10-1987

TIPS, Volume 07, No. 3 & 4, 1987

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We fell so far behind this fall that we had to make this our second double issue of the year, and selected our usual December themes which revolve mainly around the homeless and imprisoned, peace and nonpeace, the interface of human service with religion and seasonal news.

Imprisonment

*Some of the southern states lock up more people in prison than the Soviet Union or South Africa, which have the highest national prison populations. Overall, the US is reportedly third (Augustus, 1986, 3/12). Prison crowding has become so bad that tent cities are springing up everywhere as prisons in the south (Augustus, 1986, No. 9).

*Ships of fools. Since the prison population has been skyrocketing, and prison space has been so crowded, authorities have been scheming to put prisoners into all sorts of places, including the modern equivalent of ships of fools. The US government has actually offered to help out the state of Texas by putting prisoners onto off-shore oil platforms (Time, 10/8/87). About 1987, a former ferry boat between Manhattan and Staten Island was converted into a prison and moored in the East River off Manhattan (Time, 10/8/87).

*In Pennsylvania, there are county prisons, and we were told that the one in Carlisle is keeping Cuban prisoners (who were dumped by Castro out of his own prisons) under contract with the US federal government, thus making money.

*In the face of overcrowded prisons and increasing imprisonment, it has been proposed that fines for certain crimes should be pegged to the income of offenders: the higher the income, the higher the fee. The proceeds from this scheme should then be used to build new prisons (source clipping from John Morris).

*Around 1990, the state of California will spend as much money on prisons as on education (Augustus, 1986, No. 9).

*Of all people in local jails, 90% are waiting trial and would be released if they had as little as $500 to make bail, as those with enough bail money do. Of all jail inmates, 80% are housed in cells which do not meet minimum space standards of 60 square feet, i.e., about the size of two regular mattresses (Augustus, 9/87).
*There is a pattern of findings that people who are for some reason released prematurely from prison have a lower recidivism rate than those who either serve their full sentence or are released under the normal parole process (Augustus, 9(10)).

*The Corrections Corporation of America, a for-profit entrepreneurial private prison enterprise, was chartered in January of 1983 by the founder of Hospital Corporation of America (Augustus, 1986, 9(12)). Some of the leading politicians in the state of Tennessee have held stock in the corporation, including the governor's wife and the House speaker, at the same time as the corporation tried to gain the prison business in Tennessee.

*As we predicted, the private prison bubble is already beginning to burst. One privately operated prison in Pennsylvania went bankrupt when a judge ordered it to return 55 prisoners that it imported from out of state in order to keep it solvent. (CSM, 27/7/87; source item from Peter King)

*A service for children and adolescents who had offended against the law was actually a community jail to which such children would be sentenced for 6-18 months. The program was run on an exceedingly tight disciplinary routine. The children had to earn points for every single activity, and could not go anywhere—not even from room to room or from one floor to another—without informing the staff of their intent and requesting their permission. The children could lose points for such things as sulking, scowling, grumbling, or disagreeing with anyone. This certainly epitomizes Foucault's insight that the contemporary penal system is intent on controlling people's minds rather than inflicting vengeance upon their bodies. One of the people who visited the service described this atmosphere of total control as being the intellectual equivalent of the electric cattle prod in controlling and shaping people's behavior.

*Many "women's centers" have sprung up since the rise of feminism in the mid-1970s. But the Wyoming Women's Center is a state prison for women (NASMHPD Studies, 11/85).

*Sexual activity is forbidden in New York City jails, but jail officials nonetheless hand out condoms to inmates on request, and prisoners who are being released—whether they request it or not (SHJ, 15/4/87).

*Anyone who gets locked up in the federal prison in Loretto, Pennsylvania, can be consoled by the fact that it once used to be a Franciscan seminary, though the cells which were designed for single monks now house two involuntary prisoners apiece. Even the name of the town was taken from one of Europe's most famous pilgrimage shrines.

*One might have expected the US federal prison system to be better than the state prison system, and in some respects, it is in that there is probably less abuse by staff and fellow prisoners, but in other respects, it is worse. After all, it invented the practice of shifting prisoners about relentlessly from one prison to the other which has since been copied by many state prison systems. Also, in a federal system that is so incredibly bureaucratic and that tracks everything else with merciless precision (as exemplified by the tax collecting), one is amazed to discover that when one sends a letter to a federal prisoner and the prisoner has been moved, one's mail is returned with a laconic note "not at this address," instead of being forwarded to the prisoner. We see this as more than an oversight or slip-up, namely as an evil, consistent with the federal prison system's efforts to cut prisoners off from outside contacts and support systems.

*According to US News & World Report (27/7/87), the federal penitentiary at Marion, IL, is perhaps the only large penal institution in the US where the staff are really in control. The facility houses 360 men deemed to be the meanest, most dangerous and most unmanageable felons in both the state and federal prison systems. Prisoners are kept in their cells 23 hours a day, there are no programs to speak of, no contact visits, and no large-group church services. Some of the meanest of the mean are even more severely restricted. Amnesty International believes that the prison violates United Nations standards for treatment of prisoners. Oddly enough, some of the prisoners perceive themselves to be so out of control that they actually feel more secure in this type of environment. (Source item from Deborah Reidy.)
We ran across the following commentary on correction personnel. "...Plainfield has turned out more hard-core criminals than honest citizens. That's because of the type of person who seeks employment in prisons. Some are frustrated policemen who couldn't qualify for the police force. Others are without the ambition or skills to maintain a job in a competitive trade. Believe it or not, a great many of them are there to obtain an outlet for their own perversion. Confinement and punishment are necessary in the present society, but having sadistic, perverted assholes working in an institution that is supposed to rehabilitate is the biggest bunch of bullshit going. You can't expect to straighten out an offender's life when the people in charge of him have worse hang-ups than he does."

This quotation comes from Charles Manson who has spent the better part of his life in detention of one kind or another, including for some murders committed by members of a quasi-cult of which he was the guru (Augustus, 4/87).

A Syracuse area woman claimed that a family reunion coordinator with the state's Department of Corrections forced her to have sex with him in order to keep her right to have conjugal visits with her husband who was incarcerated in the state prison (SHJ, 16/9/85).

In New York State prisons, vast amounts of food are permitted to be thrown away by prisoners. For instance, at Attica, inmates are allowed to take as much as a whole loaf of bread per meal and then throw most of it away, which is probably one of the prisoners' ways of striking out at society. In this fashion, 80 pounds of bread might be thrown away in a single day. On the other hand, the guards in the prisons of the state are apparently pilfering food on a large scale. In two prisons, 400,000 more meals were requisitioned than were needed. At nine prisons alone, almost $4,000,000 worth of food was pilfered or wasted in an 18-month period.

Apparently, the staff of four of the prisons in the New York City area have been systematically plundering the stock of the prison commissaries, and have also stolen over $10,000 belonging to inmates (Augustus, 9/87).

According to Joan Andrews, currently serving a 5-year prison sentence in Florida, prisoners said by prison psychiatrists to be disturbed are sometimes strapped naked on a mattress-less cot for weeks at a time which, if true, would constitute a form of torture comparable to what is going on in some totalitarian or Third World countries today (Interim, Summer 87).

A scene phenomenally similar to that of Christ in the Praetorium (often depicted by artists) occurred in 7/87 when a convicted murderer was delivered to a New York State prison. He was received at the gate by guards telling him they had been waiting for him, brought into a room, set in a chair, and then his head was shaved as a group of guards encircled him, taunting him with their large batons, threatening to beat him if he did not obey rules and follow orders. They also told him that "Tonight you are going to become a woman." One deputy said that he was looking forward to the prisoner having sex with the other inmates, getting AIDS, and dying a "slow horrible death." Members of the correctional system explained that "they do that to most dangerous prisoners brought there." (Syracuse Herald Journal, 12/7/87)

A British outlaw by the name of MacKenzie wrote a book (1955), entitled Fugitive, which is part of his autobiography as a frequent guest of British prisons. One of the observations that he made was that when he was put on parole, he was referred to the Central After Care Association, but noted that "the one thing it does not provide is after care. The association is at pains to inform you that it had not funds to provide financial help nor can it find jobs...In practice, I report by writing my name and address on a slip of paper...Back comes a mimeographed letter signed with an undecipherable signature. It says that the writer is pleased to hear that I continue to do well and looks forward to hearing again from me next month....This association, as far as I can see, is nothing but an address-collecting agency for the police" (p. 203).
*When young adults are imprisoned, 69% are rearrested for new crimes in the 6 years after they are released. This figure does not include those who commit crimes who are not caught (AP, in SHJ, 25/5/87).

*There is both good news and bad news from the prison scene in Quebec. The bad news is that 6 of the smallest prisons in the province are being closed down, which would inevitably lead to fewer but larger prisons. The good news is that in many of the provincial prisons, staff are being oriented to be kindly, respectful and helpful to prisoners and increase their contact with them. This is believed to lead to much greater self-esteem in both parties, more job satisfaction for guards and more habilitation for prisoners. (Source clipping from Doug Mouncey.)

*A 1985 Cornell University doctoral dissertation found that when people tried to visit inmates of various New York State prisons, "visitors are treated in a way that is foreign and offensive to most American adults. They are expected to wait intolerably in uncomfortable, noisy, crowded environments for the opportunity to spend a few hours in the prisoner's company. The visit itself takes place in congested visiting rooms. Though nearly everything in this strange world of the prison is offensive to the outsider, one learns that this is the price one has to pay for associating with a convicted criminal" (Thursday's Obligation, Autumn 1986). A point to note here is that not merely prisoners are thusly ill treated, for which one might muster some understanding, but visitors to prisoners are treated almost as badly as the prisoners themselves. With his own eyes, the TIPS editor has seen some of this treatment, and found it truly of a deathmaking nature for visitors. Very aged women might be left standing long periods outdoors in freezing rain waiting to be processed, or in winds with a windchill factor of -40. For some visitors, it can be a bit as if the death penalty had been applied to them instead of to their loved one, and of course, all of this is not merely meant to be part of the punishment of the inmate but also an effort to separate the inmate from all outside supports and contacts--something far beyond any punishment contained in, or even intended by, the offender's court sentence itself. It is part of the prison system run amok, much like the Internal Revenue Service in the US has developed its own independent political kingdom--a state within a state beyond virtually any law or meaningful oversight.

*The prison blues--grays and greens. In Nazi concentration camps, different kinds of prisoners had to wear distinctive badges, designating things such as whether they were common, political, or sexual offenders, Jews, etc. In a Denver county jail, homosexual prisoners have to wear gray, prisoners awaiting trial on felony charges wear green, and blue if accused of misdemeanors (Institutions, Etc. 9/85). Oddly enough, officials of the National Institute of Corrections of the federal National Institute of Corrections said that they had never heard of a similar policy.

This reminds us of a poem published in Lewis (1917):

When first he saw the zebra
The donkey wagged his tail,
"My goodness!" cried the donkey.
"That mule has been in jail."

*The Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities commissioned an artist to beautify the Colorado State Penitentiary in Canon City with sculpture. What the prison, the prisoners and the public got was the following: a fountain where what looks like the head of a drowned man barely sticks above the water surface, which in turn is fed by a crouching gargoyles that appears to be vomiting (water) into the pool; heads being stuck on pike-like poles along a wall, as in Medieval days; and a pregnant dancer. While artists may give all sorts of good reasons for these things, we suspect that what we have here is the same sort of thing we see all the time, even in supposedly attitudinal change campaigns, namely, artists unconsciously expressing negative stereotypes and attitudes, and thereby enlarging them. In this case, we are probably seeing devaluation of and contempt for prisoners, and their menace-imaging.
An interesting way of integrating prisoners with members of the public took place at a 4-day retreat conducted in May 1987 by Jean Vanier in Nigeria. The retreat was conducted at a local prison, but was open to the public, and 400 people entered the prison the first day to participate in the retreat together with 200 of the 1000 prisoners. Each day, more members of the public joined, until there were 1500 on the last day. (Source item from Carol Berrigan.)

Beating Institutions Into Prison Shares

The following state institutions are slated for conversion into prisons: at least parts of Lakeland Village (for the retarded) in Washington State (according to Tom O'Brien); the Fairfield Hill Hospital (in Conn.); and the Southbury Training School for the retarded (in Conn.) is being considered as a maximum security prison, possibly while retarded people still also live there.

Crime & Punishment

*In 1987, the US government invited illegal resident aliens in the US to apply for amnesty. Three hundred such aliens waited as long as three days outside the Houston Immigration and Naturalization Service office—and then were told that they would not be let in because there was not enough staff. Not surprisingly, the result was a small riot (AP, in SHJ, 19/8/87). This sounds to us a bit like the wound of afflicting the already afflicted.

*The TIPS editor's distant cousin, the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, was a peculiarly paranoid man. He had Dorothy Day investigated, as he did almost everybody else. Day was the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement in the US in the 1930s, and since her death in 1980 has been suggested as a candidate for canonization. Hoover was told that in her writings, she referred to the "counsels of perfection," which of course was a reference to Christ's call to non-violence and voluntary poverty. However, Hoover thought that she was referring to some "council of perfection," and thought that it might be some subversive antidraft organization using the Catholic Worker movement as a Communist front, and he had FBI agents spend many futile months trying to identify this council so that they would be able to infiltrate it. In time, Day's FBI dossier amounted to 600 pages. (Fidelity, 5/87)

*The human lust for fame is so great that a large number of people with little prospect of attaining same are willing to confess to all sorts of crimes that they did not commit in order to gain publicity. In the 16th century, an inquisitor, De L'Ancre, had several lunatics burned at the stake because they supposedly had killed and eaten children. He promptly found himself swamped by people who insisted that they were also child murderers and cannibals. De L'Ancre had as many of them burned as quickly as he could, but was finally forced to give up in despair. As evidence for the genuineness of the confessions that they extracted by torture, the inquisitors pointed out that few prisoners later retracted their confessions (Mannix, 1964).

Similarly, during a 1629 craze of witchcraft persecutions in the German city of Würzburg, the inquisitors were besieged by scores of people confessing to all sorts of bizarre crimes. One prostitute was burned when she claimed that she could summon the devil by shouting "King! King!" Half the little boys in the community started running about shouting "King!" Three of them were burned, but ever more children started running about shouting the forbidden word (Mannix, 1964). One of the many things that all this illustrates is that the urge to imitation is so strong among humans that it will override even the likelihood that this imitation will incur the most gruesome pain and death.
One thing to contemplate is how readily so called SWAT teams are sent onto a real or perceived crime scene, how blood-thirstily such teams proceed, and how approvingly they are ogled by the public. Swatters have been so socialized into a killing mind set and operating routine that they have to be restrained from going into their reflexive killing act, and quite obviously they often deliberately kill where they could have actually managed to disable a threatening individual. Indeed, from the perspective of a lot of people, such killings solve a lot of problems, considering what happens in the courts, prisons, and on the mental health scene where offenders might end up if they survive a swatting.

The very term, SWAT, is well-chosen from an imperial perspective. One swats vermin (flies, etc.) to death, not people. Ergo, the very arrival of a team called SWAT signals to everyone (swatters and public) that a vermin is to be contained, and that not much harm is done if the vermin is killed.

Making the punishment finally fit the crime. A Los Angeles neurosurgeon who was a slum lord and had failed to make health and fire safety corrections after numerous notifications was finally sentenced to two months of incarceration; one in prison, and one in an apartment in one of his own housing projects. (Time, 1/7/85)

A Quebec French liberationist who blew up mailboxes has been in prison for over 20 years, while fellow radicals who participated in terrorist killings have been let out of prison years ago. This underlines again that in our North American culture, crimes against property are commonly punished more severely than crimes against human life.

In 1985, California passed the "Defenseless Victim Sentencing Act," which requires that two years be added to the sentence of a person convicted of a violent crime if that crime was directed against a person under 14, over 64, blind or handicapped. (MM, 12/85)

In European countries, the homicide rates are all very close to about 1 a year per 100,000 people compared to the US rate of about 9. However, the incarceration rates differ dramatically from about 27 per 100,000 in the Netherlands to a high of 94 in West Germany, and about 240 in the US, at least as of a few years ago.

A man in the greater Syracuse area stabbed another man to death and was sentenced to prison. Thereupon, he and his family filed a suit for a million dollars, charging the police department for not doing enough to prevent him from committing the murder (SHJ, 23/6/86).

More than one of every three young men in California was arrested at least once between 1974-1985 (Augustus, 6/87).

As females gain greater equality, their crime rates are going up, gradually closing the gap with male crime. For instance, between 1970-1984, larceny arrests of females increased about 650% in New York State (AP in SHJ, 8/1/86).

Criminal activity by youths peaks at age 17, and then falls off dramatically to 50% of the peak rate by age 23. However, a very small proportion of youths enter a compulsive crime career, and those who are assaultive are also much less likely to give up their life of crime. While the average robber commits "only" 4 robberies a year, 5% of robbers commit between 180-400 robberies a year. Daily heroin users commit an average of 1 robbery every 2 weeks, and 52% of all felonies are committed by multiple drug users. Looked at the other way around, about 65% of felons tested in New York City and Washington, DC, were found to be on drugs (Science, 26/6/86).

Elizabeth Carmichael, upon reading in TIPS that middle-class people were unconcerned about Mafia members living amongst them, noted that research had shown that people are not bothered very much by "organized crime," but are distressed mostly about "disorganized crime." This suggests that street muggers and their ilk should get themselves organized in order to gain societal approval. She also thought that all those nice and normal Mafia members in our neighborhoods should be called neighbor-hoods.
Judicial Killing

*Eighty-six percent of Americans support the death penalty, and half want it instituted for crimes in addition to murder (AP, 12/1/87). In Canada, support for the death penalty is almost equally high, 80%, but Parliament has resisted its reinstitution.

*Opponents of the death penalty often note that it is unfairly applied more to devalued minority members than to people in the valued classes. However, they fail to tell us what Erdahl (1986, p. 117) reports, namely that while 40% of all homicides are committed by women, only 1% of death row inmates are women. Thus, it appears that the death penalty is also a form of discrimination against males.

*For thousands of years, and in almost all cultures, it was considered to be wrong to put insane persons to death, or to put persons to death while they were insane. Our civilized society is moving away from this taboo, and more and more, one finds among those executed for capital crimes people who formerly would have been spared because of their mental states.

*One ghoulish fact about capital punishment in the US is that in many states, including those where there has been no execution for over 20 years, regular rehearsals of such executions are held, in some states several times a year. Obviously, the empire does not want people to get out of the habit of killing others with little compunction, and the rehearsals maintain the mental readiness of a corps of potential executioners. Unlike formerly, when torture and executions were "honest," today every effort is made to minimize contact between executioner and victim so as to objectify the process and minimize its scruples. In many states, executioners do not even see their victims, or perhaps see them only completely covered up and only for a few seconds. (AW, 28/6/86)

*The executioner for the state of Louisiana is a master electrician. He pushes the buttons that electrocute the condemned without seeing them, and sometimes without even knowing who they are. Whether they are guilty or not is indifferent to him. He gets about $400 per execution, but claims to give it to charity, most of it to an orphanage. (San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, 28/6/87; source item from Sandra Meucci.)

An interesting point to consider if the executioner by electrocution must be a master electrician is: must the executioner by drugs be a master chemist or master pharmacist? And must the executioner by hanging be a master engineer, the one by shooting a master ballistographer, and the one by garotting (strangulation used in Spain) a master respiratory therapist?

Forensics

*At a 6/6/85 hearing before a US congressional Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, the chief juvenile probation officer of Dallas County, TX, testified that juvenile offenders are often better off in a juvenile detention facility (i.e., a juvenile jail) than in a psychiatric facility. Juvenile detention centers have strict standards as to what they can and cannot do, while psychiatric facilities have much more latitude and access to invade the person's body and restrain his/her behavior. Even in states with highly developed mental health codes, psychiatric staff have far more scope and intensity of power than personnel in criminal or juvenile justice facilities. The probation officer cited the case of one youngster who was a well-oriented model inmate in a juvenile facility who, upon transfer to a psychiatric one, was automatically put on drugs which precipitated a depression for which additional drugs were administered. Thus, the therapeutic setting actually made him fall apart, while the detentive one gave him the type of structure he needed. (Source item from David Schwartz)
**Maybe crazy but not stupid.** A California man threw acid in the face of a 4-year old girl, damaging her severely. He later claimed that Satan had told him to do so. In court, he at first offered an insanity defense, but then changed his mind, over the objection of his own attorney withdrew the insanity plea, and accepted a 13-year prison sentence. He said he did so because he concluded that otherwise, he would be confined even longer in a mental institution (UPI, 17/8/86).

*A 41-year old man in San Antonio was charged with robbing a dentist's office. He claimed that only 2 of his 11 personalities committed the crime, and a shrink testified that he believed that; whereupon a court found him incompetent to stand trial (UPI, 7/85).

*Though it is hard to believe, when a man confessed to a murder in Colorado, he was warned at least three times of his right to remain silent, but insisted that he was told by an inner voice that he had to confess his crime. The Colorado Supreme Court ruled that these confessions were not admissible because they were involuntary manifestations of mental disease and only uttered because of the compelling command of his internal voices. The case has since gone before the US Supreme Court (source item from David Schwartz).

### Homelessness & Abject Poverty

*While we are aware of the increase in homelessness in North America, it seems to be on the increase world-wide, in both more and less developed nations. There are a reported 12,000 homeless in Melbourne, Australia. Worldwide, an estimated 100 million people have no shelter at all, and 50,000 people, mostly children, die every 24 hours from conditions associated with inadequate shelter.

*According to Common Cause (3 & 4/87), the federal agency that has suffered some of the biggest slashes under the Reagan administration is Housing and Urban Development and its programs. Accordingly, homelessness could become much worse than virtually anybody at this time would believe. However, we believe that the answer is not necessarily giving more money to HUD with its history of insane and destructive policies.

*Some people believe that in a single year, the number of homeless people in many US cities has increased by 25%. In Chicago, an increase of almost 100% is believed to be taking place. (US News & World Report, 9/9/87; source item from Deborah Reid)

*Vast throngs of people are being displaced into a peculiar borderland close to homelessness, consisting of residences in garages, toolsheds, former chicken coops and even automobiles. In Los Angeles county alone, it is estimated that 200,000 people, mostly the Hispanic working poor, are living in garages (Time, 22/6/87). One type of habitation on the margins of homelessness are all sorts of decrepit houseboats, floating platforms and a miscellany of discarded and generally unseaworthy small ships and crafts and in which people live, sometimes in shacks. In San Francisco, people have lived in such floating shacks for 100 years, and currently there are about 100 such vessels anchored in pretty much the same area. Apparently because their presence depresses the real estate value on a nearby shore, the empire now wants to scuttle this flotilla, which would force many of their residents onto the streets. (San Francisco Chronicle, 29/6/87; source item from Sandra Meucci.)

*The American Institute of Architects has come up with a shelter design based on mobile trailers, similar to the kinds of instant trailer prisons which have appeared on the market in recent years. This design is to be tried out for a year in San Francisco by the St. Anthony's Foundation. Officials like the idea because it is so cheap, costing about $2 to shelter a person overnight versus the $10 the city pays to put homeless people up in a flea joint. Trailer shelters can be easily and quickly installed in empty lots. It is interesting that such facilities do not have to meet building codes because they are not permanent residences, and in fact are obviously not meant to provide permanent housing. The assumption is that whoever is homeless now shouldn't begin to dream about
being provided with a permanent place in this fashion. Also, toilet and washing facilities are sparse, apparently on the assumption that homeless people use the toilets less often and don't want to wash anyway. (San Francisco Chronicle, 20/7/87; source item from Sandra Meucci.)

*A CA architect has designed a small 8x4x4 ft. box out of plywood that contains a foam mattress, a clothing locker, a shelf and coat hangers, that has a window and an entry port that can be closed. This oversized bird house is designed to be set up almost anywhere for homeless people, and costs $800. One was set up in a parking lot and another one under an overpass, and were soon occupied. The inventor considers this an improvement over welfare agencies putting homeless people into "squalid hotels" at great cost. (AP, 4/87; source item from Sandy Bufis)

*We ran across the following street people joke. The homeless person is being interrogated by a police officer: "And what is your address?" When told, "I have none," he turned to a second homeless person, "And what is your address?" "I am his neighbor."

*Promise them anything but give them shrinkery. The US Congress earmarked $35 million in 1987 to provide mental health services to homeless people. What this means is that instead of providing homeless people with places to live, money will go to shrinkers to inflict additional craziness on the poor, and largely defenseless, homeless. Of course, the shrink occupations will end up with the money, and whatever else the homeless may get out of it, it probably will not be a place to live. It would probably also be too much to ask that the shrinks convert the mentally disordered homeless into sane homeless people.

Shrinkery is also trying to make big bucks out of the AIDS scare, and get millions appropriated for mental health services for people with AIDS. We will then have yet another remarkable spectacle: people without a friend in the world getting paid shrinkery.

*Time (2/2/87) ran yet another story on homeless people. It told about the homeless man who said that "I'm getting to the point where I can't talk to people. They are always telling me to do something or get out of their way. But a dog is different." This gave the TIPS editor a brilliant idea for a decisive new breakthrough program to solve the problems of homeless people. Obviously, what they need are dogs. Special dog schools could be started to train "companion dogs for the homeless (CDH)." The dogs could be trained to become totally impervious to the bad smell of their owners, and to growl at anyone who tries to wake up a homeless person trying to grab a little shut eye on a heating grate in the streets, or to "roll" the person for whatever small change or bottle of liquor they might have on them. The dogs should be bred to have thick furs since they will have to spend most of their time outdoors, sometimes in bitter cold weather. They could also be trained to emit heartbreaking whines when affluent-looking passers-by traverse the vicinity, and perhaps to hold a tin cup or a hat in their teeth so as to spare their masters the embarrassment of panhandling. Obviously, armies of people would be needed to breed and train these dogs, and to properly match them to prospective owners. A professional specialty may have to be created skilled in matching the psychologies of specific dogs with specific homeless people. Doctorate degrees should most certainly be awarded to study the dimensions of this problem on their highest levels, and to staff university chairs to teach relevant professionals on the lower echelons.

*The Ministerial Association in Worthington, Minnesota, has launched a most peculiar arrangement for traveling homeless men to receive overnight hospitality in a prison, also providing a prison meal ticket for such "guests" (Kindred Voices, 8/86; source item from Ann O'Connor).

*In Syracuse, the lobby of the "Public Safety Building" (a combination of police station and prison) has been used as a night shelter for homeless people. By shelter, we mean people come in and just sleep on the floor. We understand that there is considerable consternation that murderers, burglars and arsonists who are being brought in to be booked or jailed have to be put through the unpleasant experience of having to step over the sleeping bodies.
We mentioned in 2/85 that T-shirts and sweat shirts have been coming on the market with pictures of street women/bag ladies, but selling among the fashionable set for between $12-25, even though one of the homeless women thusly depicted has since died as the result of her homelessness. The latest version of this type of merciless mockery of the poor is a bag lady doll that has been selling like hotcakes in exclusive Boston stores for between $50-400. The producers of the doll have donated a paltry $100 to a shelter for homeless women in order to salve their conscience, and have promised to give the shelter 5% of its gross sales in New England (New York Times, 19/4/87). Furthermore, in the same shopping complex which houses the Oneida Stainless Factory Outlet in upstate New York, there is a gift shop tastelessly named "The Bag Lady."

Yet another cynical exploitation of street people, in addition to the one commented on in our 12/86 issue, is that there are now street people dolls out. Their producers hope to sell a million, at $250 each. We should not be fooled by their promise to donate 10% of the proceeds to feed homeless people (Des Moines Register, 9/12/86; source item from John Morris).

To our surprise, we discovered that there was a newsletter called the Homeless Times, subtitled "A Voice For the Homeless Community," published out of Portland, Oregon. The issue we saw (supplied by Ann O' Connor) had a hefty 16 pages. We bet it is read mostly by people who are not homeless, not to mention the fact that an ad in the newsletter advertised "king and queen of the hobos" T-shirts for $10 each.

Science discovers homelessness hard on children. Apparently, being homeless is very hard on the development and intelligence of homeless children. A study found that 47% of homeless "preschoolers" were slow in physical, emotional or language development (Newsweek, 12/1/87).

*It is very amusing to read learned people claiming in the world's foremost science periodical, Science (27/2/87), that in order to solve the problems of homelessness, a great deal of vigorous scientific research must be done.

*A homeless man in France found an abandoned baby and saved her. In response, he was showered with gifts of over $1000--which he made available for the baby's care, and he issued a public appeal for the mother to come forward and reclaim the child. (AP, 1/87; source item from Joe Osburn)

The Tramp Who's Gone Home

by W. S. Gilbert

Close the door--across the river he has gone!
With an abscess on his liver he has gone!
Many years of rainy seasons,
And malaria's countless treasons
Are among the many reasons why he's gone!

Bind the wasted jaws up lightly--he has gone!
Close the sunken eyelids tightly--he has gone!
Chinese gin from Bottle Alley
Could not give him strength to rally--
Lone to wander in Death Valley--he has gone!

In his best clothes we've arrayed him--he has gone!
In a wooden box we've laid him--he has gone!
Bogus Hennessy and sherry
With his system both made merry:
Very hard he fought them--very! Yet he's gone!
Down the hill we tramp once more; friends, he has gone!
Once again we've seen all o'er; friends, he has gone!
Let us hope we may endure, or
At least our taste be surer--
Let us pray the liquor's purer where he's gone!

A Reflection on Poverty and Valuable Garbage in a Brain-Washed Consumptionist Society

In recent years, we have become aware that a fair number (though still only a tiny percentage) of poor people rummage through dumpsters and other places of discard and deposit in order to salvage cans and bottles which they can return for a deposit of 5c, at least in those states where such a deposit has been legislated. However, we also noted that the very same people will sometimes completely ignore the most precious finds that one can make in the garbage of our affluent and oversated hedonistic society. It is not uncommon for people to almost literally walk out of their dwellings and simply put everything on the curb, including furniture and the clothes in their closets, and yet nobody will as much as bend over to pick up what is to be had for free and for the taking. For instance, one might find heaps of the finest, most expensive clothing, and even when it is bitter cold, one might find sturdy high-quality winter clothing or boots. One can of course find all kinds of food which has in no way been contaminated by being placed in the garbage; in fact, unopened canned food and still-sealed jars or bottles may be found, but are almost universally disdained. It is not exaggerating very much to say that one could go on a certain street where poor people live, and where several residents might be willing to commit a burglary in order to steal a fur coat--but if one put the same fur coat on top of a pile of garbage in the same street, that it might still be there three days later when the garbage is collected.

Of course, there are many among the poor who disdain anything garbage-imaged as a matter of pride, even though the item itself is not in truth genuine garbage. In other words, it has not deteriorated, has not lost its function, has not lost its beauty, and perhaps has only lost its "value" because in our society, we produce more than we can absorb, and consequently go to great lengths to assure that products are destroyed or junked as quickly as possible.

We have also experienced instances where we picked something valuable out of the garbage, and upon being seen carrying it away, being asked by a poor person if they could have it. It is almost as if the item had lost its garbage identity, and regained its functional identity upon being seen "touched" and/or valued by a person who is perceived to be of higher status.

There are many lessons in all this, only some of which may be apparent to us. (a) When people pick bottles and cans, it is almost as good as picking money as far as they are concerned, and they have been so socialized by our materialistic society that they value money more than the goods it buys. Thus, they would value 20 cans or bottles that will yield them a dollar's worth of cash more than a $20 sweater which they might buy later from the money redeemed from the cans and bottles. Thus, money has become its own end, as idols are wont to do. It has also acquired a universal reinforcing capacity that is vastly higher than its market value. To venture a very crude guess, the dollar in cash might very well be worth 30 or more dollars in merchandise to the poor. (b) The poor have been perhaps even more thoroughly brain-washed by the media than the affluent in the values of a hedonistic short-sighted materialistic exploitative culture. Things are made to be either used up or junked; there is very little value in preservation and conservation--certainly much less than in even the more affluent culture. And relatedly, once something has somehow been "branded" as junk and garbage, it has usually left the mindset of the poor as having any value unless, of course, it can be converted most directly into cash. And of course, as we said above, even only a small minority of the poor go that far.

One result of all of this has been that we often find ourselves in a position of salvaging clothing from the garbage either in a poor neighborhood, or certainly a neighborhood visible to the poor, making sure that it is clean (if need be by washing or dry-cleaning it), making sure that it needs no repairs (making repairs if needed, a common need being the replacement of a single button), and then returning the items to some needy
person—perhaps in the very neighborhood where the item was first retrieved, with the recipient being overjoyed at the gift—and never making a connection between the gift and what was freely or nearly freely available to that person in the first place.

**Oppression**

*Despite a very healthy increase in productivity, American laborers are receiving about 4% less (in constant dollars) average pay than in 1980. This underlines the continuing shift in remunerating the unproductive sectors of society and oppressing the productive workers. In essence, the basic goods are being taken away from those who produce them and given to those who don't.*

*One out of every 5 US farmers is either poor or deeply in debt (Newsweek, 22/9/86).*

*The perversity of our post-primary production economy was illustrated by a joke about a farmer who calls his three sons to his deathbed. He bequeaths to the oldest all the income from governmental subsidies, price supports, special allowances, money for not planting, etc. To the second, he leaves the money the army agreed to pay for damages which its vehicles inflicted to his land during military maneuvers. And he tells the youngest that unfortunately, all that he can leave him is the farm itself.*

*In 1958, the Federal government forcibly took 960 acres from a farm in Montana for missile emplacements, paying its owners $31 an acre. After the missiles were phased out, the land was sold back to the ranch for $42 an acre in 1971. However, the land was rendered almost useless because it is covered with concrete structures so massive that nothing can budge them, because they were meant to withstand nuclear explosions. This illustrates how commitments to death spread death around repeatedly in multiple forms (Life, 12/86).*

*Even as production and consumption of basic raw materials, such as metals, have gone up, the prices received by their primary producers, such as the native Indian miners in Bolivia, have actually gone down. It is outrageous to consider that the metals that make our technological world a possibility are mined under the most unsafe and most unsanitary conditions by people who cannot even manage to make a living at it.*

*At one time, torture was used primarily in order to extract either information or confessions from people, but this is hardly true any longer. The bulk of torture being practiced today by all sorts of governments around the world is not in the least bit concerned with either of these two aims. Instead, it has to do with an idolatry of the regime, with two major forms or subgoals. (a) One is to terrorize other parties or the population in general. In that case, there is nothing that the tortured person can do to have the torture stop, since it is all conducted so as to become known in the relevant population, strike terror into the hearts of people, and thereby bring them into subjugation to the regime. (b) The second one is to seek the spiritual destruction of the tortured person so as to bring him/her to abject surrender to the power behind the torturer—usually Caesar.*

*We should note that torture is being practiced today by every kind of regime, ranging from the far left to the far right, plus those in the middle, and that it is the idolatrous kind that is almost exclusively practiced. That much for the inevitable progress of mankind and the innate goodness of the human.*

*A most extraordinary and long-observed phenomenon across the whole world, for which the experts have as yet come up with rather unsatisfactory explanations, is that there is an inverse relationship between affluence and fecundity: poor people tend to have many more children than the affluent. Since the poor of society have always been held in lower esteem and often been considered outright inferior, this has led to an almost universal fear on the part of the more affluent classes that the poor will "outbreed" them, and thus eventually displace them. This fear becomes particularly acute when the class differences are also accompanied by ethnic or racial differences. A common
response of the privileged classes is to add yet further oppression so as to bring down the birthrate of the poor. This is exactly the story told in Exodus 1, where the Egyptians tried to kill all the male infants of their Hebrew slaves.

During the eugenic period, it was universally believed that the retarded and other dependent classes were rapidly outbreeding the genetically healthier and more productive ones. The Russians today are said to be very fearful that their southern Islamic population, which is largely of different stock from that of the Russian one, will rapidly outbreed them. In Europe, there is now a fear that the "guest laborers" imported only a few decades ago from southern Europe to perform menial labor are rapidly multiplying while the indigenous population has a birth rate that does not even equal the replacement rate.

In the United States today, when one goes to a local social service department such as might be run by a county, one may discover to one's amazement that the Welfare department also runs a "family planning clinic." The obvious message is that if you are receiving welfare, you are probably reproducing at a higher rate than we would want you to, and we are going to do everything we can to reduce your fecundity.

The experts have advanced all sorts of explanations as to why the poor should be so fecund, such as that the poor are ignorant and do not know how to limit their families, that they have cruder sexual habits and less inhibition, that there are fewer social controls that might inhibit entry into sexual behavior at an early age, etc. All of these may have some truth to them, but seem to fall short in explaining the phenomenon. Maybe despite their higher rates of disease and death, the poor are closer to life and more generous in giving life than the affluent.

War & Peace

*Around 1900, many military leaders became convinced that the invention of the machine gun would serve as an effective deterrent to future wars because surely, civilized nations would not engage in military conflicts against such destructive powers; and even if they did, the weapon would be humane in killing quickly, and battles would be over so quickly that wars would not last long. (Invention & Technology, Spring 87, p. 3)

*During 1986, supposedly a year of relative peace, 96 countries had border conflicts, 41 engaged in military hostilities, and 36 were actually involved in some kind of war. The international weapons trade amounted to $900 billion. (Source clipping from Dr. Aharoni.)

*When the US frigate Stark was hit by two missiles, both the missiles and the fighter plane that fired them had been bought by Iraq from France. Yet France has an interest in keeping the oil lanes open in the Arabian Gulf.

*Canadians may be surprised to learn that uranium export, at least in part for the production of nuclear weapons, ranks 4th among its exports (The Anglican, 10/86; source item from Doug Mouncey).

*The world is spending $1.7 million per minute on armaments.

*In case the US president dies or is disabled, there is a very precise order of succession. It is frightening to contemplate that 14th and 15th in line are the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and the Secretary of Transportation. They would have the authority to launch nuclear weapons or a nuclear war. However, authority to launch nuclear weapons must not be confused with capacity to do so. While at present, this authority is extremely limited and specified in hierarchial fashion, as a practical matter, a vast number of people apparently have the capacity to launch some kind of nuclear device (Time, 20/4/87).
We mentioned before that a good portion of the US budget that goes toward war is hidden away, and is thus much higher than the federal budget reveals. Further evidence along these lines is that the air defense for the eastern half of the northern border has been shifted from the US Air Force to the Air National Guard—which is substantially funded out of state funds, and which thus relieves defense monies to be applied toward Star Wars (SHA, 18/1/87).

The US and Russia have a habit of clustering their nuclear missiles into so-called missile fields which may contain up to a thousand missile silos apiece. Some experts believe that each side has targeted two missiles at each of the other side's missile silos. This means that a single silo field may be subjected to as many as 2,000 nuclear warheads. Readers are invited to imagine observing 2,000 nuclear explosions, even from a distance, which must seem like an eternity (Science, 25/1/85).

The US Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a report in 1987 on "nuclear attack planning," to be used for civil defense plans, and to be sent to all state emergency planning bodies. Revealingly, the plan failed to anticipate any effects of nuclear attack on agriculture, trade or social institutions, even though the scientific community had been sketching a likely nuclear winter scenario for 5 years. (Science, 12/6/87)

We remind readers that empires regularly pretend that they are omniscient and omnipotent, and make no allowance for the possibility that they might come to an end. This is as true for human service empires as any others, keeping further in mind that an empire does not have to be very big to be imperial in nature.

Those who study and remember their history may recall what the battle of Verdun was about that was fought in World War I for a period of several years, most heavily in 1916. The fortress of Verdun was of great strategic significance, and so the Germans tried to capture it relatively early in the war, and the French decided to defend it at all costs. When it became apparent to the Germans that capture was extremely unlikely, the German high command departed from its usual strategy and decided to continue to besiege the fortress not because of any realistic prospects of capturing it, but in order to apply a "blood sump" onto France, i.e., to have it invest so much of its material and personnel resources to the defense of the fortress that it would not be able to launch an offensive elsewhere, and perhaps not even be able to be in a good defensive position on other parts of the front.

There are a great many people who view Star Wars as the American attempt to attach something like an economic blood sump onto Russia. It has been calculated by the experts that by merely threatening to develop a halfway functional Star Wars System, the Soviets would be forced to undertake a counter-research and development program which would totally exhaust their economic potential, thus draining the Soviets of the capacity for other initiatives. In other words, in these calculations, the issue is not whether Star Wars can work, but whether it can seduce the Russians into an irrational program—which seems to be largely working. Of course, one big danger is that once the Russians realize that they are losing their initiative options, they may become highly motivated to launch a first strike surprise nuclear war in order to forestall being economically swamped (e.g., Science, 28/11/86).

To some people who have placed their highest faith in technology, the world today has become one of video display terminals and computers; this is their reality. It is also in this kind of "reality" that terms such as "weapons of life" may be invented to refer to war weapons.

The end is near: this may be the last TIPS issue. For decades, there has been speculation among leading thinkers that once unstable or poverty-ridden countries acquire nuclear weapons, or when such weapons are acquired by irrational despots, that nuclear war will become inevitable. Everyone also predicted that nuclear weapons were bound to come into such hands sooner or later. Whether today is sooner or later may be disputable, but not the fact that the first part of this scenario is now in place. As Newsweek
(27/7/87) put it: "Pakistan is only the turn of a screw away from assembling its first nuclear bomb." India has already had nuclear devices, and her own stability seems to be going down-hill. We thus now have 2 countries that are intensely at odds, neither of them particularly rational or stable, and a nuclear exchange between them should not in the least surprise us. In turn, this could set off a yet larger conflict.

An Idolatrous Profession of Faith

John M. LaForge

We believe in one God The Pentagon, the Almighty, destroyer of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, the Bomb
the only son of the Pentagon,
continually begotten of the Pentagon,
Bomb from Bomb, Flash from Flash, True war from True war, profitable, not sane, one in being with the Pentagon.
For us and for our cremation the Bomb came down from heaven;
by the power of the multi-nationals
the Bomb was born of fear and became death.

For our sake the Bomb was exploded over Hiroshima
where people still suffer, die and are buried.
On the third day it was exploded again in fulfillment of a war game;
its mushroom cloud ascended into heaven
and its fallout is seated at the right hand of all people.

The Bomb will come again in gore
to vaporize the living and the dead
and its devastation will have no end.

We believe in the threat of the Bomb, the taker of life,
which proceeds from the Pentagon and its contractors.
With the Pentagon and its generals the Bomb is worshipped and glorified.
It has spoken through the Joint Chiefs.

We believe in one Holy anti-soviet and apocalyptic foreign policy.
We acknowledge multiple pre-emptive strikes for the forgiveness of socialism.
We look for the resurrection of the Right,
and the death of the world as we know it.

Boom.

The Rent-A-Womb Business

*One amazing thing is that there has been a dramatic upswing in support for so-called surrogate motherhood, which reached 63% in late 1986. Some people foresee a much greater demand for surrogate mothers than women willing to serve, even at $25,000 fees--at the same time as we are throwing away babies by the millions every year. One bizarre aspect about contemporary surrogate motherhood is that about a third of these women have either themselves had an abortion, or given up a baby for adoption earlier in life. The link between the surrogate practice and deathmaking becomes also clearer when one considers that in many of these agreements, the surrogate mother promises to undergo amniocentesis and abortion if it appears that the child may be handicapped.

A Jewish ethicist said that surrogate motherhood has similarities with slavery. Formerly, one bought the person, and now one buys, so to speak, a person's organs (Time, 19/1/86). Particularly when a woman is inseminated by another woman's husband, the transaction resembles the buying of a child, which, after all, is indeed not very far removed from slavery, even if the slave (child) is well treated--which many slaves in former times were also.
A human donor egg program was started at a Cleveland clinic in 7/87. During its first month, 500 women offered to donate their eggs to childless couples (York Daily Record, 25/8/87; source item from Elizabeth Carmichael).

Items Relevant to the Season

The alienation of people of our day from realities of time is certainly exemplified during the Christmas holidays which, as almost any observer of the society has noted, are being extended earlier and earlier into the year. Thus, Christmas decorations often spring up as early as September, and the advertising on television for Christmas purchases—especially that directed towards children—begins at least that early as well. A relatively new expression of this development was a mail brochure that we received at the beginning of November (from a Christian publishing house yet) which announced in bold print on its cover "last-minute Christmas gift ideas."

One Humane Society advertisement ca. 1980 pictured a pitiful-looking dog with a narrative that explained that poor dogs like this "can't have a Christmas" unless people donated money.

Yet another human service Christmas song. We have published a human service Christmas song before. Here is yet another, by Susan Thomas, to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." It is meant to express what we call lack of model coherency that is so common in human services.

On the first day of the fiscal year,
My director gave to me
A building that was e-e-empty
Two diagnoses
Three Rebus kits
Four social workers
Five IPPs
Six sets of keys
Seven state vouchers
Eight mixed-up clients
Nine dance therapists a-leaping
Ten behavior modification programs
Eleven new directives
Twelve tranquilizers

The Interface of Human Service and Religion

Various groups in Israel keep announcing the imminent arrival of the Messiah, sometimes specifying the precise day and the route by which he will come into Jerusalem. Further, people claiming to be the Messiah pop up all the time, sometimes three at once. Most of these messiahs come from various American Christian sects. One citizen of Jerusalem commented that with that many false messiahs coming to Jerusalem, one is in great danger of treating the real one, should he come, as either a false one or a mad man. (Source clipping from Dr. Aharoni)

From Signs of Reconciliation (1986-87), we have adapted the following paraphrase of the so-called beatitudes.

I was hungry and you said apply for foodstamps.
I was homeless and you said there is a shelter somewhere downtown.
I was lonely and you said get a Sony Walkman.
I was naked and you said a local church sometimes runs a clothes hand-out.
I was penniless and you said the Bible says the poor are always with us.
I was sick and you said apply for Medicaid.
I was imprisoned and you promised to pray for my parole.
I was illiterate and you said apply for a library card.
I was dying and you said my quality of life would have been bad anyway.
Modern so-called ethicists are poking fun at the story and image of the Good Samaritan. They would instead analyze a situation in terms such as the risks and costs of involvement, and just what one owes the person in distress. For instance, one will find this view expressed in Spheres of Justice by Walzer (1983) who says, "the limit on risks and costs in these cases is sharply drawn," and "I need not take the injured stranger into my home." The amazing thing is that this type of modern selfishness is presented as high moral philosophy, showing yet once again how the intellectuals will legitimize what it is that society has decided to be and do.

Discover (8/87) was amused by the fact that while Christ preached "resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," the American Psychiatric Association has said that one would have to be insane to do that, especially if one did it habitually, and has a diagnosis for this insanity, called "self-defeating personality disorder," formerly called masochism.

In a 1986 Gallup poll, more people (63%) expressed confidence in the military than in organized religion (57%), which is a decline of 9% since 1985. (NCR, 9/1/87)

The editor of the revised Churches of Christ Hymnal said that hymns such as "Bringing in the Sheaves" are no longer "applicable in our mostly urban society," because of their "bucolic imagery," and people no longer know what sheaves are. Perhaps we should anticipate songs such as "Bringing in the Groceries," or "Bringing in the Big Macs" (Newsweek, 29/12/86).

The Syracuse University basketball team almost won the National championship in 1987. At one of its last games of the season, a very earnest local Christian said something to the effect that if Christ were on earth and in Syracuse today, he would surely go to the stadium to attend one of the games of the local team, because it is such a joyous uniting community event.

It is a sad sign of our times that Argus Communications, a Christian religious publishing house, put out a brochure of its posters which it describes as "the perfect resource to create an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality," which "add both joy and a sense of prayer wherever they are used." But we discovered upon looking through the brochure that the largest proportion of them consisted of pictures of animals, often with a scripture verse underneath, or a saying about opportunities, hugging, making mistakes, seeking direction, but all in sort of a sappy, modernistic psychopop optimistic language. What does it mean when religion and joy are equated with pictures of puppies, and when animals become the proclaimers of Holy Writ?

In 1987, the United Church of Christ became the first US Christian church to authorize a religious rite of divorce, parallel to its marriage and burial rites (Time 16/3/87).

It is rather consistent with our cultural ways of things that an instant miracle healing service was being held in Titusville, PA in 1987 at an instant fast food restaurant (source clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael).

The 6 leading TV evangelists reported taking in among them $684 million in 1986. The Southern Baptists, however, who took in the lower sum of $635 million, supported more than 10 times as many humanitarian enterprises and services than the TV ministries (AP in SHJ, 30/5/87).

It is interesting to contemplate that as early as 1831, the astute observer of America, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote (in Democracy in America), "By respecting all democratic tendencies not absolutely contrary to herself, Christianity became an ally of the "spirit of individual independence." He warned that the clergy might therefore "readily adopt the general opinion of their country and their age."
There is a man who presents himself as St. Silicon, founder and patron saint of the Church of Heuristic Information Processing, or CHIP. He promotes his religion as being "user-friendly" and down-loaded upon him from the Giver of Data (GOD) (when lightning struck St. Silicon's satellite dish). The religion speaks in terms of divine dispensation, a DOSpel, keyboard prayers and divine profits (a take-off on prophets). (AP, in SHJ, 19/4/87)

At a 1987 session of the American Physical Society where superconductors were discussed, scientists crowded themselves into a room meant to hold 1/3 their number and stayed there for 8 hours until 3:00 a.m., all in order to hear the latest about a new idolatry that will presumably save the world.

Educated people fall not merely for some at least quasi-rational body building or diet crazes, but for almost entirely spiritist crazes such as belief in the healing power of copper bracelets, of pyramids (even if only made of matchsticks), and more recently of crystals, which is almost a conversion of pet rocks into fetishes and talismans. Time itself (19/1/87) has called this craze an "esoteric blend of computer-age jargon and ancient religious practice, which often invested stones with powerful magic."

It is hard to believe that Time-Life books would publish an entire book in 1987 which comes close to a celebration of the occult, called Mysteries of the Unknown. This may be yet another symptom of the people of our age groping desperately for a substitute for the religions that they have abandoned.

A Catholic movement of and for physically handicapped and chronically ill people in the US was called Victim Missionaries. It sponsored retreats and conferences, and put out a bi-monthly publication. In ca. 1986, it changed its name rather peculiarly to Victorious Missionaries--without its brochure explaining the change.

We are told (A Positive Approach, 11 & 12/86), that Catholics United for Spiritual Action is a "network of persons of all faiths who participate in sharing by correspondence through group-letters." This reminds us a bit of Mothers Against Drunk Driving which also recruits non-mothers and males, and it presages any number of other potential peculiar groups, such as: a republican party platform committee of which half the members are registered Democrats; a sheltered workshop for the physically handicapped in which none of the clients are physically impaired; the Ku Klux Klan inviting Negroes, Jews and Catholics to join; a self-help group for the dying where all the members are in perfect health; and a classical music club which only holds punk rock and "Heavy Metal" music concerts.

Originally, the word martyr meant "he who confesses the truth." Only when confessing one's Christian faith began to become equivalent to drawing a death sentence in the Roman empire did the term acquire its later meaning, something along the line of dying for what one believes in.

Even though the independent TV network in Britain is supposedly independent, it is prohibited by law to run any promotion of the Bible, even if by paid advertisements. In contrast, there has been no obstacle to its running advertisements for condoms (Daily Mail, 11/7/87; source item from Paul Williams).

After a man was hired "off the street" to work at the Ossipee House, a group home for the mentally retarded in Center Ossipee, NH, other employees said strange things started happening: splotches of blood here and there, lights blinking on and off, etc. He also said bizarre things and intimated that he was involved in witchcraft. Though the man was fired, two other employees said they still perceived evil radiating from him--and they performed what they called "exorcism" at the house. This turned out to be their own brand
of witchcraft which they characterized as "white," falsely claiming that it was part of early Christian practices. Soon, a third employee found voodoo-like objects in her mailbox and quit in protest of the exorcism. All of this came on top of a recent notice that the facility was on 30 days' probation for various deficiencies, including unrepaid damage to the building by a violent resident who had injured workers. (Source: Sunday News, 27/9/87; source item from Elizabeth Carmichael)

*In Cincinnati, a woman with Down syndrome was in the habit of walking by herself to Saturday evening Mass. One day, her mother noticed that she had an unusually happy look on her face as she arrived home from church, and she asked her daughter the reason. "Well, Mom" she responded, "you know those people who give out the Hosts? I've always wanted to do that. So this evening, when the time came, I went up to the altar to help, too." Her mother was horrified, and blurted out "but you can't do that; those people are special!" That proved to be no obstacle. The woman has since been welcomed by her church as a regular Eucharistic minister, assisting at Mass every Saturday evening. The mother reports that some of the parishioners have told her that they make a special effort to get in her daughter's line. (Source item from Griff Hogan)

*We have commented before on the amazing gullibility of westerners (sometimes anthropologists) when they study other cultures. *Time* (4/87) told a story of a visitor to the Masai Tribe in Africa who asked one of the elders whether they ever ate wild animals. The elder said "sometimes, we eat the gazelle because it is close to God." Because of the peculiar accent of the Masai, their English sounds a little bit as if it were spoken by a German, and God comes out like Gott. The visitor gasped with apprehension of a mystical reality. Of course, gazelles are close to God! All sorts of beautiful images started dancing in the visitor's mind. So he asked the natural follow-up question: "Are there any other animals that are close to God?" There was a long silence during which the visitor was eyed with profound consternation. Had he asked a question too close to the secret belief system of the natives? Maybe God was too mysterious to discourse upon? But then the elder said snortingly, "No no, we eat the gazelle because it is close to goat, it tastes like goat, and we like goat above all." Behold, another western anthropological mysticism about native cultures unsentimentally exposed and nullified.

*In response to the criticism that the passion play in Oberammergau, Bavaria, promoted antisemitism, a local citizen observed that "after all, we couldn't help it that the original passion occurred among the Jews. We would much have preferred it if it had occurred among the Prussians."

Signs of the Times--General

*Time* (20/7/87) reported that in only a little over a year, Europe seems to have forgotten the 4/86 nuclear reactor disaster in Chernobyl. This underlines what we have been saying about the shrinking memory horizon of people of our age--including people in human services and about human services.

*In 11/87, Time* complained that President Reagan was not in charge of affairs, stating that "the nation calls for leadership and there is no one home." The loss of memory in our culture is illustrated by the fact that 16 months earlier, in its 4 July 1986 issue, Time had called Reagan one of the strongest leaders of the 20th century.

*Illegal street drugs are being used in the US to the tune of about $110 billion a year. The US is now the most drug-ridden society in the developed world. (Newsweek, 16/6/86)

*An amazing sign of our times is that even in Seville, Spain, 31% of the juvenile population are reported to be addicted to heroin as of ca. 1986, spending almost $200 million a year feeding their habit, in part obtaining this money by robbing foreign travelers (Sunday Times Magazine (England), 15/11/87).
According to Newsweek (27/4/87), two cocaine-dealing gangs in Los Angeles alone have about 15,000 (!) members between them, moving about 6,000 pounds of cocaine every month. Gang-related violence has accounted for 328 homicides in 1986 alone. If this had happened 20 years ago, it would have been a #1 headline all over the country, but in 1987, it makes a minor item in the media. People who would have considered this a most meaningful sign of our times had they been asked about it some decades ago have been so de-sensitized as to think little about it now. One problem with signs of the times is that people always demand ever-escalating signs, meaning that ultimately, no sign is sufficient to them to interpret their times and their future to them.

We were stunned, but unfortunately not surprised, to learn that an educational catalogue listed the following educational items: a space war gun, and a "nerve tester" that gives an electric shock to the learner. The gun is described as giving "realistic sight and sound effects you expect from such a weapon," and allowing the student to practice both rapid fire as well as stun techniques. The nerve tester, which is supposed to test one's ability to remain steady and calm, can be rigged to give an electric shock that varies in magnitude as a person tries to complete a delicate hand maneuver. Surely this is a sign of our times as well. (Source item submitted by Elizabeth Carmichael)

People gunning down fellow drivers who block their way or make a mistake, or even going out on the highways to harass others with their cars, is yet another sign of our times. Already, people flying small planes have also picked up this new craze and have started shooting pistols at each other in the air. All this may turn out to be more than a passing fad, namely a whole new way of living out modernistic values.

In the future-fiction novel, O-Zone, major cities have become ruthlessly guarded fortresses abounding with internal checkpoints, and sealed against "aliens," which includes the vagrant and homeless, the mentally handicapped, human mutants born after the proliferation of nuclear waste, and people who look like humans but carry dreadful diseases about with them. All of these are considered to be non-persons (in our current legal language), have no legal existence, and are not required to pay taxes or carry ID. Accordingly, like the unborn today who are legally also non-persons, they can be gunned down on sight by heavily armoured helicopters that constantly hover above the urban zones. The latter scenario was obviously not very far-fetched because shortly after the Vietnam War, the US government gave helicopters to police forces all over the country, and in Syracuse, police helicopters were in the air virtually all the time (at night, often with their search lights on) so that it became a rare luxury not to hear their noise, and it took many months before citizen complaints finally limited police helicopter use.

On 17/9/87, bells all over America were supposed to ring in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the US Constitution. The trouble is, we could not hear the bells ring in Syracuse because of the constant wall of the sirens of emergency vehicles going to hospitals, fires, scenes of crimes and false alarms. We have commented before on the fact that the constant wall of these emergency vehicles in our cities is like a cry of anguish of a dying society. The TIPS editor must now hear several score emergency vehicles with special sound effects going somewhere or other every day, and around the clock.

A woman in Newark, NJ, salvaged scrap lumber for ten years, and then constructed an ark (like Noah's) in the middle of town with it because she "wanted a decent place to live." The empire ordered it torn down just a bit short of completion, but as one observer said, "You mess with an ark, you mess with the collective memory of the race," and a public outcry broke out. Quite frankly, we cannot imagine the empire resting until such a symbol of its impending doom is annihilated, and we salute its builder. (CSM, 22/4/87; source item from Ann O'Connor)
Signs of the Times--Family-Related

*It seems truly a sign of our times that an entire institute has formed (Creative Connections) trying to interpret how much fun and creativity divorce can be, and that tries to advise divorced parents how to stay in touch with their children who do not live with them. The corporation even issues a "connection kit" aimed at the child victims themselves, described as "a perfect gift for a child" to be presented by "a grandparent living far away," a non-custodial parent, or "a friend from the old neighborhood."

*At one time, colleges offered courses such as "Marriage and the Family," or "Preparation for Marriage." Today, we are informed that SU University College has offered a course on "Marriage and Mayhem."

*Nowadays, one might receive an invitation to a party with the note to "bring your significant other and any associated children." In hospital delivery areas, one may see signs that "every woman in labor may have one significant other accompany her in the laboring room." Among the many things that this does is that it puts spouses on the same level of significance as business partners, scientific collaborators, or conceivably even bitter enemies who, after all, can be extremely significant to each other. Furthermore, relatively casual sexual partnerships are given as much legitimacy by this practice as committed marriages. In turn, this degrades the institution of marriage and family--which of course, delights some people. Soon, only historians, linguists, and students of literature may know what it once meant to be a husband or wife (reflection based on column by E. J. Emmanuel in New York Times, 15/11/86).

*A volunteer bureau in the Albany, NY, area has set up a hotline for latch-key children which they can dial between the hours of 2-5 p.m. in order to hear "a taped adult voice tell reassuring stories and jokes." (Metroland, 26/8/87; source item from Chris Liuzzo)

*Parents accused of child abuse who feel that they have been accused unjustly have formed an organization in Britain called Parents Against INjustice (PAIN).

*One rock band that also played in Syracuse, the Beastie Boys, used the grossest obscenities as their props, including a giant inflatable penis and scantily clad dancing girls--and no feminists are to be seen anywhere picketing.

*Italian scientists reportedly have experimented secretly on attempts to cross-fertilize humans and chimpanzees with a view to creating an anthropoid slave class or a pool of organ sources. These efforts are vastly more sophisticated than those first reported to be carried out in Paris in the mid-1930s with what were described as "the most crude methods," which we can well imagine what they were (SHJ, 15/5/87).

Social Role Valorization

*Residents in a Irvine, Cal., neighborhood howled in protest against plans to convert a dog kennel in their neighborhood into a shelter for the homeless. Hypocritically but accurately, they noted that this would be humiliating to the homeless, and that they would be juxtaposed to yet another animal care center just 100 yards away. (AP 9/87; source clipping from Deborah Reidy)

*In early 1987, a church in Cleveland used an old neighborhood bar as a meal hospitality center for street people--many of whom have problems with alcoholism and may formerly have gotten drunk in that bar. They also distribute clothing out of the center which is brought in and stored in garbage bags. (SAM, 4/87)
*It has been estimated that the home of Rock Hudson, who died of AIDS, lost about $4 million of its $7 million value because prospective buyers shied away in an irrational fear of infection (AP, in SHJ, 5/4/87). This supports the contention of Social Role Valorization theory that places and objects can acquire taints through their previous identities, such as association with devalued people, and that this taint can then later transfer to others, in particular to other devalued persons. Imagine Rock Hudson's home now being used as a group home for some kind of handicapped people!

*In one English township, the local government routinely employs physically and mentally handicapped people to remove the furniture from the homes of families being evicted from public housing. This seems to us a perfect way to rile up the population against handicapped people, not to mention the creation of an extraordinary devalued person juxtaposition (Roof, 162/87; source item from David Race).

*Heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali once owned a 17-cabin mountain camp at Deer Lake, PA, where he, together with his entourage, trained. The camp is now used as a refuge for--believe it or not--battered and abused children and pregnant (often also abused) girls. (Source clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael)

*The Syracuse Automobile Dealers Association has, for several years, set aside a half day of its annual auto show as a "special morning for special people," i.e., admission restricted to handicapped people and their families. The good news is that the number of handicapped people attending this special "opportunity" has declined dramatically.

**AIDS-Related Developments**

*The AIDS denial insanity continues at high levels. (From the beginning, denial has been highest at the highest levels.) The Third International Conference on AIDS in 6/87 "ended on an optimistic note" even as every datum that comes in makes things look worse than the previous one (SHJ, 7/6/87).

*One of the co-discoverers of the AIDS virus said that data about the spread of AIDS should not be published because it might provoke suicides (ALLAI, Summer 87).

*In a filled Madison Square Garden rock performance, rock singer Madonna announced that "AIDS is a strange and powerful disease. But we are more powerful," which we interpret as a form of idolatry of the human. During her performance, the message "safe sex" was flashed on a giant screen. All this is a remarkable exemplification of how deception, lies, and the promotion of death so often go together, and today are indeed one of the most popular cultural crazes. (Time, 27/7/87)

*Anyone who participates in, or is exposed to, an AIDS awareness campaign is apt to hear the "Condom Rag" played, which includes lines such as the following: "See, it's easy and fun and it ain't a drag, groovin' and doin' the condom rag..." (ALLAI, Summer 87). We think that this is sadly funny for multiple reasons, not the least of which is that it is precisely people in drag who are apt to be among the prime "targets" of the song.

*In its 10 August 87 issue, Newsweek carried the pictures of 302 people who died of AIDS in the preceding 12 months. Many of the adult males were in occupations that most people would consider to be those disproportionately chosen by homosexual men, such as entertainment, florists and the arts. But surprisingly, a relatively large percentage (12%) were in occupations in which they would handle food or drink, such as chef, waiter, bartender, etc. Another 2% were in health-related occupations that might also handle food (e.g., hospital attendant) or blood.

*Preliminary studies suggest that women who are on birth control pills run a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases when having sex with an infected male than women not on the pill (ALLAI, Summer 87).
Street drugs injected with needles are common in the slums of our cities, and are becoming increasingly common, and are increasingly becoming the transmitters of AIDS so that some experts have begun to speak of an impending "genocide" of urban slum populations (Newsweek, 13/4/87). Unscrupulous operators in New York City are collecting used hypodermic needles on the illicit drug scene, and reselling them as sterile. This is one of the practices which has contributed to more than 50% of intravenous drug users in New York City testing positive for exposure to the AIDS virus (Science, 21/8/87).

About 400,000 foreign tourists went to Brazil for the 1987 carnival, many of them in order to partake in its sexual licentiousness, a fair proportion of these being homosexual folk. In consequence, AIDS is also beginning to explode in Brazil (Newsweek, 27/7/87). The TIPS editor's Swiss grandmother had many wise sayings, some of which we have already featured. One not yet mentioned was "Stupid calves go out and fetch their own butcher." In German, it rhymes.

We mentioned in a previous issue a dramatic increase in gonorrhea in just a single year, but failed to mention that syphilis also increased 23% in a recent time period--the most dramatic increase in two decades. People who have a history of "conventional" sexually transmitted diseases are also higher at risk of AIDS.

The Institute of Marital Studies in London apparently considers marriage one of the more stressing experiences of contemporary humanity. It noted that a lot of people have been coping with "the pressures of married life" by having "occasional affairs to relieve marital tension." But now, they are very much affected by the fear of catching AIDS which "could constrict a couple's emotional life." Accordingly, the Institute has started evening courses for married couples to facilitate their being reasonably happily married without outside affairs. What a sad and an awful motive! (Daily Mail, 23/3/87; source item from Paul Williams)

The federal prison system has begun to concentrate prisoners with AIDS at its Springfield, Missouri, prison. However, it does not segregate its other prisoners there from those who have AIDS (ALLAI, Summer 87).

An Illinois physician with AIDS was permitted to continue practicing at a hospital, but not to perform invasive procedures such as giving injections or doing throat, rectal and vaginal examinations. The American Civil Liberties Union urged the physician to appeal (AP, in SHJ, 7/7/87).

It is estimated that 70-90% of Americans with severe hemophilia now carry the AIDS virus, not because of their own fault but because of the fault of others. We remind readers of the fact that for several years, blood banks even as much as refused to ask donors whether they were in a high-risk group. This strategy was supposed to protect the rights of donors, but it rode rough-shod over hapless blood recipients, and thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, will have to pay a high price for other people's moral choices. (APA Monitor, 11/87)

According to a Newsweek cover story (7/9/87) on children with AIDS, the health care system not only has difficulty coping with adults with AIDS, but has already virtually collapsed in regard to the treatment of children with AIDS. This underlines how real the possibility is that people with AIDS will become the victims of a de facto genocide in the sense that treatment and care that could be provided simply will not be provided to them, thus dramatically lowering their already limited life expectancies.

Paradoxically, but also revealingly, the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists has been offering AIDS and child abuse seminars--in Las Vegas (ALLAI, Summer 87).
*While demonstrators on the streets were demanding "cure AIDS now!", a Johns Hopkins professor, speaking to the International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis Societies, said that a great deal of the money being channeled to AIDS research is being taken away from research on other conditions, including multiple sclerosis (SHJ, 15/9/87).

*There now are dating clubs which test their members for AIDS before they are introduced to each other. We are rather offended by this, for two reasons. First of all, the a priori presumption is that the members will have sex with each other (suggested even by the names used by some of these groups, such as Safermate, Safeadults, and the American Institute for Safe Sex Practices). Secondly, a negative AIDS test does not mean that the person cannot transmit AIDS. After all, the body may take 4-6 months to produce antibodies which will show up on the tests, and in the meantime, the person might have the venereal disease and pass it on. (Time, 11/5/87)

*The Christian Medical Fellowship in the United Kingdom which claims a membership of 4300 physicians proposed that everybody would be tested for AIDS every six months, and those who show signs of infection should be sent to towns set up specifically as separate living areas. Spokespersons for the plan said that the current spread of AIDS was comparable to a war situation, and only measures equivalent to war footings would be able to protect the population. The proposal is presented in further detail in a book published in 11/87, entitled The 20th Century Plague (The Guardian, 18/11/87).

*In 8/87, the US (government) Center for Disease Control, located in Atlanta, recommended that health care workers should act as if all patients were infected with AIDS. (New York Times, 21/8/87; source item from David Wetherow)

The Deathmaking Scene

Abortion-Related News

*In 6/87, Michigan became the 30th state to end state funding of abortion except to save the mother's life. As we mentioned before, once the statistics catch up, we should see a significant decline in US abortions over the last 4 or so years, as a result of such cutbacks (RLR, Summer 87).

*In 8/87, Upjohn stopped domestic sales of the second trimester abortion drug, F 2 Alpha, but claimed that this had nothing to do with the boycott of its product by anti-abortion groups. (Source clipping from John Morris)

*Abortion is now apparently the only medical procedure, including very insignificant ones, for which physicians are not even allowed to get an "informed consent" from the woman at issue (US Supreme Court Ruling of 6/86).

*A parent personally informed us that she went to Mount Sinai Medical Center in NYC during a difficult pregnancy, and her physicians wanted to do genetic tests and let it be known that they would refuse treatment if the unborn baby were diagnosed as handicapped and not aborted.

*In Minnesota, it has been legal to dispose of the remains of aborted fetuses through the sewer system. When a law was passed requiring burial or cremation, Planned Parenthood tried to overturn the law, and a court in 8/87 has at least temporarily put the law aside (Source clipping from John Morris).

*The TIPS editor passes by the Planned Parenthood center of Syracuse every day on his way to work. Often, there are demonstrators outside it. We were taken aback recently to see demonstrators carrying a sign that announced "Vacuum abortion sucks." Attention this may very well get, but what else it gets that might be worthwhile is questionable.
Child Deathmaking & Child Rescue

*There have always been various degrees of child discarding throughout history, particularly among the poor, and particularly when times were hard. But one common pattern was that if poverty struck, the whole family would be poor, and would still remain a family unit even within the most abject poverty. Also, while the killing of newborns and the death-making of very young children was a relatively common occurrence, less common was any systematic killing of older children. All this has now changed in numerous countries throughout the world that are structuring themselves upon the developed Western pattern. As families leave the land and go to the cities, the family unit disintegrates, and families simply discard, or walk away from, their children of virtually any age. This accounts for the fact that in some Latin American countries, there is an increasing street population of homeless and family-less children. We have written on this before but in 1984, Brazil alone was estimated to have 32 million such children! Such figures are so large as to recede into meaningless abstractions. But as we have said before, this sort of thing will find bitter revenge in years to come (SHA, 12/7/87).

*We have commented before on the fact that the increased interpretation in the fiction literature of the unborn or children as monsters, demons and aliens symbolizes the growing hostility towards children in our culture (Kinderfeindlichkeit). Apparently yet another work in this genre is the 1987 book Beloved by Toni Morrison. Therein is a character described as a venomously angry ghost of a small baby who "seems hell-bent on driving the other characters crazy." As far as we know, Morrison has also expressed her support for feminist issues, including legalized abortion.

*It has come to light that the very headquarters of UNICEF in Brussels has been a center of child abuse and child pornography, with children being photographed in pornographic poses in the basement of its building, and with its computer being used to keep track of a child pornography mailing list (Newsweek, 6/7/87). The blindness of people in reading the signs of their times just absolutely overwhelms us.

*Some authorities believe that the US in the 1980s may be the first society in history (presumably other than under circumstances of war and pestilence) in which children are distinctly worse off than adults (Newsweek, 6/10/86).

Starting with this issue, we will commence with a special highlighting of developments that have the potential for becoming part of a pattern of perversion.

#1 PERVERSION ALERT — We have now run across a number of recent reports of parents of (non-handicapped) children killing their children and then committing suicide. This may be one version of the broader category of contemporary child juking, and may involve parents whose intent is to juk their child but who have enough compunction to want to escape the temporal consequences.

*In 1986, 317 children under 17 were shot in Detroit. A record 41 of them died (Cleveland Plain Dealer; clipping from Elizabeth Carmichael).

*In Minden, LA, parents were charged with murdering their grossly underweight 7-year old son who had Down Syndrome on the apparent assumption that they stuffed him into the deep freezer. His body was discovered in a bedroom closet in the family’s mobile home, still frozen after a week in the freezer (AP in Troy Times Record, 22/10/87; source item from Chris Liuzzo and Darcy Miller).

*Marion, R. (1985). Born too soon. New York: Doubleday. This novel by a physician is about young interns in an intensive care nursery for premature infants. A girl with Down Syndrome is born to a middle-aged mother who had not wanted another child at all, then wants to have an intestinal operation withheld from the child. However, both the husband and she eventually decide that it is God’s will for them to have a handicapped child, so the operation is performed and they take the little girl home with them. The novel depicts accurately the medical imperialism which arrogantly withholds information and decision-making from a patient’s family and friends, which prefers high-tech methods (such as Caesarean births) over natural methods, and some of the so-called "ethical
dilemmas" brought about by technological advances. However, as with so many similar books nowadays, this one lends support to deathmaking by interpreting those who defend life as insane extremists who keep bodies pumping long after their vital organs, and even their brains, have ceased to function. It also calls the children who do survive this critical period but who end up severely impaired GORKS, and the fact that such children are commonly institutionalized is invoked as another reason why perhaps not everything should be done for them at their birth.

*Jack Yates recently sent us a most heartwarming vignette.

"On my way home every day I pass a small farm that sells fresh produce from a table in front of the house with a chalkboard sign telling what is for sale. One day last summer the chalkboard told drivers that the proceeds of the sales would go to help Joey, presumably the son of the household, who it told was in a coma and in critical condition at New England Medical Center. The sign remained with that inscription into the fall, then one day changed. The chalkboard then told drivers that Joey, still in a coma, had been moved to New England Sinai Hospital, a longer-term care facility nearer-by. After a few more months, the chalkboard told us that Joey was awake now, still in the hospital, and was doing much better. Then recently, the chalkboard told us that Joey would be coming home, then that he was home and doing well. The most recent message on the chalkboard was accompanied by the lesson of the story in the view of Joey's parents, that 'God still performs miracles every day.' In all the days of driving by and reading the changing signs, the day that I began to cry when I saw the chalkboard was when the family taped up a huge printout-photograph of Joey. It was seeing the photograph which changed my perspective: as well as seeing the chalkboard as a driver and as a worrier that people in Joey's situation might die and as a worrier that people in Joey's situation might indeed be killed, I saw the chalkboard (from my perspective) as a father."

"Euthanasia"

*To continue our coverage of "euthanasia" in the Netherlands: the more one learns about it, the more alarming it gets. Reportedly, there are 3000 registered "euthanasiases on request" per year, but a very extensive population survey revealed that the real number must be vastly higher, and some authorities have estimated it to be as high as 20,000 people a year. That, prorated over 14 million inhabitants and annual death totals of 120,000 would mean that as many as 1 death in 6 might now be the result of "euthanasia." Furthermore, it appears more and more that there may be more cases of "euthanasia" without the patient's consent than with. In fact, there may be a consent in only 10% of cases. Overt or covert support for the practice is such that nothing can be done about it in the courts. Apparently, the largest opposition group consists of elderly people who are afraid not only of having their lives taken, but having them taken secretly.

One element to note is that people with AIDS are among those being put to death. Some of them were not at all terminally ill in the usual sense, but had been given such scary forecasts of their future that they supposedly requested death. On 17 May 87, the Toronto Star carried a very substantial article on the trial of two West German physicians for having killed many thousands of handicapped people during World War II. The very same issue carried another lengthy article on "euthanasia" being administered to people in the Netherlands, including people with AIDS. According to one survey, about 5 out of 6 Dutch physicians have carried out "euthanasia." The issue was dealt with very sympathetically and in a positive light by the Toronto Star, and absolutely no connection was made with the German euthanasia era so extensively documented in another article on the very same page of the same issue. One detoxifying language practice now is to speak of people having "received euthanasia." Doing mercy-killing, or being mercy-killed, is apparently "out." (Source item from Barry Wever)
*West German teenagers asked in the schools during the 1980s what they knew about Hitler often noted that he wasn't all bad as a person or for society, because after all, he arranged for merciful deaths for handicapped people (Becker, 1987).

*In 4/86, a physician in Cherry Hill, NJ, gave a lethal drug dose to his mother-in-law who had "Alzheimer's Disease." The courts sentenced him to 2 years' probation, a fine and some community service. In 5/87, the State Board of Medical Examiners revoked his license—and reinstated it in 10/87. (RLR, 11/87)

*In a great many "euthanasia" and voluntary suicide argumentations, it is pointed out that a patient is being tube-fed, and this is used as a deathmaking argument. People who have not already embraced a deathmaking mentality need to become aware of the fact that increasingly, stomach tubes are being installed merely as a convenient and less expensive substitute for nursing care. Patients who could manage quite well if they were gently and tediously hand-fed get these tubes installed simply because the modern medical system is not willing to pay for this type of nursing care. In turn, this creates long-term dependencies on tubes, and also raises the likelihood that all sorts of other complications will arise. People on tubes often have diarrhea and infections, the diarrhea often leads to skin ulcers, and the infections often lead to yet other treatments which can be life-endangering. People on stomach tubes are also less likely to be elevated, to be permitted to get out of bed and sit up, and they therefore, are more at risk of beginning to get pretzelled up. In fact, they may be rendered non-ambulatory when, without the tube, they could have been returned to ambulation. People particularly likely to get stomach tubes installed are those who do not recover rapidly after an operation, and who do not have friends and relatives to tend to them in the hospital and to defend them against this kind of medical aggression and deathmaking.

*The NJ Supreme Court issued three decisions in 6/87 which all further open the door to starving competency-impaired people to death even if they are neither dying nor comatose (NRL News, 2/7/87). One of the three cases had some particularly gruesome elements. It involved a 32-year old woman who became profoundly debilitated as a result of an error or accident in the administration of anesthesia during surgery when she was 25. Her family waited until their lawsuit for damages was settled in their favor for $900,000—and then requested withholding of food and water, describing her as an ugly not human monstrosity who died a long time ago and should have a funeral now, who was not living and not a human entity. The court dismissed the testimony of the nursing home employees who worked with the woman every day as illusions, and accepted as credible the testimony that described the woman as ugly, monstrous and inhuman. (Minneapolis Star & Tribune, 4/7/87; source item from Jane Hoyt)

*Speakers at the annual meeting of the (Canadian) Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in 9/87 called for hospital guidelines on "euthanasia" for severely handicapped newborn babies. This of course is a classical slippery slope and detoxification ploy: one no longer discusses whether euthanasia should be committed at all, but instead focuses people's attention on "doing it right." (Winnipeg Free Press, 12/9/87; source item from David Wetherow)

*In 4/87, a court in California approved a woman's request to have her 92-year old mother in a nursing home deprived of food and water so that she would die. However, both the woman's physician and the nursing home flatly refused to cooperate with this plan. Her physician said that the old woman was "not dying any more than anyone else," not comatose, and responsive to people and her environment. (NRL News, 16/4/87).

*Soon, we may get our first court case in which a hospital will be sued for "negligence" for refusing to starve a patient to death (NRL News, 2/7/87).
*There has been a sudden explosion of TV (entertainment) programs in which the theme is lovers or spouses trying to kill each other. On just one single day in 8/87, a Syracuse TV watcher could watch about a half-a-dozen TV programs that had to do with the killing of women, in most cases by their husbands or boyfriends, in one case by a satanic cult. At least one other program dealt with three mistresses of married men—and then there was a program showing 14-18-year old girls competing for the cover of Teen Magazine. Surely signs of our times, reflecting growing division between the sexes, debasement of love and marriage, and recourse to private violence.

*While in recent years the media, including novelists, have heavily favored all sorts of deathmaking, the 1987 book, The Thanatos Syndrome, raises consciousness by depicting a future society in which massive euthanasia is systematically practiced and also well detoxified, as by being practiced at "qualitarian life centers."

The Relationship of Deception to Violence and Deathmaking

People of wisdom have long said that violence is always accompanied by deception. Thus, we should expect that deathmaking be surrounded by deception—and that deception that is persistent and patterned probably conceals some pattern of violence. For instance, there is hardly one significant fact about nuclear power about which the public was told the truth the first time around, or even the nth time around: how expensive it would be, how safe, how quickly reactors could be built, how reliable they would be, how radioactive waste material could and would be disposed of, etc. The full truth about the seriousness of Three Mile Island still has not been told (Science, 4/12/87), nor about the long-term impact of Chernobyl.

*The Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion on demand in the US in 1973, Roe vs. Wade, was based on the case of a woman who wanted an abortion because she claimed that she had gotten pregnant by a gang rape. The Roe of Roe vs. Wade (actually not her real name) by 1987 had been married and divorced, three times pregnant (twice out of wedlock), and has more recently been living in a lesbian relationship—all things that very much symbolize the kinds of tragedy and degeneracies that go with preparedness to kill one's own flesh and blood. We should not be surprised to learn that the tremendous amount of violence of abortion that resulted from this case was based on a deception, insofar as deception always accompanies violence. In 1987, it came to light that the woman had lied. The two women lawyers who had taken her case did not express any regret or even as much as admit that they were hoodwinked, and other abortion advocates dismissed the deception as irrelevant (Interim, 11/87).

*An abortion center run by a radical feminist group in Milwaukee is called Bread and Roses, and has declared itself a "nuclear free zone." (FI, Summer 87)

PERVERSION ALERT — We have now run across repeated instances where people who had life support withdrawn from them on the application of other parties were interpreted as having "fought for the right to die." For instance, when Nancy Ellen Jobes was starved and dehydrated to death in NJ in 1987, pursuant to her family's wishes, a newspaper headline proclaimed "Woman who fought for right to die dies" (AP in SHJ, 7/8/87). Jobes never expressed any such wishes, since she lost most of her consciousness suddenly and unexpectedly. We can expect future displacement of guilt and responsibility for deathmaking through this deceptive detoxification device.

*We received a mass mailing from an organization called Americans Against Human Suffering. Sounds humane and noble, doesn't it? It turns out that this is a euthanasia organization working for the "right to request a physician to administer aid in dying," using of course, very appealing terminology. Its acronym sounds like a death rattle: AAHS.
Miscellaneous Human Service-Related News

*An 80-year old Indianapolis man managed to carry his non-ambulatory 42-year old cerebrally palsied son from his burning home late one evening, thus saving his life (late 1987 clipping from Joe Osburn).

*The 4th grade children of a Maryland school went all out to try to break their TV watching habits during a week of Lent 1987. Apparently, this was as tough an act as going cold turkey on heroin addiction. This shows how powerful a tool TV has become in our age, and that reality has in part already overtaken the fantasy of Max Headroom.

*The governmental activities office of the United Cerebral Palsy Association of the US conducted a survey of several hundred members in order to get an idea of the costs of being handicapped—in this case, cerebrally palsied. Expenses were categorized into the rubrics of surgery, major equipment, barrier removal, transportation, and miscellaneous. While the survey had some methodological shortcomings, it did confirm the obvious, namely, that it is rather expensive to be handicapped or have a handicapped dependent. In the case of children, the handicap-related expenses were estimated to be $5300, with another average $1700 a year for surgery. Only 1% of the respondents were able to bear the expenses of handicap without outside help. In addition to these direct expenses, there were many indirect costs. Not included were salaries forfeited over the years where one parent stayed home to care for the handicapped child where otherwise that parent might have worked, and there were all sorts of things that the handicapped needed which they did not get, simply because no money or funding was available. (Source material from Joe Osburn)

*The unemployed who are least likely to find a job are those who are over 50, those who have been unemployed for over a year, and those who have multiple such high risk factors.

*We thoroughly disapprove of the establishment of a "national clearinghouse on women and girls with disabilities" (NYS Advocate, 7/87). This kind of divisioning of people from each other, and in this case handicapped men against handicapped women, ranges from stupid to evil. It will end when there are associations and clearinghouses for purple Macedonians of neuter gender between the ages of 30-32 who are poor at reading and have a limp in their left legs.

*The most explicit apologia for institutions for the retarded in recent years was published as a book (Institutions for the Mentally Retarded: A Changing Role in Changing Times) by Skodak-Crissey and Rosen in 1986. A reviewer characterized the book as "the family strikes back" (another way of saying "the empire strikes back"). We were amused that A. Baumeister, author of one of the chapters, said the following: "Wolfensberger (1971) said that he can see no reason why small specialized community programs cannot accommodate all people living in institutions. After 15 years we probably ought to take another, less emotional, look." We must assume that the writer assumed that anybody who thinks that it is possible to serve retarded people in small units must be stark raving mad, and therefore irrationally emotional.

*Employees of institutions and community services for the retarded of the State of New York have been offered training in "investigation techniques and procedures." What this amounts to is that staff are being trained to be mini-detectives in tracking down client abuse. Strangely enough, the state has offered to provide the same training to staff of other voluntary agencies without charge.

*To return to a point made previously: why are the feminists not out, and especially out in force, to picket, denounce and boycott rock performances with themes of sadistic sex, as exemplified by Ozzy Osbourne who has performed with a buzz saw blade protruding from his codpiece (Newsweek, 10/8/87)
Here goes another warning which, like most of our futuristic warnings, is apt to be ignored. One hears increasing agitation within the medical community for maintaining elderly people at home, or at least in the community, coupled with the observation that our population will become top-heavy with older people in the future, and these simply cannot all be institutionalized. (E.g., a committee of the Canadian Medical Association issued such a call in 1987.) People are now going to be fooled into believing that all of this might augur a diminishment of the nursing home empire. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because of the very fact that a larger proportion of the population will be elderly, the PPP society and its service supersystem can easily double and triple the nursing home population and still crow triumphantly that "more elderly people are being served in the community."

PERVERSION ALERT — We received a flyer of the Victorian (Australian) Voluntary Mental Health Services organization which gives some troublesome interpretations as to what Citizen Advocacy is, and which might contain the seeds of a future perversion. CA is being interpreted as merely a transitional mechanism for helping people to become "self-advocates" and independent. Furthermore, the relationships are interpreted as being on an equal basis, which may heavily bias toward selection of mildly impaired protégés, since advocacy for profoundly impaired or even comatose individuals would be very difficult to interpret as "equal." (Vicserv, 14/8/87; source item from Michael Kendrick) We hope very much that these interpretations are in error.

The right to sneeze. In 1983, the US Commission on Civil Rights compiled a list of 149 distinct "rights" that it felt needed specifying for persons who were mentally retarded or had other "developmental disabilities," in response to a prior history of major discriminations in each instance (Scheerenberger, 1987). Obviously, such a low-level approach could be endless.

David Schwartz recently sent us an appeal by a Yale University professor for a person to donate his/her heart to a prominent colleague. The appeal was headed, "Dr. so-and-so needs a heart and your help." Several readers found the appeal incredible as well as amusing. It reminds us a bit of the medieval German legend of "Poor Henry," an ailing knight who could only be saved by the surgical and loving sacrifice of a pure virgin.

In 5/87, the editor of the world's most widely distributed scientific periodical, Science, called for full steam ahead on research that would precisely delineate the composition of the human genetic genome, which has been referred to as the "Manhattan Project of biology." A reader replied that the human race has proven itself incapable of adequately managing any of the major technological problems of the modern world that resulted from previous recent "breakthroughs" such as nuclear weapons, nuclear wastes, other toxic by-products of industry, and that it seems ridiculously pretentious to call for yet another of these developments without having proven that one can manage any of them (Science, 26/6/87).

Human services under President North. A good number of thinkers have said for years that democracy cannot be expected to survive in the face of modern technocracy. To this, one can add that it certainly cannot be expected to survive without a sufficient percentage of the population having moral strength, being politically sophisticated, being able to read, and being able to perform wise analysis of their leaders and their positions.

The usurpation of illegal power accompanied by the grossest deception of the public that has occurred by members of the executive arm under the Reagan administration is probably the greatest threat to the American constitutional system in its 200 years. Yet political illiteracy and the death of personal morality have progressed so far that a landslide of Americans admire Colonel North and consider him a true patriot—even though they believe that he lied. Furthermore, Reagan's credibility ratings increased following North's testimony.
When American democracy ends, what can be expected to take its place? One recurring speculation is that it will be a quasi-dictatorship, i.e., a military dictatorship that does not appear to be such, which is actually close to what we have already had in recent years, with military and ex-military personnel running much of the administration.

It is also fascinating to consider that for almost 70 years, Americans have been suspicious of the possibility of a left-wing "takeover" when, in fact, the danger of a right-wing takeover has always been vastly higher, and currently astronomically so.

An interesting question is what human service would look like under such a regime. Quite likely, such a regime would be even yet harder on the poor and the weak than conservative democratic governments have tended to be. We would probably see a dramatic rise in the police forces, in imprisonment and the death penalty. There might be many Watts-type mini-uprisings that would probably be bloodily put down. Money for many services would get short for real this time, with more money going to police, the military and the one thing that rightist power regimes tend to be good at: public hygiene, as reflected by better garbage service and cleaner streets. One could certainly expect a severe crackdown on AIDS. Oddly enough, human service quality may increase considerably in some sectors, such as the educational and habilitational ones, and of course decrease in those that serve as a tool for deathmaking, such as nursing homes and medical ones.

**Dunce of this Month Award**

It is about time that we started something like the "dunce of this month" award. After all, Senator Proxmire gives a golden fleece award, and Institutions, Etc., used to give a Catch 22 Award. Our first dunce of the month award goes to the Syracuse Herald Journal.

A 24/11/86 editorial called for the teaching of certain basic moralities in the public school that are considered to be universal and essential for civic functioning and order. It suggested that when it is taught that killing is wrong, "questions of capital punishment or abortion need not be considered," and when the importance of honesty is taught, "the issue whether government disinformation is proper national policy can be left out." We can just imagine some smart aleck kid who, during the teaching on killing, will raise a precocious finger and want to know why we can't kill all the criminals, and an embarrassed teacher saying something like, "well, that's different, and now let's not talk about it anymore--especially since if I do, I might get fired, and the school will get sued for a zillion trillion billion dollars."

**Health & Environment**

*In 1972, the US Environmental Protection Agency was required by law to reanalyse the health and environmental impact of the 600 active ingredients in 50,000 pesticides. By 1986, none had been retested, even when it was found that 200 had been approved on the basis of data from one laboratory that were later found to be fraudulent (Newsweek, 14/7/86). One that had been used since the 1940s was banned in 1984 because it was found to cause cancer, birth defects and other diseases in animals. Field workers have been poisoned massively, but most of them have been reluctant to complain because of their illegal immigration status. Interestingly, while the pesticides are said to be essential to productivity, this is all one of those big lies of modernism. Before pesticides, about 20% of crops were destroyed by pests--the same percentage as today! Yet further, the cost of the pesticides now amounts to about a third of a year's crop. Also, before, only 7 species were resistant to pesticides, now 447 are--plus the pesticides have been destroying the natural predators of the pests. All of this also underlines something that we have been teaching in our workshops, namely, that when there is a high and a low technology way of doing something, we will do it the high technology way even if the low technology way is cheaper, safer, and more effective.*
*Nobody knows exactly why, but there has been a rather sudden 4% drop in ozone in the earth's stratosphere. Research is closely monitoring what is going on. The leading theory is that there has been a combination of human pollutants, recent volcanic emissions and natural variations. Ozone screens out the ultra-violet sun rays that cause skin cancer. Rather disingenuously, US Interior Secretary Hodel said that people should not worry but simply wear a coat, hat, suntan lotion and sun glasses when they go outside.

*It could be a human service! Three towns in the California desert are competing to become sites of a toxic waste dump. The dump would provide about 40 jobs. A local newspaper man justified the effort by saying that otherwise, "all our kids have to look forward to is pumping gas and washing dishes." (Time, 20/7/87)

*The element Plutonium is one of the most toxic substances known. Just a few pounds of it could kill everybody on earth. The substance is used in nuclear reactors, and as we all know, no one has yet figured out safe ways either for using it or disposing of it. Yet the imperial fools are now planning to recycle plutonium and stretch its utility by transporting it from one place to another all over the world, by means of ships, planes and trucks. The world has become a ship of fools in the cosmos, and the higher up its functionaries and officials rise, the more foolish they get.

Miscellaneous Other News

*Something fishy is going on. The US General Services Administration is spending at least $4.2 billion on a computerized system, the FTS 2000, that would keep track of all long-distance telephone calls being made on US government lines so that one will be able to tell who called what number when. Allegedly, this is to prevent government employees from making long-distance calls at government expense. But it is virtually incredible that government employees would defraud the government of $4.2 billion in phone tolls. Thus, we would interpret this as yet another form of surveillance being instituted in our society that nudges it yet closer to some kind of controlled society, if not outright totalitarianism. (CC, Summer, 87)

*Among the largest farmland owners in the US today are, believe it or not, insurance firms. Fourteen of the better-known and larger US insurance firms, representing about 95% of all US insurance holdings, held almost $13 billion worth of farmland in 1986. The biggest, in rank order, are Travelers, John Hancock, Metropolitan, Prudential, and Equitable. They have these farmlands farmed by hirelings who ruthlessly exploit the soil, practice very little stewardship, and contribute to a dramatic deterioration of the quality of farmland or even its entire disappearance (NCR, 3/7/87). It is profoundly ironic that names such as Mutual, Equitable, and Prudential are so common among these vulturing firms.

*One of the early Jesuit university scholars commented in the 16th century that "Here in Germany they are given to producing a book overnight," and regretted that he was not able to perform similar feats (Broderick, 1962). One of the greatest European educators was Comenius (1592-1670). He once said "I don't just turn out books by the dozens, I write them. I do not bring forth premature miscarriages."

*Blessed are they who have nothing to say, and who cannot be persuaded to say it." (James Russell Lowell, via Doug Mouncey)

*Toward the end of the Middle Ages, classes in universities sometimes started at 6 o'clock in the morning.

*A Syracuse University publication lists money gotten by faculty members from the government or foundations under the heading "Scholarly Activity."