear that this is the case. But one thing carried over from the earlier understanding to this more empirical method, and that was the notion of certainty and completeness. For just as the rationalist had argued that natural law can be known a priori, and therefore with rigid certainty, so the scientific inductionist of Mill's era felt that complete inductions were possible so that natural law was established hard and fast. This led Mill to speak of "invariable" natural processes. Here, as with the rationalists, natural law was wholly fixed, with no room for miracle. But here again the theologian had a sure case for the evidence of the supernatural, for all he had to assert was that something had taken place outside the bounds of natural law, and it was obvious that God had acted. Or so he thought.

An orthodox apologist of the day named Mozley criticized the idea of complete induction by pointing out that induction is never really complete because the complete number of instances relating to a given law can never be observed. He maintained that if the principle of uniformity is not rationally derived then belief in miracle is not irrational.

Mozley's criticism was devastating, and subsequent years of scientific investigation have only worked to strengthen his point. For if the scientific age has shown us anything about nature, it has shown us that our understanding of natural law is undergoing constant revision. As further inductions take place and as new data is incorporated into the body of scientific understanding, concepts of natural law of earlier eras are no longer tenable.

Mozley had clearly pointed out that induction can never be complete. But he did not see clearly that this insight has a greaty devastating effect on the evidential value of miracles. For in the time when natural law was thought to be a fixed thing, there was a definite criterion available for those who wanted to claim that natural law had been broken and that therefore God had acted miraculously in nature. But now that criterion has gone by the board. The problem of miracles has therefore shifted from deciding whether a given event has taken place in violation of natural law, to deciding what natural law is. But if we do not have any final answer to that question, then we can never be completely sure that a given event could not at some future date be explicable in terms of natural law in light of our advancing understanding of the potential of the natural order. It follows then that no event can be dogmatically said to have a divine cause. For:

so long as the constitution of nature is not exhaustively known, it is no more possible to assert that a given marvel is beyond the unaided powers of that Nature,
and that it accordingly evidences with directness and certainty supernatural activity *ab extra*, than to affirm that an event indescribable in terms of natural law, as systematized up to date, is for ever intrinsically incapable of being subsumed under natural law. (F.R. Tennant, *Miracle and Its Philosophical Presuppositions*, p. 54).

There is however, one consideration which takes the sting out of such a conclusion. For while it is true that we do not know enough to say dogmatically that a given event cannot be subsumed under natural law, as the scientific process advances we do adopt ways of thinking which have bearing on what phenomenon could be so subsumed and what course that subsumption might take. An example from a slightly different perspective might illustrate the point.

While we know how to identify cancer, we still have no sure cure for many forms of it. Yet we expect, on the basis of past scientific achievements in medicine, that a cure will be forthcoming. It might take the form of a new serum or chemical which would fight and destroy cancer organisms. We do not know how long it would take to effect a cure, but for a disease as serious as cancer, we might reasonably expect that it would take a number of weeks, months, or even years. None of us suspect that a cancer victim will be cured by an immediate response to the words of the physician, "Be healed; go assume a normal life." Similarly, it is possible for us to conceive of some events the nature of which it is probable to assume will never be explicable in purely natural terms. For example, is it reasonable to think (in terms of our ever advancing understanding of natural law) that we shall soon uncover natural facts which will explain how the waters of the Red Sea would well up to leave a sandy pathway clear at precisely the time when Moses, in flight from the approaching Egyptians, raises his rod over the sea? I believe we have no reason to believe that such secrets will ever come. For while new and startling facts have been uncovered about the physical world from time to time, there is always a vast body of basic information about which we have only been refining our knowledge since the beginning of the world. All this is merely to assert that we can observe a certain teleology in the progress of scientific understanding, and this teleology gives us a useful, though not an inflexible criterion by which we can make probability judgements about what science will or will not be able to discover.

But while these probability judgements are useful, they by no means amount to the rigid criterion possessed by those who believed the natural laws are fixed. The conclusion to which I come then is that we shall never be able to assert of any phenomenon, "There is no conceivable way in which this could be explained on natural grounds." We shall only be able to say, "We have reason to believe that this phenomenon was caused by God because..."

What, then, is a miracle? On the basis of the proceeding analysis, it might be appropriate to say that a miracle is an unusual physical phenomenon which is a sign of supernatural activity. I am willing to hold this definition with a number of serious qualifications.

First, I will remind the reader that this discussion has (hopefully) taken place within the context of the Christian faith and that it is therefore imperative, in any consideration of supernatural activity, to remember the Christian doctrine of creation. If this doctrine stresses anything, it stresses God's continual upholding of the created order. So that it would be a mistake to speak merely of miracles as signs of supernatural activity. For from the Christian view, the very existence of the world is a sign of supernatural activity. This fact was clearer to no one than the Hebrews, who spoke of the Heavens declaring the glory of God. Hence, this miraculous activity must be regarded as a special supernatural activity, or some unusual activity within
the larger usualness of the created world.

Another qualification involves the ambiguity of the term supernatural. For Christians believe in both Satan and God, both Evil and Good in the supernatural realm. So we are faced with the question, "when a miracle takes place, how do we know whether it supernatural cause is Evil or Good?"

This brings us to another qualification about the nature of miracle, namely, that a sign of special supernatural activity in the physical realm must always occur in a prophetic situation, in order for us to know that God has been its cause. I use prophetic situation loosely to mean that the physical sign must be accompanied by the presence of a prophet, Christ, an apostle, and angel, and/or the very words of God himself. Also, most prophetic situations involve some sort of cognitive message accompanying the phenomenon. For example, in the flood story we have not only the phenomenon, but also God's word to Noah that he was going to judge an evil world. When Moses stood before the burning bush God told him that he was to be the leader of Israel. When Zechariah was made dumb, he was told by an angel that this was to signify that God's word would be fulfilled. When Peter's mother-in-law was healed of a fever, Jesus himself brought it to pass. On and on we could go and these criteria would be upheld. So that in every situation we find a significant reciprocity between the prophet (the divine representative) and the physical act. While the prophet is known by the believing community to be God's representative, the physical phenomenon may add credence to his statement for those who are willing to believe. On the other hand, his presence adds dignity and authority to the physical act, raising it from the level of magic or demonry to an evidence of God's co-operation. It is important to note the Biblical view that while miracles may influence belief - as with the Philippian jailer or Paul on the Damascus road - they are never the sufficient cause of belief. The Egyptians did not worship Yahweh after the plagues came, nor would a person raised from the dead have convinced the rich man's brothers of the need to mend their ways.

In conclusion, then, we may say that a miracle is a sign of God's special activity in the physical realm issued in co-operation with the message or authority of a prophet in a prophetic situation. To the extent that it is not alone a sufficient inducement to belief, and to the extent that any miracle can, in principle, be ascribed to purely natural processes, a miracle - in order to be understood to God for its cause - must be accompanied by a belief or willingness to believe in God in the mind of the observer.

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CHURCH KILLED GOD
by James VanCamp

Upon arriving this quarter I called a professor from the California Institute of Technology about the church class I had worked with a year and a half ago. Carver reported that Phil had gone to teach at a state university, Al had gone to teach at Harvard, no trace of the two lawyers, one medical doctor had gone on a six month missionary tour, the geologist was teaching nearby, and so went the report. However, another discussion group is being formed of students and professors from Cal. Tech., U.C.L.A. and L.A. State. But not in church! They more than welcome me and look forward to when we can get together--but not in church. I asked why the change in feeling about church.

Carver talked about deciding to get off a sinking ship and try to make it by

JAMES VANCAMP is a special student at FTS. He graduated from Walla Walla College in 1960 with a major in theology.
swimming alone. While he talked memories were flashing through my mind—memories of
when we were sitting in the church balcony laughing about the irrelevancy of the apoc­
alyptic sermon; when we were climbing Mount Wilson discussing Bultmann, Tillich, and
God; when we sat in front of his fireplace talking about the new laser discoveries
they were making; discussing mysticism and Christianity; our times of prayer—so he
gave up a sinking ship?

Carver went on to say that he felt that God has become irrelevant to most Christ­
ians. For them God is dead, and they can't admit it to themselves. Dead because they
use Him as a working hypothesis for all discussions and all discoveries. God becomes
the basic presupposition by which they know reality. He becomes an abstraction, to be
used in spinning nice theories or in trying to make sense out of environmental diffi­
culties. God becomes an escape from life.

Wait a minute Carver—be specific so that I can see if you are really saying
something or just calling names. Take prayer: what does it mean to you to pray to a
living God?

Prayer, he said, must become an open and honest confrontation with another. It
must be a relationship with a being who is central to life and not to a God who answers
prayers, gives assurance in the face of mysteries, or who helps in problems. We must
seek God in answers rather than in questions. We must seek Him in life and not in
mysteries. He is central not peripheral. We must confront ourselves in God and not
focus on a projected self. In repentance, one finds that prayer is a reaffirmation of
acceptance; for estrangement from Christ, one finds that prayer is a confirmation or
relationship. Notice that in none of this is God taken for granted. There is no resting
in the assurance that He is standing behind us somewhere, but there is the experience
that He is participating in life now, and that He is challenging us to new experiments
and discoveries. He is challenging us to be men; men who can stand on our own feet and
respond as loving or hateful creatures; men who respond creatively, respon­
sibly, and freely.

Carver went on to say that he for one, feels ministers offer Christianity as a
magic formula to answer questions or as an answer to life. All of which is irrelevant
to need! Carver seeks a life with Christ where he can afford to let go and not be in
a continual quandry wondering if God is still the basic presupposition. He seeks no
system or airtight arguments that God exists. He wants to live as an authentic person,
relating to Jesus Christ as an authentic God. And for some reason neither he nor any
in the class felt that they knew a minister or church where they could go. They want
very much to get together, but not in a church which they feel has killed God.

DON'T PANIC
by Neal H. Neuenburg

As a young man considering God's call to foreign missions, I had always been fear­
ful that I would never get to the foreign field. As one looks at the endless list of
requirements for many mission boards, he begins to wonder if he will not be too old to
go after completing all of them. Most mission boards require a BD plus at least two
years of practical work before going to the mission field. One of the eye-opening
experiences of attending the language school here in Costa Rica was to observe that
the majority of the new missionaries coming to Latin America were much older than I
had thought they would be. The majority of the new missionaries were in their early

NEAL H. NEUENBURG currently is in Costa Rica under the Middler-Year-in-Missions
program. He received a B.S. in 1962 from Calif. State Polytechnic College.
thirties and some even into their forties. One man had retired after 20 years in the military and could now finance a good portion of his own work. There were several retired couples with good years left coming to give of their skills to the Lord.

Currently, the mission board that seems to be sending more people to Latin America than any other board is that of the Southern Baptists. It is interesting to note their philosophy in sending missionary candidates. Most of their new missionaries have had at least 5-6 years of practical experience in the US before they are sent out. The Southern Baptist Board feels that just having a call to the mission field is not enough. A man must prove himself first in a US pastorate and gain experience there before he can be sent to another country.

I had thought it was unnecessary for a mission board to require so much practical experience in the homeland before going to another country. I felt that the earlier one arrived in the country and became acculturated, the better his adjustment would be. After all, the problems on the foreign field were going to be different from a pastorate in the States. However, I am finding out that the problems the Church and missionary faces here in Costa Rica are not much different from those in the States. The following is a sample of some of the problems we have seen here in Costa Rica. Unless I am mistaken, I believe you could find them in most any church in the US.

1. Lack of trained lay and pastoral leadership.
2. Ingrowth in the church; having too many activities; meetings every night.
3. Indifference and lack of concern among Christians for witness and living a Christ-centered life.
4. Indifference of the laity in taking responsibility.

The chief difference between the established churches here and in the US, is that here the problems become more complex for the missionary because of the difference in culture and language. I have heard several missionaries who came to the mission field almost directly from the termination of their school work say that they wish they had more practical experience in the US before coming. Basically the work and problems center in dealing with people. Learning to work with people is the key to successful mission work. One needs to learn to work with people of his own culture and language before moving into another culture.

In a sense, I am trying to say, "Don't Panic." Don't feel that age, long requirements, family size, or other obstacles will keep you from the mission field. Every experience that God sends you is prepared and planned by Him to fit you for an exact area of his service. Of course, one of the dangers in what I have been saying is that of becoming so involved with local church work and, thus, fail to keep open to God's possible call to serve him in another country. However, the God who calls us unto himself will direct us in the course of our life and our walk with him. Let us be willing to prepare ourselves fully for the great challenge and opportunities we have in the service of our Master.

* * *

REFLECTIONS OF A CHAPLAIN
by Henry T. Close

People often think of a mental hospital as an awesome place, inhabited by strange and frightening creatures who have no sense of responsibility, and are liable to go completely berserk at the slightest provocation. The patients are all thought to be "crazy", and to encounter one would make a person feel very uncomfortable, embarrassed, frightened, uneasy. The hospital is thus regarded by many as a place to be dreaded, and people who have been there are to be treated with caution and suspicion. HENRY T. CLOSE is currently the Senior Clinical Chaplain at Milledgeville State Hospital in Georgia. He received his BD from PTS in 1955. This article was excerpted from a paper by Chaplain Close-Pastor to a Mental Hospital.
The truth, in part, is that these are lonely people. Their loneliness is part of the illness; and the illness creates its own kind of loneliness. One patient commented that you can explain to your friends that you have TB or pneumonia, and they will accept this; but how can you explain that you are just frightened or that you are lonely? Who will accept this? The world which these people have experienced has been in many ways a barren rejecting world, and their isolation has become unbearable. No one can conceive of the utter abysmal loneliness of the seriously disturbed person. Unless you have experienced this yourself, you can have no inkling of what it is like, and may God grant that you never do. When the loneliness is overwhelming, people do strange and desperate things.

Their underlying loneliness and fear are reflected in their theology. Many patients have quite frankly rejected God, either intellectually through doubt, or emotionally through fear or hate. "How can you believe in or respect a God who would allow a world like this to exist?" they will ask. God is seen primarily as a tyrant, making impossible demands on them; and no matter how hard they try to please him, they will fail and he will triumphantly send them to hell. Yes, I would guess that perhaps the majority of the patients feel they will be sentenced to hell, despite their earnest efforts to repent and to please God. To be sure, they have heard of the love of God; but instead of this meaning, "God loves you in spite of your failures," it has been taken to mean, "Unless you love God, he will torture you in hell." Other patients, of course, have other attitudes toward religion, and see God as their friend and their hope. Sometimes God is their only friend, and their only hope. Basically, the people here are religious people, but their religion has more often than not been a source of pain rather than joy.

I have often asked patients, "What do you want from a Chaplain?" "What kind of person do you want him to be?" Two answers are given. They want him to be a friend; they want him to be real. A friend is someone who cares, who is not afraid or repulsed by their sickness, who can accept them where they are. A friend is someone you can love, get mad at, joke with, pray with, weep with. He is willing to get involved, involved at the level of feelings rather than mere social niceties. He is someone you can experiment with in new ways of thinking and living and relating. A friend can be a bridge between the patient's inner loneliness and the world of human relationships, a bridge between the hospital and the outside community, a bridge between the individual and his God.

Related to this is a person's acceptance of his own humanness. It is difficult enough for any of us to accept our limitations, our idiosyncrasies, our defects; it is doubly difficult for the disturbed person. Patients often speak of being frightened of their fear, or guilty about their anger, or angry at their limitations, or anxious over their despair. These feelings about feelings catch a person up in vicious circle, and it is easy for the patient to despise himself. The Chaplain, as a representative of God, can say as no one else can that it is all right to be human, it is all right to be scared or anxious or guilty. You don't need to run from these feeling or try to pretend that they are not there. These are all human feelings; you can accept them, you can live with them, you can experience joy and love in spite of these painful things. When patients can accept their humanness, their capacity is enlarged to tolerate the painful side of life, and to enjoy the good that comes their way. One of the nicest compliments given me was by a patient who said that I had accepted her craziness and started her on the road to accepting it herself. To make contact with God is to accept oneself as human, and vice-versa, to accept one's self as human is to make contact with God. And as this occurs, the person becomes free to reach out a and make contact with his fellowmen.
Someone has said that to enjoy working in a mental hospital, a person has to be comfortable with his own weakness, his own "craziness". This is true. But beyond this, I don't think anyone can say exactly why he likes this work and is committed to it. I can say for myself and my colleagues that we do like our work and find it very satisfying. It is a deeply satisfying thing to walk with another human being in his pilgrimage, to participate with him in his struggles, to share together in moments of living. For in such moments, he and I together are indeed drawn into the presence of God.

* * *

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR CHURCH
by David Froberg

A by-product of the December pilgrimage to Chicago's south side is my annual "palship" luncheon with the two top eschelons of my home church's MINISTERIAL HIERARCHY. My parents have been members for many years and my father-in-law is chairman of the official board, but I probably would've rated an invitation without these credentials as I am something of a museum piece around home. Representing 50% of our church's contribution to the ministry is quite a DISTINCTION.

The heart of our "off the cuff" exchange centered about the fears within the congregation of the integration peril which is a few short years away. What was the minister doing to educate and prepare his hyper-reactionary country club congregation? I left with assurances that our church was adequately schooled and wonderfully prepared. With finality and a spirit of true charity I was told "without social conscience there is no Gospel".

To substantiate the integrity of this declaration, our church HIRED A NEGRO JANITOR. The response was instantaneous. The chairman of the official board speaking candidly--but not far from the sentiments of the congregation typifies the reaction: "If that smart aleck thinks we're gonna have some nigger right in there with the people on Sundays, he has another think coming. Either that jig goes or __________(the pastor) gonna be shipped to Iowa!"

OUR JANITOR WAS FIRED -- CALM RETURNED TO THE TROUBLED WATERS.

A mighty fortress is our church, a bulwark always failing.

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DAVID FROBERG is a senior at FTS. He received his AB from the University of Illinois in 1962.

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