1-1-1969

The Opinion - Vol. 08, No. 03

Fuller Theological Seminary

H. Jeffrey Silliman

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fts-opinion

Recommended Citation
Fuller Theological Seminary and Silliman, H. Jeffrey, "The Opinion - Vol. 08, No. 03" (1969). The Opinion. 119.
https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fts-opinion/119

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by the Fuller Seminary Publications at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Opinion by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.
the opinion


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, Calif. 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.

Editor in chief . . . . . . . H. Jeffrey Silliman
Literary Editor . . . . . . . Belden C. Lane
Consulting Editors. . . . . Robert L. Hubbard
                           Gerald T. Sheppard

Past issues of the opinion are filed in the Reference Room of McAlister Library.
YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A GOD *
by Belden C. Lane

And there were in the same country
shepherds abiding in the field
not a creature was stirring
not even a
mouse

And this shall be a sign unto you
let's put Christ back into Christmas
wrapped in swaddling clothes
dreaming of a white christmas
away in a manger

Happy holidays and for a wonderful new year
a multitude of the heavenly host
praising God and saying
only 17 shopping days
until xmas

So you better watch out, you better not pout
while shepherds watched their flock by night
the special Christmas sale at Macy's
will go into its third
week

The little lord jesus lays down his sweet
seasons greetings and silver bells
God of God, Light of Light, true God
avoid the Christmas
rush

Begotten not made, of one substance with
optimist Christmas trees
glory to God and on earth
a partridge in a pear tree
born of the virgin mary

They shall call his name
here comes Santa Claus
which being interpreted is
five gold rings
tour calling birds
Conceived of the Holy Ghost
two for a dollar seventy nine
in excelsis deo
like a bowlful of jelly

*(He's just very hard to recognize)*

LAWLESS GRACE
by Roger Minassian

"FULLER - THE LOGICAL SEMINARY," so the sign read a few months back. Although a ream could be written on that theme, there's at least one area in which it just isn't so. The matter of grading is one of our most pathetic fallacies. Every student is aware of the pantheon of grading policies adhered to by the faculty. Some professors, to be sure, lay the law down at the beginning and the student knows where the goal is, at least gradewise. Others play the game close to the vest throughout the quarter and issue, at last, what amounts to a papal encyclical. Students in these classes never know where they are or where they are going until it's too late. Then there are those faculty members who have decided that in a graduate school everyone gets at least a "B". Any student in these classes knows exactly where he stands (or is it "sleeps"), short of an untimely demise.

Most recently, I have noticed the professor who divorces himself completely from the grading process, leaving it up to mythical readers. Students in these classes can't help but think that there is something sinful about grades and that the good professor does not want to judge lest he be judged. "And what shall I more say, for the tire would fail me to tell of ____, and of ____, and of ____." The coup de grace to an effective grading process is delivered by the Registrar's Office, delivered about one month late I might add. This last, retarded act shows that grades don't mean too much ... except to your next school, faculty mentor, or first pastorate.

Roger Minassian graduated from U.C.L.A. in 1960 and is presently a Middler at Fuller Theological Seminary.
There are a number of drawbacks to the grade system itself, especially the possibility of a dog-eat-dog atmosphere. However, the lack of grades can have even more disastrous results. Nonetheless, the fact remains that our Administration has not come forth with an acceptable substitute for the grade system. Every student knows that grades are at least some incentive to try a little harder and that, properly used, they can be an indication during the quarter of areas for improvement. As long as entrance into advanced programs at our Seminary and others requires certain minimum grade-point averages and as long as denominations and other Christian agencies consider grades as a measure of the man, our faculty and administration must not ignore their responsibility to make the grading system an adequate measure of student ability and a guide to student achievement.

An effective grading system would leave room for the sanctuary of academic freedom, but it would give no quarter to some of what happens during our quarters. It would not excuse the experienced professor who designs a two-hour exam for a one-hour period. This is not a measure of student ability but rather of student agility. What, pray tell, are we training—ministers for their studies, or pilots for their cockpits? Furthermore, the effective grading system would not smile benignly upon the instructor who engages the students in so many garbled exercises during the quarter that the reader is unable to return half of them before the term is over. Nor would the system embrace he who does not return the midterm before the final, or indeed any exam more than two weeks after its administration. An effective system would not bless the grader who gives low marks with no indication of what was missing or wrong. All of these entrenched Fuller techniques provide the student with no guidance towards improvement or achievement. But our problem would be simplified if all its roots were only in this shallow soil, and not also in the bog of provincial theology.

Theological spectres stalk the office corridors and haunt the administrative houses of our faculty. When a professor sets a due date for term papers two months in advance and then, near the end, slips the due date, the Ghost of Theology Past tells him he has been "gracious". Yielding to the whining of a few, he has graciously hurt all. To those who had been burning the midnight oil to make the deadline, he graciously says, "See, your hard work was wasted. Take thine ease." To the sniveling groundlings, his action graciously commends, "Continue your TV, your ping-pong marathons, and
your sleep. Life has no urgency." Of course, there must be real grace for those who have been ill or have met other emergencies. And for those who have to work too many hours, let them take fewer courses. But the rewarding of indolence is hardly the "one main point" of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16). Probably the parable of the bridegroom and the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1-13) is more apropos to our problem.

What do we do then with grades, grace, and the law? It is not my purpose or my forte to launch out upon a theological treatise on grading. Others are vastly more endowed and equipped for the task. My only suggestion would be that the Administration convene "Faculty I" to discuss these matters. If we expect to be accredited by the same association that accredits our colleges and universities, we must start grading with a purpose as these great institutions do. Let us find that purpose for our academic community and pursue it. Let us rejoice eternally in gradeless grace but be done temporarily with lawless grades. Above all and in all, let us eschew lawless grace.

CONVERSION ETC. (an allegory)

by William L. Goff

During my senior year in college I lived with three other guys in a one-room apartment. We had a large living room so we didn't lack space. What was really bad was our meals. We had little imagination in making up menus and less skill in preparing meals. Hamburgers and spaghetti were our staple foods which we alternated every other night. Once in a while I got desperate and tried a TV dinner. Every morning for breakfast I had two hard boiled eggs and instant coffee. For lunch I had peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Dishes were a drag. Ever since I had to be on KP eighteen straight hours in the Army, I've had a mental block against doing dishes. The constant sloppy mess of oiled-up dirty dishes in the kitchen made it evident to me that my roommates did not have the gift of helps.

All this changed when I came to Fuller. Here I had a rich variety of food and I ate with Christian friends who

William L. Goff is a graduate of U.C.L.A. where he majored in English. He is now a senior at Fuller Theological Seminary in the D.Th.P. program.
shared common interests. Best of all I never had to cook a meal or wash a dish. What relief! What freedom!

Now I often sit in the refectory and complain about the food. What's happened? What does this mean?

PLEASE, LORD!

by Margaret Thornton

Grant me a serene heart, Oh Lord.
Fill it with the quietness of Thy love.
Leave no room for angry thoughts,
Wipe away all bitter tears,
Empty it of self-pity and regret,
And erase the stains of selfishness.
Crowd out all traces of envy,
And hide the signs of possessiveness.
Make it always aware of what is right,
And quick to recognize that which is wrong.
Let it be filled with understanding,
With compassion and the wish to forgive.
Let patience overflow into every corner,
And put kindness always near at hand.
Keep it ever ready to listen
And respond to another's need.
Let it be a source of strength,
Or a well of deep-felt sympathy.
Fill it with joy worth sharing;
Keep it open to all that is good.
Grant me a heart full of love, Lord,
Then teach me to give it away.
"Is the Christian life a process of learning to be less human and more Christ-like?"

When asked this question, the group of Senior High students with whom I was speaking responded with a simple "Yes." The objection by one of their sponsors that "The glory of the Incarnation of Christ was that He was human," was countered with a sadly predictable, "Yes, but He didn't sin."

These students had read between the lines of the theology they had been taught and had there learned that the humanity of Jesus somehow was not very real or did not count very much. Such is the state of the Conservative Church that this discussion was neither rare nor disturbing. Indeed, the Fundamentalist mentality seems to have insisted upon the strange doctrine that to be human is to sin.

I have heard many people - including a preacher from the pulpit - state that the humble Christian ought to say with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The underlying doctrine is that the Christian is supposed to get out of God's way.

Again, I have heard it said, in a hundred testimonies and so-called "gospel" songs, that committing one's life to Christ means the end of such frailties as loneliness. In fact, this same group of students who considered "Christian" and "Human" to be mutually exclusive terms also felt that the Christian should never be lonely because he has Jesus Christ to fulfill his needs.

How long, how long, Beloved Church; will you foist such tragic misconceptions upon one another?

To be human is to sin? I would rather believe the Bible: "Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I

This is the second article in a two-part series.
that do it, but sin which dwells within me." (Romans 7:20). Paul makes it clear in this section that our "inmost selves" are good and pure, but that our "members" are corrupt. The question we must ask is: which of these two extremes is the real me? Romans 6:11 has anticipated this question, because Paul knows that we cannot answer it by looking at our own experience: "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

It is no wonder that the Church's doctrine of man keeps so many psychologists in business, and no wonder that our doctrine of forgiveness ("God puts on blinders, blood colored, so that He cannot see the real you") is so nearly impossible to hear and accept.

To be human is to sin? No, to be human is to be in the image of our Creator, as He has intended us to be and has converted us to be.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." Such a statement is not an expression of humility for the Church. Rather it is an attempt to escape from our responsibility, for we are all of Jesus that our neighbors are likely ever to see. Jesus Christ's ministry is never to replace our ministry as it did John's, for we have no ministry apart from His and He has no ministry apart from ours. It is not Biblically, theologically, or psychologically sound for us to think that the "abundant life" which Jesus promised is simply the constant scramble to get out of His way. Can we so lightly dismiss our Lord's prayer:

As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...I pray/ that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me...  

Jesus Christ has no ministry apart from ours, for His purposes and tasks are not in addition to ours, not other than ours, not in place of ours: the ministry of Jesus Christ is fulfilled through us and through our ministries. How can the Evangelical allow the Church to continue its pretense that Jesus really asks of the Christian man only that he get out of God's way?

"Jesus Christ dispels all loneliness." Does he? In my own heart, in the lives of those around me, in my Bible I find no support for the common doctrine that the Christian
needs no one but Christ Himself. I cannot believe that Christ’s last prayer with those He loved was wasted on trivialities; I cannot help but sense in John 17 the depth and urgency of Christ’s concern that you and I might become one with each other just as He and His Father were one. Nor can I help but value highly the insistence of Paul that you and I are members of one another, so much so that your bellyache hurts me too. How long will the Church teach that each individual is meant to relate only to Jesus Christ and that we really ought to feel no need for one another?

All of these common distortions concern the Christian life, and thus lead to the conclusion that it is this area of theology which most desperately needs renewed study and understanding.

The key to our new understanding will be the destruction of the doctrine of "slip-cover conversion." If we sincerely believe that conversion means becoming so covered with the grace and blood of Jesus Christ that God cannot or will not see the "real me," then we can never hope to come to a positive understanding of what God expects of the converted man.

God says that you and I, my brother in Christ, are dead to sin and alive to Him in Christ Jesus?

Dare we take Him seriously?

FOR PERFECT EVE
by John Piper

A perfect Adam needed Eve;
God knew it and complied.
Indeed, God made young Adam
With perfect need inside.

A perfect Eve met Adam’s need,
And all was well with both
Till Eve and Adam, free,
Embraced an alien oath.

Now fallen Adam needs his Eve.
But with a tainted need
For tainted Eve he longs
So blinded by his greed.
But Christ in man, I’ve learned
From twisted threads can weave
A flawless, primal need
That longs for perfect Eve.

John Piper is a Junior at Fuller Theological Seminary.

**EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR**

**MADERA COUNTY, CA.** - 91 percent of Madera County growers who receive farm subsidies between $5,000 and $133,000 per year oppose a guaranteed annual income of $4,500 for a family of seven, a recent survey shows.

Ninety-four percent oppose providing a minimum of $4,000 to a family of five.

Stanford graduate student Robin Yeamans recently conducted telephone interviews with growers in Madera County, which ranks as the 37th wealthiest agricultural county in the nation.

It has the highest concentration of poor families (29.8 percent) in California, and its infant mortality rate is among the highest (10.1 per 1,000) in the state.

Growers there received $3,008,901 in farm subsidies in 1966.

Here are some comments from growers interviewed in the survey.

"Giving causes loss of pride," said the wife of a Madera County grower who opposed federal welfare assistance to the poor. Her husband received $29,000 in cash from the Feds in 1966.

"The Bible says a man should work," said a grower who opposed federal aid to the poor, but grabbed $18,000 for himself in 1966 farm subsidies.
"I can't understand having things handed to you," said the wife of a grower, but evidently her husband could understand the $16,000 crop subsidy he received in 1966.

"Idleness causes many evils," said a grower who got $8,000 in 1966 from crop subsidy programs but opposes all federal aid to the poor.

The following comments came from growers who received from $7,000 to $27,000 each in farm subsidies in 1966:

"Everybody should have it as hard as I did."

"Anyone healthy shouldn't get more than what they can earn."

"We don't want to create generations of idle people."

Miss Yeaman showed only eight percent of the growers or their wives interviewed recognized a parallel between the federal money they get and the federal aid to the poor they oppose.

A total of $3,281,621,070 was paid to U.S. growers in 1966 by the Federal government. Of the total, $103,881,250 went to California growers. The bulk of this was for not growing cotton.

This article originally appeared in "El Malariado", December 15, 1968, under the title "Subsidized Growers Scorn Welfare" and is presented here as food for thought concerning the grape boycott.
HOW IS SOCIETY CHANGED?
by Thomas A. Wolfe

When we can see pattern we can gain perspective. The following is an attempt to set out the typical answers that have been proffered to the question, how can society be changed? This is accomplished by outlining and illustrating five basic formulations; they are types, motifs. The problem has been an enduring one since man first faced ordered living, and the approaches have remained essentially unchanged in principle, though the particulars, of course, have been altered to fit the cultural context. The method of typology, for all its inadequacies historically, has the advantage of drawing attention to the great motifs which have appeared again and again.

It is encouraging to see that we do not walk this way alone. Several men, from different disciplines, have opted for this method before. Arnold Toynbee, in tracing the decline of numerous civilizations, distinguishes four possible principles of action open to those aware that the culture is corroding. (1) 'Archism' is an attempt to escape from the present intolerable situation by reconstructing an earlier mode of living. Archaising movements, such as Fascist Italy dreaming of the Roman Empire and Nazi Germany glorifying the heroic ages of German saga, attempt to cure present ills by restoration of the past. They generally prove sterile or transmute into their opposite, i.e. violent political reaction. (2) 'Futurism' is revolutionary Utopianism; the attempt to escape the present by a leap into the dreamed of future. It disgustingly scraps all traditional links in sweeping destruction. (3) 'Detachment' is another response which seeks to transfigure the present, not on a terrestrial plane, but via contemplation within the soul. Toynbee argues that some circumstances are so desperate that this detachment is the necessary preliminary to the fourth principle of action. (4) 'Transfiguration' is 'withdrawal according to plan', whereby one withdraws in order to later return, seizing the initiative. Whereas detachment is only withdrawal, transfiguration is withdrawal and return: a palinogenesis, a rebirth in the sense of a new species of society.

C. H. Dodd, in The Bible To-Day, uses Toynbee's analysis approvingly. Charles Ryder Smith, in a thesis approved for the D.D. in the University of London, discusses the 'Bible doctrine of society'. Smith detects a development of the theory of peace, maintaining that "the stages of the Biblical evolution of this quality may readily be distinguished - Peace by Isolation.

Thomas A. Wolfe is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute (1965), received the B.A. with a major in sociology from Baylor University (1967), and is currently in progress towards the M.A. in Christian Missions.
Two contemporary theologians of different bents have also arranged their thinking along these lines. Carl F. H. Henry speaks of "contrasting social strategies" and identifies the strategies of revolution, reformation, revaluation, and regeneration. H. Richard Niebuhr's Christ and Culture stands as the most significant work in this area from a Christian standpoint. Niebuhr finds five Christian options to culture, emphasizing either Christ's opposition to, agreement with, synthesis of, tension with, or transformation of, culture. If "Christ" were deleted, one can easily see how these form much the same pattern of the other arrangements involving man in general, and not just Christians.

By mentioning these men two goals are intended: first, to demonstrate that this is not an asolated approach and that others have labored and we have entered into their labor; and secondly, to indicate possible sources of stimulation, clarification and amplification of what follows. Let it be stressed that these are motifs, models, paradigms. As such they are rational constructs and somewhat artificial. They are not intended, however, to be the final molds into which all the data must be poured. They are not intended to be seen as static, but dynamic; not frozen, but fluid. They are like a verb, capable of yielding several different conjugations or declensions, but also, always evidencing a family resemblance, resting on a definite stem. Or again, these motifs are like the spectrum capable of innumerable shades, hues, and combinations, yet also containing limits to the frequency of purples, yellows, and greens. Men, in answering the question How do you change society?, have always brewed their own remedy, but in so doing, have usually fallen into one of five basic categories. The five recurring answers to social change have been: revolution, renunciation, reconstruction, revaluation, and regeneration.

Revolution is the radical, violent, compulsory change of the existing patterns of living. For revolutionaries, evil is external, usually located in the political and economic structures, and the only viable solution is the immediate (an important item) overthrow and eradication of the present society. Because the existing authorities are so intransigent to the pleas of the oppressed, the only recourse is extensively radical and violently compulsory change. Three groups historically, have taken this route to social change. (1) Slaves of the ancient world have time and again refused to be chattal, the Spartacus incident being the outstanding example. (2) Christians, to the surprise of many, have also made this their means to the good life. The Donatists of North Africa during the fourth century, waged guerilla warfare against the landed Latin clergy. Religious controversy was mixed with racism, cultural differences, and widespread economic misery to evoke the response of the Donatist 'Circumellions'. In the 1530's the Anabaptists
salzed control of Munster and organized their version of the Christian society. (3) But the movement more commonly associated with revolution is the Marxist. Lenin in Russia, 1917; Mao Tse-Tung in China during the 1930's; and, during our own days, the Castros in Cuba and the Cleavers in California.

The merit in the revolutionist perspective is the grasp of the fact that power, coercion, force, is necessary for widespread alterations. But having said this, it must also be said that the house of revolution is erected on a cracked foundation. The glaring fault of revolution, as Arthur Koestler in Darkness at Noon and Milovan Djilas in The New Class make abundantly clear, is: the new emancipators become the new enslavers.

From a Christian perspective, it may be well to note that revolution has always been eventually declared a heresy, though the minority involved viewed itself as the 'remnant'. And if Cadoux, Moffatt, and Cullman are right (as we believe they are) there is direct scriptural condemnation of this motif in 1 Peter 4:15. Thus it would seem that evil is more extensive than at first the revolutionists thought. Even though the old forms are utterly obliterated, evil and corruption continue to cling to the new society.

The other motif of extreme, renunciation, knows that evil is not only or even primarily in the political structures. Instead, it adheres in the entire web of relationships, for evil is social. Therefore, the only way to vital change is by retreat. In the third and fourth centuries men such as Paul of Thebes, Anthony, and Simeon the Stylite set the example for thousands in Egypt and Syria in the retreat into the deserts and hermit life. Cloister life was the pattern of withdrawal in Europe as monasticism developed.*

Today we see those frustrated by the present. On the one hand is the 'hippy' movement which has seen through the hollow constructs of parents who have labored all their lives to climb from rags to riches, and has set its face to move from riches to rags. The hippy reaction is a renunciation of the highly competitive, technical, and material-oriented society of middle-class America. It should be noted that drugs and gurus are not accidental accretions to the movement, but essential elements, for they foster a retreat into nothingness and nirvana where one can escape the surrounding society. Yet even as one admires the resolute dissent of these youths, the words of Confucius, some 25 centuries ago, come to mind: "There are those, teacher and student alike, who bemoan their times as lost.... With long hair unkempt and bodies unwashed, they would lay down the

*As an aside: Medieval monasticism denied the material, and Elton Trueblood accuses logical positivism of being "a kind of modern monasticism", renouncing the immaterial.
philosophy of their times and persuade all others with their constant denigrations and mournful fears. They are sick, and would inflict their sickness on all who ignore or deride them."

But there remains an active as well as a passive renunciation, such as that represented by the reactionary Minutemen, the American Nazi Party, in some cases the John Birch Society, and certainly the recent American Independent Party of George Wallace. We take the last as a case in point. Wallace's slogan was, "Stand Up for America" and he ever drew nostalgic pictures of the 'good old days' before riots, hippies (his passive counter, remember), Communists, and eggheaded intellectuals. Also integral to standing up for America was a tacit "you know what I mean". And anyone familiar with the Deep South knew exactly what he meant. He meant keeping the Merediths out of the University of Alabama and, in the trilogy of his governor's inaugural address of 1963: "Segregation yesterday, segregation today, and segregation forever." It meant, in short, a reinposition of the past, a retreat from the today for a dream of yesterday.

So, renunciation if unmitigated ends in stagnation because it isolates itself from the very society it wishes to change. However, there is one clarion note it sounds which we dare not miss: the note of critical evaluation. Whatever else can be said about renunciationists, it must be conceded that they do not mind being out of step with the tempo of their times. Thus, while an inadequate position, it is a necessary one, because without it others lose their balance in self-complacency and pride. Nevertheless,

we must immediately point out that they never achieved these results alone or directly but only through the mediation of believers who gave a different answer to the fundamental question. Not Tertullian, but Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Ambrose, and Augustine initiated the reformation of Roman culture. Not Benedict, but Francis, Dominic, and Bernard of Clairvaux accomplished the reform of medieval society often credited to Benedict. Not George Fox, but William Penn and John Woolman, changed social institutions in England and America. And in every case, the followers did not so much compromise the teachings of the radicals as follow another inspiration.


3. The Bible Doctrine of Society (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920). Though this work came to our attention too late for detailed consideration, it will be noted that the categories Smith uses could be transposed over the ones adopted in this paper.

4. Ibid., p. 374.


14. See cover article in TIME, October 18, 1968.

15. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, pp. 67f. Niebuhr refers only to Christians, but it does not seem to distort the main point to use it here in a broader meaning.

This is the first half of this discussion by Mr. Wolfe. The second half will appear in the February issue of the opinion.