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the opinion

March, 1968 Vol. VII, No. 6

the opinion is published the first Thursday of each month throughout the school year by students at Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena, California. the opinion welcomes a variety of opinions consistent with general academic standards. Therefore, opinions expressed in articles and letters are those of the authors and are not to be construed as the view of the seminary, faculty, student council, or editors of the opinion.

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The Church?!

The Church. We think of many things when that little six-lettered word comes to mind. We think of the building on the corner. But in these days of the rebirth of the laity, we know better than to think of that building as the Church.

We think of established denominations. But in these days of ecumenical awareness and cooperation, we know better than to think of a denomination as the Church.

We think of Protestants. But in these days of inter­ecclesiastical dialogue, we know better than to exclude the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, and the others. Protestants alone are not the Church.

In all of this, however, we find ourselves talking about a theological entity (and we must!).

Theologically, we have little difficulty, really, identifying the Church. It is "...the spiritual family of God, the Christian fellowship created by the Holy Spirit through testimony to the mighty acts of God in Christ Jesus. Where­ever the Holy Spirit unites worshipping souls to Christ and to each other there is the mystery of the Church." Furthermore, "...the one church of God is not an institutional but a supernatural entity which is in process of growth towards the world to come." (Wm. Childs Robinson, "The Church," in Baker's Dictionary of Theology)

This is not the problem though. The real difficulty comes when we look about us to find the theological reality in the world. We see institutions called "churches" which almost repel us at times. But we see sparks of life in "ex­tra-church" movements (like Young Life, IVCF, etc.). Yet these movements, we are told, cannot claim to be "the Church".

We attend services which are labeled "worship". Yet somehow we wonder if in such services we are really uniting with Christ and each other. Is this the Church?

We hear pronouncements from the NCC on many issues. Is this the Church speaking? We hear pronouncements from the NAE on many Issues. Is this the Church speaking? We hear pronouncements from the ACC on many issues. Is this the Church speaking? Can the Church speak?

Crucial questions. Are we thinking about them? We must. How can the Seminary help us answer them? Is it helping? Could it help more? Maybe. And many questions have not even been mentioned. What is the mission of the Church? Church growth? What of social issues? Collective stand? Individuals only? Economic sanction?

The Church. We think of many things...
The doctrine of the Church is a doctrine which continually presses in upon us, burdening us with the responsibility to earnestly examine what this doctrine means. Perhaps this is becoming increasingly so today. On the one hand we are faced with the rising swell of ecumenism, and must come to terms with what constitutes the true unity of the Church. On the other hand we are faced with a growing impatience and pessimism with regard to the traditional and institutional forms of the Church. We find little patience with the visible structures of the Church, and therefore replace fellowship with action.

It is hoped that this brief study of one attempt to work through these problems may give us some light in our own struggles. This study is an exposition of Mercersburg theology: more specifically, it is an exposition of the theology of John Williamson Nevin. (1)

John Williamson Nevin came from a 'Puritan' Presbyterian background. Educated at Princeton and firmly convinced of his Princeton 'Calvinism,' Nevin seemed hardly the person to initiate a high-church movement in a German Reformed seminary.

American Reformed church life in Nevin's day was characterized by a rather static orthodoxy. It shared the older theology of the 'rational supernaturalists' such as Turretin, Wullebius and Ernesti, somewhat modified--especially in the case of Hodge at Princeton--by Scottish empiricism. The intellectual climate of America at this time could be measured by the fact that most schools in the mid-Atlantic States had "repeated the same texts and lecture notes for decades." (2)

The Bible was seen to be the one indispensable means of grace. Church life was deeply influenced by a dogged individualism. The Church itself was commonly thought to be a voluntary association of like-minded believers. The whole was nothing more than the sum of its parts. Worship was non-liturgical, if not anti-liturgical, and emphasized a 'free' spirituality; which, because of its freedom, more...
often than not revealed the arid spirituality of the average pastor.

In the midst of this 'Puritan' Calvinism came the revivals of the early and middle nineteenth century. Finney and his 'new measures' did much to change the face of American church life. He brought to an already deeply individualistic Christianity a subjectivism and emotionalism which it was not prepared to handle. This was the kind of 'Puritanism' Nevin later so vigorously fought—a Calvinism reshaped by revivalism.

It was while Nevin was teaching at Western Theological Seminary he became most involved in his polemic against Finney's revivalism. Nevin had begun to read Neander by whom he was violently stirred from his "dogmatic slumber." Says Nevin:

How much I owe to him in the way of excitement, impulse suggestion, knowledge, both literary and religious, reaching onward into all my later life, is more than I can pretend to explain, for it is in truth more than I have power to understand. (3)

It was from Neander that Nevin learned the meaning of growth and development in Church history. Nevin gained a deep sense of historical consciousness which began to help him understand the meaning of continuity in the life of the Church catholic. He began to detect a sense of unifying direction and purpose in the history of the Faith. This historical consciousness and this growing Idealism did not appear at once, but the seeds had been sown and were soon to blossom full grown in a powerful and lively understanding of Christian life and the Church.

Immediately, however, Nevin began to see how impossible it was to endure revivalism, a force directly in opposition to his growing understanding of the Church. In his tract The Anxious Bench (1843), and in following editions of the same work, one can trace Nevin's own development. He began (in the first edition) by attacking the 'quackery' of the 'new measures,' (4) urging instead a careful system of catechetical instruction. He ended (in the second edition, 1844) by expounding for the first time the Mercersburg doctrine of the Church.

In the seventh chapter of the second edition of The Anxious Bench Nevin directly attacked the individualistic presuppositions of revivalism. Sin, according to Finneyism, is the product of the sinner's own will. Thompson states that "That presumption struck Nevin as a completely false analysis of both man's predicament and man's recovery." (5) Nevin introduced his theology of the second Adam, in which "Christ is the principle of the new creation" (6) Whereas "sin is not simply the offspring of a particular will...but a wrong habit of humanity itself;" (7) so
salvation, i.e. the new creation, involves humanity which "is made to undergo a resurrection in Christ." (8) Christ is the New Man, the Second Adam in whom humanity is recovered and redeemed. Or as Nevin states in his later work, The Mystical Presence: "The root of righteousness in the one case, corresponds with the root of sin in the other." (9) In the words of St. Paul: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam...a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). The incarnation has begun to govern Nevin's thinking about redemption and the Church.

The basic structure of Nevin's theology is that of German idealism. Before discussing in detail Nevin's doctrine of the church, it may be best to review the manner in which this idealism takes shape. As was mentioned earlier, Nevin was wrested from his 'dogmatic slumber' through reading Neander. It was through Neander that Nevin was introduced to Schleiermacher, who taught him that religion was in itself distinct from doctrine or ethics. Nevin was introduced to Hegel's idealism, especially his doctrine of progress, through the help of Friedrich Rauch and Philip Schaff. It was Schaff who showed Nevin that the history of the Church was best understood as a process of development: not as a mere process of human improvement, but as a process of "an increasingly profound apprehension by the Church of the life, doctrine and spirit of Christ, and the assimilation of these into the course of catholic experience." (10)

For Nevin 'churchly' theology is a series of triangles (thanks to Hegel!). First, his theology is Christological, in that Christ and his Incarnation forms its center; it is Creedal, in that it reflects the Christocentric character of the Apostles' Creed; and it is objective and historical, in that it is based on the objective reality of the Incarnation and is understood within its historical outworking in the Church. Secondly, theology is churchly, in that it believes in an economy of grace working through the visible body of Christ; it is sacramental, in that it believes that the sacraments are both "outward signs of what they represent" and "seals of the actual realities themselves which they exhibit;" (11) and it is liturgical, in that "the sacramental feeling...cannot fail to show itself a liturgical feeling." (12)

Nevin gives us one other triad, and this one comes closer than the preceding ones to capture the mood of the Hegelian idea of progress. In order to deal rightly with the Church catholic, thought Nevin, one must acknowledge three great crucial movements: 1. as a Protestant, one must come to terms with the Reformation; 2. but this is not possible without a proper consideration of the roots of the Reformation, that is the Catholic Church, especially the ancient Church of the Fathers; 3. a correct appraisal of these two movements will offer guidance concerning the future
development of the Church. Nevin and Schaff's concept of "evangelical catholicity" related to this third great move­
ment of Church history.

The most complete development of Nevin's theology of the Church is found in a sermon which he preached at the open­
ing of the Eastern Synod of the German Reformed Church at Carlisle, Pennsylvania on October 15, 1846. His text for this sermon is Ephesians 1:23: "Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Using the Creedal state­
ment for his basis (I believe in one holy, catholic Church), Nevin develops the view that the Church must be seen on the one hand as the Ideal Church, and on the other as the Actual Church.

The term Ideal for Nevin is used to mean "the very in­
most substance of that which exists, as distinguished from its simply phenomenal character in time and space." On the basis of this understanding of the Ideal, Nevin defines the Ideal Church as

the power of a new supernatural creation, which has been introduced into the actual history of the world by the incarnation of Jesus Christ; and which is destined to go on, causing all things to pass away and all things to become new' (Rev. 21:4, 5, adapted), till it shall triumph fully in the end over all sin and death, and the whole world shall appear transformed into its image and resplendent with its light. (13)

This definition is the basis for Nevin's view that the Church is an Ideal in the process of actualization. As an Ideal the Church is a unity, it is catholic, and it is holy. As an Actuality (see the discussion below) it is seeking to realize its true nature.

The Church is the new creation. It is a living organ­
ism and Christ is the principle of this new creation. The Church, says Nevin, "is a living system, organically bound together in all its parts, springing from a common ground, and pervaded throughout with the force of a common nature." (14)

What, specifically, does Nevin mean by such terms as "Christ, the principle of the new creation." or the Church, "a living organism?" Nevin is referring to three concepts he earlier had expounded in the second edition of The Anxious Bench. First, he is referring to the solidarity of the sinner in salvation with the New Humanity. As man was linked in a real bond to the old Adam (and hence to the Old Human­
ity), so he is linked together with the Church (the New Humanity) to the new Adam, Christ. Secondly, this 'real bond' with the new Adam is conceived in terms of the 'mysti­
cal union' with Christ. Thi Christian in regeneration, says Nevin,
is inwardly united to Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. A divine seed is implanted in him, the germ of a new existence, which is destined gradually to grow and gather strength, till the whole man shall be at last fully transformed into his image. (15)

Thirdly, this mystical union with Christ is epitomized in the sacramental life of the believer. In the Lord's Supper, for example, this union is most explicitly set forth and realized.

All of this is to say that for Nevin the Church is in some way the historical continuation of the life of Christ. "Christ lives in the Church, and through the Church in its particular members." (16) Nevin says elsewhere that "There can be no Church without Christ; but we may reverse the proposition also and say, no Church, no Christ." (17) This is the proper understanding of the Creed (according to Nevin). It begins with God, "but soon shuts us up to the Church, as the only medium of his saving presence among men." (18)

One further comment must be made with regard to Nevin's concept of the Ideal Church. In that it is essentially a corporate body, so too is it of necessity a visible body. "It is not the visibility of single Christians... as such, that is required," says Nevin, "but the visibility of the Church as an organic body, in whose presence alone all individual Christianity becomes real." (19) It were absurd to believe in an absolutely invisible Church. One can no more do this than he can believe in an invisible state, or family, or man. "The Idea of a Church includes visibility, just as the idea of man supposes a body." (20)

This leads us to Nevin's second concept of the Church, the Actual Church: That is, the Church presented to our view. The Church conceived in its Ideal state is realized in its Actual state. In other words the Church is a process which is pressing forth to its complete fulfillment. Says Nevin:

The Ideal Church... is no abstraction but a living, divine constitution, which includes in itself from the beginning all that it is destined to become by development in the end, and whose very nature requires it to show itself real in this way. The history of the Actual Church, then is but the presence and life of the Ideal Church, struggling through a process of centuries to come to its last, full manifestation. (21)

Nevin takes seriously the imperfection of the present Church. It is obviously not free from heresy and schism. He criticises the Roman Catholics and the high-church Anglicans, who assert for the Actual Church that which is true only for the Ideal. Schism or heresy in the present does not destroy the unity or holiness of the Ideal Church. On the other hand, Nevin guards against a too easy separation
of the Ideal and Actual, as if they really did not have an essential connection. "With all their difference," he states, "the Actual Church and the Ideal Church, it must always be borne in mind, are in the end the same." (22) The Actual is always the bearer of the Ideal.

In his description of the Church Nevin borrows the concepts of German idealism. He speaks of the Church as an organism with Christ as its organic principle, the life-giving force within the Church. The Church, as organic, is in a process of growth and development. But this growth is like the growth of a seed, in which reside all the potentialities of the resultant plant. Hence, there is no evolution in the sense of essential change. The Church is in its inception what it will become. But there is a tension in the life of the Church, the tension between what the Church is in Christ, that is, its perfection, and what the Church is in history, that is, its imperfection. It is the tension between the 'already' and the 'not-yet'. Therefore the life of the Church is seen as a process of actualization. The Actual is becoming the Ideal.

This eschatological thrust of Nevin's theology is important. Nichols states that "The Church which claimed the full devotion of the Mercersburg men was in this sense an eschatological one. Faith in such a future enabled them to put up with imperfections in the present which would otherwise have been unendurable." (23) The ground of their hope was Christ himself who was the guarantee of the ultimate victory of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ. It was Nevin's conviction that as Christ in his resurrection had gained victory over sin and death, so too his body, the Church, would ultimately partake of this redemption—indeed, in a sense, it already had.

This eschatological hope issued in some very practical concerns. Nevin took quite seriously the present bond between the Ideal and Actual Church. This was seen most clearly in his concern for Church unity. In this he was a forerunner of modern ecumenical endeavor.

The unity of the Church is a given fact. St. Paul states that "there is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. 4:4). He does not say "Let there be one body." The exhortation which follows is grounded on this fact: There is one body, therefore keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The givenness of this unity is Christ himself. The Church is composed of many members, but these are all actuated by the power of a common life, and the whole of this life gathers itself up ultimately or fundamentally in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the principle or root of the Church, and the Church through all ages, is one, simply because it stands in the presence and power of this root universally and forever. (24)
The believer has an individual existence, but this is the existence of a member in relation to a body. The whole precedes the part. "The Church does not rest upon its members, but the members rest upon the Church." (25)

The unity of the Church is based on the concept of the mystical union of the Church with Christ. This, for Nevin, was no mere moral union, "the harmony of purpose, thought, and feeling." This union was "real" and "substantial," involving oneness of nature. "We are members of his body, his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30, adapted).

The life of Christ in the Church is inward and spiritual. In its inward constitution the Church is one in Christ. "But to be real," Nevin said, "it must also become outward." (26) Here lies the force of his concern for Church unity. Christ has made the Church one, but everywhere it is divided and contradicts this unity. Christ is substantially present within his Church, but bodies within the Church catholic deny their common bond and refuse fellowship with one another. Nevin pleads with the Church to acknowledge this "deep and radical defect." The spirit of Christ is that his Church may be one, and for this he prays (Jn. 17:20, 21).

In Summary, Nevin's view of the Church is that of the Creed, "I believe in the holy catholic Church." He interprets the Creed to mean that the Church is visible, in that to be real and a knowledgeable object of faith it must be external as well as spiritual; the Church is catholic, in that as it is the body of Christ, it must be one because Christ is one; the Church is historical, in that as it must be visible, so it must be continuous, that is, "it must unfold itself organically in a standing concrete form;" the Church is life-bearing, in that through it the Incarnate Son of God reaches out in saving power to the world.

Bard Thompson reminds us that Mercersburg theology is a matter of recovery and progress. (28) In that it is a matter of recovery it deserves commendation. Nevin and Schaff did much to awaken their church to the riches of its Reformed and catholic tradition. Nevin's keen historical consciousness was one of the primary strengths of his theology. Through Nevin's efforts the doctrine of the Church was reinstated to its proper historically high importance. His attempt to point out an organic link between Christ and his Church, and his attempt to justify this biblically and historically is surely right.

But in so far as Nevin's theology was a matter of pro-
gress, its value is mixed. The central question must be asked: How legitimate is it to use modern philosophical constructs to explain a Biblical faith? Nevin's philosophical idealism permeated his theology, as has been shown in the way he explained the Ideal and Actual realities of the Church. The concepts of "organism" and "Progress" were borrowed directly from philosophical idealism; but it must be stated that Nevin did seek to use these ideas to explain Biblical truths. Even his terms Ideal and Actual are serious attempts to describe the Biblical understanding of the tension between the present rule of God and its future perfection.

While Nevin sought to do justice to the Biblical teaching of the Church as the Body of Christ—he was more faithful to the Biblical text than most of his contemporaries—he tended to make too close an identification of Christ and his Church (cf. his statement, "No Church, no Christ."). While the New Testament speaks of the Church as Christ's body (even equating the body with Christ: I Cor. 12:12), it also says that Christ is the Head of his body, the Church. For the New Testament Christ is both the body and the head, and these two statements must be kept in tension. It may be that at this point Nevin allowed his idealism to govern his exegesis rather than explain it. Hence, he was driven to speak of the Church as literally the extension of the Incarnation.

The danger is always to want to say too much. Perhaps Calvin's admonition should always be kept in mind: The first thing...that God requires of us in this humility to allow ourselves to be controlled by His pure Word.

...In obscure matters not to speak, or think, or even long to know more, than the Word of God has delivered. (29)

1. "Mercersburg is a Pennsylvania village in the foothills of the Appalachians, close to the Maryland border. In the mid-nineteenth century it was the site of the college and seminary of the German Reformed Church. But the men who gave the institutions their distinction had a horizon far wider than that of their denomination. There were two of them, John Williamson Nevin (1803-86) the theologian, and Philip Schaff (1819-93) the historian." Nichols: Romanticism in American Theology, p. 1.
2. Nichols: Mercersburg Theology, p. 5.
3. Weekly Messenger, June 15, 1870. Quoted in RAT, p. 42. See also MT, p. 18.
4. For the 'new measures,' said Nevin, "conversion is everything, sanctification nothing. Religion is not regarded as the life of God in the soul, that must be cultivated in order that it may grow, but rather as a transient excitement to be rewarded." The Anxious Bench (2nd Edition), quoted in RAT, p. 57.


6. The Mystical Presence and Other Writings (Thompson, Ed.) p. 212f.


8. Ibid.


11. Nevin, quoted in MT, p. 16

12. Ibid.

13. The Church, MT, p. 58.

14. Ibid.

15. Nevin, quoted in Thompson, pp. 228-229.

16. Ibid.

17. The Church, MT, p. 66

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 61

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 64

22. Ibid.

23. Nichols, MT, p. 28.


25. Ibid., p. 38.

26. Ibid., p. 41.

27. Ibid., p. 43

28. Thompson, p. 238.

29. Sermon on 1. Tim. 4:1-5; Inst. 1:14:4
THE LIFE-SAVING STATION
by The Rev. T. O. Wedel

On a dangerous sea coast where ship wrecks often occur there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves they went out, day or night, tirelessly searching for the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in surrounding areas wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little life-saving station grew.

Some of the new members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it expensively, because they used it as sort of a club. Less of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life-boat crews to do this work. The life-saving motif still prevailed in the club decoration, however, and there was a liturgical life-saving boat in the room where initiation took place. About this time, a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boats loaded with cold, wet, and half drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some had black skin and some had yellow skin. The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where the victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal life of the club. Some members insisted on life-saving as their primary purpose, and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives

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of all various kinds of people who were ship-wrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same change that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another life-saving station was founded. History continues to repeat itself, and if you visit that coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

We think of the Church as your people, Christ's body, at least a foretaste of your new creation. Some part of your purpose must have been realized in it. Sometimes the lives of Christians do put the world to shame. But the Church does not proclaim the Gospel so clearly that people are left without excuse. We cannot be surprised when they do not find Christ easily through the Church. How can this be put right? How can your life be released in the Church and transform its worship and its service? We believe in your purpose for the Church; help us not to be imprisoned in unbelief.

Caryl Micklem, Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship.
Man is valuable just because he is. God has brought him into being and because God has made him man is important. But instead of being free to enjoy the existence that God has given him and the worth which is an integral part of this existence man seeks to establish his importance by his own activity apart from a dependence on God. When so oriented, man sees his value as determined by what he does and so seeks to establish his worth by what he can do or possess. This activity really amounts to an attempt to be free from God. But in thus seeking to be free, man is bound to the necessity for seeking to establish his importance by what he can accomplish. Salvation involves the realization of total dependence upon God as demonstrated for us in Jesus Christ. In this realization of dependence man is made free to be. No longer must he strive to establish his value, but instead he can act from within the freedom which he has been given in his dependence upon God.

In a similar way, God's calling the Church into being has made the Church valuable. And by realizing that its importance is given in its creation by God the Church is also made free to be and to act. But the action is an action from within the already established value and not action in order to become valuable. Thus, as with man, the Church is freed from the necessity for grasping after accomplishment in order to have value.

Out of this freedom both the Church and the individual do act. The actions have an entirely different motivation from the attempts to gain value by doing; action is a response to God's making free, in appreciation for all that God has given man. The Church which thus acts out of freedom treats men as important because God values the men he has created and in order to convey to men the message that they are important because God has made them. Thus the Church, in the freedom God has given it is called into responsible action in whatever it does. Instead of doing something in order to establish its importance, the Church is free to act with great seriousness and concern in all its activity rather than sloppily and hastily just so it can be said that the Church has done something worthwhile. The Church is freed to be the Church only when it realizes that it is valuable just because God has called it into being.

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ROBERT S. SAHR, a Middler at Fuller Theological Seminary, graduated in 1966 from the University of Washington.
WHY I OPPOSE OUR POLICY IN VIETNAM
by Robert McAfee Brown

4. I believe there are alternatives our Administration does not face.

As I read the history of the last three years, I cannot avoid the conclusion that American foreign policy has been reduced to one bankrupt concept: military escalation. We now seek military answers to political questions. This seems to be our almost automatic reflex in every situation. The Politics of Escalation in Vietnam, by Schurmann and others, (Fawcett), cites ten instances of peace feelers initiated from the other side, to which in each instance we responded by military escalation, apparently feeling that the peace feelers were a sign of weakness in Hanoi. Norman Cousins, in a series of editorials in The Saturday Review last spring cited another set of peace feelers from Hanoi in early 1967. Our response was to bomb Hanoi. The plans for discussion were of course cancelled by Hanoi. We replied that the bombing had been a mistake. The plans for discussion were consequently renewed. And then we bombed Hanoi again.

What sort of attempt to end the war is this? Who is running the store? Have we nothing left except a decision to go for military victory at any cost? Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in the preface to the paperback edition of The Bitter Heritage (Fawcett) cites similar instances during the winter of 1967, from which he can only draw the conclusion that our government did not wish to negotiate. If our government has since expressed a desire to negotiate, it is quite understandable that Hanoi should look with considerable skepticism on the sincerity of our claim. The terms on which we say we will negotiate betray a similar unwillingness. About a year ago we increased the demands we were making as preconditions for negotiation. We communicate the impression that Hanoi must first capitulate before we will talk. While we daily run the risk of engaging mankind in World War III, we are apparently not willing to run the risk of negotiating at some possible cost to ourselves. We will not stop the bombing of the north as a precondition

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This is the second part of an article begun in the February issue of the opinion. Its author is Professor of Religion at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

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for talks (a gesture most of the world seems to feel is necessary) even though Mr. McNamara has conceded that the bombing has not achieved its strategic objectives. We attach strings to our willingness to negotiate with the Vietcong stating that to do so would be the equivalent (in Mr. Humphrey's metaphor) of letting the fox into the chicken coop, even though the Vietcong are one of the main protagonists in the struggle without whom no settlement can possibly be reached.

The Administration always counters criticism of its policy with the rejoinder that there is no alternative. It then proceeds to escalate one step further. There is no point at which it seems willing to stop short of military victory. There is now persistent talk of an Invasion of North Vietnam. There have already been incidents in which we have overflown the borders and fought over China. There will be more such incidents. How can we finally stop short of provoking China into more intensive involvement in the war? When that happens, the final logic of Mr. Rusk's cries about the billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons will unfold: the way to stop the Chinese in the future will be to stop them now, and we may find ourselves engaged in a holy war against the yellow peril.

To some, such extrapolation from the logic of escalation may sound hysterical. But who would have assumed, when we sent a handful of "military advisors" to Vietnam a few years ago, to help the Vietnamese fight their own war, that we would soon have over 500,000 American troops in Vietnam, that over 13,000 of them would be dead, and another 95,000 of them injured? Every act of escalation commits us more and more irretrievably to further acts of escalation, and makes less possible the working out of a negotiated peace. Opposition to a policy of further escalation is less and less tolerable to the Administration. It is hard to understand the ousting of Mr. McNamara in any other terms. He was the one who was keeping the lid on the escalation process. The portents for the future with his influence negated are chilling to contemplate. If Mr. Goldberg leaves his UN post, as is being rumored while these words are written, this will be only another grim portent that more escalation is in store. The notion that we can continue or even intend to fight a "limited war" is harder and harder to believe.

Why should Hanoi trust us, in the face of this kind of record? Why should the rest of the world believe that our intentions are honorable? Why should members of the UN feel that they can or should collectively unravel the horror we have unilaterally perpetrated? Never before in our history, perhaps, has our moral stock been so low among the community of nations.
It is absurd for Mr. Johnson to insist that there are no other choices. U Thant's three points (cessation of the bombing of the north, recognition of the Vietcong at the bargaining table, deescalation elsewhere) have not been seriously explored. Senator Fulbright has made alternative proposals to our present policy. So has Senator McCarthy. So has John Kenneth Galbraith. So has Senator Robert Kennedy. So has General Gavin. So has Senator McGovern. So have a host of others. There is no reason why we should believe that only Mr. Johnson knows what is right. The narrowness of the vision of those in power is as disquieting as their unwillingness to explore alternative possibilities.

5. **I believe that citizens must take the initiative for change.**

I have taken a harsh attitude toward the present Administration. It is based upon my conviction that the Administration has committed itself to a policy of utmost folly, and that there is virtually no way left to persuade it to change. The only vehicle that citizens have left in a democracy is the raising of a public outcry against the policy. And even as that outcry mounts, I am no longer sure the government will listen. In October, Mr. Humphrey stated in San Francisco that the government would pursue its present course regardless of public opinion. Mr. Johnson has made clear that he will await the verdict of history, and not reexamine his policy no matter what the people say or do. Such statements present a frightening picture of men with inordinate power, ready to use it heedlessly in the pursuit of goals the nation increasingly questions.

In the face of this, what can be done? Every day narrows the list of alternatives still open. Nevertheless, I still see a number of courses open to citizens and urge that each find his own place along the total spectrum of dissent.

First of all, everyone who is dissatisfied with the policy must escalate his own level of protest, in an effort to convince the policy-makers that they do not have the people behind them, and that they are responsible to the people and not to their own intransigence. One who speaks more loudly than he has before may at least encourage another who has not yet spoken at all to begin to speak.

Beyond that, we must press our policy-makers toward alternative courses of action. It is not our job to provide the specific alternative; we do not have the expertise for that. (Who could possibly be interested in Brown's Plan for Extrication of Our Forces from Vietnam with Minimum Loss to All Concerned?) But there are plenty of men who do have the expertise, and who are clearly not only being ignored but also demeaned by the administration. We must insist on a fresh exploration of such alternatives.
There are others who feel, with considerable justification, that we are past the time when any significant impact can be made upon the present Administration, and who feel that nothing is left to them but to "get on record," to leave some kind of witness to the future that in this time of great national folly there was at least a minority who refused to condone our wholesale slaughter in Southeast Asia. Some of those of draft age refuse to serve, and pay the price of imprisonment. Others are willing to engage in various forms of civil disobedience, and pay a similar price to make a witness to the priority of conscience over evil laws. Those who suspect their motives, or castigate their patriotism, simply do not know the depth of moral feeling that prompts many, particularly of our youth, to such acts of courage.

Until very recently, I was virtually at the point of thinking there was no alternative to civil disobedience; and I will continue to give my full support to those who in conscience feel that they must break the law—a tradition firmly imbedded in the Acts of the Apostles. Until recently, the political spectrum seemed bare. The Republicans would nominate a hawk and the Democrats would renominate Johnson. The "choice" between such alternatives is a debasement of the word. As I write this, however, Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, one of the most admirable and high-principled men in public life, has decided to risk his political future by challenging Mr. Johnson. There is therefore a new hope that the political process may still be able to offer us a choice. It is a very long shot. But it seems to me essential that Mr. Johnson be removed from office, since he has painted himself into a corner by his own fatal policy and can do nothing now but escalate. I therefore hope that Senator McCarthy's candidacy will be supported by millions of Americans. (This is not a paid political announcement. It is simply an attempt to indicate that there is a specific alternative, which is what Mr. Johnson is always taunting his opponents that they do not have. Now they do.) If 1968 cannot give us a political choice, then I fear that a whole generation, the "under thirty" group, may be permanently disillusioned with politics. Let the one who scoffs at that prediction spend a few days on the college campuses where I spend all my days, before he underestimates the degree of frustration and cynicism that Mr. Johnson's policies have engendered among the most sensitive and intelligent youth of our land.

This is a somber note on which to close. But I cannot close a discussion of Vietnam exultantly or hopefully. All I can do is record my feeling that the hour is very late, that our options as a nation have virtually expired, that the churches have failed to sensitize the conscience of the nation, that the voices of those who cry for change must be
heard more forcibly than they yet have been, and that, in the words of a statesman of another era, America should tremble at the thought that God is just.

Personal Postscript

Those of us who criticize our country get no pleasure out of doing so. Nor does it follow that to criticize American moral outrages is to condone Vietcong outrages. It should be taken for granted that evil is evil whoever does it. There are plenty of people pointing out how wrong the Vietcong are, but there are relatively few people who turn the same voice of criticism upon America. That is why some of us feel the necessity to keep doing so, and who we try to do so as churchmen, because we feel that it is always the prophetic task of the church to challenge the pretension of any nation that seeks to play the part of God over the lives of other men.

I plead therefore that those who so roundly criticize us for speaking out would realize that we derive no joy from doing so. There is nothing I would like more, in my moments of physical and spiritual exhaustion, which are many these days, than to be able to forget about the war, put it outside my life, be on the side of a majority for once, sleep well at night, make a speech without feeling in the pit of my stomach that it is going to make people angry, give full time once again to my research, and spend an occasional weekend with my family. And yet I realize that it is unlikely that in our lifetimes we are ever going to have the privilege of “normal” existence again. We will lurch from crisis to crisis—if we survive this one—and my only hope in the present crisis is that we may learn enough lessons from it so that subsequent ones may be less painful to the whole family of man.

In my own moments of weakness, I am strengthened by some words of my predecessor at Stanford, the late Alexander Miller, and I suggest them as a source of strength to all who, like myself, get very weary and discouraged when the brickbats are flying. Surveying the times in his own life when he had to make difficult choices, he wrote, in The Man in the Mirror (Doubleday), "I...regret...the times when I failed to meet a challenge because the risk was too great, or to meet a need because the cost was too great. I don't regret any of the times I stuck my neck out for what I then thought right; I do regret the times I kept it in."
Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, in the last opinion, raised a number of objections to the Vietnam War. That there are valid objections to this war no one can doubt, but the supports used for these objections must be more carefully chosen if one is to properly evaluate whether or not we should be engaged in this conflict. Because we are Americans, these structural weaknesses often center upon our projection of the Western mind into an oriental culture.

Dr. Brown begins by invalidating our alleged commitments to the South Vietnamese because the Diem regime was not "representative of the people." He further supports his contention by stating that "we are supporting South Vietnamese governments that have been repressive military dictatorships." That is true, but one would be hard pressed to find many nations in Southeast Asia that have not endured such regimes since World War II. To demur at the unrepresentative character of the Diem government is to reason in a circle. After all, isn't the concept of representative government part of that ideal for which we are fighting? Whether indeed we should impress Western democracy upon South Vietnam at all is another question entirely.

The argument, "we are in Vietnam to halt the expansion of world Communism," Dr. Brown calls "simplistic". At least as simplistic is his interpretation of the meaning of that statement, for he spends his efforts shredding the word "world". It is not too much to expect any civilian, even a churchman, to be capable of ascertaining that the important word is "Communism". To deny that Communism has common ideological threads woven into whatever nationalism it enslaves is just plain fatuity.

But Dr. Brown's binary reasoning continues. After lauding Dean Rusk's candor in stating that we are in Vietnam to protect ourselves from China's imperialist ambitions, he immediately concludes that this reason is the only reason and therefore we are immoral in using the Vietnamese as pawns to be sacrificed in the furtherance of our own self-interest. Again he has lost sight of the forest.

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The last argument in Section I is also too simple to be convincing. If we shouldn't have gotten into Vietnam, and this "if" is never demonstrated to be a "since", then we must not compound the error by staying there. No doubt that logic applies adequately to entering the wrong locker room, but is Vietnam as transparent as a locker room? Assuming that we erred to begin with, could not our evacuation of Vietnam in this present situation be a greater error? At the very least, this question deserves thoughtful consideration.

Section 2 of "Why I Oppose Our Policy in Vietnam" presents the absolute tragedy of war, which no one can deny. But again we are caught in the web of Western thinking. The most feared troops in South Vietnam today are the soldiers of South Korea. If these men are on patrol and receive shots from any village, they level all buildings and kill every man, woman, and child found. Brutal, we say...ghastly, immoral! But as their infamy has spread, fewer villages in their path are leveled and it is possible that less people are being killed in the long haul than would be by our "moral" war tactics. But that really is irrelevant. These are Asians dealing with Asians; maybe they know something our pulpit generals don't.

Dr. Brown ends Section 2 with the idea that we will never win the hearts and minds of the people. Three cheers for that! Our primary aim should be for the South Vietnamese government to win their allegiance. Our western culture can survive without the allegiance of the world. We need not endlessly seek fawning admirers of our way of life.

In Section 3, Dr. Brown displays a total lack of knowledge of military concepts. He bemoans napalm above all other weapons and radically condemns those who produce it and use it. He then is horrified because we have not developed weapons that will selectively kill only the soldiers in a group of civilians. What's more, we are told that anti-personnel weapons are not designed to destroy buildings! This brilliant analysis of American ordnance is an unwarranted excursion by Dr. Brown into Wonderland. In the horrible process of war the "guilty" and the innocent always suffer; in a guerilla war the "innocent" pay a higher price. War is basically the business of killing people, unless one can find a building that seeks his demise. And if a man with a doctorate is shocked that war is not conducted against buildings, surely we cannot expect an uneducated weapon to distinguish between soldiers and civilians. Furthermore, what makes napalm uglier than any of the other gruesome weapons of conventional warfare that are designed to obtain the most deaths per dollar? That's war and let us never forget it.
As for the conduct of the war, Dr. Brown implies that President Johnson is not constitutionally the one who is to make the decisions. But according to Article II, Section 3 of our Constitution the President, not Congress, is the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces. Fortunately our founding fathers have the superior wisdom to know that one does not conduct a war by the decisions of a committee. If the issue is the actual declaration of war, that is Congress' problem which, admittedly, it may be evading.

In conclusion, there are two observations that may or may not be an indicator of Dr. Brown's thought patterns. First, it is interesting to notice that nowhere in his article, so far, does he mention the loss of American lives as a tragedy of this war. Is this not something that the war is doing to America? Surely while galloping about on the hobby horses of civil rights and poverty, Dr. Brown cannot pass by our soldiers as just so many mercenaries. Or can he? Second, at least as much as Dr. Brown deserves the right to his title, so too does our President deserve to be called by his title of honor. The exclusive use of "Mr. Johnson" betrays an inexcusable lack of respect for the highest office in our land.

This article has not been written to solve the question of Vietnam but only to warn those who would uncritically accept the facile answers abroad in our land today. If these words have opened some new avenues of thought, be they of opposition or even ridicule, then they will have served well in stimulating the ongoing and agonizing quest for peace and justice in Vietnam.
I WONDER WHAT WE'RE DOING IN VIETNAM...
(to be sung to the tune of "I wonder what the
King is doing tonight?")

by James R. Oraker

Why are we in Vietnam? A good case could be presented
for the psychology of war and its effects on human behavior,
but that is true about the effect of anything on human be­
behavior.

One answer might be that we are there to destroy evil in
order to have a freer society to live in. But evil tradi­
tionally has been impossible to destroy so maybe there are
other issues too. Is it the lesser of two evils that we are
fighting for? Is war part of the paradox that some must die
that others might live? The reason appears to be very com­
plex. Some claim that evil should be destroyed while others
want to restore good. What is the answer?

This battle to kill or restore is not foreign to man.
It begins early in life with an aggressive desire for iden­
tification. Man learns to kill daily in ways so subtle that
society has not been able to organize or legislate against
them. The result is warped values and sick relationships in
people who seek to be known even at the cost of being used.

What do the simple folk do, asks Guinevere to the husband
she has betrayed? But Guinevere fails to realize that the
"simple folk" are busy fighting the same battle on a differ­
ent battleground. The simple folk have their own methods of
satisfying their needs and blocking out the pain of being
used.

Sir Lancelot, eager to respond to crisis, feels the call
brimming in his breast and vows to become the King's 'right
arm'. He is a knight noted for his righteousness and dis­
cipline. His strength and skill are unparalleled as he de­
feats challenge after challenge in the jousting games. How­
ever, when he opens a gaping hole in a man's chest causing
certain death the "games" come to a sudden and silent halt.
Sir Lancelot, in anguish, brings the fallen knight back to
life; his eyes meet the eyes of the Queen for a brief moment
and a new battle begins to rage.

* * * * *

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Psychology. He graduated in 1962 from Seattle Pacific College.
Perhaps there is no simple answer. He are probably in Vietnam for a thousand different reasons each with an answer to the problem and each having several supporters. Why was King Arthur going to battle when the round table was to solve all problems? King Arthur had to abandon his round table due to internal warfare, and resign himself to the tradition of "Knights in battle", playing out the game of life as previously outlined. The victor was decided by might.

The Christian must have more to contribute to man than an assent to world order. As daily failure of our version of the round table is experienced, will the Christian resign himself to physical combat because it represented our strength in the past?

Defense keynotes relationships today: the walls of partition are high and thick between men and between nations. Kierkegaard said this about defense:

"To defend anything is always to discredit it. Let a man have a storehouse full of gold, let him be willing to dispense every ducat to the poor — but let him besides that be stupid enough to begin this benevolent undertaking with a defense in which he advances three reasons to prove that it is justifiable — and people will be almost inclined to doubt whether he is doing any good. But now for Christianity! Yea he who defends it has never believed in it. If he believes, then the enthusiasm of faith is ... not defense, as, it is attack and victory."

(Sickness unto Death p. 218)

Defense of the Church is no more necessary than defense of being. The Church is God's dynamic interaction in history i.e., His unique communication of salvation to the world.

We are in Vietnam because we as a nation have decided to take a stand. Generally the Christian Institution has left its stand on social issues up to individual members who often turn to another organization for direction. Are there channels of communication unique to the Church that apply to the world in conflict? The Church has a recipe for family living and for a personal relationship with God but not much is said about world order. In therapy barriers are broken down between men, subtle games that destroy relationships are revealed and meaning is found in the love of a giving of the self. In war a subtle difference is evident. Man lays down his life on the basis of killing or being killed. This represents the stand our nation has decided to take. Can the
Church add its uniqueness to aid in the solution of the problem or does its silence give assent to traditional methods?

Obviously the war cannot be stopped and everyone on both sides assigned to therapy groups. Obviously all Christians cannot become missionaries. Obviously...obviously...obviously. The obvious is dismissed in favor of dramatic solutions and the Church is stuck with settling value disputes as usual, by force. The gospel must not offend or make the wrong move. King Arthur made a move for what he felt was right and was beaten down by the forces of evil only to become a servant of the status quo. Surely the Church has a more optimistic commission. Incidentally - "I wonder what the King is doing tonight?"

A LENTEN PRAYER

'He set his face resolutely toward Jerusalem'. Lk. 9:51

Heavenly Father,
Love is vulnerable -
this we learn from your Son as he approaches the hostile city, cost what it may;
this we learn from you, as down the repetitive years you make your approach to man, and feel the callous hurt of human pride.

Make us sensitive to your coming, that we may understand that you lay yourself upon to our spite.
Give us to repent, and to live carefully, that we add no more to your grief.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Caryl Micklem, Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship.
ADVENT LITANY

Minister:
Pardon, O God, what is amiss in us, confirm what is
good and order what we shall be:

CONGREGATION: RENEW US BY THY SPIRIT
For the sins that divide us, from all class bitterness
and race hatred, from forgetfulness of Thee and indif-
ference to our fellow man:
FATHER FORGIVE
For hostilities and wars in Thy world, for the untimely
death of the young, for the suffering, grief and sorrow
of the war-torn peoples, for the divided families, the
destroyed homes, the waste lands:
FATHER FORGIVE
For the poverty, hunger and despair which fills our
cities, for the lack of attention to the needy, the
forlorn, the lost in every place:
FATHER FORGIVE
For the separated families, the unhappy children, the
confused adults, for the alcoholics, the morally ill,
for those who lack the courage to follow Thee:
FATHER FORGIVE
We pray Thee that the Church may be as a city set on a
hill and that her light may shine forth in all the dark
places of the world:
WE PRAY THEE, O GOD.
That the Church may be apostolic, knowing that mission
is the very essence of her nature, living in the spirit
of the first apostles and in their faith:
WE PRAY THEE, O GOD.
That thy Church may strive, not for its own safety, but
for the world's salvation, seeking only the Kingdom and
Thy righteousness:
WE BESSECH THEE, GOOD LORD.
That each local congregation may be a center of true
worship, a source of grace, a community of love, a
fellowship of witness, loving concern and service:
WE BESSECH THEE, GOOD LORD.
We thank Thee, O God, for the Church, the Body of Thy
Son, the community of those who believe in Him and com-
mit themselves to Him:
WE PRAISE THEE, WE BLESS THEE, WE MAGNIFY THEE,
O LORD MOST HIGH. Amen.

Church, Pasadena
Dear Sir:

Up to this point I have suspended judgment on American involvement in Vietnam. Being a Canadian, I have felt greater liberty to remain neutral between the "dove" and "hawk" positions (although I believe these labels are unsuitable except to "smear" the other side). As a Christian, I am repulsed by the horror of war as I see men killed in front of cameras to provide a nightly television spectacle. On the other land, the lessons of modern history have convinced me of the threat of Communism, regardless of what form it takes, to the free world in which we live. These considerations have led to my confused and indecisive state concerning the war.

However, recent events and published materials at this Seminary have been pushing me closer and closer to agreement with American policy. This is not because I am convinced by the "hawk" arguments, but because I am violently turned-off by the emotional and essentially dishonest tactics of proponents of the "dove" position.

The editorial position of this publication is so obvious that it hardly needs comment, except to point out that some very basic reasons for the American presence in Vietnam have not been given adequate consideration. However, I would like to use as two cases in point, the showing of the film "Time of the Locust" and the published statement concerning the formation of the "Inquiry Vietnam Committee". These attempts to influence Fuller students towards "justice in Vietnam" exemplify the dishonest approach commonly used to denounce U. S. involvement there.

"Time of the Locust" was such a perverted use of the movie medium and such a bad piece of propaganda that to me it was an insult to the Seminary level of critical thinking. It cannot be denied that enemy soldiers are subjected to cruelty by Americans and their allies. Similarly, we are all aware of how Vietnamese civilians are being victimized by this bloody war. Nor would I attempt to defend this. The thing that so greatly disturbed me in the film was the grossly dishonest neglect of atrocities committed by the Viet Cong.* Furthermore, the highly selective and distorted editing of President Johnson's words amounted, in my view, to the lowest form of propagandizing possible.

The "Anti-Ostrich Committee" sounds like a very worthwhile and potentially profitable venture. I would not want
to pass judgment before it is given a chance to prove itself. However, I am bothered by a few nuances which show through the published Statement of Purpose. Although the statement declares that this committee will be impartial, I cannot help but sense something of the attitude which is so prevalent in the Vietnam discussion: To be "anti-ostrich" is to be "pro-dove". In effect, "if you are a hawk on Vietnam you haven't really seen the light! You are an ostrich!" I sincerely hope that this committee will avoid the above tendency which strikes me as a "holier than thou" type of stance. It will also be interesting to observe who will emerge as the chief spokesmen for this group and which professors will be actively sought for counsel.

In short, my appeal is for the abolition of emotionalism, one-sidedness and dishonesty in the Vietnam discussion on our campus. If the students of this seminary cannot be led by reason and honesty in their thinking, then God help our churches (to say nothing of the world at large.)

As for myself, I am still undecided. For me, the argument against American involvement is no more convincing than the argument for it. I need to know more and joining new committee could be valuable for this purpose. If I were to become a "hawk" on the basis of an emotional reaction against the opinion or "Time of the Locust" I would be just as dishonest as these media. It seems to me, however, that the "doves" would do less harm to their own cause by first becoming "wise as serpents".

Ken Birch

* The Canadian observer in Vietnam for the International Control Commission expressed shock and disbelief in my presence after reviewing newsfilm of the war shown in the U. S. and Canada. His concern was the same as mine is here: the great prominence given to American atrocities when those committed by the Viet Cong were, from his observation, so much more numerous and brutal.