

EDITORIAL

GUEST EDITORIAL

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In *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide*, a recent best-seller, A. Alvarez speaks as a prophet to man's present dilemma. In stark contrast to the idealism of Charles Reich's *The Greening of America*, Alvarez characterizes our age as one of despair and pessimism, seen especially clearly in the works of contemporary playwrights, poets, and artists. On a recent visit to Chicago I read the movie marquees of a dozen or so downtown theaters. Without exception the films advertised were sordid expressions of violence, representing a recent trend in cinematic production. A new "realism" has also appeared with respect to professionals such as lawyers, physicians, and policemen. The kind, tenderhearted cop of Norman Rockwell's paintings has come to life for us as an often unsure, rather pathetic "new centurion" or "blue knight" (vis-a-vis Joseph Wambaugh) whose badge is the most clear-cut distinction between him and the "slimeballs" he arrests.

As if this is not enough, mass media is shrinking our globe to the size of what Marshall McLuhan calls a "global village". This village is not rural; however, it is what Desmond Morris describes as an urban "human zoo", a place where human potential must fight for meaningful existence. In the western world computers, rapid-transit, and space exploration are mixed freely with concern for the balance of nature, rising costs, and continuing racial tension. Crises arise so rapidly that when the ethical topics for this issue of *The Seminarian* were discussed, Watergate was still an infant and the energy crisis (as far as vast public interest is concerned) was unborn. Yet, this is the world of late twentieth-century man. It is a world of "future shock"! It is also the world to which the Church of Jesus Christ comes with the good news that man's disorder can be replaced with God's order.

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I am of the opinion that the Church cannot afford the luxury of standing aloof from the pain of the world. Wherever persons struggle with moral problems and interpersonal (and international) conflicts the Church is obligated to help them interpret their situations and become ethically responsible. The vast resources of the Church permit it to speak. To fail to speak of life where death reigns is treason to humanity. And because this world is basically a collection of individuals, the gospel can make its impact. As British Methodist Colin Morris has said,

This whole massive structure we call a Church with all its history, theology, worship and witness is a great pyramid on a point. It is meant to be brought to focus upon any one man's need.

It is to this end that this issue of *The Seminarian* has been published.