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10-1990

TIPS, Volume 10, No. 3 & 4, 1990

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Some unexpected events, including the loss of both our long-term secretaries at the Training Institute, overwhelmed the TIPS editor so that we were not able to bring out an October issue and, therefore, are bringing out a double issue that incorporates traditional December themes (poverty, homelessness, the interface of human service and religion, the prison scene, war and peace) with miscellaneous other issues.

Poverty

* An article in Science (27/4/90) made the point that a distinction should be made between people who are poor, and those who belong in what one might call the "underclass." After all, college students may technically be poor without belonging to the underclass. The underclass is defined largely by a long-term persistence of poverty, often across generations; certain types of behaviors; and usually residence in certain types of locales. The article concluded that while, according to governmental criteria of poverty, poverty in the US increased from 12.6 to 13% between 1970 and 1980, the underclass was much smaller than this, but also growing more quickly. The article also noted that there has been an increasing concentration of underclass criteria in certain neighborhoods in the US, more than there had been before. In other words, slums and ghettos are becoming more slumish and ghetto-ish, and people of the underclass who formerly might have lived elsewhere are increasingly forced into such neighborhoods.

* Graveyards where the indigent or unknown are buried are called "potter's fields," in allusion to Matthew 27:6-7. The potter's field for New York City is on Hart Island in the East River, and is most likely the biggest in the world, holding 750,000 bodies. It is a classic and sorrowful story of the devaluation and deviancy-imaging of the poor. The island has held a Civil War prison camp, a nuclear missile launching pad, a garbage dump, and currently has a prison for 80 inmates who do the burial work. The poor are stacked four or five high into pits 100 feet long and 30 feet across, which are filled up when a thousand boxes, marked only with a crayon number, have been put into them. Not uncommonly, the boxes break open prior to burial. Many of the coffins, including those of children
whose bodies are abandoned by their parents, or whose parents are too poor to afford a burial, often arrive in garbage dump trucks. It is a sign of our times that the number of burials of indigent infants has increased faster than that of indigent adults, largely as a result of the rise in drug addiction. In 1989, 16,000 babies were buried on the island! Hardly any of these parents ever show up to visit the graves in later years. (NY Times, 28/3/90; source item from David Schwartz)

* An article in the Syracuse Herald Journal (25/2/90) described the conversion of a Rescue Mission storehouse for used clothing into a 43-residence condominium selling for $250,000 each. The article was immediately below another one on a Syracuse shelter that provides beds for up to 70 homeless people every night. One wonders how many people, including even the newspaper layout people, noted the irony in this juxtaposition.

* An interesting new sign of the times is that a client of the welfare system in South Australia has made it his full-time business to personally harass welfare employees, mostly at a senior level, all the way up to the minister. In essence, he is giving them the street version (being followed, receiving threatening calls in the middle of the night, etc.) of the kind of harassment that human service structures so commonly inflict upon the poor and powerless in a bureaucratic fashion. While the man may be dangerous, and possibly even wrong, he has succeeded in inflicting on welfare workers the kind of insecurity and fear that poor people who are victims of the service system feel all the time. This has prompted a good number of welfare workers to move their homes, unlist their phones, and even leave the state—all things that are the middle-class versions of so many of the strategies of the poor to escape the attention and surveillance of the ruling powers.

* Holland (Social Thought, 1989) characterized the current societal scene as follows (p. 30). "We have resigned ourselves to defeat in the 'war on poverty,' and have accepted the growth of a permanent underclass of the chronically poor, dependent and victimized. Corruption in public life is seen as inevitable. We feel alienated from government, betrayed by large corporations, and distrustful of our legal institutions. Our society seems to be losing a sense of cohesion, an allegiance to shared values, and any commonly understood moral vocabulary which would help us make sense out of our private or public lives (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Seidler, 1985)."

* According to the Association of Friends of Donkeys (in Germany), one reason why donkeys acquired an image of stupidity was that wealthy people used to ride on horses, while poor people rode on, or walked with, donkeys. Since the wealthy tended to think of the poor as stupid, by juxtaposition, donkeys got imaged as stupid (Parade, 5 Nov. 89). Of course, one of the more plausible alternatives is that donkeys acquired their undeserved reputation for stupidity from their stubbornness.

The Universal Valid Instincts of the Very Poor

It has often been noted that those who are little and even least in the world, and who usually are oppressed, so often have insight into the most obvious truths and realities to which the powerful of the world—and especially the oppressors—seem oblivious and even blind, as exemplified in the famous story of
the Emperor's clothes, in which it was the child who finally burst out "but the Emperor has no clothes!" when all of the smart and adult people were acting as if he did. We have run across many similar such instances in human services. A very striking example was that of a woman incarcerated in a psychiatric institution who burst into a meeting of professionals being held at that institution, and exclaimed, "This place is making me crazy! And the clocks even go backwards!" An alert observer then looked and, lo and behold, the clocks were indeed running backwards; and it was quite likely that even if she had not been crazy to begin with, the nature and routines and practices of the institution would indeed have driven her so. (Story told to us by Ray Lemay.) Even very intellectually impaired people can often perceive the insanities of so many human service practices which well-educated and professionalized service workers accept with a straight face and implement seriously.

Because the perspective of the downtrodden is so often much more accurate, we have collated below some of the apparently timeless and universal insights or instincts of the poor, which have proven themselves to be historically valid, regarding the likely purpose, function or outcome of certain societal practices.

On Morality in General
1. There is such a thing as good and evil, black and white, even if some moral issues have their gray areas.
2. Saintly people, too, can be identified, as can evil ones.

On Oppression, Its Forms, and Subtleties
1. To be poor is to be much nearer to death.
2. There are some serious moral problems with great wealth.
3. There is a connection between the oppression of the poor and other societal oppressions of the people of one's own nation, or of those abroad.
4. The valued and privileged classes in society derive many benefits from the poverty of the poor.
5. One will not be fully sympathetic to the plight of the poor unless one experiences their lives directly, rather than only from a distance.
6. War is harder on the poor than on the privileged classes, and kills more of the children of the poor.

On Public Charity
1. The vast majority of human service, welfare, and charity programs are a sham, in that they do little good for the people they serve, and often benefit the servers and society much more than the needy.
2. "Welfare" and similar type programs serve as much or more to keep the poor in line and under control as they do to habilitate them, or keep them from starving.
3. "Welfare"-type programs involve so much degradation of the poor that there is some honor in starving rather than submitting oneself to these indignities.
4. It is dangerous for the poor to go into public hospitals.

On the Law and Law Enforcement
1. It is dangerous to let the authorities know who, where, or even that one is. This explains the following three otherwise puzzling phenomena. (a) Many poor people prefer anonymity because they intuitively understand that the authorities often have an ulterior motive in wanting to be informed as to who and where the poor are. For instance, many poor people will refuse to register for social security, or apply for welfare benefits; and the lower classes have
historically been resistive to census-taking. (b) Many, many street people use
aliases. (c) Many poor people do not want to give out their own addresses, or
those of others. For instance, if one enters a poor neighborhood and asks for
directions, one may not be given them, or at least, one will not be given accurate
ones. Similarly, if one enters such a neighborhood seeking a particular person,
even people who know may not tell the truth about where that person is. (d)
Physical mobility is highly adaptive in evading the control of the authorities.
This wisdom is thousands of years old, and explains the never-ending conflict
between the authorities and nomadic or non-sedentary people, and why so many poor
people are even more mobile than would be accounted for by poverty itself.

2. The presence of police forces in their neighborhoods means trouble for the
poor.

3. "The law locks up both man or woman who steals the goose from off the
common—but lets the greater felon loose who steals the common from the goose."
I.e., the law is good to the mighty and hard on the lowly.

Caution: Poverty-Makers at Work

We are living in an era in which there is much redistribution of wealth from
the bottom to the top, especially (a) from the Third World to the first, and (b)
within various countries, from the poor or lower-middle classes to the top. The
latter started happening massively in the US under the Reagan administration, and
continues unabated. Among the wealth transfer mechanisms so far (many mentioned
before) are the savings-and-loan scandal, systematic theft of and from US pension
funds, the HUD scam, and the junk bond scam. Even ordinary banks are now
increasingly cracking, and eventually, the entire deficit-based economic system
may come down—to some degree on the rich as well as the poor. Updates on these
and other mechanisms of poverty-making will be given below.

The Tax System

One of the many wealth transfer mechanisms of Reagan was that in 1981, he
arranged a tax cut which gave tremendous benefits to the wealthy. Then in 1988
came the tax "reform" legislation which was supposed to make things easier and
better all around, but turned out to make tax reports harder on everyone, and tax
avoidance easier for richer people. Under a series of Republican governments,
the income tax rates for the higher-earning groups have been lowered so that now
they are lower than that of any other major Western industrial democracy. One
result is that between 1981–86, the 1% of US families with the highest income got
richer by 74% even after adjustment for inflation, while the bottom 40% of the
population lost income (USN&WR, 2 July 90).

Banking and Other Financial Institutions

* It was Reagan who pushed for deregulation of many sectors, including the
banks, and the savings-and-loans (S&L). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there
were several major failures of financial institutions in the US. Continental
Illinois Bank, the 8th largest in the US, failed; one of the biggest Wall Street
investment firms declared bankruptcy; and the entire system of S&L banks began to
go under. Despite lip service to a laissez-faire market by conservative powers
for over 100 years, these same powers, when in control of the US government,
decided to use tax funds to selectively bail out these various financial
institutions. Continental Illinois was bailed out to the tune of $4.5 billion,
and salvaging the S&Ls may eventually cost the US public as much as $600 billion
over a period of several decades! The reason the ruling forces have taken such
drastic steps is that a major financial failure would signal that the social order
itself is in a state of failure, with all that this implies; and imperial parties
will almost inevitably try to prevent not only the collapse of the imperial order,
but even the transmission of messages that there is anything fundamentally wrong
with it.
Because the weekly news magazine, US News & World Report, is thoroughly imperial, and because it always tries to paint the rosier possible picture, things must really be terribly bad whenever it admits of problems. It is therefore astonishing that in its 6 Aug. 90 issue, the editor-in-chief announced that we are witnessing a "systemic breakdown" symbolized by the S&L scandal. He called this not merely a financial but a moral crisis, and explicitly berated the conservative champion, President Bush, for sharing with other politicians a mentality of "defer at all costs," by which he meant never addressing a problem that could somehow be postponed or ignored.

Powerful banking interests now want to be included under the same general kind of federal bailout guarantees because they have certainly seen in the massive tax bailout of the bankrupt S&Ls a good thing for themselves and the rich. Also, banking interests have gone to war against credit unions, which are generally small, non-profit cooperatives owned by their shareholder/depositors. In essence, this is an attempt to eliminate competition and hijack the insurance deposit funds of the credit unions, so as to be able to use them for further bailouts of regular bank failures.

The 14/1/90 investigative CBS TV news program "60 Minutes" interviewed a young crook who had managed to borrow half a billion dollars from banks, often with the banks virtually forcing money on him, sometimes without any advance study of what he was doing with it, which he used to acquire real estate, businesses, and artworks—aside from high living. Briefly, he was one of the richest men in the US. Amazingly, this young man, with only a minimal education, never had to use any of his own money at all, of which he did not have any anyway. Apparently, armies of accountants participated in this scam by not applying rigorous techniques, if not by outright cheating as well. Since this was essentially a pyramid scheme, it eventually busted, and the young man had to declare bankruptcy and face charges, but he said that if he ended up in jail, so should oodles of accountants, bankers, politicians, and others—and we agree.

It is not only failing banks that are part of the scam in the current transfer of wealth, but many other programs, such as the US federal credit and insurance programs. A congressman said that eventually, every man, woman, and child in the US may have to make up an average of $20,000 in taxes for all these various defaults and scams (Time, 18/12/89).

The National Debt

An insightful article in Time (7 May 90) finally helps us to understand why, of all groups, the Republicans in the US have been so loathe to do anything about the mounting national debt. It turns out that the national debt is really another program for transferring wealth from the lower to the upper classes, who are largely the owners of capital that is being loaned to the government. They are thus the recipients of what the article called a "social welfare program for the rich." Of course in the long run, they may lose everything if the economy collapses, whereas the poor always have little to lose. As the writer also put it, at least this "bizarre and expensive welfare program" does not benefit the "undeserving poor."

The Social Security System

One of the transfers of wealth from the poor to the richer classes is taking place in the US social security system. In 1983, the Social Security Act was amended so that these taxes fall even more heavily on lower income people. Wage-earners have been paying much more social security (SS) tax than the SS
system currently consumes. While theoretically, the surplus goes into a trust, the fact is that when more people become elderly, they will find in the trust just a bunch of IOUs written by the current federal government to subsidize its budget debts. The only way it will be able to pay off the SS debt at that time will be by raising taxes—either general taxes across the board, or a phenomenal increase in SS taxes which will almost certainly not be accepted by the population. All our worst fears about hatred of sick and elderly dependent people will then probably be realized. The effort of legislators such as Senator Moynihan to lower the SS taxes is of course an attempt to force the government to raise its other taxes, so that it will cease borrowing from the SS fund, and cease deceiving the public about the federal budget deficit and how much it spends. The current tax policy merely postpones a tax raise to later generations when there will be a smaller proportion of wage-earners. It is mindful of psychopathic people who live it up today at the expense of others because they neither have a sense of time and futurity, nor a conscience.

* It has been estimated that somewhere between 10-25% of all US Medicare expenditures are lost to misrepresentation or fraud by medical practitioners. Even if only the low figure is correct, it would mean a cost of $300 for every one of the Medicare beneficiaries. The most common abuse is billing for services that were not provided, followed by billing for a more expensive service when a cheaper one was actually given. The most borderline kind of fraud is to actually give an unneeded service, and charge only for what was given (Modern Maturity, April/May 1990).

The US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Scandal

* Further in regard to the federal HUD scandals: USN&W (8 Jan. 90) pointed out that virtually all the major cities in the US have suffered from an over-building boom that now has resulted in a 1% vacancy rate in commercial properties nationwide, with some cities being at 30%. Not only is this space that is being denied to the homeless, but after all sorts of people take profits from the construction, many banks are apt to experience very significant losses, with the spectre of massive bankruptcy, so that—as in the case of the S&L bank scandal—the general public will then be expected to bail out these other banks. And this catastrophe is apt to happen just at the time when we are also apt to see the results of all sorts of private pension scheme scams and defaults.

The scandals mentioned here and in the 2/90 issue are all the result of very systematic manipulations by Republican governments. To our knowledge, no Republican administration has ever lightened the burdens of the poor, though we hasten to note that we do not thereby mean to endorse Democratic policies.

Theft of and From Pension Funds

* For some years, we have been warning of the massive ongoing theft of the private retirement funds of aging people. USN&W (30/7/90) pointed out that the alienation of monies from private pension funds was extremely widespread. When one couple complained that they were not getting the benefits that they were supposed to under their company’s plan, the US Labor Department said that there was so much of that going on that it was simply not possible to investigate all complaints. There were about 870,000 private pension funds in the US as of 1990, and of those that were audited, money was de facto being stolen from more than a third.

USN&W (28/5/90) also had a lengthy article which warned of one particular dimension of this massive transfer of wealth from the lower to the higher economic strata, namely, the unreliability of the life insurance that many people have been
buying as a form of income for their old age. About 20% of the 100 largest life insurers became insolvent in the 1990s, and unlike banks, insurers are not protected by a federal bailout provision. One reason for the current crisis is that life insurers hold about $60 billion in junk bonds, which is four times as much as has been held by the thrift S&L banks—and we know what happened to them. There is also massive fraudulent reporting by insurers, and collusion in this by state oversight bodies. Even insurers that have an A+ rating may suddenly announce major shortages or outright insolvency which they previously managed to hide.

* The congressional General Accounting Office estimated in 1988 that private firms in the US had $402 billion of health benefit obligations for their retirees above what money there was in the respective accounts to cover it. In consequence, firms have been trying to somehow or other get out of their obligations and promises, which is of course a form of indirect theft of resources of older people, that, even if not necessarily legal, is made legitimate by various machinations and by gross collusion of the US government. Already retirees have hardly any statutory protection against this theft (Modern Maturity, 6 & 7/90).

Insurance Scams

* According to AARP Bulletin (4/90), there is a widespread pattern of swindling, deception and exploitation of elderly people by insurance companies and insurance agents. This is particularly problematic with long-term care policies since their sale increased explosively from 125,000 in 1987 to 1.3 million in 1989.

* Unscrupulous parties have begun to offer to buy the life insurance policies of terminally ill people at a large discount. For instance, a man who had AIDS sold his $100,000 policy for $53,000 in order to be able to use the cash during his remaining months. While this is undoubtedly to the benefit of many ill people, lawyers are making a tidy profit. Firms that do this have names such as Beat the Grim Reaper International, and American Life Resources Corp. (perhaps it should be Corpse). (Indianapolis Star, 27/2/90; source item from Joe Osburn)

Other Impoverishments of the Elderly

* Consumer Reports (2/90) devoted a major article to retirement communities for the elderly, in which about 230,000 people in the US now live. One generally has to put down a very hefty entrance payment, plus a monthly fee. The problem is that some of these communities have gone bankrupt while others are financially precarious, and older people may find that they have lost their down payment, and are thrown on welfare and the service agency system. These arrangements evolved from the private institutions of fraternal and religious organizations for their own members and their families. These usually required that people sign over their possessions on entrance, in return for a guarantee of life-time care. Nowadays, a person may surrender close to all their possessions in the down payment, and find betrayal rather than lifetime care.

* The same kind of stripping of possessions and the means of livelihood from marginal people that we see in this country and in several others has also been happening in Australia. An older woman wrote a letter to the newspaper that she had no relatives whatsoever, had been ill a lot, but managed to pay her bills by doing two things: selling her possessions bit by bit, and going without food. By the time she was "practically stripped of possessions" (in her own words), she was beginning to consider suicide. Thus, even the pension scheme on which she subsisted was not enough of a so-called safety net. (Source clipping Spring 89 from Mike Rungie)
Conclusion

* In early 1990, the Wall Street Journal published an exposé of the way US health agencies in recent decades have stolen or misused federal community mental health monies, perhaps to the tune of $100 million since 1967. Only 5% of the federally-funded community mental health centers have lived up to the agreements under which they received their original funding. For instance, some hospitals took the money to start mental health clinics, but never did. Several agencies built swimming pools (actually, why not?—swimming therapy may be better than anything shrinkery has to offer). Ironically, federal oversight, particularly from within the National Institute on Mental Health, has been virtually non-existent, and in some instances there was collusion with these misuses.

* New York City has 4% of the population of the US, and 17% of its underclass, according to US News & World Report, 27/11/89.

* One interesting phenomenon of the late 1970s and 1980s is that unlike in previous eras, the proportion of the working poor in the US has actually increased, despite the fact that the economy had experienced very significant expansion during this time span. At the same time, income among the wealthiest 20% of the population has gone up dramatically. In 1988, they received 44% of the total national income, the largest share since such data began to be analyzed in 1947 (SHA, 15/4/90). The poor of today are poorer than the poor of yesteryear (Time, 30/10/89).

* The number of millionaires in the US rose between 1981-1990 from 600,000 to 1.5 million, and the number of people with assets of $10 million or more tripled or quadrupled. We can be sure than many derived their wealth from S&L thefts, stealing the pensions of poor people, and similar wealth transfer scams (USN&WR, 25/6/90).

Health & The Poor

* According to a sad article in the Ottawa Citizen (31/1/90), "depression-era solutions" are being employed to deal with chronic hunger of children in Canada. A church basement soup kitchen in Montreal that originally fed 18- to 30-year-olds now provides lunch to about 40 elementary school students every school day. Government research shows that Canadian children under 20 have a 56% higher death rate if they are in the lowest 20% income range than if they are in the highest 20% income range—a most striking and very "practical" example of the difference between being one of the haves and one of the have-nots. One positive note in all of this is that some poor women, often single mothers, have formed a so-called collective kitchen. By cooking together, they can afford to make more creative dishes and feed their families better than by trying to do so alone. The women rotate the site and the responsibility for their cooking chores, and share the costs and the making of the food, as well as the benefits. The bad news to this good news is that welfare does not like the idea, may consider this some sort of additional "income," and therefore reduce the families' welfare benefits. The other bad news is that one mother said the reason she did this was because she was going broke buying hairspray for her teenage daughters.

* In New York City, the city's poorest neighborhoods, inhabited by 1.7 million people, are served by only 28 physicians when more than 500 would be closer to the national average (AP in SHJ, 17/5/90).
A spot check found that on a given day in January 1989, 600 patients were backed up in the emergency rooms of New York City, waiting for hospital admission. Many were packed like sardines, some of them having to wait for days before admission. This has been routine in NYC (Dollars & Sense, 12/89).

The Open Door Hospitality House in Atlanta occasionally gets bills from a local hospital for treating a patient whose name is rendered as "Unknown, Male." This is because some of the homeless people of the street will give the hospitality house as their address when they are admitted to a hospital. Sometimes, the bill even comes in an envelope addressed to "unknown male." Amusingly, the bill will commonly mention that if the amount due is not quickly paid, the account will be referred to a collection agency (Hospitality, 2/90).

Other Forms of Oppression of the Lowly

Another subtle oppression of the lowly discovered. We have commented before on the fact that new computerized telephone-answering systems have at least two ghastly effects, namely, (a) a further replacement of human labor (and laborers) with machines, and thus a rendering of more and more people unemployed, unemployable, and superfluous; and (b) reducing more and more marginal people to outright dependence and incompetence because they cannot cope with the new level of complexity in gathering information.

We have discovered yet one more offense against the poor in this type of system, which is illustrated by the following vignette. If someone needs to call the US federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), there is no number for it listed in the telephone book, so one has to dial a federal information number, which is usually busy. When one finally gets through, one may be given a number for an INS office in some city near where one is calling from. When one reaches that number, one is told that they are not permitted to give out other numbers for INS (e.g., the downtown records office), which means that people would have to drive from wherever they live to another city just in order to maybe obtain a piece of information—which that office may or may not have—which one could easily have found out by phone if only one had been permitted to know the phone number! If one has enough sense to call back the federal information number and ask for the central INS number in Washington DC, and calls it, one is connected with a pre-recorded instruction system that tells callers to press 1 on their phone for information on a certain issue, 2 for information on another, etc. Some of these instructions are lengthy, and eventually one is told that if one wants to talk with a person, one has to press 0—but in the meantime, one has had to wait until all the instructions for 1 through 9 have been given. Thus, it takes more than 3 minutes on the line before one even attains the possibility of getting connected to a person. Then, when one finally does press 0, a recording tells one that it may take 25 seconds for a connection to be made, and then one may get...a never-ending busy signal. People who are calling long distance thus have to pay for a 4-minute long-distance call only to find that the phone is busy. If the caller has enough sense to call up the phone company and ask that the charge for that call be cancelled from one’s telephone bill because one never reached the other party, one will be told that because the call was technically completed—i.e., the caller reached the pre-recorded set of instructions—one will still be charged for the call. And of course, many of the people who might be calling INS would be foreigners and immigrants who do not speak English very well, which could be extremely frustrating and demoralizing for them. They need citizen advocates with telephone charge accounts to intercede for them!

Sojourners (2 & 3/1990) carried an article (Lee, 1990) that documented the not surprising fact that both within and between countries, toxic wastes get very
disproportionately dumped on the poor. Thus, within countries, toxic wastes are apt to be dumped near where the poor live, while internationally, rich countries dump their wastes in poor countries. The article also claimed that pesticide exposure causes more than 300,000 illnesses each year among farm workers in the US, predominantly Hispanic. A large percentage are children and women of child-bearing age, meaning that the children will be very much at risk of early or life-long diseases, and the women of bearing impaired offspring, if any at all.

* In some of our TI events, we talk about societally legitimized crimes against the poor, and how witnessing such legitimized crimes leads others to think that it is okay for them to do hurtful things to people they devalue. In a recent conversation with one of the lowly people of society, during which the dangerous effects of psychoactive drugs (such as Thorazine) were being discussed, this poor man of the streets said that he called things like the use of such drugs "politician crime."

* The editor of Science said (25/8/89) that there is probably no more dramatic form of aggression of developed countries against underdeveloped ones than the gradual local warming resulting largely from the consumptionism of the developed world. Developed countries are largely in temperate zones and can survive temperature increases, while many underdeveloped societies cannot.

* A book review in Newsweek (10 July 89) said that there simply was no such thing as a secret plan to destroy Haiti, but then added sagely that this did not mean that things were not going according to such a plan if such did exist. After all, social policies can be utterly systematic, and proceed with the most ruthless logic and consequentiality, without ever having been formulated, promulgated, or consciously embraced by anybody.

* One of the very few times in history where a ruler apologized for what his government had done was when the president of South Korea asked the nation to forgive his predecessor, pledging to try to do what he could to compensate for the injustices meted out under his rule.

* How things so often do not change much when looked at from the bottom up was exemplified by the following story. After the Catholic King James II lost the Battle of the Boyne against the forces of the Protestant King William of Orange in 1690, a poor boatman ferried the king across the Boyne River to safety, and inquired timidly, "Sire, who won the battle?" The monarch thoughtfully replied, "Put it this way, my man, you'll still be a poor boatman tomorrow."

**Homelessness**

* Beier, A. L. (1985). Masterless men: The vagrancy problem in England 1560-1640. London: Methuen. Beier shows how the measures taken by the state in England between ca. 1560-1640 to deal with vagrancy and problems thought to be associated with it, such as all sorts of theft, were a very new extension of state authority that has since been extended into many areas of life so that we now take it for granted, but that was a radically new and unwelcome departure at the time. For instance, the crown granted all sorts of powers to local magistrates and authorities that they had not previously possessed. Also, it was in response to the vagrancy problem that the first passports were issued. The basic "crime" of vagrancy--i.e., why it was seen as such a problem and treated so harshly by the powerful classes--is that "vagabonds appeared to threaten the established order. They were 'masterless' in a period when the able-bodied poor were supposed to have masters." Thus, for the poor not to be in subservience to a "master" was an intolerable threat. As Beier notes, vagrancy is "the classic..."
crime of status, the social crime par excellence. Offenders were arrested not because of their actions, but because of their position in society." Beier also notes that a large proportion of the large number of itinerant paupers in Elizabethan England were sick, handicapped, or both. Their death rate must have been astronomic, and yet for generations, society generated as many as thus died abandoned. It is horrendous to contemplate the parallel between all this and the homelessness in our society, and the role that is played by our human service system in the generation of homeless and dependent people.

* As we keep reiterating, it is rather strange that homelessness has increased dramatically in countries around the globe at about the same time. There may be up to 3 million homeless people in Russia alone. One interesting development in Eastern Europe is that more and more people are beginning to live in tents. In West Germany, more than 100,000 people were homeless as of 8/89 and increasingly, they are being driven out of the cities.

* A nun operating a shelter for homeless women in Adelaide, Australia, said that homeless women are much less visible than homeless men because rather than sleeping in public places, they are apt to associate themselves with some man for the sake of shelter, though they commonly suffer great harm from these associations (1989 source clipping from Michael Rungie).

* The weekly news magazine US News & World Report, is, as mentioned, a thoroughly imperial one that consistently covers certain issues in a fashion so as to make certain social problems appear to be less serious than they are. For instance, its 15/1/90 issue had a major article on homelessness which tried to convey the impression that drinking and drugs are at the root of it, rather than social policies.

* In 1984, the New York State Department of Social Services announced that it had a crisis on its hands in the form of 50,000 homeless New Yorkers (Hospitality, 10/90). In 1987, the estimate had increased to 100,000. The question now arises what to call a crisis that has doubled in size.

* No room in any inn. According to the Children's Defense Fund, there were approximately 100,000 homeless children as of early 1990.

* Children who have been in foster care have a vastly higher likelihood of eventually becoming homeless as adults (OMH News, 1/90).

* It is estimated that somewhere between 70,000-200,000 children in the US are not going to school because their families are homeless. Among the reasons why homeless children do not go to school can be transportation problems, parental neglect, and insuperable bureaucratic hassles to which the school systems subject the families, particularly since homeless families frequently move about. Some schools have even established special classes or mini-centers exclusively for homeless children—a development that 10-20 years ago would have been considered incredible by most people (SHA, 7 Jan. 90).

* The reviewer of the 1989 book, Old Men of the Bowery, told the instructive story of his 9-year old daughter contemplating with big eyes some homeless people huddled desperately on the steam venting grates of the DC subway, and remembering having heard Attorney General Meese say that homeless people like it that way. She finally asked her father doubtfully, "Do they really want to live there?" (CP, 35, 6). The book noted with awe that there are homeless old men who cope
with astonishing resilience with drinking, mental disorder, personal crises, harsh weather, malnutrition, illnesses of all kinds, physical abuse from others, and inexorable bureaucratic warfare against them, and yet are unable to focus their adaptive skills on escape from poverty and homelessness. The book also points out that few professionals are interested in these people, and that in turn, few of them wish to seek out professionals. "The ultimate dilemma is that their independence is both their most valuable possession and their major enemy."

* Research on shelters for the homeless is coming in big in academic and professional circles, with doctorate dissertations being earned thereby in some cases.

* Harvard University accepted a $15 million grant to study homelessness—and the first thing it did with the money was to construct a building. We hope that it has large steam grates outside (Sojourners, 12/89).

* The APA Monitor (2/90) ran a relatively long article about the astonishing story of an Atlanta psychologist who works with the homeless by helping build them homes, instead of talking to them about being homeless.

* As one observer put it, in the typical poorly supervised shelter for the homeless, "everything is up for grabs, including your personal belongings, your bed, your locker, your body and your privacy." (NY Times, 24/5/90; source item from John McKnight)

* In the days of the big bad old institution, the literature spoke of people becoming mentally institutionalized, meaning that they so adjusted to institutional life that they could no longer adapt to life in the community. Some contemporary observers claim to begin to observe the phenomenon of "shelterization," whereby homeless people who begin to rely habitually on shelters begin to adapt to this life, and their will to return to a more normal life thereby erodes. (Source clipping from John McKnight.)

* The city council in Irvine, Cal. voted in late 1989 to convert a building designed as a dog kennel—and with an operative dog kennel still on the same site—into a shelter for the homeless (AP clipping from Joe Osburn).

* The deathmaking of the homeless. The in-depth TV news program, "48 Hours," brought out dramatically on 18/1/89 that at least in New York City, there is a form of warfare going on against the homeless. The welfare department does everything it can to cut off as many homeless people from the welfare rolls as possible, and it succeeds with about 30,000 cases a month (it only admits to 15,000), by hassling them so relentlessly with requirements and paperwork that a lot of people simply are unable to cope with it. The response of the citizenry is largely one of trying to repress the reality of homelessness and to wish it away, because people are not able, or do not want, to deal with it. The program showed a number of human service workers participating in the war against the homeless, including a school teacher who teaches working class children, and—believe it or not—a social worker whose job is to work with the homeless. As some of the street people put it themselves, many privileged people have a "disappearance wish" for them that amounts to a death wish, and many of these are quite willing to play their small parts in the deathmaking, as by campaigning for the demolition of shelters for the homeless, and the ceaseless pushing around of the homeless. The program also brought out that polls have revealed that while homelessness was among the top concerns of citizens a few years ago, it has sunk way down in importance in people's minds.
* Vagabunden-rein! A series of measures launched in 1989 were designed to cleanse the New York City transportation system of the homeless. It began with a regulation that forbade the poor to beg, but continued to allow the rich (political groups and charities) to do so. In 6/90, a new regulation made it a crime to sleep or lie down in the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, followed by ongoing evictions of the 500 or so homeless to whom it was one of the few refuges. Outside the Port Authority Bus Terminal, the sidewalk began to be hosed down several times every day, even during peak summertime water shortages, in order to discourage the homeless from settling on it. Ironically, the authorities said they did this to get rid of a public health problem when, in fact, it was creating one. Instead of using terms such as the poor, homeless, oppressed and dispossessed, the newspapers reported on these issues by using terms such as vagrants, panhandlers and unruly (CW, 9/90).

* Six members of the Catholic Worker community in New York City were detained and issued summons for trespassing because they were serving soup and bread in a subway station where there were many homeless people (CW, 5/90).

* The war of downtown merchants in the US against the poor and homeless that began in the 1960s continues unabated, and as usual, to the accompaniment of genocidal language. Merchants in Atlanta, Philadelphia and Miami (among others) are pressuring city officials to "get rid of" both beggars and the homeless from downtown streets. Further, contemplating their increasing numbers actually seems to be hardening rather than softening the hearts of many citizens who, ever since the early 1980s, have dramatically reduced their financial support for shelter programs in many cities (National Catholic Register, 25/3/90).

* We have been told that in the Canadian province of Ontario, it was proposed to round up all the homeless people and send them to an island in the James Bay off Moosonee, which is about as far north as you can go and still be just south of the Arctic Circle. While we do not have the documentation, we can well believe it to be true, considering Ontario's culture of imperialism.

* Lions 10,000, Hoboes 1. In 1988, the city of Santa Ana in California picked up all of the meager possessions, such as their bedrolls, of 15 homeless people on a particular plot and threw them away. The people sued, and in 1990, won $50,000 between them. For that money, the city could have purchased a lot of shelter. (Source clipping from Mike Morton.)

* Many of the homeless lead very furtive lives in order to escape the grip of the authorities. Many of them have false names, and many do not reveal their true life story and identity to others. In fact, street life is one of the few remaining bastions of liberty in a modern society in which everybody is enumerated and computer-registered, and this is particularly so if one even eschews Social Security benefits, as a fair proportion of street people do. Thus, one is astonished to learn that the agency in Syracuse that probably serves more homeless people in some way or other than any other agency there, namely the local Rescue Mission, eagerly accepted a grant to computerize 13,500 (!) case records in 1989. This was interpreted as having "the potential to revolutionize the Mission's entire social service delivery system." At the same time, this development stirred up great anxiety in the community of street people.

* Marsha Tewell had no sooner read in TIPS about perverse fund-raising events for the homeless when she ran across a very fancy flyer announcing a "coast-to-coast benefit for the hungry and homeless" at some of the fanciest eateries in the US, and sponsored by Bon Appetit (gourmet cooking) magazine and an organization of chefs, restaurateurs and food industry professionals. Considering that many homeless people have drug and drinking problems, it is amazing that the flyer also contained instructions for making four different fancy cocktails with some of the more expensive liquors.
In 1989, the Lighthouse Mission in Indianapolis fell short of its fund-raising goals, and corralled 20 of the city's most influential and wealthiest citizens for a luncheon at an exclusive private club. Thereafter the guests were put into a trolley and driven past (without going in) a number of shelters in the city. They were then disembarked at a mission construction site and toured through the empty, unfinished building by well-dressed mission executives (Indianapolis Star, 22/10/89, source item from Joe Osburn).

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Hobo Song

Every year, we try to include a "hobo song" or poem, but our supply is running low, and help would be appreciated.

There's a soup car roaming
The streets of London town,
While people with full bellies
Have long since bedded down.

There's a long, long queue waiting,
The soup they hope to get,
And people sneering from hotels,
As they shuffle by in the wet.

There's thousands of homeless in London,
And it seems no-one could care less.
The councils are confused and confounded,
And can register only a guess.


There isn't a place in London
Where you won't see a bundle of rags,
And youngsters under Charing Cross bridge,
Lying in sleeping bags.

There are plenty of doss houses and Sally's
In dear old London Town,
And if you spent a night in the places
You'd shout to pull them down.

(from Avoiding Institutions, by Nelson, Sternberg & Brindley, 1982)

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A Few Reflections on Differentness

(Below are some excerpts of a 6/89 speech by Ann O'Connor, a hospitaller at Unity Kitchen in Syracuse, NY, to a group of mentally retarded people and human service workers from the Syracuse Developmental Center.)

"I feel very privileged to be a participant in this celebration. I am very grateful to be part of an event that honors those who worked so hard to step out, even if only a few steps, into greater liberation from personal limitations, social rejection and institutional constraints. As 'MC,' I've been invited to share a few reflections with you.

"Please forgive me if I don't use the proper word in vogue these days for us folks who are consigned to the categories of physically handicapped or developmentally disabled or mentally impaired. It would wear a person out trying to keep up-to-date on the current acceptable language. In any case, there's a lot of talk these days—and from handicapped people as well—that people like us do not want to be considered as different, or at least that our differences should be ignored, because (it is being said) we are no different than anyone else. Perhaps this is one way of insisting that our human dignity and value be acknowledged and accepted. Or perhaps this is an expression of how our culture levels everything out to a certain flatness and sameness. But nevertheless, the
reality of our situation is, and there is no denying it, that we are different. We are different from those who are not so afflicted, which is most people. We are, by our affliction, set apart. Yes, we are different in superficial ways such as physical appearances, mental capabilities, in the way we talk, or don’t talk. But we are also different in the way we perceive the world and reality and our place in it. Our very presence reminds people of their own vulnerability and mortality, and that their idols of youth and beauty and physical fitness are passing away.

"So because of our difference and the hard truth which our presence speaks—and which people don’t want to hear—others avoid us, and society wants to keep us out of sight. We’re told we’re not productive, and therefore not valuable. We are made poor, and then we’re told we’re a financial liability to society. Our differences then become to others our whole identity. We are called 'victims' of some disease or other; or patients instead of persons, or we become a 'case' and a number in someone’s case load. The process of depersonalization deepens as we are regarded as less than human, and others look past us or through us, as if we are not there.

"However, as all of us here know, once people are willing to give us their attention and look into our eyes, they can get to know WHO we are, and they no longer experience our difference as a problem or a barrier or a threat. What wounded people require is, as William Stringfellow says, that we be called by name and taken seriously.

"I believe that we must not hate our being different nor deny it. I believe that our difference is our vocation. Our difference is a gift to us, to those around us and to society. By vocation, I mean, that each of us is called to be the unique person God intends us to be, and thus to accomplish something which only we, as that unique person, can do. By vocation, I do not mean jobs or careers, or accomplishments such as financial success or fame or glory. I am speaking on the deeper, more important level of living the truth and serving others with that truth. Those of us who are afflicted can discover a great truth. The more deeply wounded we are, the easier it is to see: it is the truth of the great dignity of human beings and the eternal destiny to which we are all called. Our vocation is to live the truth, that this is not all there is in life—what can be seen or touched or heard—that under the surface is where the treasure is buried, a pearl of great price. Our vocation is to be a sign to the world of the sacredness of each human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.

"We serve others best, I believe, by calling them to the truth about themselves and about human life and God. Simply by being, we (who are afflicted) call others to the truth. This is the great gift of wounded people—the truth the world hungered for, the gift that others need if they are not to lose their souls.

"So instead of denying our difference, or hating it, we can come to see our difference as vocation and a gift we have been given to share. ...For most of us, we discover our vocation and gifts only through those around us who love us and serve upon us, and help us search our hearts. ...Share your gifts of heart and soul, so that simply by being and struggling against all odds, you will serve life...."
* A new twist on the US crime scene is that juveniles who get arrested increasingly claim to be at least 17 years old. This means that as their police/court record is computer-checked, it will turn up nothing, because juvenile records will not show up on adult records in most cases. This enables these juveniles to be sentenced very leniently as first-time offenders, and usually to be soon set free, even though they may have had a juvenile record of considerable gruesomeness (Time, 26/3/90).

* A young man in Indianapolis tried to snatch away the purse of a 69-year old woman, was intercepted by another young man who was illegally carrying a handgun, and shot, leaving him quadriplegic. Taken to court, the shooter was interpreted by the judge as a "good Samaritan" and let go (Indianapolis Star, 3 May 90; source item from Joe Osburn). It used to be that good Samaritans were people who helped and healed the wounded, but in our contemporary value context, they do things to people that then require healing.

* In a residential service (a so-called "half-way house") for people serving out the remainder of their prison sentence, there was a book-sized list of regulations and policies, the categories of which were entitled Contraband, Policy on Firearms, Bomb Threats, Terrorist Attacks, Hostage-taking (defined as a "critical incident"), all the way down to Death of a Person, Hunting Licenses, and concluding with Garbage, and Pest Control. Since all of the residents had been sentenced for nonviolent offenses, this imaged them as violent, and perhaps even set up role expectations for violence.

* Torture as good public relations. A policeman has invented a tiny pair of aluminum pinchers that police officers can hold in the hand without being seen, and with which they can grasp a bit of skin, a finger or an earlobe in a way that is painful but virtually invisible to observers. In pain, the person can then be pulled along and marched off by the officer pulling on the pincher. The gadget has been named the Mika Come-Along, and is promoted as a public relations device that protects the image of police officers who, otherwise, might have to become rough, or use guns and clubs (Laconia Evening Citizen, 17/2/90; source item from Karen Barker). The TIPS editor anticipates that the device will be sold by the zillions for torture purposes abroad.

* A police investigation in the Australian state of Victoria apparently discovered that more than 150 prison officers had criminal records (1990 clipping from Michael Steer).

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**Imprisonment**

* A 3/90 report claimed that close to 25% of all "African American" males between the ages of 20-29 are either in prison, or on probation or parole—and the rate is still increasing. Given additionally the high death rate in this subpopulation, due largely to violence and drugs, we have what some people have called an "endangered species" (Time, 12 March 90).

* By 1989 the US Federal Prison System was 56% above capacity, and double what it had been in 1980. Each prison place was costing $51,000, but only 19% of the inmates were confined for violent offenses (Hospitality, 10/90).

* In the US, people held in local jails, in part because of overcrowding in state prisons, rose in just one year (1988-1989) from 344,000 to 396,000 (AP, in SHJ, 4 June 90).

* The single largest spending category for state governments in the US in 1990 was prisons, followed (for the first time) by Medicaid (source information from Guy Caruso).
* In Syracuse is a former industrial building on a site that is heavily poisoned with all sorts of toxins. In Fall 1989, the building was promptly proposed as suitable for renovation into a prison.

* In order to provide steady jobs in depressed areas, private investors in West Virginia have been building prison facilities to be leased to the governments of other states (USN&WR, 14/5/90).

* One building of the jail in Adelaide, Australia, was almost 110 years old in 1984, when a young man whom they call an aboriginal in Australia died in one of its cells under mysterious circumstances. Shortly thereafter, the cell in which he had died was the only one that got freshly painted—perhaps the only time any of the cells had been painted in the last 110 years. The victim's mother thinks that the son may have written a message to her on the wall, and that the authorities literally "whitewashed" the case (Advertiser, 3 Feb. 89; source item from Mike Rungie).

* A commission in Australia that studied the astonishingly high number of deaths of aboriginals in prisons had an ingenious answer: send fewer of them to prison, and thus they would die elsewhere (1989 source clipping from Michael Rungie).

* Many prisoners in Colombia are in jail because of drug dealing. Many of these prisoners are very violent among each other. One jail in Bogota that holds 3000 prisoners experienced one killing among inmates every day (SHJ, 25/1/90).

* A Globe & Mail article (3 May 90) commented on the fact that there has never been so much violence in prison, and so many killings of inmates by other inmates, in Canada. Among the many causes, the article pointed to the increasing complexity of managing prisons, and that wardens have been retreating into paperwork and paper criteria of quality.

* An editorial in the Toronto Globe & Mail (3 May 90) noted that on the average, 8 prisoners serving sentences for sex offenses are beaten every month by other inmates at just one single federal prison in Alberta, and that this was a consequence of the government's policy of "integrating sex offenders with the rest of the prison population." It also noted that sex offenses generally are increasing, that incest offenses that were a rarity around 1980 were beginning to be commonplace, and that therefore, more such prisoners are to be expected. It advocated separation of such prisoners from others in order to protect them.

* As of 1986, 46 US states and territories were under court order with respect to the bad conditions of their prisons, or were defendants in suits that were likely to render them so (CP, 10/89).

* Up to 20% of US prison places may be occupied by mentally retarded persons (USN&WR, 20/11/89). With federal and state prisons in early 1989 holding 673,000 prisons, this would add up to 134,600. Even half that number is an indictment of the prevailing policy of dumping retarded persons into the community.

State Killings

* The fine art of hangery. It took thousands of years for people—mostly within the judicial system—to learn the fine art of killing people by drop-hanging, whereby the victim dies mercifully from a suddenly-broken neck, rather than convulsing himself in futile motions while suffocating from the end of a rope. However, because no one has been judicially hanged in the US since 1965, this seems to be a dying art, so to speak. The state of Washington interviewed dozens of people who volunteered for the hangman's job, several of them women (hence hangwomen and hangpersons), but none of them met the state's
exacting requirements and qualifications. Apparently, only one of the old hangmen in the US was still alive in 1989, and he was under psychiatric treatment. It is conceivable that hangmen may have to be imported from South Africa which has been hanging about 100 people every month throughout the 1980s. According to a prison official, this is because "Hanging is a science that deals with maths, momentum and distance. The hangman needs to understand the body-weight to rope-length ratio, assess the height and weight of the individual, the proper drop from the platform and the right knot to use." If the hangman fumbles, the victim will either suffocate in the old-fashioned way, or the head will be torn from the body, which of course is more an aesthetic problem than one of compassion, since death will probably be just as instantaneous as in the broken-neck version (Daily Mail, 23/3/89, in Speak Out, 9/90).

* When the use of electricity to execute prisoners was first considered in 1888, death by lethal injection might very well have been adopted except for one thing: the medical profession was vehemently opposed to it, and as a result, electrocution won out. It is very telling that in the intervening 100 years, the medical profession has lost its inhibitions against the identification of medicine with capital punishment.

* According to the polls, the percentage of Americans between 1970-1990 who approve of the death penalty has increased from 50% to 80%. A number of politicians have begun to campaign with a major capital punishment platform. Even formerly arch-liberal politicians, such as the former democratic mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, have become vigorous proponents of the death penalty. Some politicians who have already been governors or attorneys-general brag about the number of criminals whom they helped dispatch, and that they will do more of the same. (Source clippings from, among others, John O'Brien)

* Amnesty International, an international organization that investigates and protests torture, unjust imprisonment, the death penalty, and human rights violations all over the world, puts out a number of reports on the plight of prisoners, victims of torture, etc. One 1989 publication, A Punishment in Search of a Crime, concerns the use of the death penalty in America. TIPS readers should not expect these reports to contain good news, but the reports do treat with the issues raised each year in the December TIPS. To obtain a list of available publications, write Amnesty International USA, 322 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10001, Attention: Publications. Foreign TIPS subscribers should write to their domestic Amnesty International office.

* China is big on capital punishment, and executes, at the very least, many hundreds of people every year. Some people are executed for political dissidence, and others for as little as stealing bicycles. The Chinese government has begun to sell the organs of executed prisoners, primarily to wealthy foreigners, including many people from Hong Kong. Someone who needs a kidney pays $50,000 and is then summoned to a military hospital where the condemned prisoner is then neatly shot dead and the kidney quickly transplanted. Medical practitioners have quickly interpreted this as yet another "moral dilemma" (The Age, 22/8/90: Source item from John Annison).

The Interface of Human Service & Religion

* In 7/90, there was a conference at Princeton University of 100 leaders of world religions to discuss the plight of children around the world. Unfortunately, the recommendations that came forth revolved primarily around higher government spending. Apparently, no one is considering that children have been around a long time, and that people used to know good things to do for them before governments got into the act.
Holland, T. (1989). Values, faith and professional practice. Social Thought, Winter, 28-40. Holland points out that the profession of social work had its roots in a Judeo-Christian heritage, and based its work on the twin ideals of love and justice. A major milestone in the medicalization of human services in North America was the so-called Flexner Report of 1915, even though it was addressed to medical services. Holland claims that as a result of this report, human service workers no longer idealized the Christian minister as a model, but the physician. One peculiar consequence has been that hardly any social work curriculum any longer includes explicit attention to the religious dimension of the field, or even the role of religious faith in the lives of clients (at least two-thirds of whom in the US profess a religious belief); and if religious issues are addressed at all, they are converted into the constructs of science (e.g., as things to be studied) or of psychology (e.g., as related to client psychopathology). Spiritual and moral struggles are translated into psychological and mental health issues that are seen as possibly requiring expert psychotherapeutic response. Holland also believes that the concern with power in the social work profession derives at least in part from looking to the business world as one major model.

Here is a striking example of what we call theotechnology: the American Association for the Advancement of Science established a Black Church Project that got funded by the Ford Foundation to encourage churches and non-profit groups working with them to "promote education in science, mathematics, and computers within the black community." The cooperating churches get small grants to this effect, and many have actually signed up (Science, 3 Aug. 90).

Imago dei is Latin, and means "image of God." It refers to the biblical message that the human was created in God's image. In 1989, in Syracuse, NY, the Rescue Mission agency started a "structured residential rehabilitation program for men over the age of 18 who have been formally diagnosed as having a personality disorder according to mental health criteria" where they participate in group therapy 3 times a week, and individual therapy once a week. One is startled to learn that the program's name is "Imago Dei."

How psychology is replacing religious faith was dramatically illustrated when a high school girl was murdered in East Hampton, Mass. The high school guidance department set up a hot line and drop-in center and made guidance counselors available to respond to students who made contact with these; and a county mental health center provided backup assistance on a round-the-clock telephone line, as well as via its out-patient clinic (Springfield Morning Union, 16/1/86; source item from Michael Kendrick).

A publisher has put out a series of six books entitled respectively Be-Good-to-Yourself Therapy, Prayer Therapy, One-Day-at-a-Time Therapy, Be-Good-to-Your Marriage Therapy, and Slow-Down Therapy. The books are illustrated by little elf figures accompanied by short messages. What makes all of these things worse are the following facts: the series is put out by a Catholic publishing house; it is not aimed at children; it is quite serious and not just a parody of the therapy culture; and it tries to convey religious messages parallel to the therapeutic ones by elf gimmickery, much as others try it with "Peanuts," Mickey Mouse or clown gimmickery.

There is actually a book entitled Jesus the Therapist.

It is ridiculous enough that American paper money carries the inscription "In God We Trust," but in England, there is an organization for parents with mentally handicapped children with the name "In Touch We Trust," which is in its own way no less idolatrous than the inscription on behavior modification token money "In Behavior We Trust."
A good example of the materialization of religion is the inclusion, during the 1980s, of questions such as "Have I been exercising enough?" in an examination of conscience compiled by certain parties for Catholics preparing for confession. Relatedly, the weekly flyers prepared by the Catholic publishing house Liguori Publications for handout at Sunday Masses contained a little article in its 21 January 1990 flyer that was entitled "Holiness and Health."

TIPS readers may remember the man who married the most faithful creature in his life, his dog. The religion column of the Burlington (VT) Free Press (11 Aug. 90) had a Unitarian minister explain that his spiritual guide is his dog. He also explained that his dog was better than a therapist—to which we can readily agree. (Clipping from Susan Mack)

We wonder, with grim amusement, what the hypernormalizers and the TASH people would do with the stanza of Charles Wesley's hymn, "O For a Thousand Tongues," which is based on Isaiah 35:5-6:

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come:
And leap, ye lame, for joy!

He knows his own. We were not surprised to learn that a Satanic worship temple was discovered in a building of the Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center (in New York state), formerly known as Marcy State Hospital (SHJ, 6 Dec. 89). The devil has owned the mental health establishment in New York for over 100 years.

Science (2 Jan. 87) ran a lengthy article on school textbook policies in the US. Textbook publishers have become so scared of separation of church-and-state lawsuits that they go to grotesque lengths to avoid mention of religion. For instance, textbooks will not mention American religious history or traditions, will refer to the Pilgrims as "people who made long trips," omit mentioning the Salem witch trials or the role of religion in major American movements such as anti-slavery, women's suffrage, and temperance, and even fail to identify Martin Luther King as a minister. The publishers try to garner the full range of the textbook market, ranging from Texas, which is considered the most conservative state as far as such textbook requirements are concerned, to California which is the most liberal. Because California textbooks are not supposed to promote junk food, textbooks will omit mentioning of birthday cakes in their stories. All of this has been called the "dumbing down" of textbooks. On the other hand, in order to demonstrate their commitment to affirmative action concepts, they might feature a photograph of a handicapped Negro woman judge. Home economics text no longer teach homemaking, but how to run one's life. One of them pontificated that "the best approach is to try to combine family and peer influences as you shape your personality and establish your identity." Psychologically, the undertone is that of self-actualization theories, with not a hint of the self as subject to anything else except the laws of the land.

Syndicated columnist Paul Greenberg wrote a rather good piece (in SHJ, 2 Nov. 1989) about the people who are trying to ban all sorts of pieces of great literature from school libraries, or at least school curricula. He said that if there is a subversive book that ought to be banned, then it should be the Bible: "The Bible, the unsuspecting reader should be warned, is a work deeply subversive of the established order, a revolutionary treatise that makes Karl Marx seem tame, a book in which the humble are raised up and the proud brought low, the slave freed and the mighty cast down. In its stories, the eldest are passed over and the youngest singled out, the meek in spirit inherit the earth, simple shepherds outshine kings, and things hidden from the wise and understanding are revealed to babes."
Strangely enough, there is a human service organization which, despite its name, Trinity Services, describes itself as a non-sectarian organization. Perhaps to some people, human service has become the deity.

In 1989, someone wanted to buy a Bible for a retarded young man who has limited reading ability. Such a Bible might include numerous illustrations with brief and simply-written summaries, and large print. However, it turned out that several large religious literature stores only had children's Bibles that came close to the desiderata, but these Bibles had childish illustrations and prominent titles inside and out that proclaimed clearly that they were intended for children. Only weeks later we discovered that already in the Middle Ages, the problem had once been solved, but has apparently been forgotten. As early as in the 15th century, there were so-called biblia pauperum, or bibles of the poor, which were clearly designed for low-literate adults, had many illustrations, and brief summary or descriptive texts with the illustrations.

The Archdiocese of New York and the Health Department of the State of New York entered into an unholy alliance. On the one hand, the state agreed that it would not require Catholic agencies to offer condoms, drug paraphernalia, abortions or other services that conflict with church teaching. On the other hand, the archdiocese agreed that the Catholic agencies would refer any of their clients who wanted any of these to other agencies that would provide such. Of course, behind this dramatic erosion in church morality looms money: if the church agencies would simply not accept public funds, they would be free to abide fully by church teachings on traditional moral discipline.

Not surprisingly, since so many people these days are without faith, there has been a move afoot to establish rituals for "secular funerals." The British Humanist Association, an organization that tries to represent the viewpoints of non-religious people, offers such rites for funerals as well as for weddings and other occasions, and claims that it gets about 200 inquiries a week about the funerals alone. It also claims that up until now, the churches have had a "stranglehold" on such occasions, and that religious funerals are not only meaningless for people without faith, but that they also are routine, riddled with clichés, and conducted by clergymen who know nothing about the deceased, and therefore cannot speak personally about him/her, or meaningfully to his/her survivors. The spokesperson for the Association claims that people are increasingly getting "fed up with vicars who say the same generalized earth to earth and dust to dust words for everyone," and that these words "have nothing to do with the person who died." The Association even publishes a booklet entitled Funerals Without God: A Practical Guide to Non-Religious Funerals, and it is selling briskly. Interestingly, the Association trains, recruits, and deploys people who are obviously not clergymen to conduct such secular funerals, and these people receive the same fee of about $40 for conducting the ceremony that clergymen receive--however, the Association refers to these people as volunteers, even though they receive payment for their services. Also interestingly, and ironically, some of these "volunteers" who officiate at a secular funeral may also know nothing about the deceased, but will spend time prior to the funeral talking with his/her family and survivors to gain information in order to personalize the speech or even eulogy--which sounds to us much like what many hard-pressed clergymen do or would do. The Association's spokesperson says that the biggest compliment to such a "volunteer" is when mourners say to him/her, "you must have known him/her" (meaning the deceased)--which strikes us as very funny when the volunteer may not have known the deceased at all (New York Times, 10 Jan. 1990; source item submitted by Peter Millier).
We have carried before some of the "easy essays" written by Peter Maurin, the founder of the Catholic Worker movement, about 50 years ago. The one below, entitled "The Wisdom of Giving a Bit," may have been written with tongue-in-cheek.

"To give money to the poor is to enable the poor to buy. To enable the poor to buy is to improve the market. To improve the market is to help business. To help business is to reduce unemployment. To reduce unemployment is to reduce crime. To reduce crime is to reduce taxation. So why not give to the poor for business' sake, for humanity's sake, for God's sake?"

The Religious Scene

* Surveys continue to reveal some curiously schizophrenic religious opinions by Americans. According to some criteria, Americans are among the most religious people, with 80% of them believing that the Bible is the word of God, and with a Bible in almost all American households. However, at the same time, Americans are amazingly ignorant about what the Bible says, even about such basic facts as how many apostles there were, how many gospels there are, or where Christ was born—despite singing about the latter interminably or hearing songs about it at Christmas time. Furthermore, the more educated people are, the less they know about the Bible, and younger people know less than adults. Even among those who regularly attend Christian religious services, 20% do not know why Easter is celebrated. And, of course, while most people say that they believe in the ten commandments, few know what these are (Bible Review, 6/90).

* DeParrie, P. & Pride M. (1989). Ancient empires of the new age. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books. This is another in a series of books by the same authors that deal with modern paganism. According to the authors, the so-called New Age cult that is sweeping the contemporary Western world is really no more than a resurrection of ancient paganisms from Egypt, Babylon, Greece, the Mayan and Aztec cultures of Central America, etc. They give brief overviews of the predominant beliefs and religious practices in these ancient cultures, with special emphasis on sexual immoralities or perversions that these endorsed and practiced, as well as the human sacrifices or other killings which they endorsed or practiced. The authors also explain that New Age beliefs really are religions, even if not admitted to be, and that one core belief that all New Age cults have in common is that whatever any person chooses to believe, or thinks "is right for him or her," is acceptable—but nothing is acceptable which smacks of Christianity.

* One interesting phenomenon about "new age" religion is that it is becoming respectable in circles that otherwise pride themselves on intellectuality and rationality. An example is academia, where only a few years ago, the irrational, superstitious and certainly unscientific elements of new ageism would have been greeted with disdain and ridicule, and with invocation of Enlightenment appeals to rationality. Now, new ageisms are beginning to be given credence and
legitimacy by academia. An example is the 12/90 issue of Syracuse University Magazine which carried a very positive article about an alumna who uses "new age" techniques with people who are terminally ill, and who has also been hired to work with psychologists and social workers to help them cope with job stress.

* Griffin, D. R., & Smith, H. (1989). Primordial truth and postmodern theology. Ithaca, NY: State University of New York Press. The authors seriously debate whether modernity requires the invention of a "never-before-articulated-worldview," or whether "traditional religious philosophy" can be salvaged. The debate seems to suggest that one invents one's religions, and with humans having advanced so far, one simply may have to invent a brand new one. It all reminds us of Napoleon commissioning Talleyrand to invent a new religion, and when he had studied what Talleyrand concocted, he asked sardonically, "Monsieur, would you die for this?"

* In Syracuse, a cult of walking on hot coals, called firewalking, has developed. The cult fires up a bed of coals outdoors, its members engage in Indian chants, and eventually, they walk over the glowing coals, apparently without suffering any harm. The coals reportedly are 200 degrees hotter than is needed to melt aluminum, and the cult accompanies its feats with all sorts of mind-power language. Strangely enough, human service workers play a prominent role in this cult, such as a social worker, a psychotherapist, and the manager of the Human Resources and Development Department of a major local industry.

* There are reports that practices once believed to have died out, or at least become a rarity, are emerging with a vengeance in Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia. Cannibalism, human sacrifice and ritual mutilation are on the increase, mostly in connection with sorcery. In turn, many people take witchcraft so seriously that things are going very ill with suspected witches. With independence and a return to earlier practices, Western medicine is being increasingly rejected. Part of this has to do with rejection of colonial history and influences in general, including Christianity and all Western institutions.

* In its efforts to secularize society and values, the East German government introduced in 1955 a "youth dedication ceremony" (in German, it sounds closer to the administration of a blessing or the anointing to the priesthood). The ceremony was so timed (on a spring day in May) and structured as to compete with the Protestant confirmation ceremonies, because after all, the vast majority of East Germans were Protestants. In the first year, 17% of the eligible youths participated, but refusal was made increasingly difficult until 98% participated by the late 1980s. Some people began to call this a "state confirmation," and one consequence was that indeed, fewer and fewer youths did participate in church confirmation. The East Germans so much surrendered to this practice that years in advance, restaurants, halls, etc. were already booked solid, because the occasion was observed as a family feast, perhaps even more than confirmation had been. Just how well this evil strategy worked was underlined by the fact that even after the collapse of the Communist regime, about 150,000 of the 180,000 eligible youths participated in 1990. In 1990, certain Catholic and Protestant dioceses called for an abandonment of the secular youth confirmation, and Catholic bishops even went as far as demanding that people who participated in any such should do penance (Amerika Woche, 19/5/90).

* In late 1989, there was quite a bit of publicity about the unveiling in Montgomery, Alabama, of a monument to slain civil rights figures, particularly since the monument was designed by the same artist who had designed the Vietnam War memorial. The new monument has an inscription "...until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream," and we noted in utter amazement that below this quotation is carved the name of Martin Luther King. We
could hardly believe our eyes, because the phrase is from the book of Isaiah.
Apparently, to attribute the passage to the Bible would have been offensive to
many people, who would think it a wonderful passage if King had coined it.

* An Italian entrepreneur, Vitale, noticed that two things were particularly
popular among American juveniles: blue jeans and Jesus freaks. Sniffing a
business opportunity, Vitale put the two together and brought out a line of
"Jesus Jeans," advertising them with pictures of nearly nude young women's
bottoms, and slogans such as "thou shalt have no other jeans before me," and "he
who loves me, follows me." Despite protest from church leaders, the strategy
worked spectacularly, so much so that even the Russian government began to
manufacture Jesus Jeans on license.

* The executive director of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
is yet another observer who has made the point that American Christians embrace
something he calls a "good-fortune theology" that is comforting rather than
challenging, that lays claim to a personal relationship with Christ, but that
allows people to proclaim faith while lacking compassion for the poor and needy
(Indianapolis Star, 12 Jan. 90; source item from Joe Osburn).

* 78% of you shall keep every fourth Sabbath holy. When things go downhill,
yesterday's bad news can become suddenly today's best news—and yet people often
are totally unaware of the shifting of their mental and moral reference points.
For instance, the Catholic bishop of St. Louis told a press group that it too
often omits good news—and as one example, he pointed out that "78% of American
Catholics attend Mass at least once a month" (FL, 7 & 8/90).

* An article in Masterpiece (9 & 10/90) noted that more and more, the
practice of religion is being based on the entertainment model. One example is
new churches being increasingly built like theaters with stages in front,
built-in screens, revolving platforms, colored spot lights, and all sorts of
special effects. Worship increasingly becomes a slick professional PR show with
slide shows or movies, drama, pop music, dance and soft-sell sermons. There may
also be clownery, and themes from comic strips such as Peanuts. We would add to
this that to some degree, the model is also an advertising one. (Source item
from John Morris)

* We find it rather appropriate, in a certain sense, that a Dutch monastery
has been turned into an amusement park. After all, such things realistically
reflect cultural values.

*There once was a robber who fell in among a gang of vicious good
Samaritans... When law and order break down and the police are no longer able
and willing to deal with street crime, no one should be surprised if citizens
begin to take things occasionally into their own hands. A robber who had muscled
his way into somebody's apartment in the Bronx was chased by a neighborhood
crowd, run down, and beaten and stabbed to death. By the time police arrived,
not one single person among the many who had either participated in this
vigilante act, or witnessed it, would testify. A lot of people have begun to
call this kind of killing a "good Samaritan act" (NY Times, 24/8/90; source item
from Griff Hogan).

* Some people have the idea that Christian martyrdom has been on the
decrease, but in terms of numbers, exactly the opposite has been the case. While
in 1900, an estimated 35,000 people were killed in the world because they were
Christians, the number gradually increased to an average of about 50,000 a year
throughout the century, and reached an estimated 260,000 a year by 1990
Events

* The Training Institute tries to maintain a schedule of upcoming SRV and PASSING training events in North America that are offered by approved SRV/PASSING trainers, and where the SRV events are conducted in such a way as to qualify trainees to attend subsequent PASSING training. Interested parties should write to the TI to obtain such a schedule.

* Over the past several years, we have witnessed the initiation of a number of voluntary groups (some incorporated, some not) that have formed with the intent of being, in their regions, (a) a major mechanism for disseminating Social Role Valorization (SRV), mostly through training workshops, and (b) a bulwark against the degradation of SRV and related PASSING training. Michael Kendrick, a Canadian relocated in western Massachusetts, has been a major force in promoting such groups, and Darcy M. Elks, probably the most experienced SRV and PASSING trainer in the world, has worked closely with several of them. Primarily, these groups arrange SRV and PASSING training events in their locale, identify and promote potential leaders from their area, and provide support and feedback to these. Such groups have also often been able to sponsor related training events, again with the intent of building up support for SRV within their areas and promoting their indigenous leadership. We see this as a very commendable phenomenon, and believe that these groups can learn much from each other, and that even more, people in other locales can learn much from these groups. As far as we know, the following constitute such groups:

- Alliance for Community Living - New Hampshire
- Association of Advocacy for Change Through Training - Victoria, Australia
- Citizens for Valued Lives - New York State
- Committee for Values-Based Training - central Massachusetts
- Connecticut Training Project - Connecticut
- Consortium for Training - greater Louisville, Kentucky
- Southern Ontario Training Group - southern Ontario, Canada
- Training and Evaluation for Change - South Australia, Australia

There are other similar groups in other locales, but to our knowledge, these are not primarily focussed on SRV and PASSING. If we have overlooked any group in the above list, please correct or update us. People who would like to contact any of these groups may write the Training Institute to obtain current contact persons, addresses, and phone numbers.

Resources

* The British Values In Action group has published (8/90) a monograph (sent to us by Paul Williams) on self-advocacy by retarded people which tries to bring some clarification to the construct of self-advocacy, and which critiques a number of elements of the so-called self-advocacy movement. The monograph has a number of shortcomings, two big ones being that it failed to bring out that self-advocacy by people whose competency-impairment is essentially mental is quite different from self-advocacy by mentally competent people, and that there are some people who cannot represent themselves at all. Despite these flaws, we recommend that everybody who is "into self-advocacy" read this little brochure.

News of the Season

* Time disorientation took a new quantum leap in 1990. Widespread decorations for Halloween went up about the second week of October, and by the third week of October, we already saw Christmas decorations in public places and stores.
* It was bad enough that a woman in an old age home near Toronto was "visited" by a dog in 12/89, but even worse was that the dog, a big Doberman pinscher, came dressed as Santa Claus, and the event was featured with a prominent photograph in the local paper. (Clipping from Beth French)

Slaughter of the Innocent Unborn

* In our entire western tradition—even prior to Christianity, as exemplified in Jewish, Greek and Roman custom and morality—society (and in many instances, the state) viewed marriage as a social institution in which society had a high interest, and which should be safeguarded and defended. With the advent of the modernistic value system, and particularly since ca. 1970, the modern state has gradually withdrawn from the defense of the integrity and the rights of the family, in favor of the rights of the individual. This is certainly a dramatic manifestation of the modernistic value of individualism, and of the unwillingness of modern humans to sacrifice even one iota of their individuality to an institution as ancient and basic as that of family.

In this connection, someone pointed out to us that wherever in human history marriage was seen as inextricably interlinked with the willingness to reproduce—as has in fact been a virtually universal assumption about the nature of marriage—then whenever the state permits a woman to abort her husband's baby against the husband's wishes, the state is de facto invalidating the marriage contract as we have always understood it.

* The earliest systematic advocacy for abortion in the Western world was by the Marxists, and abortion was in fact legalized on-and-off after the Communist victory in Russia, and in Eastern European countries under Russian and Marxist domination after World War II. In these countries, abortion was then also massively practiced. Even before WW II, when Czechoslovakia was socialist (but not Communist), abortion had become a common form of birth control, with about 60% of working class women having had abortions, some of them as many as 22 (Proctor, 1988).

* Britain was the first country in western Europe to introduce widespread legal abortion in 1967 via the Abortion Act. In New Zealand, the innocuously named Auckland Medical Aid Center (AMAC) is the country's oldest abortion clinic, operative since 1974, and spawned by the Planned Parenthood of the US (WDR, 14/12/89).

* Jews have traditionally bent over backward not to join with Christians in religious enterprises, and in mingling Jewish with Christian symbolisms. It is thus ironic that one of the few such enterprises should be—the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, with its logo of a cross and a menorah intertwined. This underlines what distortions and perversions abortion has introduced on the social and religious scene.

* The unification of East and West Germany has a number of implications of interest to TIPS readers. One is that East Germany had abortion on demand, while West Germany had significant restrictions on it. In order to keep obstacles to unification to a minimum, the ruling Christian Democratic Union in the west has so much moved toward the liberalization of abortion that some of its members have left the party and started a new one, though it is not apt to have much impact.

* We learned of one method of abortion we had never heard of before, used by a mass abortionist in Dayton, Ohio. In late abortions, he dilates the woman's cervix, sticks a pair of scissors up the cervix and into the skull of the baby,
opens the scissors to make a bigger hole in the skull, and suctions out the baby's brain. This not only kills the baby, but also permits the skull to collapse for an easy vaginal ejection of the corpse. His fee for this is $1,675 (WDR, 15/3/90).

* In England, the muscular dystrophy organization has so far been rather in favor of conducting research on human embryos, thus supporting deathmaking because of the expected future benefits of such research. (Source information from Ruth Abrahams)

* We have been told that home abortion kits are promoted as "personal hygiene items."

* In the Canadian press, abortions may be referred to under the umbrella term, "appropriate health care" (Calgary Herald, 4 May 90).

* Now here is a sadly funny one: the Committee on Women of the American Psychiatric Association pontificated that abortion on demand is a "mental health imperative," since denial of an abortion would be far more likely to impair mental health than the abortion and its consequences (Washington Post, 16/5/90; source item from Michael Kendrick). Once again, ideology masquerades as high science.

* An obstetrics and gynecology professor at the Indiana University School of Medicine complained that a state law to ban abortion would "devastate physician training programs" at his facility. He also claimed that most medical students observe abortions or perform them, including those who are "pro-life," because they realize their duty as physicians (Indianapolis Star, 12 Jan. 90; source item from Joe Osburn).

* At its 1989 annual meeting, the American Medical Association adopted the following official policy. "Early termination of pregnancy is a medical matter between patient and physician, subject to the physician's clinical judgment, the patient's informed consent and the availability of appropriate facilities."

At its 1990 annual convention, the AMA went a step further and voted its approval of the "miracle abortion drug" RU486.

* The American Bar Association had 375,000 members when, in 2/90, its House of Delegates voted to support abortion on demand as a constitutional right. There was no reason for the organization to take a position on abortion, particularly since it has not taken a position on any number of other issues, and has certainly never taken a position against homelessness by saying that everybody had the constitutional right to decent shelter. It is our opinion that anyone who believes that abortion is wrong should withdraw from any organization that either officially endorses abortion, or that promotes practices that imply an approval of abortion. An example of the latter are a number of environmental organizations that have endorsed governmental and population policies that include the promotion of abortion. The TIPS editor, who has belonged to a number of such organizations, some for decades, has withdrawn with great regret from several such groups. Unlike with the ABA, some such organizations deceptively claim that their policies have nothing to do with abortion. In late 1990, the ABA reluctantly withdrew its organizational support of abortion on demand, but we surely will see continued efforts to recruit all sorts of organizational support for abortion and other deathmakings.
After decades of membership in Defenders of Wildlife, and many years as a member of Environmental Action, the TIPS editor has very regretfully dropped both memberships because both organizations have begun to endorse population control policies which directly or indirectly will include abortion, including abortificacient "contraceptives." This withdrawal has come after a series of letter exchanges with the power structures in these organizations which, as expected, have proven futile. It is quite common for organizations that do support abortion at least indirectly to deny that they are doing so, but one should not be fooled thereby. In fact, when, upon being confronted on the issue, such organizations begin to talk rather vaguely, confuse issues, do not answer straightforward questions, etc., this almost certainly means that deception is being practiced, and as every philosopher of violence knows, where deception is systematically practiced, violence lurks behind it.

The field of obstetrics is becoming a deceptively labelled field, because some obstetricians apparently do nothing but perform abortions, and others may attend a pregnancy to birth only infrequently. For instance, in West Virginia (one of the poorest US states), in one entire 5-county area, there is only one obstetrician who will accept US government medical insurance for the poor (CBS "48 Hours", 15/3/90). It would be much more honest if such physicians clearly advertised themselves as abortionists. Since the 1960s, Dr. Jane Hodgson (aged 74 in 1989), a Minnesota obstetrician, has performed or supervised 5 times as many abortions (25,000) as deliveries (5,000) (USN&WR, 4 Dec. 89). One other woman doctor who does all the abortions at the "Southern Tier Women's Services" in Binghamton, NY, trained as an obstetrician but dropped that practice because "being on call with laboring women interfered too much with her personal life." She now does only abortions. She also said, "It's varied enough to be interesting, but not so complicated as to be highly stressful that something could go wrong," and "I go around (the uterus with the vacuum machine) a couple of times. I know I'm basically finished when nothing comes out any more" (Binghamton Press & Sunday Bulletin, 19/11/89). Gruesome! And what hardening of heart!

In 1975, Dr. Kenneth Edelin was the defendant in a much publicized trial for manually suffocating a baby boy he had aborted who was still alive. In 1990, we learned that he had become the chairman of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the foremost abortion promoter in the US.

The pro-abortion forces are attempting to recruit 1 million high school and college students to prevent the passage of parental notification laws, and to lobby for the introduction of RU486 in the US (NRLN, 8/90).

Apparently, it is not at all unusual for teachers in health and sex education classes in our schools to actively promote abortion. According to Time (9 Oct. 89), one such teacher told the children that the worst thing to do was to put a child up for adoption, and that it would be better to have an abortion instead.

If the public opinion polls are valid—and nowadays, that is a big question when it comes to abortion—there has been a dramatic increase in women's support for abortion on demand in just a few months in late 1989, from 32% to 43% (Time, 6 Nov. 89).

The Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers has begun to distribute a video tape that teaches women to perform their own abortions, promoting this with the Scout slogan, "Be prepared" (Newsweek, 17/7/89).
* In many locales, aborted babies are incinerated together with other hospital waste, thus once more treating human beings and their bodies as waste material, and reinforcing the image of the "disposable" or "throw-away children" (Calgary Herald, 4 May 90).

* In stark contrast, in Japan, where there is one abortion for every live birth, mournful burial rites for the aborted child are performed by the family, and there are large abortion cemeteries where there are rows of little stone figures, often lovingly tended to for years, to commemorate the unborn infants (National Geographic, 4/90, p. 65).

* A World Health Organization report noted that women who had an induced abortion were more likely to consume alcohol than women in the general population. In itself, this should not be particularly surprising, but now additional reports are beginning to come in that suggest that after an induced abortion, women are more likely to take to alcohol or other drugs, apparently in attempts to deal with their conflicts over having sought an abortion (NRLN, 2 Oct. 90).

* US News & World Report (9 July 90) reported that abortion activists have adopted a strategy of repeating a short list of code words on as many opportunities as possible. Among these are the words "women," "interfere," "personal decisions," "privacy," "control over one's body," "choice," and "right." And it is working! Accordingly, the news weekly itself concluded that the controversy has become largely a struggle over language, which is a most extraordinary admission by the generally pro-death news media. This kind of relentless repetition of phrases has become a major brainwashing tool in numerous modernistic propaganda contexts, including especially under the Nazis and the Communists.

* One of the ways in which abortion promoters trivialize and depreciate opposition to abortion is by constantly associating opposition to abortion with emotionality. For instance, they may say things such as that the discussion of abortion is "sure to raise emotional responses." What this does is try to convey to people that opposition to abortion is never a purely rational moral position, that opponents of abortion are unreasonable and emotion-driven people, or that those who believe that abortion kills human beings should not feel any emotions when dealing with the issue. The absurdities of the death lobby can often be perceived more clearly whenever one substitutes Jews rather than unborn babies as victims. One would then say that Jew-killing almost inevitably elicits emotional responses.

* What kind of human service would have the name "Wine and Roses"? One of the most plausible answers would be a lavish hospitality service for elderly people, or perhaps a dating service. However, the name belongs to an abortion clinic in Milwaukee (according to Ann Woldt, via Zana Lutfiyya). The least of the problems with this is that it constitutes model incoherency; a bigger problem is that it is certainly a blatant case of detoxification.

* Since the early 1970s, an increasing percentage of pregnant women have gotten an amniocentesis test, and the older the pregnant women are, the more likely they are to have the test, and the rates may still not yet have reached a plateau. When a pregnant woman decides to have an abortion if the results suggest the possibility that the baby is impaired, and this is pretty much what the studies have found so far.
In England, the Royal College of Physicians recommended in 9/89 that there should be mass genetic screening and pre-natal diagnosis, quite obviously in order to abort all children likely to have either inherited or congenital anomalies. Of course, this is the eugenics of the modern age, as compared to the eugenics of the age of social Darwinism (WDR, 28/12/89).

We hear all the time of new tests for identifying the unborn baby that is imperfect, almost entirely in order to abort it. Now, a new test has been announced that allegedly would even tell us if an unborn baby is at risk of the retinoblastoma (rb) cancer, and other tests for other cancer risks are supposed to be forthcoming (USN & WR, 11 Dec. 89). In the current value climate, this can only mean a further intensification of people's insistence on a perfect baby, massive recourse to pre-natal screening technologies, and a lot of abortions of babies of questionable "value," particularly so if RU486 becomes available.

An amazing confluence of perversions is contained in the survey results that 6% of parents would abort a child if they thought that the child would get "Alzheimer's Disease" in old age, and 11% would if they knew that their child was predisposed to obesity! (IAETFNU, 6 March 90)

As we point out repeatedly, the anti-abortion movement has been deeply incoherent in not opposing all forms of deathmaking. In the US at least, it has been additionally incoherent in tying itself to nationalistic chauvinism. Thus, it is very common to see anti-abortion efforts wrapped--so to speak--in the American flag, the very flag that has legalized and funded abortion. In equating Americanism with religion, divine privilege, and law, this movement has also been obsessed with the idea that abortion can and should be stopped primarily by legal means, and movement members have been kept hyped up with endless promises of success just around the corner. Now that nearly 20 years of such effort have failed to bring about the "second coming" of the outlawing of abortion, the movement still has not been able to give up its false religion of nationalism, and thus still seeking legal avenues, it has begun to shift focus from the outlawing of abortion to the passage of laws that reduce the number of abortions. This, of course, has added yet further incoherencies, because now, members find themselves voting for abortion laws, merely because such laws would allow fewer abortions to be performed than previously. Many abortion opponents have thus exchanged moral rationales for arguments of a utilitarian calculus that support certain kinds and numbers of killings if this supposedly prevents yet greater killings. To us, this is a little bit like trying to dissuade the Nazis from killing 6 million Jews by agreeing with them that one million can and should be killed, or by arguing that only Eastern European Jews should be killed instead of all of them. However, very few abortion foes are capable of perceiving the parallelism in these stances.

Accordingly, one remarkable phenomenon we can now observe, in the US, Canada, and possibly elsewhere, is so-called pro-life groups and Catholic bishops lobbying for legislation that would permit abortion under all sorts of circumstances, and especially of course in the case of what we call "the big four": rape, incest, health of the mother, and the likelihood that the child will be impaired. One example is the presentation made by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Canada before a Canadian parliamentary committee. A bill before the committee would permit abortion under various conditions, including risk of maternal health. Rather than condemning the bill, the bishops complained that it was flawed because it did not sufficiently specify what maternal health meant (Vitality, 3/90).
Another example is the National Right to Life Committee that has drawn up what is supposed to be "model legislation," which would permit abortion in cases of "the big four" (e.g., Star Tribune, 27/2/90). With so-called pro-life abortion bills proliferating all over, the question becomes no longer the moral one of whether one has a "right" to abortion, but a quantitative one as to the various circumstances under which one could have one. What all this underlines is that fewer and fewer pro-life positions are actually subsumed under the "pro-life" label. Who knows what horrible deathmaking and genocides may someday be endorsed as being "pro-life"?

TIPS has pointed out such incoherencies among "pro-life" advocates before, and we remind our readers that we have never allied ourselves with "right-to-life" or "anti-abortion" groups because their incoherency has been apparent to us from the first.

The TIPS editor also suspects that deep down, despite their opposition to abortion, abortion foes have unconsciously surrendered to the modernistic perception that (a) being handicapped is worse than dead, and (b) the unborn are really not quite human, and that is one reason why they can support laws that permit abortion of some children when at least some of them would never ever ever ever support the same kinds of laws in reference to already-born humans.

* Burgess Medical Center, which is supposedly Catholic, and Bronson Methodist Hospital, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, agreed to consolidate after agreeing that there will be no abortions done in either branch of the merged hospitals "except to save maternal life or in cases where the fetus is deemed incompatible with life." This is not consistent with traditional Catholic ethics, and yet Dr. Jack Wilke, president of the National Right to Life Committee, commended this "pro-life decision" (NRL News, 2 Nov. 89). This underlines again how over and over, so-called pro-life and anti-abortion people are simply not against abortion across the board, and make exception for one or all of the "big four" reasons. Oddly enough, this news item was immediately juxtaposed to one entitled "Milwaukee Journal Editor's Pro-Abortion Hypocrisy," and a few pages further on (p. 11), Willke accused an "anonymous author" of inferring "that I am confused and soft on abortion."

* WANTED: Some v-e-r-y long-handled spoons for some very confused bishops! As we keep reiterating, there is an old wisdom that those who sup with the devil must use a long spoon. Unfortunately, hardly anyone believes it and acts accordingly—surprisingly, not even those who profess to believe in the existence of the devil! Thus, just before Easter 1990, the US Catholic bishops announced a plan to hire the Hill & Knowlton public relations firm in order to convince Americans (including the bishops' own Catholics) that abortion is wrong and should be outlawed. This same firm has also represented a firm which manufactures two abortion-inducing drugs, one which manufactures oral contraceptives and condoms, a producer of parts for the military, the Tobacco Institute, several governments known for their oppression (including of Catholics), and Playboy Enterprises. Not only did this decision come under attack by people within the church, but even some of the staff of the public relations firm rebelled when they learned of it, because they disagree with the church's position on abortion. Only the incoherent right-to-life groups condoned and even praised the decision as showing that the bishops were "serious" about the issue.

* Strangely enough, the current generation of young people in mental retardation may see almost the last of the children with Down's Syndrome, not because of effective preventive measures but because of overwhelming pressure on
pregnant women to participate in a search-and-destroy quest that would identify all the unborn who might conceivably have some congenital anomaly, and abort them. Thus, anyone who sees a person with Down's Syndrome in school or sweeping the floor at a McDonald's should look intently and pensively at them, because soon, there may be no more. (Source item from Betty Milizia, via Jack Yates.)

* A man in central New York has been sending Easter cards to employees of an abortion clinic, greeting them with the love of Jesus and inviting them to repent. Several employees went to war and court about this, one of them charging the writer with "aggravated harassment."

* A human life is said by many pro-abortion people today to begin at birth rather than at conception, but US federal tax laws say that a cow's life begins at conception, from the moment of which the calf is taxable as a capital asset, while the costs of carrying it to term are tax-deductible. Clearly, unborn calves are worth infinitely more than unborn babies (CCFL, 2/90).

* One should have known that the revolution in Rumania could bring no good when one of the first things it did on seizing power was to legalize abortion. It is also ironic that various news media, exemplified by Time (29/1/90) and Life (7/90), interpreted the 20-year baby boom in Rumania as just about one of the worst things that could have happened to it after Ceausescu himself.

Slaughter of the Innocent Newborn & Young Children

* A good example of the privatization of homicide and mutilation was what happened to unwanted infants in Rome. In large numbers, such unwanted infants were left in a public place at the base of a column, the Columna Lactaria, and most likely in other places as well. The law said that anyone who took possession of an unwanted child became the child's master, and the child was his/her slave, and masters could do anything they wished with their slaves. Men could use them as concubines, and women were accustomed to punishing their female slaves by jabbing icepick-like implements into the fleshy parts of their bodies. Thus, unscrupulous people picked up the abandoned infants and mutilated them, often in the most horrible fashion, tearing off limbs, gouging out eyes, and so on. Of course, many infants died from such treatment, if not right away, then later on. If the infant lived into childhood, it could be sent out to beg for its master. The object of this cruelty was to use the infants as props for begging, to elicit pity from potential donors, thus enabling a beggar to gather more alms.

The situation was debated between Roman thinkers, and even though they well described the awful realities, the debate still reached the conclusion that no law was being broken because the abandoned infants were, in essence, slaves, and doing harm to them did not inflict any damage to the state. Since it was also Roman political thinking that things should only be viewed as illegal if they could be identified as doing damage to the state, all this also implied that no laws against these awful practices were called for. Of course, certain types of destructive interpersonal interactions could very well be defined as being contrary to the interests of the state, but since slaves were apparently always in generous supply, and since mastery over slaves was considered rather absolute, doing injury to slaves was not considered doing injury to the state.

Similar arguments are heard today in regard to the privatization of abortion, infanticide, suicide, inter-spousal killings in response to spouse abuse, and certain forms of "euthanasia."
In our capitalistic value tradition, property rights are nearly absolute. At the same time, children have come to be seen much more as property, in the way of disposable chattel. Not surprisingly then, children have been seen as interchangeable with other parental properties, and equally disposable as the latter. For instance, a woman in Minnesota left her baby as collateral with a store clerk while she went off for an hour to get the cash for her purchase (vignette from Paul deParrie). And if, furthermore, an unborn baby is interpreted as being simply one component of the mother's body that she can do with as she pleases, then we should not be surprised that people will begin to look at newborns as merely severed or expelled body parts that they can also dispose of the way we dispose of other body excrements or clippings. Thus, it is not surprising to hear more and more of abandoned babies being found, and quite commonly in garbage disposal containers or in dumping areas.

Under the Rumanian dictatorship, the women were expected to have at least five children, but as the Rumanian economy deteriorated more and more, many parents abandoned their children, and particularly so their handicapped ones. When the dictatorship was overthrown in 1989, it was discovered that the state had hidden over 100,000 handicapped and abandoned children in isolated, overcrowded and underfunded warehouses, which were called "orphanage hospitals," in rural areas. These institutions were so bad that even non-handicapped children placed in them very soon became handicapped. Even at that, the children discovered in these institutions were apparently survivors of a much larger cohort in which the death rates had been extremely high (International Rehabilitation Review, 10/90). Rather than blaming all sorts of things for this catastrophe, the one thing one is being said over and over is that none of this needed to happen if only the Rumanian dictator had allowed abortions and the sale of birth control devices.


The above two books provide significant coverage on certain forms of child deathmaking. The first one reports and compares data from Canada, the United Kingdom and the US. Both books underline that child protection services are simply not in a position to adequately carry out an effective child protection task. That child killing is often not the product of ordinary kinds of insanity is underlined by Greenland who reported a study in Ontario that revealed that only about 10% of people who had killed a child were deemed to have displayed severe psychopathology. However, people who kill a child are extremely likely to have previously engaged in severe child abuse (in the United Kingdom, in 90% of cases according to Greenland).

According to a literature review by Maney and Wells, a very large proportion of child abuse identified by human service professionals is not reported. The authors also conclude that professionals are overwhelmingly more likely to protect themselves and each other than potential child victims.

A 25-year old man was left by his wife, and after a week of trying to care for the couple's two children, he beat one comatose and said that the pressures of raising the two children alone simply overwhelmed him (SHJ 12/89).

In some states, children's protective services may investigate child abuse charges when a suspect is a family member, but not when the suspect is not (Parade, 18/3/90).
Whenever infants are being killed or abandoned by their parents—usually their mothers—they are nowadays very likely to be put into some garbage container, and/or quite commonly also wrapped in garbage bags, or both. This underlines the reality of the verbal image of the "throw-away children."

Unfortunately, there is now the acronym CAN which stands for "child abuse and neglect," which in turn has given rise to the term "CAN deaths," with the latter almost conjuring up images of garbage. Of course, what is being done to children these days is very similar to trashing or throwing them into the garbage can, but we are not sure that the term CAN deaths is helpful.

A 1989 study tried to identify the extent to which violence leads to significant but non-fatal injuries in the US. It was found that one out of every 130 children each year requires hospital care either as a result of fights, intentional violence by others, or suicide attempts (AP in SHJ, 9 Dec. 89).

We have commented before on the wrenching phenomenon of disappearing children. In the US, it is estimated that somewhere between 6000 and 50,000 of the disappearing children are abducted every year. It was only after the problem had become mammoth that a few things began to be done about it. One is increasing interest and better coordination among police departments. Another one has been a TV show which gives pictures and information about missing children. As a result of one that showed 55 such children, 14 were located, which is actually a very spectacular result. Such programs will probably be periodically repeated. Two common responses which we do not recommend include calling in psychics and prescribing psychotherapy for the parents—yet such treatment must be considered par for the course of a decadent society—as must the crank calls that are received about every missing child. One family got 700 crank calls, not counting honest-to-goodness false leads. Parents of an abducted child are lucky if the abductor falls into one of the major abductor categories, namely that of the women (usually who have lost a baby or cannot conceive) who steal a child in order to mother it. The vast majority of the other abductions appear to have sexual motives, often combined with homicidal impulses. Ironies abound. One child kidnapped at seven was reunited with his family at age 14—but proved to be so rebellious that the parents twice ordered him out of the house again before he was 18.

Until now, there has always been a relatively plentiful supply of adoptive and foster families, but the situation may soon change dramatically, for a combination of reasons: fewer people care to raise children, and therefore also to raise other people's children; people who are willing to raise children may only want to raise one, in contrast to foster families in the past who often took in several children; the number of children without functional homes is exploding, parental drug addiction being just one of the reasons; there is the remarkable fact that the underclass is really the only one that is reproducing prolifically, but it also has an ever-increasing incapacity for child-rearing, one implication being that there is a racial gulf between many of their children in need of homes, and potential foster homes from the upper strata; many of the children who will need homes are very problem-ridden and pose more challenges than many potential foster families want to deal with; and more and more people who are willing to function as foster parents turn out to be severely disfunctional themselves, not able to deal with the children, and often abusing them.

Where all this is going is illustrated by the fact that just between 1985-1989, the number of infants in need of foster care in California increased 235% (NCR, 24/6/90).
It is interesting to contemplate that some of the advice on behalf of institutionalization that used to be typically given to parents of handicapped children during the height of the eugenic era and right up into the 1970s closely parallels the arguments that have been common since the 1970s in support of abortion and infanticide, especially where the unborn is known or suspected of being handicapped. These include that such a child would interfere with the parents' (and especially the mother's) life or career; that siblings would suffer if the child is kept or allowed to live; that keeping such a child would be tremendously costly financially; that the child will never be able to do this or that, and will end up horribly burdensome; that it would be a kindness to the child to get rid of it quickly; that after this child is gotten rid of, the parents can have another "replacement" child; and that getting rid of the child is "the best thing for all concerned." Of course, these arguments are as untrue now as they were then, and as untrue in regard to abortion as in regard to infanticide or institutionalization of a born child.

Harry Schwartz was a member of the editorial board of the New York Times for 29 years. In 1990 (USA Today, 22/5/90) he said that providing intensive care for low-weight babies is a "wasted expenditure" "because the treated babies die or are cursed by life-long major defects." We see here the equation of death and impairment, as well as a pretty straightforward statement that a life-long major defect is a "curse," and a "waste" of other people's money. Schwartz then went on to equate such a child with "a 99-year old Alzheimer's patient who is in the last agonies of cancer."

One thing we need to remember is that many people who grew up before World War II were deeply imbued with eugenic concepts, and many of them have continued ever since to hold and express these in some form or another. (Source item from Julie Grimstad)

In 1985, the Reagan administration ordered health agencies to stop collecting data on immunizations, with the major impact being the loss of statistical data on child immunization. This of course serves the larger purpose of child junking in a very well-concealed fashion (Children's Defense Fund information flyer, early 1990).

In 5/90, two Stanford University types proposed that the US should save $2.6 billion annually by abandoning care of more premature babies.

Deathmaking "ethicist" Peter Singer in Australia came out in 1990 for declaring anencephalic infants brain-dead, and for use of their organs (Age, 9 May 90; source item from John Annison).

Almost the entire 10/90 issue of Speak Out, published in England, is devoted to the deathmaking of children with Down's Syndrome, and efforts to prevent it.

Congenital syphilis had virtually disappeared in the US, but is now making a remarkable reappearance. The major cause by far is women engaging in sex (usually with multiple partners) in exchange for drugs, particularly cocaine-based ones. Many of these children either die or survive retarded and/or otherwise damaged, but 30-40% of the infected unborn die before birth (AP, in SHJ, 8 Dec. 89).

**Babymaking, Artificial and Other**

An Australian author referred to the "baby consumer movement," characterized by the following: "a concern bordering on obsession with having the right child at the right time in the right place with the right preparation, the right doctor and/or attendants, all having the right attitude and producing the right experience for all concerned" (The Age, 15/9/90; source item from Michael Steer).
Artificial baby-making is closely related to deathmaking, especially of children; and perhaps not surprisingly, under cover of life-promoting arguments.

The artificial baby-making business involves, among other things, a great many of what one might call extra-uterine abortions. For instance, in South Australia alone, several hundred couples have had multiple embryos each produced by in vitro fertilization programs and then frozen. When a couple have had all the children they want, they are then given a choice of either "using" the embryos to have yet another child, or "donating" them to another couple—or having them "discarded." Note also the extremely utilitarian mentality and language involved in all of this (Advertiser, 11 Sept. 90; source item from Ross Womersley).

One of the utilities for artificial baby-making that has been described is for career women to have an ovum taken and fertilized, put in storage, and then artificially grown—perhaps in another woman—so that the mother never has to skip a day of her career for pregnancy or childbirth.

Much deception is involved in various kinds of artificial baby-making. For instance, it has been discovered that some sperm banks impregnate women with sperm from men other than those they say they did. Worst-case scenarios include alleged impregnation by one's husband's sperm that later turns out to have been that of another man (4/90 news clipping from Mike Morton). Also, many physicians and so-called sperm banks keep such sloppy records that it will be impossible for children conceived in this way to ever find out important information about one of their parents. This is apparently done on purpose, in order to protect the image and reputation of the sterile husband. Children thus end up with falsified medical records. Further, some children conceived in this fashion are learning the truth about themselves in a punitive way. For instance, in a fit of anger, a parent may later throw it up at the child how the child was conceived. Especially if the parents later separate and/or divorce, the child's true parentage may be used by one spouse against the other, with the child caught in the middle. It has also happened that after a divorce, one parent's new lover threatens to tell the child, and in order to beat this person to it, the threatened parent hurriedly tells the child in the middle of the night or in some other panic context. All this, of course, on top of the major deception, namely, that various types of artificial baby-making are very successful. In fact, the "success rates" of these various types of shenanigans—at least in terms of children carried successfully to term—are notoriously low. (Source item USA Today, 26 March 1990; submitted by Jan Doody)

Many of the outcomes of efforts at artificial baby-making we would characterize as typical betrayals of idol worshippers by the idols that they worshipped. Idols always betray their worshippers. Idols eventually also demand human sacrifices, and such are plentiful in the artificial baby-making culture. Examples of all these truths abound all around us, though most people are incapable and unwilling of seeing these things—but yet another dramatic example follows below.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the intrauterine device called the Dalkon Shield, manufactured by A. H. Robbins Company, was promoted by its inventor as a "superior modern contraceptive" that was as effective as birth control pills without the risky side effects thereof. Sometimes, the shield was even trumpeted as "the Cadillac of contraception." Between 1970-1974, physicians inserted 2.4 million Dalkon Shields into American women, and another 2 million were sent abroad. It took many years for the systematic pattern of death-dealing deception surrounding the promotion of the Dalkon Shield to become apparent. First of all, it turned out that the shield was really an abortifacient rather than a contraceptive device, which many women were not told, at least not in ways they could understand. Then the Dalkon Shield resulted in a 500-600% higher pregnancy rate than contraceptive pills, for whatever that is worth. Thirdly, hundreds of
thousands of women were injured by the Shield, most of them because of infections that the shield caused. Some women suffered constant hemorrhaging, pain, and eventual scarring and blockage of the fallopian tubes. Thousands suffered abnormal pregnancies and sterility. At least a few dozen died. An alarming number of marriages disintegrated when husbands discovered that their wives had either become sterile or were unable to have sexual relations because of their malaise. Many of the women ended up in the hands of shrinks, where they were sometimes treated as hypochondriacs or chronic complainers.

When complaints began to flood in, the manufacturer's response was to hire a New York public relations firm to tell positive stories about the shield in the media, and an expensive consultant to continue to promote the shield. Women who went to court were accused by the company of either poor hygiene or wanton sexuality. Only in June 1974, and only under pressure from the US Food and Drug Administration, A. H. Robbins suspended marketing the shield in the US—but continued to sell it abroad for yet another 10.5 years. In time, as lawsuits mounted, the company had to pay out $530 million to 9,500 claimants, and avoided further liability by simply declaring bankruptcy. Even after this happened, 335,000 more women lodged complaints. The bankrupt company was taken over in 1988 by the American Home Products Corporation which, interestingly, manufactures a synthetic estrogen (Premarin) which many Dalkon Shield victims must take to replace the lost hormones because of hysterectomies. Furthermore, this company has also been the target of a consumer boycott because of infant formula abuses. The Robbins family, which owned 42% of the stock, is apparently walking away with $294 million, free from any further liability for their crimes against women. Also, lawyers are apparently getting the lion’s share of any awards to claimant women. The women most likely to get compensation are the more upper-class ones, because the poorer women cannot cope with claims and questionnaires, and were often given Shields at clinics where inadequate documentation was kept or that have since gone out of business. One woman who suffered two spontaneous abortions (other than the ones the shield induces on an ongoing basis), and who gave birth to two still-born children plus another who lived only for an hour, said, "I just wish A. H. Robbins would say, 'We're sorry'" (Sojourners, 1/90).

War, Preparations for War, and Its Human Sacrifices

* According to one estimate, the B-2 Stealth Bomber will end up costing more than its weight in gold (Time, 31/7/89).

* The American military was in the process of experiencing massive cuts when the Mideast crisis came to its rescue, and its demand to be allowed to intervene in Arabia was probably determined in large part by its fear of cutbacks. It is quite possible that it will seek other similar adventures in the Third World in the future in order to maintain its economic stranglehold on the US economy. How much the US military is driven by such self-preservation compulsions also became clear by its dramatic flip-flop in regard to its involvement in the war on drugs. Quite properly, the military had resisted serving as a drug police, but as Communism crumbled in 1990, it flip-flopped and agreed to put its entire long-range radar system in service to the surveillance of aerial drug delivery. We warn again that one day, the US will rue the day when it permitted the military to become a police force.

* There is a severe irony in the fact that almost all the Western countries that aligned themselves against Iraq had only shortly before been supplying to it arms or the capabilities for waging modern warfare, including nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare. The US and Britain continued to furnish arms to Iraq up to July 1990, and Germany even later than that. In fact, Iraq had been the world's largest importer of arms over an entire five-year period. There
is further irony in the fact that one reason why Iraq went to war for oil in 1990 was because it had accumulated one of the Third World's largest foreign debts paying for the above purchases. But so far, the only developed country that is considering cutting back its arms industry voluntarily is Czechoslovakia (Guardian Weekly, 30/9/90; source item from Peter Millier).

* The US has funded war lords in Angola and Mozambique that have waged civil war between 1980-88 that took the lives of over 800,000 children under 5, yet one rarely heard any news coverage of this, while a plane disaster costing 50 lives might make the front headlines (SHJ, 12 Feb. 90).

* There is a US law that prohibits private citizens from taking sides in foreign wars. The law is virtually never invoked, and certainly not to stop clandestine US involvement in foreign wars, and the massive participation by thousands of private parties in these. And yet one of the few times that the law was ever invoked was when a young American churchwoman was accused by the government of El Salvador of storing weapons for rebels. The charge was quite obviously trumped up, and yet the US government treated the woman as if she were a guilty criminal, and the US Justice Department tried to pin a violation of this neutrality act on her (AP in SHJ, 29/11/89).

* During the Vietnam War, between 1966-71, the US Department of Defense was so short of manpower that it decided to lower its usual intellectual requirements, and admitted into the armed forces 354,000 low-scoring men who would otherwise have been rejected. Many of these men had IQs in the 70s, and no more than a 6th grade reading level. They were referred to by the euphemism "new standards men." Secretary of Defense Robert MacNamara interpreted this measure as giving the poor of America an opportunity to serve in their country's defense, and to return to civilian life with skills and aptitudes which would reverse their downward spiral of human decay. This episode has only recently come under more intense study (e.g., APA Monitor, 5/90), and it is also amazing to learn that the Veterans Administration itself was never informed of this policy, or prepared for its impact on the department after these men had been discharged. Some people are charging the government with using the low-intelligent poor as cannon fodder in Vietnam, particularly since they were assigned primarily to combat, if not to low-skill jobs such as food service. Ironically, most of these men received very little training or special assistance either in the military or prior to discharge. Studies and congressional hearings in early 1990 have revealed that the survivors have done very poorly in later civilian life.

* At the Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, the headquarters of the US Strategic Air Command (which runs the long-range bombers that would try to deliver nuclear bombs onto Russia in case of a war), children who came to an open house were recruited to have their pictures taken wearing a camouflage flak jacket, a helmet on their head, a bandolier of bullets draped across their chests, and brandishing an automatic weapon. But people who handed out leaflets telling visitors that the citizens of the state spend $1.75 billion each year on war preparation were taken into custody and had their leaflets confiscated (Sojourners, 1/90).

* Between 1980-1990, sale of war toys in the US increased by 200%. Time (26/3/90) said that children are being egged on by an overwhelming barrage of electronic violence, and are beginning to lose touch with the consequences of violence in real life. One of the saddest recommendations of what to do about this that we have ever seen is that Time suggested that parents—rather than putting a stop to any and all of this—add "more imaginative props" and help the children "take creative new directions" in their war games. In essence, the position taken is the same as on sex: the moral leaders have concluded that one simply cannot stop the decadence, and should therefore try to make it as "safe" as possible.
When one goes to war, and tries to justify it, one has to display force whether it is needed or not. This explains why, when the US invaded Panama, it unleashed a firestorm of firepower against several targets devoid of enemies, and at several civilian areas. In other words, there was much indiscriminate shooting, shelling and bombing merely to create what one might call a media war scenario. One result was that many civilians got killed—and the number was immediately covered up so that the truth may never be known. The US government admitted to only 200, the Panamanian government allowed that 650 died, but non-governmental sources in both countries estimate it to be 4000 or more, and almost all of these civilians. The civilians were quickly buried, often in mass graves, often by US troops, and often without identification. Since the current Panamanian government is in cahoots with the US government, both governments have resisted a search for graves (Globe & Mail, 30/4/90).

A detailed and lengthy serial exposé (SHJ, 11/89) revealed that whereas the armed forces go out of their way to lionize their members who die in combat, and to support the family members, when armed forces members die in non-combat accidents (which occur at the astonishing rate of more than 3 a day), the families get treated like dirt. They often get no information, or only lies; the accident is almost always attributed to the deceased in order to maintain an image that the armed forces are infallible and that there is often nothing wrong; files and documents get "lost"; and family members are often deprived of benefits. This is often profoundly disillusioning for the family members who previously had often been gung-ho patriots and military-minded, though few people ever come to a full realization of the nature of the imperial beast in general.

In West Germany, the universal draft system for young men required them to serve 15 months in the armed forces, but conscientious objectors could instead choose to serve in a human service—but for 20 months instead of 15, with this even going up to 24 months in 1990. So many young men chose this alternative that together with the birth rate long having been below replacement levels, the armed forces started worrying that they will be left without manpower (Futurist, Fall 89; source item from Ed Cohle). The problem was solved for the short run when, as a condition of unification, Germany agreed to a small army. However, the loss of several hundred thousand military-related positions is a blow to a post-primary production (PPP) economy, but western-style PPP dynamics also quickly are coming to the rescue in the form of a massive explosion of lawsuits. Because the bulk of stationary wealth in East Germany had more or less been confiscated by the state, the question has now come up what claims former owners have to their former properties. This may keep millions of lawyers busy for at least a generation—probably a preferable PPP alternative to having them go around soldiering. An additional problem has since developed. The conscientious objectors, numbering in the tens of thousands, had become a mainstay of plentiful cheap labor for human service agencies. With the scaling-down of the military and the draft, this manpower source has declined dramatically, throwing the human service sector into crisis. Of course, people who have been to certain of our workshops will also recognize the problem of having so many people working in human services not as a calling but as an escape from military service.

Miscellaneous Human Service News

People should not assume automatically that the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is bound to have nothing but happy results. In fact, we should have known that all sorts of laws and schemes on behalf of devalued people commonly have previously unanticipated negative impacts on the purported beneficiaries. Among the potentially negative outcomes of the ADA is that there might be zillions of lawsuits which add additional burdens on society and its
already crumbling processes and structure, and possibly cause a backlash against handicapped people via unreasonable rulings. Thus, what gets gained in the courts could be lost outside the courts. To us, the most promising elements of the act deal with the long-term impact on accessibility to public transport and physical facilities.

* A major article in the 9/90 issue of Exceptional Children reviewed the de facto failure of the individualized education program plan concept, tracing its history from 1975 on. All the people who are so crazed about individual service plans and have looked on this as a major salvation for human services would be well-advised to read this.

* There is profound irony in the fact that nobody is doing hardly anything real about the most awful things that are getting done to children by a broad array of decadent cultural practices, such as family dissolution, pornography, advertising, TV and its violence and mind destruction, and on and on—but everybody gets up in arms about children holding jobs and earning money. We are all in favor of child labor as long as it is not destructive of the health of children and does not interfere with their education, but the child labor warfare that is currently on only revolves around the letter of the law against child labor, and is totally disassociated from the other concerns mentioned above. We might only consider that a child that is not holding a job outside of school hours is apt to sit in front of a TV set, run in gangs, or do who knows what awful things (Time, 26/3/90). Thus, we must interpret the war against child labor as not at all being concerned with child welfare, but with protecting the peculiar characteristics of an insane and destructive labor market.

* The Aboriginals in Australia still believe in deadly curses, and so, apparently, do many other Australians. Persons who are "sung with curses" (sometimes referred to as "someone being sung") and/or have ritual bones pointed at them commonly take sick, ail and die. Two cases of this happened in West Australia in 1990, and other Australians were apparently so afraid that the newspapers could find only one anthropology expert to talk to them about it (West Australian News, 8 Sept. 90; source item from Darrel Wills). As we commonly point out in our SRV teaching, this underlines that culturally embedded practices are commonly more powerful than all sorts of valid socio-behavioral technologies that are used out of their cultural context—as they so commonly are in human services.

* The US Department of Defense is launching a pilot program that would allow military psychologists to prescribe psychoactive medication (APA Monitor, 7/90).

* Because of the centralizing ideologies of socialist societies, many of them have not permitted voluntary associations, but with the recent political revolution in East Germany, more than 200 local organizations of parents of retarded people sprang into life almost overnight (AW, 30/6/90).

* How important continuity and security are in the lives of wounded people was illustrated by one mentally retarded woman in her 20s who, when asked what she wanted to pray for during a prayer service, replied "safety" (Dorothy Murray, Albany 9/24/90).

* In terms of percentage of the gross national product, only Ireland and Australia invest less than the US in basic education among the 16 developed countries studied, doing only a little better (9th) in per pupil expenditure (Time, 29/1/90).