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Bruce O. Braman

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the opinion



Vol. V, No. 5

THE CHURCH AND THE SECULAR CITY

February, 1966

THE DEATH OF GOD: SYMBOL AND REALITY

by Dr. Carroll J. Wright

Some say that we have come into a post-Christian era involving the secularization of Christianity and the death of God. We hear that the traditional approach of the church no longer has the same effect, and that if Christianity is to survive, the church must speak to man's needs in a new way.

The attempt to respond to such issues involves us immediately in semantics and the realities involved in semantics. Intensive attention has been given in recent years in theology, philosophy and psychology to the relationship between symbol and reality, especially in relation to man's beliefs and problems.

If there is any truly Good News for man in a post-Christian era when God is often felt as dead to the individual, we are going to have to be able to take man's symbolic processes as real and ultimately meaningful, though not always accurate. We must learn something about the reality of the imagination and the symbolic coinage in which man spends his life. We must not continue to tell ourselves that there is mythology and non-mythology; rather it is a question of how true our mythologies are and how accurately they relate to the realities they symbolize.

The Good News refers to realities about God, the world, and man, which are so true that we are allowed a certain flexibility in the symbolic ways that we describe and relate to these realities. For instance, God allowed His people to discover new names for Him, each name being a new symbol of something about his character and reality in the world. I suspect that God is not nearly as religiously limited as we are. He has even been known to tell people that he was tired of their religiosity. His reality is such that he has allowed certain religious forms and enterprises to be destroyed, certain of His prophets to be slain, His only begotten son to be crucified, and His own name to be made dead. We are less certain about reality and sometimes fear that the New will not arise.

The ability to differentiate the changing symbols from the underlying realities is one of the basic problems involved in the present secularization issue. Every man tries, in his own way, to change reality to fit his symbols, rather than allowing his symbols to be changed to fit reality. In the neurotic process, we develop inappropriate beliefs or assumptions (symbols) about ourselves and life, to which we cling with great tenacity for safety and security. In our fear and pride, we try to change reality to fit our inadequate commitments and symbols. It is not

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EDITORIALS

The major focus of community life at Fuller Theological Seminary is the chapel service. It is there that an opportunity for all to gather in one place at one time is afforded. The meaning of this service, however, has been obscured by a lack of definition -- a malady which we share with many Christian institutions of learning. It would be hard indeed to explain the rationale behind the service as it now stands.

We propose that a chapel can have but one primary function, that all other functions must stand or fall on the basis of this principal function, and that there is a dire need for appraisal of our program now.

Anyone acquainted with the outstanding examples of school chapels -- King's College Chapel, Cambridge; the chapels at the United States Air Force Academy; Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, The University of Chicago; etc. -- will quickly admit that they stand to facilitate worship. "Chapel" denotes a place or a service established for worship. And worship is no vague thing -- it is man's performing of "solemn duties of public service to be done unto God." (Hooker). Hooker is incisive in his ordering of worship: "Duties of religion performed by whole societies of men ought to have in them according to our power a sensible excellency, correspondent to the majesty of him whom we worship."

Because chapel is an occasion for worship, it cannot be a mere tool for the recruitment programs of various religious organizations or for periods of "discussion" or "presentation." It must not be ordered in terms of public relations. The basis for worship will be weakened if the chapel is given over to celebrity contests -- with the participants announced each Tuesday.

We need a chapel service that is the product of some hard thought, backed up with equal portions of preparation and decency and order. No mere reading of a lesson and singing of a song or two will suffice. We must begin to ask why we gather; we must begin to draw from the traditions represented in the student body and from these develop an order of worship.

B.O.B.

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There are two approaches to the life of the Church which fall short of a responsible position -- condemnation and celebration. It is in the responsible via media that churchmen must stand and from which they must begin to act. It is through the exercise of freedom and authority that the Church must do what she has always been required to do -- come of age.

This issue of the opinion has been given over to the issue of the Church and its confrontation with the present society. It deals with what the Rev. Louis Evans, Jr. (a member of "the committee of fifteen" responsible for drafting The Confession of 1967 for the United Presbyterian Church) has called the fourth age in the history of the Church. It is in this age that we must define the nature of the Church in relationship to society.

Inevitably, such study elicits disagreement and even strong reaction. But the Church of Jesus Christ ought never to be oriented toward a petty, status quo position; the problems of "secularization" are upon us, they are real, they will not go away. That which is needed is creativity, creativity directed toward an understanding of the present age, the attacking of its problems, and modification of an institution so that it might more effectively participate in the changing cultural setting, ad gloria Dei.

B.O.B. ////

THE DEATH OF GOD: SYMBOL AND REALITY (continued)

appropriate, however, to condemn our symbolic efforts because, although they may be sinful and misdirected, they contain a germ of truth regarding each man's deepest needs. For example, it is not enough to merely condemn one's "temper" or "jealousy" any more than it is to defensively use them, but rather, these symbolic emotional expressions are to be understood to refer to deep frustrations of ultimate needs which the individual has not been able to face and resolve meaningfully.

If we are going to be able to understand the relationship between the symbolic and the real, we will have to penetrate the rationalized and intellectualized approach to faith and to life. The Christian faith is not irrational, but neither is it meant to be contained within the rational. It includes and transcends the rational, which means that we have to come to certain depth levels in our own experiences before we can fully appreciate certain paradoxes and realities of life which Christianity embodies and represents. The Christian faith involves deep emotional, spiritual and ontological realities to which rational concepts and symbolic modes must be flexibly and dynamically related.

Thus I am saying that the Christian faith is both symbol and reality, it is both psychic and transpsychic, it is both changeable and unchangeable. Today we need to remind ourselves that the gospel means good news, because each of us, whether he considers his god to be dead or not, or the church to be relevant or not, is in need of good news about himself and reality. Whether or not one can intellectually grasp and face the realities about himself with which the Christian faith is concerned, those realities remain the same throughout human existence. Though appearing in multiple forms, the human being is always possessed with struggles about his ultimate meaning, personal identity, self-dividedness, alienation, guilt, anxiety, and the need for reconciliation. The Christian faith is precisely concerned with these matters at every level of human life.

When a man has made every effort to save himself from meaninglessness, he often decides there is no good news for him, while hoping at the same time that he is wrong. Since God is often considered, either consciously or unconsciously, to be destructive or indifferent, the individual concocts his own scheme of living and his own method of salvation when this scheme fails him. The real God, hidden by a destructive or indifferent god-image, is largely unknown to the individual, even to some degree after conversion. If one dares to attack the god he knows or to declare him dead, he may be starting to walk down some Damascus Road. Faith for him at this point is to dare to try to be honest and to test his reality against reality itself. Unfortunately, we often fail to hear any meaning in this defiance and the impetus is lost.

The death-of-God-idea is a realistic experience which is perhaps more easily admissible today than in the past. The feeling that God is dead is certainly nothing new in human experience, but perhaps the difference today is that we do not say, "I feel God is dead", but we say, "God is dead" because we cannot believe there is a reality which transcends our symbols of reality.

From a psychological viewpoint, the father figure in our era is too often emotionally dead as a good authority figure ("dead" in the sense of weak, absent, divorced, intellectualized, sick, withdrawn, or deceased) and although the individual tells himself he has "everything: he needs, he is threatened by feelings of being empty and dead inside. Finally one day he says openly what he has hidden from himself, he admits that something is lacking. He may say this in different words, such as, "I have a problem," or, "I'm depressed", or "Life is meaningless", or, "I don't care", or "God is dead".

THE DEATH OF GOD: SYMBOL AND REALITY (continued)

Whatever form this admission may take, whether from a minister or a scientist, from within the church or outside, let us have ears to hear its symbolic message. Our ideas and images of God, of others, and of ourselves, are constantly being challenged by life itself, and by the demands and needs of the human soul. These images contain both truth and error, causing us great anxiety because we have to face the urgent press of our restless spirits to keep growing. In our anxiety we like to make our world secure by making our faith as intellectually pure and certain as possible. When the Spirit blows where it wills, we fear that our images of certainty will crack. Sometimes they do crack, and we learn that they had to crack so new life could emerge. The cracking of our images, which have sometimes become idols, is often experienced as the absence or death of God.

None of us has been able to escape the tendency to distort the reality of God, the world, and our own self. Part of our human predicament is our distortion of the way we symbolize and relate to our world. In certain experiences, our imagination is corrected and our images of life are empowered to correspond to reality as it is. These great moments of faith, conversion and insight are sometimes powerful enough to inspire us to believe and to feel that reality is ultimately good and that we are sons of God. In this kind of experience, we feel that God is alive and that we are alive. //

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GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD

A SERMON

by Bruce O. Braman

In the hands of the merciless quill driver responsible for the book of Proverbs, the poor sluggard becomes a burlesque figure in whose character are mixed equal portions of comedy and tragedy. Out of sheer animal laziness, he has dedicated himself to inertia; he is more than anchored to his bed -- he is screwed down to it!

As a door turns on its hinges

So does a sluggard on his bed. (26.14)

What's more, he is prepared to proffer a good reason for his sloth:

The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!

I shall be slain in the streets! (22.13)

Thus armed with preposterous excuses, our friendly-enough sluggard wards off the prodding of his gentle accuser:

How long will you lie there, o sluggard?

When will you arise from your sleep? (6.9)

And in his self-made security, the sluggard permits opportunity after opportunity to drift by his cosy cottage; and in his 'delicious drowsiness', ignores all outside his bed of down.

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BRUCE O. BRAMAN is a Middler at FTS. He graduated from Monteith College of Wayne State University with a PhB in 1964.

GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD (continued)

In the lesson which has been read, the teacher is prompting the sluggard to go to the ant, to consider the ways of something beneath his contempt, and to get wisdom from something very low on the biological ladder. Who could have a meaningful learning experience with an ant? I propose that just as the sluggard needed to go to the ant, so today does the church of Jesus Christ need to go to the secular world about it and consider its ways and be wise. It is easy to imagine the figurative bed of the Church (complete with hinges) and easier yet to see the fear of the lion outside.

If answers to current problems are being sought and found, it is the 'ants' that are doing the job; and all too often we are under the feather-quilt of our own designing. In the dry seasons of this century, we must drink the water of life where we find it -- the vision of truth may come from an obscure prophet, from an unthought of place. Let us go to the ants -- a prospect immanently better than going to the dogs!

We can find one voice crying in the wilderness today. He has the long hair of a prophet, a rasping voice, the garments which are not meant to be worn in Jerusalem! He has grappled with life in its complexity, and has come out with a song, a rather sad song to be sure. Bob-Dylan may come from an Eastern ant-hill called Greenwich Village, but he does come as a prophet, as one understanding his own day and one who has a message for the people of that day. Is he worth considering? Is he more than something beneath our contempt? Yes!! For he has the ability to create what the writer Ralph Gleason calls "Poetic images that clearly pose the moral dilemmas of our society." He is a poet standing at the watershed of the present. But that is not all -- for there is a profusion of dilemma detectors at present! He goes beyond the poet and becomes the true prophet preparing the way. An inadequate prophet, perhaps, but he is able to clobber the human conscience with everything Scriptures reveal of love, justice, and freedom. He manages to get behind sentimentality and deliver his message with thoroughness, honesty, and real bite. O go to the ant!

In one of his songs, after having a vision of a world where society had failed to preserve itself -- a world of dead oceans, crooked highways, and sad forests, a world with "guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children," he continues the parent-son dialogue.

What did you hear my blue eyed son?

What did you hear my darling young one?

I heard the roar of a thunder -- it roared out a warning.

I heard the roar of a wave -- that could drown the whole world.

Heard a hundred drummers whose hands were a-blazing.

Heard ten thousand whisp'ring and nobody list'ning.

Heard the song of a poet that died in the gutter.

Heard the song of a clown that cried in the alley.

Heard the sound of one person who cried he was human.

And it's hard, hard, hard, hard-it's a hard rain's a gonna fall.

Well, what'll you do now my blue eyed son?

What will you do now, my darling young one?

I'm goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a fallin'.

I'll walk to the depths of the deepest dark forest.

Where the people are many and their hands are all empty.

Where the pellets of poison are flooding my waters.

Where the home in the valley meets the dark dirty prison.

Where the executioner's face is always well hidden.

Where hunger is ugly; where souls are forgotten.

Where a black is the color and a none is the number.

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GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD (continued)

I'll see it, and tell it, and think it, and read it.

And reflect from the mountain so all souls can see it.

And I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinking.

And I'll know my song well before I start singing.

And it's a hard, hard, hard, hard-it's a hard rain's a gonna fall.

He had been to the wilderness, wrestled with God, and emerged with a vision clearly prophetic. He had a vision -- not necessarily mystical -- but with the forboding of immanent or impending disaster.

Unlike the sluggard, still safely bolted in his blissful bungalow, the prophet has sworn: 'I'm goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a fallin'.' The prophet is like the ant in vs. 8:

she prepared her food in summer,

and gathers her sustenance in harvest.

He is in preparation for a future season which will culminate in a crisis where the difference between the wheat and chaff will be determined by the measure of perception of and provision for the course of the future. Like the ant, the prophet permitted his actions to be determined by the demands of the future. And yet, as we all know, the prophet was unlike the ant in that he was able to gather insights into the course of events. His wisdom was deeper than the wisdom of the ant which was dependent upon instinct.

And so it is that in many fields of social endeavor, the Church finds itself in the humiliating position of being quite some way behind the progress of the 'ants' of the day: in urban sociology, the crossroads between society and scientific discovery, education, and all of those factors which Harvey Cox subsumes under the term secularization, the process whereby we are brought into the present, rinsed of religious anachronisms which ought to have fallen by the way much sooner. If we are behind, there is no cause for shame provided we do not take the role of the sluggard; it is rather a reason to take a Biblical assertion seriously: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." or to repeat with the Psalmist:

. . . the meek shall possess the land,

and delight themselves in abundant prosperity. (Ps. 37.11)

But the rewards of the meek are not for the one who insists on being a sluggard. The meek shall inherit the earth, but of the sluggard the teacher says:

A little sleep, a little slumber,

a little folding of the hands to rest,

and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond,

and want like an armed man (6.10-11)

It is, indeed, through meekness that we the Church can possess the land. Through the willingness to go to the 'ant', to consider her ways and be wise, through this humility is the Church going to begin to repossess her place within the present society. Thus it is praiseworthy that here at Fuller there is a school of psychology alongside the schools of divinity and world mission. But there should also be a school of urban sociology, of communications theory, of the arts, etc., all going up to make a modern counterpart to that laudable image provided by John Henry Newman a century ago.

O go to the ant. Consider her ways and be wise.

In his concern over this need for the Church to meet its responsibilities for the future, Harvey Cox has a chapter in his book, The Secular City, entitled "the Church as God's Avant-garde." In this chapter, Cox develops a 3-fold function for the Church. The Church is Kerugmatic; Diakonic; and Koinoniac.

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GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD (continued)

The first responsibility, Kerugmatic, is the task of proclamation. Because of the Christ, because of the Good News which we celebrate, man has been given the opportunity to become a son of God. As a son, he has been called to participate in and proclaim the new order of things. Christ put it this way in Luke 4: 18,19:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and
recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Cox's second function is the Diakonic function, the healing and union of fractures within society. The Greek word diakona, from which we derive the word deacon, means the act of healing or of reconciliation. But heal what in our society? Cox lists 4 problem areas:

- (1) center-city v. suburbs
- (2) haves v. have-nots
- (3) ethnic and racial tensions
- (4) competition between political parties.

The point he makes with regard to the meeting of these problems is the one that is being made this morning in the phrase "go to the ant." There is no specifically Christian response or solution to these societal fractures. The Church must keep itself abreast of the attempts to meet these problems and enter creatively into the attempt to meet them.

This leads to the third point, the Church's Koinoniac function: the making visible of the community which demonstrates what it has been saying. If this is to be done, all of the elements of the heterogeneous metropolis must be drawn into the Church. Then the Church will be demonstrating that which it is saying in its kerugma, and pointing to in its diaconate. The Church will be providing tangible, visual solutions to racial disharmony, to the plight of the lower class, to the many demands of the highly complex 'technopolis.'

And the times clearly indicate that the time is ripe for the Church to push toward this now, or forever give up its right to exist within the community of man. The crisis is every bit as crucial as the crisis which the medieval church met over its role in the feudal economy. The murmurings which we are receiving from behavioral and pure sciences indicate that we are on the threshold of bold new patterns of life, the forms of which are merely hinted at in such books as The Brave New World. To read C.S. Lewis' novel The Great Divorce about the conflict between redeemed society and the demonic forces behind N.I.C.E., (The National Institute for Co-ordinating Experiments) is to catch a glimpse of the possible problems that are to arise. Man's ability to probe into the atom, breaking it down into smaller and smaller component parts, his ability to understand and control hereditary biochemistry, his ability to create an unfathomable storehouse of knowledge electronically, are all indications of the societal crises which lie ahead of us. We hear ever more frequently that if the public only knew what was going on behind the doors of research there would be mass outrage and social revolution. The voice of the redeemed community will be needed; you, as ministers of the gospel, will be embroiled in the battle with the demonic forces of the day, that is unless the Church chooses to stay under its feather down, unless it determines to bar itself from the lion that stalks outside. -- in which case, one can only repeat the proverb of the teacher:

Go to the ant, O sluggard:
consider her ways and be wise.

GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD (continued)

Without having any chief,
officer or ruler,
she prepares her food in summer,
and gathers her sustenance in harvest.
How long will you lie there, O sluggard?
When will you arise from your sleep?
A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond,
and want like an armed man.

The question is How Long ?
When ?

The answer belongs to each one of us.

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Harvey Cox, The Secular City,
Secularization and Urbanization
in Theological Perspective, New York,
Macmillan, 1965. 276pp.

The usual response to the technological drift of our society seems to be one of dismay, bordering at times on panic. Valued traditions and ways of living are seen to be crumbling as the implications of an increasingly urbanized society work themselves out. The Secular City is a book aimed at snapping us out of our daydreams of nostalgia and forcing us to think responsibly about the inevitable direction in which society is moving.

Society, according to Cox, has known three stages. The initial stage was tribal culture, which eventually gave way to town culture, which in its turn is disappearing in the wake of technopolis. Although each succeeding stage bears traces of the previous culture, it develops its own identity which entails characteristic ways of living, thinking and feeling.

The most marked feature of technopolis is secularization. Cox defines this as "the loosening of the world from religious and quasi-religious understanding of itself, the dispelling of all closed world-views, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols." It is "the discovery by man that he has been left with the world on his hands, that he can no longer blame fortune or the furies for what he does with it" (p.2). It is to be distinguished from secularism, which is itself a kind of closed world-view (pp.20-21). In short, it is the world of Bonhoeffer's "man come of age".

Up to this point, Cox's analysis is in many ways rather conventional. The difference comes when he begins to express his attitude toward this process.

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REQUIEM

by William H. Walker

O God of ages past
And questionmark in years to come,
At last we see thee
Through our secular-shrouded senses
To be not what we had learned or feared thee to be
But rather what we had suspected thee to be:
That many imaged "Being"
Whose apparel has changed throughout the ages
With each rise of the curtain
And each change of scene.

Finally - we too can see thee
From our couches of luxury
And our atoms of invention,
From the ranks of new moralities
And our vanguards of neuroses.

Stripped of thine ancient mask,
Thou smilest upon our frenetic and devious strivings
And bathe our whims in the righteousness we desire
That we might live out fine conclusions in contemporary existenz.

Ah, Peace finally reigns where our "id" was distraught,
For although repressed, it now may express
Through this re-Vision of Thee.
Ah, wondrous insight!
That it should interrupt our three score and ten
When many before have not been so advantaged.

Now we may live and let live!
Our idealism aborted
By the realism of our well-enough-
Managed universe.

"Out" is the old spectre of Christianity!

"In" is the new creation of our desires . . .
Fashioned after the likeness of the twentieth century
By "we the people" who are also most excellent craftsmen.

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MEDITATION

by Richard A. Bower

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
James 1:17

From Thy hand, O Lord, do we receive everything! Thou stretchest out Thy powerful hand and takest the wise in their foolishness. Thou openest it, Thy gentle hand, and satisfiest whatever lives with blessing. And even if it seems that Thine arm is shortened, then do Thou increase our faith and our confidence, so that we may hold Thee fast. And if it sometimes seems that Thou dost withdraw Thine hand from us, oh, then we know that it is only so because Thou dost close it, that Thou dost close it only in order to conceal the more abundant blessing within it, that Thou dost close it in order again to open it and satisfy everything which lives with Thy blessing.

S. Kierkegaard

Could we have misunderstood
(in our haste to understand)?
Settling for the inanely conceived,
the trivial comfort of tensionless life;
Suspecting our honest doubts,
hiding or denying the sorrow which alone is real;
Seeking healing without the cure,
labor without effort.
Could we have misunderstood
(not caring to understand)?
More concerned to act than to know --
frantically acting that we might hide from knowing;
Not knowing the beaten weariness
of struggles without resolve;
Not knowing the dregs of despair
which bring courage of faith, the balm of hope.
Not receiving all that comes from His hand --
not daring to understand.
Could we have misunderstood --
the Hand that opens, closes too.
O blessed closing, that keeps us from the temporal rest
which leads us from eternal consolation.

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HARVEY COX, THE SECULAR CITY (continued)

Rather than despairing about the prospects of the Christian faith in a thoroughly secular society, he sees the movement of our society as being the outworking of ideas inherent in the Biblical view of reality. (p.21) Such prominent Biblical themes as the Creation, the Exodus and the Sinai Covenant are taken to illustrate "secularization" in the ancient world. The Creation story proclaimed the "disenchantment of nature". The magical world of primitive man is opposed with the declaration that God has created nature and is separate from it; therefore nothing in nature can claim the devotion which is due to God alone. The Exodus account proclaimed the "desacrilization of politics". The whole idea of the divine right of kings is challenged. "The Exodus had made it forever impossible to accept without reservation the sanctions of any monarch. Yahweh could always stage a new Exodus, or work through history to bring down a monarch with delusions of grandeur" (p.26). And the Sinai Covenant proclaims the "deconsecration of values". Making of "graven images" is forbidden because God cannot be reduplicated by man. Man's perceptions of God are always limited and are conditioned by his culture. Therefore, one must be willing to accept the relativity of one's own understanding and be suspicious of any claim of absoluteness.

The remainder of the book is spent in surveying a breathtaking number of subjects in terms of the process of secularization. Such topics as anonymity, mobility, "the secular style", social change, work and play, sex, and the changing role of the Church are analysed and possible new directions suggested.

I feel that The Secular City is pervaded with optimism. Typical is the statement that ". . . secularization is not the Messiah.. But neither is it the anti-Christ. It is rather a dangerous liberation; it raises the stakes, making it possible for man to increase the range of his freedom and responsibility and thus deepen his maturation. At the same time it poses risks of a larger order than those it displaces. But the promise exceeds the peril, or at least makes it worth taking the risk." (p.167) Man, in technopolis, is being loosed from the bondage of tradition, labor, and place. He is being freed for leisure, mobility and the establishment of his own ideals. It is up to the Church, Cox believes, to proclaim and to illustrate the potentialities of this liberation and to keep it from slipping into a new form of slavery.

These are but a few of the lines of thought developed in the book. Many Evangelicals will no doubt disagree with Cox's understanding of the Christian faith and how it ought to be expressed (especially, perhaps, his chapter on "To Speak in a Secular Fashion of God"), but the issues raised should not be ignored. The Secular City talks about things we have no choice but to think about, because it talks about us and about our world. And because it talks about these with forcefulness and great insight it deserves to be read widely and thoughtfully. / / / /

Charles Twombly

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the last issue of the opinion, Mr. Ron Ohlson expressed his concern for social justice with us in an article entitled "The Ones Who Really Care." The spirit of concern which he expressed is shared by many of us here at Fuller. This letter is written not to say that Mr. Ohlson's concern is wrong, for indeed it is not, but rather to state that his knowledge of the amount of involvement by students and faculty here at Fuller is quite inadequate.

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CHARLES TWOMBLY is a student in the S.T.B. program at FTS. He received his BA in literature from Westmont College in 1964.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR (continued)

Let's begin with a survey of involvement which took place during the last and continued during the present school years. Two Fuller men went to Selma to join that historic march. Three Fuller men worked in inner city ministries during the summer. Two men fresh out of Fuller worked with the Delta ministry in the deep south during the past summer. One was attacked and beaten. Some members of the student body and faculty are bona fide members of active civil rights organizations. Some have worked in the Friendly Visitor program here in Pasadena. One student wife is now recovering from injuries suffered while driving to her remedial reading class in Watts. Two other Fuller men are engaged in a similar program there. Students here worked actively for a NO only vote as well as helping to register Democratic voters in the last election. Some of our students have engaged in demonstrations in Los Angeles, others here in Pasadena. Many of our students and faculty took part in a demonstration last year supporting the civil rights movement. One student was severely wounded while expressing Christian love to a cold and wet Negro man. Other students are working in Negro and Oriental churches. This list is not all inclusive but I hope it will help point out that many Fuller people in various ways are very much involved in expressing their concern for the whole man.

I feel quite certain that Ron did not intend to express what sounded like an echo of the social gospel. We cannot afford to go this route again but need to emphasize a ministry to the whole man. There are many of us who want all these physical improvements that Ron desires but we cannot work for these physical improvements alone. It may sound old-fashioned but ultimately the most important emphasis must still be the reconciliation of man to God, "What if a man should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Fortunately it is not an either/or proposition. Let us then work together within the framework of a balanced Biblical theology, preaching the good news to the whole man in all states of society.

I would also suggest that we need to develop a strategy for bringing about social justice. If a power structure needs to be changed there is a better chance of accomplishing this from within than without. Perhaps a few hundred men preaching the whole gospel can ultimately bring about more far reaching changes than a demonstration. Certainly both have their place.

Ron we need your concern, we share your urgency but seminary students must give critical analysis of what they should do while in seminary. It is too easy to "sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate."

Roy Brewer
1964-65 Chairman Social
Action Committee

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