As usual, our December issue features mainly themes which revolve around the homeless and imprisoned, peace and nonpeace, the interface of human service with religion, and seasonal news.

Miscellaneous Prison News

*In 1840, the US imprisonment rate was 24 per 100,000 population. Imprisonment rates in the US began to be recorded systematically since 1925, when the rate was about 80 per 100,000 population. This rate stayed roughly the same until 1972, when it began to rise dramatically, reaching about 220 by 1986, and 237 in 1988. About 80% of this increase was accounted for by members of racial minorities. In fact, approximately 1 of every 4 Negro men is now apt to spend some time in prison. This is a higher imprisonment rate than for the native population in South Africa (Augustus, 1/88; NCR 16/9/88). Every year since 1981, the female US prison population has grown at a faster rate than the male. One of the reasons is that women increasingly are getting equality in sentencing, i.e., have the same harsh standards applied to them as to men (Judgment, 10/87).

Other countries of the world are experiencing the same explosion in their prison population as the US. An example is England where the government has even opened up army camps in order to accommodate the prisoner overflow. In fact, England now has Europe's most overcrowded prisons. (Source clippings from Don Braisby.)

*The Georgia Industrial Institute is not what its name may suggest, but is a state prison.

*Russell Henderson informs us that the Georgia Women's Correctional Institute (a prison) is located on Laying Farm Road, on the grounds of what used to be the Milledgeville State Hospital. As of early 1988, the old Milledgeville facilities were back up to about 6,000 inmates of various kinds.

*The so-called California Institution for Women is believed to be the largest women's prison in the free world (Augustus, 12/87).

*Eleven of the state prisons in New York are in the northern part of the state, near the Canadian border, even though the majority of their inmates come from New York City and have dramatically different backgrounds than the prison guards. The local population greatly appreciates the economic benefits of having a prison.
In 1980, the new Jika Jika high-security prison in the Australian state of Victoria was hailed as world class, and highly acclaimed by the architectural fraternity for its people-less solution to the provision of surveillance and security. The prison design achieved almost complete separation of prison personnel from prisoners as the panoptic principle, developed around 1800, was carried to its electronic extreme. Publicity about it called it things such as "a great step forward," "an example of modern design and careful planning," and "a structure of international significance." Within only a few years, the prison was interpreted as a dehumanizing electronic zoo that made monsters out of its inmates, and even the news media agreed that it was a place in which the inmates would rather die than serve out their time. Inmates commonly turned viciously on each other or themselves. The situation was brought to a head in 10/87 by a fire set by prisoners themselves in which 5 of them died. (Clippings from Michael Steer)

The Philadelphia prison system has about 9000 prisoners, but urban decadence has gone so far that it seems to have become nearly impossible to employ reliable prison guards. The local district attorney announced that several hundred prison guards were engaged in corruption, including drug sales within the prisons, and that this was the largest number of misconducts by correctional officers in US history (AP, in SHJ, 16/3/88).

No safe place left anymore. Two inmates in a Florida prison—one of them a convicted armed robber—were shocked when a man walked into their cell brandishing a gun announcing "This is a robbery, we are taking all your stuff."

A woman sent an origami paper bird to an inmate of a Texas prison. The bird was confiscated as contraband because it was judged to be "uninspectable" (Sojourners, 7/88).

Capital Punishment

An example of detoxifying objectification and distribution of deathmaking responsibility in small portions to a vast number of people is the way that American prisons have been carrying out the death penalty since the early 1980s. Not only are different parts of the killing process parceled out to all sorts of people, but sometimes, the same part is performed by more than one person so as to further dilute a sense of responsibility. Thus, different persons read to the condemned the court's order of execution, ask him for his last wishes, take inventory of his possessions, and witness and record these proceedings; certain guards take the man to the prison hospital where he is given a physical examination to make sure that he will live long enough to die violently; some guards strip-search the prisoner, others give him a shower; the guards who strap the prisoner into the electric chair are not the same ones as the ones who bring him there; someone lets in the witnesses, someone prays with the prisoner if he so desires, and somebody else calls the state attorney general to make sure that there has been no reprieve. (The prisoner is also separated from the witnesses by a bulletproof transparent partition.) Another guard checks the names of the witnesses. Two different people turn switches that electrocute the prisoner, so that each can believe that the other one did it. It is thus that a person dies—but no one can be identified as having killed him. (E.g., Augustus, 10/87)

American Engineering, a Massachusetts firm, has designed a computerized machine with a control panel of switches and multi-colored lights that regulates and tracks the sequence and amounts of the injection of three deadly chemicals that are used to execute prisoners condemned to death. Surprisingly, the machine is relatively cheap at a mere $25,000. One of the "benefits" of the machine is that, unlike manual injection, it does not produce ruptured veins—something certainly to be regretted, and perhaps even calling for the intervention of a physician before the prisoner is killed for sure. A number of states have bought and installed the machine, including New Jersey in 1983, and Delaware more recently. Officials in Delaware said that they want the killing to be done "as humanely and professionally as possible." The president of American Engineering said that he is "personally totally against capital punishment," but since the death penalty is legal and it is going to be carried out, "so if we are going
to do anything, let's do it in the most humane manner possible." "If there is a first-class way to go, this is it." He said that "in Delaware, they have thought of everything. They wanted the thing properly done. Nothing was spared, nothing was overlooked." "If the process is done properly, everybody's through and out of there in four minutes." (The firm has also designed a gallows trap-door mechanism for more archaic forms of killing. After all, Delaware gives its condemned a choice between hanging and injection.) During executions, a special team of a physician, a mental health worker and a clergy member stand by in case the event "does not go smoothly," "in case we have anyone who can't handle it," or someone has a heart attack or needs emergency mental health counseling (Philadelphia Inquirer, 2 March 88; source item from David Schwartz).

-We keep discovering connections between the health professions and the carrying out of the death penalty. In states where lethal gas is used, the prison pharmacist may be the one who goes out and buys the sulfuric acid needed to generate the deadly gas, then delivers it as it is needed. Local physicians may take charge of the cyanide pellets to have them tested at local hospital laboratories to make sure they are still full-strength. Before an execution, a physician will offer a tranquilizer to the victim, and the victim's dying is closely monitored by a physician via an ECG machine (NCR, 1 July 88).

-This is really awful, but there is now such a construct as "competence to be executed." The American Bar Association has actually collaborated in setting "standards" for determining the capacity of a person condemned to death to be actually executed. (Source material from Griff Hogan, who comments that "mental health can be lethal," and who also wonders whether we will soon have a new speciality of re-pre-de-habilitator.)

-Capital punishment. There is an old joke that capital punishment means that they as got the capital inflict the punishment.

-A survey of Time readers found that most favored the death penalty as well as castration of men convicted of rape, but they approved of income tax cheating.

-When psychiatry began to make deep inroads on the courts in the early 1900s, a German satirical poem parodied the arguments of psychiatrists as to why certain confessed murderers should not be executed: they carry genetic burdens, are epileptic, suffer dizzy spells, had affective disturbances, were incapable of premeditation, etc. The poem said, "What is this? Are only perfect humans to be brought to the scaffold?" This reveals the incoherency of arguing in those terms against the death penalty.

-A 1975 satire on the area of evaluative research pretends to report on a multi-disciplinary research study of the cost-benefit of six "models" (F01 through F06) of capital punishment (hanging, electrocution, gassing, garrotte, guillotine and firing squad models), and relating these to other "nonconventional models (F11, F12). (In Applied Behavioral Science, 1975, 11(1))

-The legal and maintenance cost to obtain and carry out a death sentence in the US legal system costs about 3 times as much as keeping the person in prison for life (Augustus, 4/88).

-Police & Criminal Justice Tales

-At the end of 1986, one out of 55 American adults was either on probation, parole, or behind bars at any given time, the number being even higher if one counts those who fell into any of the three categories at any time during the year.

-A friend of the Training Institute active in combatting the shrink empire was "tasered" by police in New York in 1988. First, even though he had apparently provoked no one, he was wrestled to the ground with his arms behind his back, and then the police shot a wire-guided dart into him from close quarters that delivers 50,000 volts as long as the person on the other end holds the trigger or the battery holds up. The experience is excruciatingly painful, as evidenced by the
Fact that a police woman who accidentally touched him while he was being tasered shrieked in pain, which was what it took to terminate the treatment. As always happens with these things, the taser was invented as a humane way of subduing violent and resistive disturbed people, but the police probably use it often for sheer fun, sadistically, or out of fear. In his case, the dart had to be surgically removed.

* In Long Beach, California, a woman was arrested and subjected to a strip search because her dog did not have a dog tag.

* In San Francisco, a petty offender failed to appear at three appointed court trials. An infuriated judge set a billion dollar bail on the woman, but it turned out that the reason she had not shown up was that another judge, who had held her in jail on a different charge, released her because the jail was overcrowded and she was considered to be one of the least dangerous prisoners. This was considered by the editor of Science (11 March 88) to be another example of the breakdown of our judicial system. He cited several other examples of the growing chaos in our courts.

* Much as our medical profession is deeply involved when death penalties are carried out, so we now learn that in the Sudan where, under Islamic law, thieves lose their right hand, the hand will no longer be chopped off as formerly, but neatly amputated in a medical operation (SHJ, 1 December 83).

* A Canadian columnist noted tongue-in-cheek that three men with police records have been working in the offices of Parliament. He said "How can we expect former criminals to reform if they are exposed to politicians day after day?" (Toronto Star, 23/1/87; source item from Barry Wever.)

* Don't assassinate kings, just refuse to obey them" (attributed to Tolstoy).

The Rich & The Poor

As the Reagan administration comes to an end, we note that during its 8 years, the poor in America grew by 8 million, and from 11.4 to 13.5%; that poverty is increasingly becoming "hereditary" in certain disadvantaged classes; and that the gap between rich and poor is wider than at any time in the last 40 years (NCR, 16/9/88).

In constant dollars, 12% of the US population earned less in 1988 than in 1977. The median family income had not changed during this period. But the poorest 10% of the US population actually earned $400 less annually in 1988 than in 1977, while the richest 5% earned $35,000 (+37%) more! In 1987, the number of US billionaires doubled, even as the number of homeless skyrocketed (AP in SHJ, 13/10/87). The data reveal a dramatic growing apart of the two extremes, with the poor staying the same or getting poorer, and those earning roughly above $35,000 pulling away, and the more one earns, the faster one pulls upward toward yet greater earning not only in amount, but in percent of constant dollars.

* Time ran a cover story on "Begging in America" (5 September 88), observing, "The streets of America's cities have become desperate crossroads. To walk any distance at all is to run a gauntlet of beggars of every imaginable description with every conceivable need." Representative of the most extreme opposition to almsgiving is New York mayor Koch. In August 1988, 4 giant billboards appeared in El Paso that said, "Please don't give to beggars. They cause traffic problems." Some anti-charity radicals go as far as to claim that only about 1% of beggars truly "need the money for legitimate reasons." Such positions are almost always coupled, as in Koch's case, with the insistence that one give to "organized charity," based on the assumption and claim that such organizations somehow are wiser and better in how they dispense funds. Of course, we in human services can laugh uproariously about such pretensions, knowing as we do how outrageously irrational, wasteful and often outright deadly destructive, private service agencies rather normatively are.
A study of 6 of the wealthier countries of the world (Science, 11/11/88) found that each had a substantial proportion of children living in poverty, but the wealthiest of these 6, the US, had the highest such rate, and a higher rate (20%) in 1987 than in 1979 (16%). Unfortunately, the "big bang" conclusion of the article was that this will detrimentally affect the commercial competitiveness of the US in years to come because these children will make poor workers.

In Arizona, the application form for food stamps is 34 pages long. To many people, it does not seem to be worth hassling out the form, plus the bureaucracy behind it, in order to get maybe no more than an extra $10 a month in food (Seeds, 6/88; source item from Charles Mingle).

Boswell's friend and master Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) wrote the following on crime in his poem, "London."

All crimes are safe, but hated poverty.
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,
This, only this, provokes the snarling muse.
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak,
Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke.

Foucault (Discipline and Punish, 1979, p. 289, 324) cites a writer in the 1 December 1838 French newspaper, La Phalange, who compared the crimes of the lower classes ("licensed prostitution, direct material theft, housebreaking, murder, brigandage") with those of the upper classes: "skillful spoliation, indirect, refined theft, clever exploitation of human cattle, carefully planned and brilliantly executed betrayals, transcendent pieces of sharp practice--in short, all the truly elegant vices and lucrative crimes which the law is far too polite to interrupt."

John Ruskin (1819-1900) once said that "In a community regulated by laws of demand and supply, but protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, covetous, prompt, methodical, sensible, unimaginative, insensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the idle, the reckless, the humble, the thoughtful, the dull, the imaginative, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident, the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, the open thief, the entirely merciful, just and godly person" (in Adams, 1988).

Medical services firms in New York City have been offering poor people 50¢ to draw a blood sample from them, and then have turned around and billed the US government at least $15 million for Medicaid reimbursement for bogus laboratory tests, sometimes charging as much as $2000 for a single sample. Samples were sometimes also sold at a mark-up to other shyster clinics (Time, 15/8/88).

A fascinating article in Science (12 August 88) on the more hidden meaning of national fiscal phenomena pointed out that governmental policies, or the behavior of the financial markets, can result in totally unrecognized large-scale changes in the distribution of wealth. For instance, the 1987 stockmarket crash brought about a transfer of at least a trillion dollars from elderly to younger citizens. Since the elderly were the primary owners of existing assets, a decline in the market value of their assets reduced their wealth and, at the same time, made new wealth previously inaccessible to the younger accessible to them, because they could purchase the existing assets at a much lower price, and perhaps at a price lower than older people paid years earlier. Similarly, if the government launches a new subsidy of a certain industry (e.g., computers), older industries and investments are reduced in value. This favors capital not as yet invested in the market--which is more likely to be owned by younger people.

Yet another example of institutionalized theft from the little people by the big ones is the way in which the government bails out failing banks. Financial sharks are buying up these failing banks cheap because they know that the government will not let them go under. Tens of billions of dollars are involved in this scam (Time, 19/9/88).
*An Oakland, California, owner of a restaurant in a shopping center claimed that panhandlers (beggars) were driving away his customers, and not only made 50-60 citizen's arrests (including handcuffing panhandlers), and chasing some, but even applying (electric) stun guns to them. It is a very ominous sign when citizens can decide to take the initiative in applying stun guns to the poor who do not have the brains to go away, or no place to go away to. We warned years ago of the likely perversions of stun guns (San Francisco Chronicle, 1/Feb./88; source item from Sandra Meucci).

*We have commented before on some of the perversities that we see associated with holding rock concerts for charitable causes, such as the relief of hunger in Africa. But we did not realize that this type of thing would become so popular and spawn all sorts of imitations. Now we learn that rock artists have even made Christmas music record albums which are sold to benefit various charities. Christmas 1987 saw two with 16 different performers; we are sure there will be many more in 1988--provided thefad lasts that long.

*One of the most popular tourist attractions in Southeast Asia has been refugee camps.

*Poor Senator Ted Kennedy really lost it when he visited a Brooklyn soup kitchen and asked one of the guests, "Do you come here often?" (Newsweek, 13/6/88).

*How even the poor have internalized the throw-away mentality of the affluent of our society was illustrated when, on his way home from work, the TIPS editor spied a big pile of "garbage" on the curb where someone apparently had been moving out and had abandoned a great many perfectly good items, including cookware, clothing, blankets, sheets, tableware, books, furnishings, and even perfectly good food in sealed containers and cans. As I began to pick some of the useable items out and put them in the trunk of my car, three little children from an apartment house across the street, who were members of a racial minority and who by all appearances, belonged to poor families, began to taunt me loudly and incessantly as "garbage picker," and every time I retrieved an item to put in my trunk, they erupted into shrieking laughs and pointed at me. It apparently never occurred to them or their families (sitting on steps not far away, and quite possibly recipients of welfare) that their very homes could have been furnished from this material, their bodies clothed, their pantries filled.

**Homelessness & Street People**

*Homelessness is apparently on the increase throughout much of the western world. It is hard to believe that proportionately, there are more people today, namely about 1 billion people (which is almost as many as live in all of the cities of the "developing" nations combined), who are homeless or live in very irregular settings (shanty towns, tombs, railroad cars, etc.) than at all sorts of other times in human history--and all that after a long period of "progress." In Calcutta alone, an estimated 600,000 people live on the streets, and more than 40,000 of them survive on what they can scrounge from the garbage which is certainly much poorer in Calcutta than it would be in developed nations. Garbage and garbage dumps are a major source of livelihood for people all over the world. In Cairo, 1.25 million people at least have no home (Actionnews, 9/87; source item from Barry Wever). According to one estimate, there are 12,000 homeless people even in the Australian city of Melbourne.

*Virtually every major news periodical in the last year or so has had one or more major coverages of homelessness or long-term and multigenerational poverty. The irony of this is that in so many of these publications, these articles are juxtaposed to, or even interrupted by, advertisements that appeal to the more privileged population and its ruthless consumptionism. For instance, in a pictorial essay on the homeless in the 21/3/88 issue of Newsweek, the sequence was interrupted by a full-page ad for diamonds. A similar phenomenon occurred in the Sunday magazine of the Philadelphia Inquirer at about the same time.

The good thing about all this newsprint coverage of homelessness is that at least the homeless will have plenty of discarded newsprint to wrap themselves in.
*Readers may be familiar with the new book by Jonathan Kozol about homeless families, entitled Rachel and Her Children, which has recently received widespread publicity. Kozol first gained prominence writing about the abysmal conditions of educational programs for poor minority youngsters in the US public schools, and about how the educational system in general fails children. It was through his interest in homeless children that he was led to investigate and write about the plight of their families. Kozol is an eloquent writer, and his description of the families and their situations is gripping, poignant, and despairing. He pins the blame for the dramatic increase in homelessness in the United States on government budget cuts under the Reagan administration, and on a generally hard-hearted attitude towards the poor which has both supported that administration and been supported by it and its actions in turn. He also demonstrates the connections between such an attitude towards the poor, and our society's willingness to kill off all sorts of unwanted people by "euthanasia." Unfortunately -- perhaps because he is a liberal -- he never mentions the connection between these societal attitudes and abortion. The book is also an indictment of the welfare system as an enemy rather than a friend of the poor, being so set up as to disincentive poor people from finding employment, securing an apartment, protecting their own health and that of their children, maintaining family integrity, and so on. In fact, after reading even only a few stories from the book, one could marvel that any poor family should ever manage to escape its problems once it falls into the clutches of the welfare system. Parts of the book were excerpted in two Jan. and Feb. 88 issues of the New Yorker magazine. (Source material from Darcy Miller Elks and Chuck Burkhouse.)*

*On any given night in the US, an estimated 100,000 children are homeless (Science, 14/10/88).*

*Homelessness in Britain. There are at least 150,000 homeless young people alone in Britain. Unscrupulous middle people make large profits by pretending to help them find accommodations, usually with only a low success rate (Observer, 17/4/88; source item from Ruth Abrahams). British government figures for 1987 stated that there were only 30,000 homeless people of all ages in London alone during that year, which is less than the figures that have been cited by the agencies that deal with them (Guardian, mid-1988; source item from Ruth Abrahams). In the face of these dire situations, the British government in 4/88 actually reduced payments to alleviate homelessness, and it appeared that there would be further cuts rather than further improvement. The amazing thing is that at the same time, there were an estimated 700,000 empty dwellings in England in 1986, many of them owned by local governments, not only in northern England where jobs and people have been disappearing, but even in London.*

*Participants at TI workshops are often eloquent in stating the insights the workshop affords them. For instance, at a recent event in which we discussed the situation of homelessness in our society, and our society's response (or lack thereof) to it, one participant called the manufacture of homeless families, and particularly homeless children, a "laboratory incubator for a more vengeful society," in that the children who suffer so much as a result of homelessness today will one day -- if they survive at all -- grow up to be unsocialized, quite possibly bitter and vengeful, more violent, and less capable of living adaptively in society, none of which bodes well for adaptive and mutually submissive interpersonal relationships within society. (From Alan Robichaud.)*

*An article in Seeds (6/88; source item from Charles Mingle) noted that a lot of volunteers began during the early 1980s working on food programs or with the homeless, when the problem was interpreted as an emergency or crisis. The same people are now getting mighty tired, and some of them are drawing back because they are worn out. What does one call a quasi-permanent emergency?*  

*According to an analysis in The Philadelphia Inquirer (6 March 1988; source material from Chuck Burkhouse), the creation of a "right to shelter" in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has actually enlarged the problems of homelessness. Namely, the existence of this new right has created an incentive to poor, unwed, young minority mothers, a lot of them both unsocialized and amoral, to leave their
parental home in order to be "independent"—which actually means ending up dependent on the welfare-shelter system. Furthermore, it has provided a free haven for people addicted to drugs to find shelter, but without requiring anything of them towards their habilitation. Thirdly, it has created a mammoth money-making shelter industry, in which landlords convert buildings that used to house poor people in normative, albeit shabby and rundown, conditions, into grossly non-normative "shelters" which may house two to four times as many people in the same space as previously, and for which the government now pays phenomenal amounts of money (e.g., $2000 a month for a family to live in a single shabby room), much more than the cost of ordinary housing even in the high-class parts of town. Unfortunately, as in so many other instances, while the problems are quite accurately described, the solutions that are proposed fall far short of any hope of success. For instance, one social work supervisor cited in the article claims that "if we had the tools—service plans that had to be fulfilled by our clients—we could work with these people"—as if the problems were simply the inability of the shelter system to gain control over its clients. Surely, this is an idolatry of the individual service plan if we ever saw one! The article concludes with a quote from another social worker that shows just how very much the creation of homelessness and services to homeless people plays a strong role in our contemporary PPP economy, viz.: "you are going to have half the population being social workers and the other half having babies."

*A program in New York City to train "intensive case managers" has been funded with $220,000. "Intensive case management" is a euphemism for working with people who are homeless or nearly so. Chances are overwhelming that one would have gotten vastly more benefit by simply giving the money to the homeless (This Month in Mental Health, 9/88).

*We find it exceedingly amusing that the US government filed a lawsuit against a homeless mentally disordered man in Atlanta because for 1.5 years, he lived on the steps of the local US Court House. The suit claims that "the United States of America has suffered and continues to suffer irreparable injury as a result of this criminal trespass" (AP in SHJ, 15/1/88).

*A hell of a way to get shelter. An Hispanic couple with a 4-month old baby in New Britain, Conn., was evicted. They first spent two nights in a motel, and when their money ran out, they slept overnight in their car during a heavy snow storm. During that night, their infant died—whereupon the police arrested the parents and charged them with "the risk of injury to a minor" (Late 1987 UPI clipping; source item from Joe Osburn).

*Sometimes, the police will pick up debilitated homeless persons that are in desperate shape and book them on phony charges in order to give them some relief in jail. This is called "mercy bookings."

*We must fully expect that the sight of homeless people everywhere strikes fear into the hearts of many people that they themselves might experience economic disaster. But rather than expressing itself merely in compassion with the homeless, this fear probably also expresses itself in adamant attempts to hold on to one's privileged status.

*Let them eat no's. The response of Mayor Koch of New York to the increasing number of the poor and homeless who beg has been to tell citizens to "just say no," and "if you feel guilty, see a priest" (Newsweek, 4 July 88).

*In 1877, an editorial in the Chicago Tribune said that if one were not a member of the Humane Society, then the simplest way to get rid of tramps would be to "put a little strychnine or arsenic in the meat and other supplies furnished the tramp" (Towsen, 1976, p. 282).

*During the 1920s, several thousand railroad tramps were killed, mostly by train crews or Pinkerton guards hired to protect the rails, giving rise to the popular tramp ballad, "Father was killed by the Pinkerton men" (Towsen, 1976, p. 282).
When two street people in DC froze to death, advocates for the homeless tried to arrange for their burial, but were rebuffed by officials who were afraid that they would make a "public spectacle" out of the burial even though the advocates had been burying the homeless dead who died of exposure for 8 years. Indeed, it was a high official who said, "I find it repulsive, indecent and a lack of respect" to have a public funeral. This is yet another striking example of imperial consciousness (AP, in Cedar Rapids Gazette, 14/2/88; source item from John Morris).

A homeless woman in New York was forcibly institutionalized on the grounds that she tore up paper money, relieved herself on the street and refused to accept food from people. Neither a psychiatrist nor a judge was able to detect any insanity in her, particularly after she explained that she relieved herself in the street because no toilet facilities were available, burned money because she was insulted by the way it was forced on her by passersby, and turned down food either because it was offered to her by mental health workers whom she disliked, or because she wanted to buy her own. We would add that there is probably an outright prophetic proclamation of truth in her burning of money, especially in New York City, but prophets have always been either interpreted as insane, put to death as offensive, or both (SHJ, 13 November 87).

Ship of fools. During the mid-1980s, local authorities in the Greater London area have been providing homeless Irish families free transportation in order to "repatriate" them to Ireland—where they often have no place to go. A Los Angeles county senior official called for putting the homeless on a barge in the harbor (Time, 5 Sept. 88).

Restaurant owners in Burlington, VT, formed a corporation called "Westward Ho!" to buy airplane tickets to the west coast for local homeless people, thus getting rid of them (Newsweek, 14/11/88). In contrast, Rapid City, South Dakota converted its municipal building into a relatively enlightened shelter, though it was distressing to learn that in this small rural city alone, there were more than 100 homeless people.

In New York City, the social services department puts homeless people into so-called welfare hotels, paying sometimes over $40 a day for 9 x 12 foot cubicles (SHJ, 19/5/88).

A US National Academy of Science report on the health problems of the homeless identified mental disorder and alcoholism as their most prevalent problem, followed by high prevalence of TB and AIDS, high blood pressure, diabetes, minor injuries, skin and vascular disorders, respiratory diseases, foot and dental problems, and many stress-induced ailments. Mental problems play a role in 80-90% of cases. Homeless children tend to suffer from asthma, anemia, malnutrition, and serious emotional and learning problems. One of the reasons the homeless get poor health care is that they simply cannot cope with Medicaid hassles and transportation problems (Science, 14/10/88).

Until a few years ago, there was a very American comic strip called "Li'l Abner." In one of its episodes, someone was murdering the people of Dogpatch by putting poison into their canned beans. Charged with protecting the people, Detective Fearless Fosdick would creep around people's houses, peek through their windows, and quickly put a bullet through the head of any unsuspecting victim about to eat beans, thereby insuring that the person would not die of poisoning. Someone said that some of the things that go on in human services remind him of this. As an example, he cited the people who make sure that street people will be able to "die with their rights on," meaning that their rights to homelessness and to choose to starve or freeze to death are protected in the courts.

Almost blasphemous Uppie pasttime in the context of contemporary homelessness is to take off a few days and hobo trains around the country, singing hobo songs at night around a track-side camp fire to the music of a guitar they brought along, eating potluck hobo stew spiced from little plastic bags of exotic spices also thoughtfully brought along. Some even charge any real hobos for a
portion of the pot. Just in case, the phony hobos also carry a credit card concealed on their bodies. To add romance, they may take on exotic names, like "Santa Fe Bo." This is called recreational hoboing. Some of these people even hobo thusly to some fancy vacation spot where they sent their luggage ahead of them, there to resume their "real" identities (Time, 11 July 88).

*Various sources list the meaning of various kinds of hobo signs. Hobo signs are very interesting, being a form of Bliss symbol system, or written sign language analagous to American Sign Language. A cross means that "religious talk will get you a free meal here," two long lines running upward mean "the sky is the limit"; something that looks like an eye warns that the authorities here are alert and not very friendly; and something that looks like an arm brandishing a stick means "a beating awaits you here" (Towsen, 1976, p. 285).

*A commercial developer said "The homeless are performing a great service to the nation by making clear how bad the housing situation is" (Time, 11 April 88).

*Some things that we report are hard to believe, and others are simply beyond belief even though they are true and we must report them anyway. Into the latter category falls a chess tournament for the homeless being held in San Francisco, top prizes including gift certificates at Yuppie stores, tickets to ball games, and, most appropriate of all, dinner at the Sizzler Steak House (from The New Yorker, provided by Rachel Janney).

This gave a clever idea to the TIPS editor's fertile mind: a marathon walk for the homeless in Syracuse—and the winner will be permitted to cut the TIPS editor's lawn.

It's a Dog's Life

(Among other things, this English poem on homelessness is a commentary on people leaving their money to animal charities. From Nelson, Avoiding Institutions, 1982.)

It's a dog's life, don't you see,
Not for the likes of you and me.
They don't live in doss houses or spikes, you know,
They have their own language, bow-wow-wow.
Whatever that means I can't translate—
And they look at me with eyes of hate.

They've got their own hotel at Battersea way.
No need to kip out night or day;
Just a wag of the tail and a cheeky smile,
and they've got free board for a little while.

Then along comes a lady with tears in her eyes
grabs hold of a poodle and says her goodbyes.
"Come along, darling, you poor little thing."
And stroking his head a lullaby sings.

But who loves a man when he's down and out,
walking the streets, around and about?
No roof over his head,
No warm clean bed.
Doors slamming shut wherever he goes.
Holes in his shoes and ragged clothes.

It's a dog's life, can't you see.
No one loves the likes of me.
And it's a pity, I stop and think,
How many people take to drink.

* A spike is a workhouse.
Higher Values & Societal Issues

*Oxford University Press published one of the most scholarly available surveys of religions in the world, by David Barrett in early 1982 (Time, 3 May 82). In terms of percentage of world population, the major religious groupings generally have about the same percentage that they had in 1900, except that the tribal and Chinese folk religions have virtually vanished, while professed atheism has gone from almost nothing to 21%. It also appears as if Eastern Orthodox Christianity is, for all practical purposes, dying out. An estimated 605 million Christians live under political restrictions to their religious freedom. The United States is the religiously most disparate nation in the world, with over 2000 denominations among its Christian population alone, plus the largest population (7.1 million) of Jews on earth. However, in many countries, quite a bit of cheating has been going on in regard to the relevant statistics. For instance, the world's biggest Catholic country, Brazil, lists as Catholics 60 million people who dabble in spirit worship, and over 11 million who are Protestants.

*Quantum mechanics, developed by physicists such as Bohr, Planck, and Heisenberg, is one of the areas where natural science and philosophy profoundly engage each other. Many of the principles of quantum theory fly in the face not only of experience and intuition, but also of logic. Under quantum physics, objects are not defined as material objects as we experience them, but as "probability waves" very abstractly conceived. An interesting potential implication of quantum physics is that the universe is a causeless random fluctuation of events in a sort of all-encompassing vacuum. Thus, this theory comes perhaps closer than any other scientific one to potentially supporting the logic of a totally materialistic view. Another implication is that a single particle can theoretically exist in more than one physical space, i.e., be in more than one place at a time. Quantum physics is not a far-out hypothetical or playful theory, but one of the major theories used by physicists not only to understand but also to predict the phenomena of the universe, and there is a substantial body of evidence that supports it (Discover, May 1982).

*There is considerable, and indeed very sophisticated, debate among ethicists whether it is possible to specify a moral code that is both universal and entirely based on reason, i.e., without reliance on any particular metaphysical religious system. The ethicists who think this can be done generally invoke a few basic postulates such as the Golden Rule, the largest good for the largest number, etc. Other ethicists have managed to systematically demolish any such system by showing that its implications might easily be rejected on purely rational grounds as well. Those latter ethicists point out quite logically that the absence of a universal rational moral code points to hedonism, i.e., the maximization of "happiness," as the ultimate irreducible moral standard, and therefore also as the standard for the "modern secular person." For a brief but excellent and incisive analysis of this issue, see Contemporary Psychology, 1982, 27(6), 421-424.

*Our views of the modern monkey trials. There have been all kinds of attempts to make the teaching of the divine creation of the universe mandatory in schools. A landmark court case in Arkansas concluded in January of 1982 that such an effort is essentially motivated by a fundamentalist religious view, and therefore violates the separation of church and state. Creationists in turn have claimed that the theory of evolution is itself a religion.

This is an instance in which both sides are partially right and partially wrong. To require the teaching of a "creation science" is absurd, but the claim that public schools should not and do not "teach religion" is neither implemented nor implementable. In a sense, virtually anything taught is based on values and could be viewed as a religion, and it is neither desirable nor possible to educate children without teaching values. Indeed, even values will decide what factual content is to be taught. Because it is impossible not to teach values, it means that de facto, all kinds of religions are taught in the schools—except value...
systems which unequivocally claim a religious identity. This means that it is mostly Judeo-Christian values that are not taught, while all kinds of other value systems that in every respect function as religions can be, and freely are, taught. The problem probably escapes any solution, underlining that perhaps the single most important thing is to explicate any and all of the major value systems that may or may not be taught, rather than to come down selectively on only one or a few of these.

*Public school programs that seek to teach moral values have discovered that they cannot teach Judeo-Christian values without being cited for violation of the separation of church and state. They thus have had a hard time identifying a value system to teach, and in some cases have settled for teaching the Constitution and the Bill of Rights—which is a classical example of elevating a political principle or system into an ultimate source of moral authority, and thus making an idol of it (Newsweek, 13/10/86).

*Napoleon reportedly once said that "some people will believe anything just so long as it's not in the Bible."

*Let Gott do it. Cosmologists have long tried to develop various models of how our current universe might have had its origin. Probably the most popular current model is the so-called "big bang" theory. It holds that the universe began in an "initial singularity" of infinite density and temperature, when the universe was possibly no bigger than one trillionth the size of a single proton, which itself is smaller than an atom. Within a fraction of a fraction of a second, the amount of space which eventually would span the 10 billion light years nearest our galaxy had expanded to about 10 centimeters (Science, 1/28/83). Cosmologists describe the moment of the creation of the universe as "singularity at t = 0 and density and curvature approaching infinity," t standing for time. To describe what happened then will require "a quantum theory of gravitation which does not yet exist" (American Scientist, 3 & 4/86, p. 176). Science (26 February 82) observed that the big bang theory has always worried scientists because it appears to "imply the breakdown of all physical law." Along comes now a new model which, in essence, proposes that our universe is only one of a conceivably infinite number of universes, each of which is a "bubble" in space-time, without any possibility of connecting to any other such bubbles, so that one will never be able to know how many universes there might exist. Amazingly, two scientists by the name of Gott (which means God) and Guth (which means good) are among those who propose that the universe was created out of nothing by itself (Newsweek, 13 6/88). Maybe they will soon be able to tell us why. Maybe instead of waiting for Godot, we should wait for Gott n' Guth.

*We have taught at TI events that everybody has at least one god, and that if one understands whom or what a person serves as his/her god, one will have a profound insight into that person, and be able to predict and understand much about the individual. An interesting example of the above is Nobel prize-winner Francis Crick, who recently wrote a book (Life Itself) in which he said that "God is a doubtful proposition at best," and prods people instead to glorify science. Religion is in essence presented as a primitive form of science, or science as a superior form of religion. Yet his own amazing explanation of the existence of life on earth is that superior beings from outer space flew by the earth and dropped a few organic compounds on it, out of which came the life we know. This remarkable theory, which he called "directed panspermia," is neither testable nor falsifiable, and therefore by definition outside the realm of the science which he has deified.

*Christ is my savior—but I don't want Him to tell me how to run my life. In a survey, 68% of Catholics who report themselves to be believers said that they did not want Christ to give them any specifics on how to live.

*A 1979 Gallup survey found that less than half of Protestants and Catholics could name even as few as four of the Ten Commandments.
A study conducted at a university in Hamburg, Germany, found that the students most likely to steal books from the library were in the areas of theology and law.

Goudzwaard, a Dutchman, wrote a most insightful book on the nature and dynamics of idolatry. The 1984 English version is entitled Idols of Our Time (Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill.). We recommend it highly. Among other things, it sheds much light on societal phenomena, history, and human services.

Where your treasure is, your heart will be also. The Catholic Archdiocese of Miami was discovered to hold stock in companies that build nuclear weapons, manufacture contraceptives, and make R-rated movies and cigarettes (AP, Fall 87; source item from Joe Osburn).

Polls have invariably shown (e.g., Frazier, 1986) that most people, even in highly developed societies, believe in one, and usually many, kinds of so-called paranormal phenomena, such as astrology and dousing. Not only that, but they also believe that there exist such things as the Loch Ness monster, the Bigfoot in California, and UFOs. Yet further, they believe that there exists solid scientific evidence for all these. These beliefs are clearly linked to some primitive forms of idolatries.

Some years ago, one might have seen a college course title along the lines of "God and Contemporary Life." In 1988, the TIPS editor encountered the course title "Gods and Contemporary Life."

Someone recently commented on the peculiar tone of modernistic religion shared by any number of denominations. It is "nondogmatic, free of distinctions, soft, warm, gentle, imprecise, full of good feelings, divorced from any unpleasant historical particularity. It draws no lines, denies nothing, seeks to offend no one; recognizes only the subjective sense of goodness. It is in fact the modern expression of Rousseau's civil religion—it will tolerate any belief save one that claims to be correct. Who can defend harsh certainty in the face of sweet confusion?" (New Oxford Review, summer 86).

An example of how contemporary hedonistic individualism has infiltrated the Christian churches occurred at the Beech Grove Benedictine Center outside of Indianapolis, Indiana, a retreat center run by the Benedictine nuns. Its chapel was given the name "The Centering Point," a name which implies that one goes there to center upon oneself, rather than to worship and pray to the Lord.

The October 1980 Futurist featured, tongue-in-cheek, an invention fitting for the modern age: a computer-supported and video screen-assisted fully automatized religious service dispenser automat. After putting in one's coins, one can twirl dials, push buttons and move levers that choose output from eight major religions (including Buddhism, Islam, etc.), play chants or hymns (if desired by the Vienna Boys' Choir), dial certain standard prayers (for instance, Hail Mary), obtain puffs of incense smoke or sprinklings of holy water, and even get a dispensation of communion wafers and wine for an extra quarter. If desired, a clergy member of the denomination one has selected will appear on the screen and talk to the buyer. While the machine could certainly be installed in public galleries and similar places, it can also be purchased in the Zapco Home Devotional Unit.

The computer system at Syracuse University, and its capabilities, is explained in a handbook and a newsletter. Readers are informed that "SUN GOD is not on BITNET. It can only be addressed through VMSmail as SUN GOD::" (from Martin Elks).

The dramatic spread of devotions to all sorts of Eastern religious and mystical concepts and practices must not be mistaken for an alternative to the prevailing decadent values of modernism. In fact, they typically are merely a re-packaging of at least some of the modernistic values in an appealing and different cover. This has been dramatically underlined by the Ramtha Cult,
supposedly a character from 35,000 years ago speaking through a woman medium (J. Z. Knight) in the context of meditation, yoga, and Zen. Ramtha is "teaching" that everyone is his or her own god, and that there is no right or wrong but only "individual reality" (Time, 15/12/86). No matter how absurd a cult may be in today's value environment, it is nearly certain to find some fervent adherents—sometimes in great numbers.

*Yet another spiritual guru who has gained prominence on the American scene is Frederick Lenz who peddles his own brand of eastern mysticism. He claims that an hour (for up to $600 each) with him is worth a hundred years of traditional meditation, and promises old-fashioned materialistic pay-offs, as by advertising that people can "gain the competitive edge through Zen." Embarrassingly, Lenz holds a doctorate in English literature from the State University of New York. One commentator said, "We have a spiritual crisis in this country. New Age gurus are feeding off it. It seems that anybody can sell metaphysical snake oil and get away with it."

*In a survey, 69% of Californians said that they were guided by a spiritual force, but Newsweek (21/4/86) commented wryly that the force was more likely to come from est rather than from God.

*A publishing house recently held a competition for the best version of a modern update to the Ten Commandments as written by an equivocal, wishy-washy non-committal contemporary committee. One's eyes roll at the mere thought of the product.

*A 1988 book by William Greider, called Secrets of the Temple, is supposed to be the best book to explain the US financial structure, but it really explains a great deal more. One of the points it makes is that the entire money system, and that of the US particularly, must ultimately really be understood as a religion. First of all, the use of money via paper rather than intrinsically precious tokens of exchange (such as gold, or for that matter, such universal trade goods as liquor or cigarettes) rests ultimately on faith, i.e., that when you give somebody a piece of paper, they will provide goods or services in return. The US Federal Reserve Board is governed by 12 people who are, in effect, high priests, and whose action determines what happens on the financial scene. The financial priests use a strange tongue unintelligible to outsiders, and they gather in great edifices that look like temples, such as the Bank for International Settlements in Switzerland, the World Bank in Washington, etc. Even on Wall Street, many buildings look like temples. To most people, the entire money system is shrouded in profound mystery, like the truths of the faith itself.

If all this is true, then our religion of money must also be a form of Satanism, considering what it accomplishes.

*We wonder exactly what is happening here. In a very short span of time, several British advertisements used old Christian stand-by hymns, such as What a Friend We Have In Jesus and When the Roll is Called Up Yonder as the music background for advertisements, in one case for Volkswagen cars and in the other case for confections. (Source item from Paul Williams.) Perhaps this is a new honesty, admitting that mammon is really the god that it is to most people.

*In West Germany, there has been an epidemic of occultism among juveniles, especially since ca. 1985, including such things as black masses with animal sacrifices and talk of human sacrifice (AW, 10 September 88).

*We should not be at all surprised to learn that a US Lieutenant Colonel with a secret security clearance who once functioned as a psychological warfare specialist in Vietnam has been involved in devil worship for 22 years, and formed his own Satanic church in 1975. A spokesperson for Catholic War Veterans who is not, as they say, "clear on the concept," complained naively "that the US Army is no place for worshippers of the Prince of Darkness." (Source clipping from Hank Bersani, 1/88)
A woman who had been instrumental in collecting the works of art that were to become the nucleus of the Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art in New York believed that the Russian painter Kandinsky (1866-1944) was the Messiah, and that artist Paul Klee was his apostle (Time, 15 February 1982).

Not only can a diversion become idolatrous by dominating people's lives by the sheer extent to which people devote their time and attention to it, but diversional endeavors may assume full-fledged identities as religions. A prime example is the rock music culture that has developed its own belief system (a hedonistic, and almost satanic, one), saints or even gods (performers like John Lennon and Elvis Presley), worship (mostly concerts), etc., and even immortals and second comings (e.g., that of Elvis Presley). Not surprisingly, we also commonly find desolation, despair and death in this idolatry as the idols betray their worshippers.

Reportedly, some rock groups have been recording Satan worship messages, such as "I live for Satan," on their records backward. If this is true, it would be consistent with the ancient practice of celebrating the "Black Mass" by reversing the order of the components of the mass.

There has been a growing belief, especially among Jehovah's Witnesses, that singer Michael Jackson is the returned Christ. Others have equated him with Michael the Archangel.

The degree to which the Elvis Presley cult is an idolatry becomes apparent when one considers that Elvis is commonly called not only the King but also "a savior," and that the recent cult claims that he is still alive have been interpreted as a "second coming." Fans today say that "the Elvis people love each other the way he loved them. What he gave to them, they are giving back"--a formulation right out of the Bible in regard to Christ and Christians (Syracuse New Times, 28/9/88).

In 1985, on the occasion of the deaths of four US Marines in El Salvador, President Reagan said that those who get to heaven "will truly find it guarded by the United States Marines" (NY Times, 23/6/85).

Someone who didn't like right-wing evangelist Jerry Falwell programmed his computer to place a toll-free call to the Moral Majority phone number every 30 seconds. The computer racked up approximately 500,000 calls at a cost of about $1 each before the Falwell organization caught onto it (Newsweek, 6 January 86).

According to one psychoanalytic interpretation, the question posed to Jesus by Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?" was a riddle similar to the riddle asked of Oedipus by the Sphinx. According to these psychoanalytic experts, the question was really a disguised way of asking "do you know where children come from?" According to this interpretation, Jesus was put to death because he could not answer the riddle because he had renounced both sex and violence in his own life. On the other hand, had he known the answer, that would have meant that he was possessed by forbidden impulses that would eventually have driven him to ruin (Children's Humor by Martha Wolfenstein, 1954).

Since roughly the mid-1970s, there has been an avalanche of publications concerned with "female spirituality." In 1988, we encountered the new counter-perversion to this, namely "male spirituality," more specifically "contemporary male spirituality." An example is a book entitled A Man and His God. As we have said before, if things keep going the way they have been, everything from pencils to body lotion to theology will be segmentized, with special "products" for the short male purple Macedonian who only speaks Serbian and is between age 50 and 60 who had a traumatic childhood but is still childless after 3 marriages. After all, nobody who has not experienced what he has experienced, and who shares the same identities, could possibly have the same needs or understand such a person.

The state of Massachusetts issued emergency regulations requiring that insurers cover artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization, but not yet "gamete intra-fallopian transfer (GIFT)" because it is still deemed experimental (Source material from Marylou Sullivan).
What Used to Be... Is Now Called

Modesty Sex hangup
Chastity Neurotic inhibitions
Moral self-discipline Unhealthy repression
Disgusting, obscene, pornographic Adult
Moral irresponsibility Being freed-up
Self-indulgence Self-fulfillment
Living in sin Meaningful relationship
Perversion Alternate lifestyle
Depravity Self-expression
Ethical anarchy Theology of liberation

(Adapted from an unknown author; source item from Ray Lemay.)

Interface Between Issues Related to Human Service, & Religious or High-Order Values

The United Church of Canada, which is a major church group in Canada based on three Protestant denominations which in the US are still separate, accepted abortion in 1960, approved it wholeheartedly in 1968, and declared it a national necessity in 1972. In 8/88, after 8 years of discussion, it voted by a 58% majority of its delegates to approve homosexuality as an acceptable "lifestyle" for its clergy. In recent years, it had also declared a hands-off policy toward premarital and extramarital sex, divorce, multiple marriages, suicide, and pornography (Interim, 10/88).

The corporal works of mercy? A Catholic nun proposed the starting of a new order consisting of women who would bear children for infertile women (Interim, 5/88).

So many Catholic priests have been molesting children that insurance companies will no longer cover diocesan personnel against molestation charges. It seems that a rather crucial question before the Catholic church is whether its priesthood is to be a homosexual one. The issue has not been forthrightly addressed. Strangely enough, opening the priesthood to women would apparently not resolve the issue because so many of the Catholic feminists aspiring to the priesthood have openly declared themselves as lesbian, or sympathetic to lesbianism (NCR, 8/1/88).

At a prayer breakfast, a former mayor of Houston announced that in order to control AIDS, he advocated "shooting the queers"--whereupon he received a standing ovation (~, 7 March 88).

In 1988, we first encountered a genre of publications called "psychotheology." It seems to consist mostly of religious psychopop material.

The latest quasi-religious cult in the US is the dream work movement. Growing numbers of people are recording their dreams on paper, tape or computer. Many participate in dream sharing groups that may meet as often as once a week, and in dream networks. Dream consultants and dream centers are springing up, and there are even dream balls with participants dressed as dream characters and symbols. Some spend up to two hours a day analyzing their dreams. Human service workers not only participate as dream consultants but also as members of this cultish movement. There are all sorts of schools of dream interpretation and utilization, including "incubation" and "lucid dreaming" (Time, 12 October 87).

Even the religions have jumped upon the "Alzheimer's" bandwagon. One can now buy entire books on "sensitive meditations" for people who "are close to someone with Alzheimer's." One can envision thousands of books on meditations, for people who are close to someone who is bald, who is starving to death, who has XXY syndrome, and on and on (Source item from Peter King).

Ever since its beginning in the late 1930s, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has been founded on a certain religious belief which was reflected in several of its famous 12 steps. It is not too well-known that these 12 steps were actually based on ideas formulated by the famous English cardinal (convert from Anglicanism)
John Henry Newman (1801-1890), and were originally meant to deal with personal reform in a broader sense than any particular bondage, such as to alcohol. In turn, AA became another model for innumerable other self-help groups, and the AA model has turned out to be just about the most effective among competing models for people under all sorts of bondages. Recently, a non-religious version of AA has been founded, but since it was precisely the religious element of AA that had the greatest impact upon most of its members who managed to break away from alcohol, it remains to be seen how this will work.

*Will you give what you have? Teofilo said to Christobel, the new convert in the little mission chapel in Cuba:"

"Christobel, if you had a hundred sheep, would you give fifty of them for the Lord's work?"
"Yes, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred cows?"
"Yes, Teofilo, I would."

"Would you do the same if you had a hundred horses?"
"Yes, of course."

"If you had two pigs, would you give one of them to Him?"
"No, I wouldn't; and you have no right to ask me, Teofilo, for you know I have two pigs."

*One particular perversion that we have occasionally encountered is the promotion of church interaction with handicapped people as a purely secular technology. The reasoning behind this goes something like this: churches claim to be people-oriented, service-oriented and charitable. They have a huge membership. Their members and clergy should be more prepared than average citizens to engage themselves with needy persons. Handicapped persons have many unmet needs for integration, material supports, advocacy, etc., which can be well met, or even better met, through channels other than those of formal service agencies. Church involvement and church membership would thus be an excellent way of meeting these needs. Such an approach may even emanate from people who have no religious beliefs whatever.

*Some religious people go to where handicapped people are, and try to convert them. One handicapped adult commented that "none of the preachers who come and preach at me will ever invite me into their home for dinner."

*During Holy Week in 1988, the Syracuse l'Arche community re-enacted the stations of the cross. One of the mentally handicapped members of the community played the role of Christ, and another one was supposed to be a member of a hostile crowd. When it came time for the latter to hurl depredations at Christ, this particular member found himself incapable of doing so. When the member who was playing Christ was crucified, he so identified with the role that he began to cry. (Source item from Doug Mouncey.)

Signs of the Christmas Season

*How the chemical industry stole Christmas. It is little known that Christmas trees are a veritable sink hole of toxic chemicals. Most of them are grown on tree farms in the following fashion. The land is cleared and doused copiously with herbicides of the most vicious kind. Then seedlings are planted that are sprayed for 7 consecutive years, 2-4 times a year, with insecticides, plus other frequent sprayings of fungicides. After being cut, they usually get an additional chemical treatment to delay needle loss, prevent insect attacks during transit, and sometimes to retard fire. Then the cycle starts all over (FA, 11 & 12/87). This is almost enough to drive conscientious people to artificial trees.

*When "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" appeared on the Christmas hit parade a few years ago, we thought it would be a passing fad that might last perhaps two seasons. Instead, the song has become a regular during the Christmas season, and may remain so for some time to come. As we noted before, the song is
built on themes of depreciation of the elderly, on the vicarious enjoyment of violence done to an old woman, and even on suggestions of rape of older women. It may thus be a reflection of cultural values toward elderly people, and probably feeds back into the fueling of such values.

*In earlier Christmas issues, we have poked fun at human services by inventing human service versions of the song "The 12 Days of Christmas." But as so often happens, reality is stranger than fiction: we ran across a 1987 text on the education of severely and profoundly handicapped students which promises the following numerical bounties: 23 questions to ask about community-based placement, 19 major competencies for teachers, 17 behavior management techniques, 10 guidelines for placement, 10 assessment instruments, 8 principles of effective instruction, 6 types of prompts, 5 components of an instructional trial, 4 models of supported employment, 4 approaches to prelanguage communication instruction, and much, much more! While it doesn't have quite the "je ne sais quoi" of the original, nor even of our modifications, it comes pretty close. In the same brochure was advertised another text on the same topic, which promised "ready-to-use assessment and planning forms for 282 clearly defined skill objectives." With 282 days of Christmas, there's not much of the year left for other festivities!

Peace(?) on Earth

*The quest for nuclear energy was launched by President Eisenhower in 1953 under the slogan "Atoms for Peace," and with the promise that it would provide energy "too cheap to meter" (Greenpeace, July/August 1988).

*Amnesty International identified human rights abuses in more than 80% of the countries belonging to the United Nations; this is the longest list since its founding in 1961 (NCR, 14/10/88).

*In the civil war in Mozambique, children are recruited to be warriors from among the 200,000 orphaned by the same civil war. They are desensitized to brutality by first being commanded to slaughter a goat—and then a prisoner (World Monitor, 11/88).

*We should be acutely aware of the fact that social security and welfare are called "entitlement programs," and are interpreted as being responsible for "uncontrollable increases" in the US federal budget—when what is really going on is that the poor who are being supported thereby are doing poorly, while it has been military spending that has been out of control. We also need to remember that what people are trying to do is to cut out the automatic cost-of-living increases, which of course would render the poor poorer while others continue to do well.

*The Catholic Worker of 5/88 ran an article by a man who signed up with the Navy and was then sent to school for 2.5 years to learn about nuclear power. He did so well that he was asked to stay on as an instructor, and for 2 years taught everybody who was assigned to Trident nuclear submarines. Only then was he himself assigned to nuclear submarine duty—and this was the first time that he came to realize, when he actually put his hands on the missiles on these submarines, that they were for real. After a few months of moral struggle, he requested to be assigned elsewhere or discharged. What we find remarkable is how few people in human services see the parallels of anything else to what they are doing. How few see that their true mission is to make marginal people dependent and keep them that way, to take poor people and keep them poor, handicapped people and make them more handicapped or even dead, etc., and they do not even see these things when they put their hands right on the real thing. As we emphasize again and again, it is not at all an issue of evil people doing evil things, but evil systems managing to get reasonably ordinary and even good people to do the evil thing. However, we do believe that goodness in people is destroyed when they do the evil deeds of other people or schemes long enough.
"Give us Barabbas!" Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis went before a group of high school students in Florida and asked them whether they preferred that money be spent on missiles or housing for the homeless—and the youngsters shouted back "Star Wars, missiles." We propose sending them all to some high school in Lebanon—as civilians (SHJ, 5 March 88).

Much as there are indeed such things as liberal kneejerkers, so there are also conservative ones. Among these is that anyone who opposes US intervention in leftist countries is either a lefty or a dupe of the left. Another is that anyone who decries police brutality or prison abuses is naive regarding what crooks, psychopaths and the prison population are like.

The hard walk of a Prussian officer out of his caste. Throughout history, artists have displayed an uncommon capacity to not merely perceive the human condition, but also the prevailing societal realities. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why tyrants and artists have so often been at odds. (Of course, we have to differentiate between true artists and so many contemporary people who turn out empty junk as art.) At any rate, one artist who played a prophetic role in modern German history was Fritz von Unruh, 1885-1970. He started as a Prussian military officer, but had to resign his commission because the military could not tolerate the theatre plays he began to write even before World War I. Called back to arms during the war, he participated in some of the bloodier battles and wrote poems about them which were denounced by the German high command itself. After the war he continued to write poems and plays and worked against war. As early as 1926, he warned against World War II which he saw coming up on the horizon. He opposed Nazism, and just about the time Hitler came to power, one of his plays which announced the destruction of Germany in the next war precipitated public riots in Frankfurt. The Nazis demanded that he be exiled, and he moved first to Italy, then to France, and finally to the US where he barely scratched out a living as a painter. He returned to Germany in 1948 and spoke amidst the ruins which he had correctly predicted so long before. Although he received highest honors for awhile, he soon fell into disfavor yet again because of his eloquent advocacy of pacifism.

We occasionally hear jokes that revolve around "what real pain is." Well, what real conflict of interest is was revealed by the following. A career US Navy Officer (Kenneth Carr) who was involved for 3 years in targeting nuclear warheads depreciated the destructiveness of nuclear weapons because, after all, in Hiroshima, "the telephones never stopped working and the streetcars were running again the next day." In 1987, he was appointed commissioner of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Greenpeace, 1 & 2/88).

Freud may not have been all he was cracked up to be, but in his old age, he did make a phenomenally insightful observation: "Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could very easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this—hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension" (Civilization & Discontents, 1929; cited in Discover, 6/86).

Deathmaking: Sexual Diseases & AIDS

Nobody can say any longer, if they could ever really say it, that AIDS has a low priority in US federal spending. As of 1988, AIDS funding overtook funding for heart disease research, and some federal agencies now get about half of their budget in AIDS dollars. All together, AIDS appears to be getting $1.3 billion in 1989 from the federal government. Federal AIDS funding will now probably begin to level off (Science, 11/11/88).

A 10/88 segment of the investigative news TV program "48 Hours" drew attention to the fact that people who use needle drugs are now the population at greatest risk of AIDS. It showed programs consisting of handing out bleach to addicted people, teaching them to clean "the works" of their needle paraphenalia with it, and demonstrating the cleaning technique. Everyone sang the praises
of such "education," and not one word was said about the importance of changing whatever makes people weak and degenerate, or dealing with the higher-order cultural values whence our contemporary mass drug addiction is derived.

*With the incredible numbers of social and medical problems and their effects in the US, it is absolutely staggering to consider that the National Conference of State Legislatures voted in 1988 that AIDS should be declared the top health concern of the nation. Just to point out what this means, even drug abuse was ranked lower by the Conference (AIDS Update, 10/88).

*In 1987, there were 26% more cases of syphilis than in 1986, due in part to the wanton prostitional sex that so commonly goes with addiction to cocaine, and in part to the presence of AIDS (Discover, 12/88). It now also appears that people who have AIDS may develop syphilis with a speed unknown since the 16th century. In people weakened by the HIV virus, syphilis may progress within 4 months to the point that it would ordinarily take at least 5 years—and even then only in about 3% of those stricken. Furthermore, syphilis from an old infection that appeared to have been cured by treatment, and that might indeed have remained dormant, may suddenly reactivate with a vengeance in people with the HIV virus. Even worse, ordinary syphilis tests may fail in persons with HIV infections because they may be so deficient in immunity that the body will not make enough syphilis antibodies to test positive.

*At least 7% of the homeless youths in New York are HIV-infected, and in many cases because they make their living through sex (NCR, 25/11/88).

*More women with AIDS are dying and leaving orphaned children behind. Current projections are that these children will not long hence become a possibly unmanageable problem for big city social agencies (Newsweek, 10/10/88). In turn, this could very well constitute an incentive for the subtle deathmaking of these children. In 1989 alone, it is estimated that 5000 women with AIDS in the US will have babies. In the Bronx alone, nearly 5% of women being delivered have AIDS (SHA, 13/11/88).

*A physician entered into a patient's hospital record that he had AIDS, upon which the patient sued and won $15,000 in damages. Are we to assume that writing up the truth about one's medical condition in one's medical record is now discriminatory? (Monthly AIDS Update, 11/88).

*One way to view AIDS is as a symptom of a much bigger disease, namely the modernistic world view. Conceivably, an AIDS epidemic might have occurred apart from this world view, but first of all, this is not what actually happened, and secondly, if it had, it would have had much less drastic expressions. Furthermore, there is no reason to expect that AIDS is the last severe disease to be spread by some kind of sexual contact. Throughout history, one such disease has succeeded another, and we can consider the future appearance of new such diseases a near-certainty. In fact, they could conceivably be even more deadly than AIDS. Medicine has massively participated in the deception of modern people by pretending that the advent of things such as antibiotics had banished the risk of sexual promiscuity, and psychiatry has participated by pretending that compulsive homosexuality is nothing more than an "alternative lifestyle" rather than an objective disorder—by the way, as much a disorder as compulsive sex with multiple partners would be for a heterosexual person.

There are not just one but several very good reasons to believe that an AIDS vaccine may never be developed, or if it is ever developed and available for mass use, that this will be sometime after the year 2000. As to the details why this is so, we refer to Monthly AIDS Update, 18/11/88. At the same time, it is possible that more money will be spent in the pursuit of this goal than on any other single medical treatment in at least US history.

Miscellaneous News

*The US Veterans Administration, which really should be abolished and genericized, has unfortunately been elevated to Cabinet status in 1988. Right away, this will cost about $10 million as a starter, mostly in order to change all the signs at the 532 VA buildings (Time, 31/10/88).
TIPS Editorial Policy. TIPS comes out every other month, and contains articles, news, insights, reviews and viewpoints that relate to the interests and mission of the Training Institute. At the present, this mission has to do with reading "the signs of the times," and interpreting their meaning for human services. While TIPS is mostly concerned with phenomena and developments that have to do with human services, reading and telling the "signs of the times" necessitates that TIPS also address some of the larger issues which affect our society and the quality of life on earth, as well as the ways in which decisions are made in our society, because these higher-order phenomena will eventually express themselves in human services in various ways, including in human service values and funding. Usually, each TIPS issue will focus primarily on one specific theme. TIPS addresses relevant developments whenever and wherever they occur, so disclosures of adaptive or horrific developments promoted by a particular political party or government should not be taken as partisan political statements. We assume that subscribers are people who lead hard lives struggling against great odds, and are aware of many shortcomings in human services. Thus, we try to inject levity into TIPS so as to make subscribers' lives more bearable (or less unbearable, as the case may be), even if not deliriously joyful. In fact, the "signs of the times" are depressing, and thus some TIPS content is in need of occasional levitation. TIPS tries to report developments truthfully, but since it gets many items from other sources, it cannot be responsible for errors contained in original sources. Specific items from TIPS may be reproduced without permission as long as the full TIPS reference is cited/acknowledged, and as long as only small portions of a TIPS issue are so reproduced.

The Training Institute. The Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency (TI), directed by Wolf Wolfensberger, PhD, is part of the Division of Special Education & Rehabilitation of Syracuse University's School of Education. Dr. Wolfensberger is a professor in the Mental Retardation Area of that Division. Since its founding in 1973, the TI has never applied for federal grants, and has been supported primarily by fees earned from speaking events and workshops across the world, and to a small extent from consultations, evaluations of services, and the sale of certain publications and planning and change agency tools (see "TI Publications" below). TI training has: (a) been aimed primarily at people who are or aspire to be leaders and change agents, be they professionals, public decision-makers, members of voluntary citizen action groups, students, etc.; and (b) primarily emphasized values related to human services, the rendering of compassionate and comprehensive community services, and greater societal acceptance of impaired and devalued citizens.

Invitation to Submit Items for Publication. We invite submissions of any items suitable for TIPS. These may include "raw" clippings, "evidence," reviews of publications or human service "products," human service dreams (or nightmares), service vignettes, aphorisms or apothegms, relevant poetry, satires, or brief original articles. We particularly welcome items telling of positive developments since bad news is so frequent as to be the norm. Send only material you don't need back, because you won't get it back. If we don't goof, and if the submitter does not object, submissions that are used will be credited.

Dissemination of TIPS. Readers are requested to draw the attention of others to TIPS, and to encourage them to subscribe. A subscription/renewal form is found on the back of each issue. Please consider photocopying this form and forwarding it to potential subscribers. Also, we appreciate subscribers announcing the availability of TIPS wherever appropriate in other newsletters and periodicals.

TIPS Back-Issues Available. TIPS tries to have a supply of back-issues available for new subscribers who wish to complete their set. Let us know what you need, and we will negotiate a package price.

TI Publications. The TI sells or recommends a number of items relevant to its mission, and lists them on a "publication list" which is updated twice a year. If you want one or more copies, please let us know.
Complete the form below for subscription/renewal/donation/address change (as applicable), and return it to the TIPS editor at the address below. We encourage you to make copies of this form and circulate it to others who may be interested.

[ ] Address Change  [ ] New Subscription  [ ] Donation  [ ] Renewal

If this is a renewal, the address below is: ___ the same, ___ new.

NAME OF PERSON OR ORGANIZATION

MAILING ADDRESS (list the address that is least likely to change in the future. For some individuals, that is their work address, for others, their home address.)

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED