Our last TIPS issue included the August one, so this issue covers October and December 2002, and February and April 2003. We include our usual December issue themes, except for hobo poetry and the morality section. We have added to this issue, as we will probably have to do in all future ones, coverage related to "the events" of 9/01 and their aftermath, as these are making a profound impact on the world, the economy, and human services.

NOTICE TO OUR READERS: In order to endure as a moral actor in a disfunctional, and increasingly, even corrupt world and its human services, one has to be able and willing to stare into the abyss and not run away. One has to be able to acknowledge hard truths, to accurately read from the signs of the times where society seems to be headed, and not flee because much of this is so unpleasant. This TIPS issue will test the mettle of many readers, and their willingness to rise to this challenge.

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National Poverties & Famines

*Economists have recently shown that it is quite possible for governments of relatively poor nations, with a low level of per capita income, to manage nonetheless to provide the population with a good educational foundation and a reasonably good overall health care system. This is exemplified by some nations that have a gross national product of less than $500 per citizen, and yet where life expectancy is as high as age 73, in contrast to other nations with much lower life expectancies despite many times as much GNP. Economists have also shown that famine hardly ever occurs in a functioning democracy, even when economic conditions are relatively bad. Furthermore, such economists assert that contrary to certain ideology-driven theories, there exists no systematic and provable evidence that authoritarian governments are better able to promote economic growth (El, 1/01).

*Many African countries are now facing famine. In many cases, political immaturity and government irrationality, ideological-isms, and oppression play a big role in this. For instance, one of the richest countries in Africa, Angola, is facing mass starvation because of decades of internal warfare and mismanagement of its resources (SPS, 27/5/02). Unfortunately, this is the case with many African nations that have more natural resources than most European countries do. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the government has begun to permit terrorism against "white" farmers, and the uncompensated carving up of their farms to be taken over by squatters, most of whom are not farmers and do little real farming, so that there has been a dramatic decline in the production of crops and an increase in less productive animal husbandry. The net result is that the population is increasingly less well-off, and is beginning to call for import of food—often donated food.

*Many islands, and even entire nations, in the Pacific Ocean are at the point where they have begun to evacuate their populations because the islands are being flooded. These are very poor nations with hardly any visibility internationally, while it is of course the big and rich nations, and the US above all, that is doing the flooding by its energy policies (Globe & Mail, 24/11/01; source item from Kathryn Smith).

*While everyone has been preoccupied with the Catholic priests sex scandal, many UN aid workers in Africa have massively taken advantage of their privileged position to sexually exploit needy people in return for sex favors when giving away food and shelter. This has been going on in many West African countries (NCR, 26/5/02).

*We were astonished to note that a reader of the scientific monthly Discover (5/01) claimed that starvation in the world was not due to a shortage of food, but to a "lack of money and resources."

*In Moldova, in eastern Europe, two women were arrested for selling human remains as meat for human consumption (Des Moines Register, 4/1/01; source item from Rod Braun), apparently just to earn some money. Moldova, mostly of Romanian ethnicity, is among the poorest countries in Europe, and was a former Soviet state.

*We have reported before in TIPS on the "micro-loans" made by grameen banks in India and the Asian subcontinent, mostly to help the very poor establish their own businesses, often working out of their homes. A Peruvian economist has come up with another low-tech (but controversial) strategy to get capital into the hands of the very poor, namely, by giving them title to the land they live on and the ramshackle dwellings they have erected on it. Often, the land is state land, but if the poor were given title, they could use it as capital to secure loans, invest, start or expand a business, etc. (SPS, 3 July 01, p. A6). While this would probably do a great deal of good for many of the poor in the most undeveloped parts of the world, where they tend to live in shantytowns or the equivalent, it would not address the problems of incompetence and social pathology that afflict so many of the poor in the more developed world.
Personal Poverty & Attempted Remedies

Prior to the US New Deal under Roosevelt, it had generally been thought that one of the best ways to help the poor was to help them help themselves, and part of that was to help them acquire virtues such as sobriety, diligence, and thrift. The early policies of the New Deal were not seen as a substitute for personal virtue but as a complement, so as to make sure that the virtues acquired and practiced by the poor would be sufficiently rewarded. But eventually, reformers seemed to have given up the idea that individual responsibility played any role at all in combating poverty, and the era of multi-generational dependency, and of a mentality of entitlement to live as one wished while being government-supported, spread. In fact, the economy began to actively discourage thrift and instead stressed spending, consumption, and even borrowing in order to spend and consume. However, the groundwork for these notions had actually been laid as early as around 1900 by a number of other social reformers, including Jane Addams, who believed that the poor were too demoralized and poorly socialized to help themselves. It seems every side had some kernels of the truth and carried everything to extremes. The test of the validity of the role of the virtues is whether a poor person who practices a virtue has a reasonable chance to escape poverty. Generally, the American immigrant experience has been that this was the case unless one was struck down by disease or accident, but it might take a generation to work one's way out of poverty. If one had many children, this might also keep one in poverty, but one could usually afford them at least a springboard out of poverty. The exception to all this was the African-American population to whom the rewards of virtue were largely unjustly denied, leading to very extensive collapse of the ideals of virtue in their culture. It is a great paradox that the "war on poverty" of the Kennedy-Johnson era on the one hand rewarded multi-generational virtueless poverty, but on the other hand opened the opportunities that, hand-in-hand with the civil rights revolution, began to reward African-Americans for a virtuous life. All of this is discussed in a 2001 book entitled Fighting Poverty With Virtue by Joel Schwartz.

*It is abundantly evident from both history and contemporary experience that many of the problems of "the poor" are due not to their lack of money, but to their lack of competence, so that even if the poor come into sudden possession of goods and money, they will still be bad off. This incompetence and its results can be very taxing of the charity of do-gooders. For instance, we know of one poor man who was given by a dentist almost $2000 worth of free service and dentures. But in less than two weeks, the man felt a gag coming on, went and stood over the toilet, coughed out his teeth--and then flushed them away. In the meantime, the dentist (perhaps new to working with poor and marginal people) had discarded the man's teeth molds. This required a whole new series of appointments, fittings, etc., in the dentist's office. That dentist had certainly not expected his free gift to be flushed away, and so swiftly! We recommend that one be thoroughly disillusioned first about what the poor will do with it before one gives them things, money or services, even as we also recommend that the well-off do, in fact, give lavishly to the poor.

*Americans generally, and poor people specifically, do not save money, and have an almost irresistible urge to spend whatever spendable money they have. In fact, more than half of American families live "from paycheck to paycheck" (SHJ, 21 Feb. 01). We therefore see the current push to have people put a big portion of their Social Security money into the stock market as a way of transferring people's potential retirement benefits to rich people. If poor people are given an option to spend now or save for later, or to take sizable cash accumulations out of investment accounts and spend them, a great many will do so, and then they will have even less to retire on than before, and the public will once again have to step in and supplement very inadequate retirement funds. Also, of course, stock and money markets are risky, and investments are often manipulated, as we have often reported upon. Thus, rich people will benefit yet once again by being able to steal poor people's pensions, and to use poor people's retirement money to invest, and even to de facto gamble with, charge account management fees, etc. In essence, we see this proposal as virtually economic warfare against the poor, the here-and-now-istic, and the foolish.

*In earlier December issues of TIPS, we have commented on the peculiarities of poverty in affluent societies. One such feature is that the poor will often buy expensive clothing because of its "name-brand," even though clothing that is just as wearable, durable, and attractive (or more so) can be purchased for much less. In fact, some "ghetto-fashion"—i.e., clothing that is popular only among
poor minority groups—is almost only seen there, and can be expensive even when it is poorly made, or made of low quality materials, or very nonfunctional. Here is an incident that illustrates the above: for over 30 years, the TIPS editor had worn a pair of high zippered winter boots, made by the Bally firm, until they finally were "on their last legs." When he tried to replace the boots in 2001, he was told to his shock that no manufacturer made this style of boot any longer, and that Bally was now making expensive sneakers that are sold primarily in the ghettos because "that is where the money now is," as the shoe store salesman told him. It should be kept in mind that Bally footwear has always been very expensive, but many of the poor somehow come up with the money to buy Bally sneakers. (While these are also well made, they may be discarded as soon as a new fashion style comes along).

One of the signs of how peculiar is poverty in wealthy nations is a picture in Time (3 Dec. 01) that showed a homeless family accommodated at public expense in a motel room, with both parents and all three children being very obese.

Also, we often see that people throw out not only their Christmas tree but also its stand, apparently buying a new stand every year, and this can be observed as much in poor neighborhoods as in affluent ones, which underlines how much the poor imitate the wastefulness of the wealthy. Apparently, people find it too much hassle to free the stand from the tree to save it for the next year, and they have the money and find it less hassle to simply keep buying a new stand every year. We also learned that some poor people buy a new artificial Christmas tree every year rather than disassembling the same one and using it over and over. Obviously, the economy would be in bad shape if people were not so wasteful.

*In 4/01, Manitoba passed a revolutionary law financially subsidizing, on a sliding scale, poor women during their pregnancies, hopefully so that they will eat a sufficient and healthy diet. However, the women may use the money any way they see fit. It remains to be seen to what degree this subsidy will be used by pregnant poor women in any way that benefits their unborn children.

*The general image of people on minimum wage is that they are poor, but it turns out that 85% of them in the US either live at home with their parents, have a working spouse, or live alone without children. Thus, the hardest hit are the 15% that is largely constituted of single parents attempting to raise their children.

*In many countries where there is less of a history of radical individualism, it has been quite legal—or even mandatory—to take into account people’s life circumstances in setting their wages. For instance, in such countries, it has been legal or even mandatory to pay more to heads of households who were supporting dependents. Our inability in the US to tolerate such a "discriminatory" arrangement is probably infinitely worse than a low minimum wage.

*For years, we have reported that the 1996 welfare reforms were successful beyond anyone’s expectations, to the extreme chagrin and even fury of the welfare state mentality liberals, who have left no leaf unturned to find drawbacks in these reforms, of which there naturally are bound to be some, even though poverty has declined every year since 1996, child poverty is the lowest since 1980, single mothers are doing better, and many of the long-term poor found jobs after all (contrary to liberal predictions). The lowly who work do not earn a lot, but they are now the working poor instead of the chronically dependent welfare-mentality poor. However, the liberals would vastly prefer the poor to be nonworking poor. (Editorials and liberal columnists constantly bring this fact out.) One good fruit of the new US welfare laws (again, to the desperate frustration of PC liberals) is that there was an increase in the number of the poor who lived in 2-parent families with children, especially among "blacks." Of course, the rich have been getting richer at the same time, and poverty could come back with a vengeance if the economy goes downhill, as we suspect it must in light of what we call World War VI that became obvious in 9/01.

*More people in the US are eligible to receive free food stamps than are eligible to receive welfare, but as people have been going off welfare in recent years, many have also either withdrawn from the food stamp program or not applied for eligibility. Rather than rejoicing that the working poor are trying to make it on their own, the liberals—as well as people in the welfare system—have gone on a virtual warfare trying to get people to sign up for food stamps for which they are eligible.
This certainly bears out the long-standing conservative claim that liberals systematically promote a mentality and culture of dependency (SPS, 18/10/01).

*In many American states, local schools receive state aid in proportion to the number of students who are certifiable as poor. Because one index of such poverty is how many students avail themselves of free lunches, some schools are doing everything they can to discourage poor students from bringing their own lunches, and instead getting them to sign up for the free ones. As inducements, the schools give CD players to students who apply for free school lunches, and have greatly broadened the selection of foods in the cafeteria. This can be interpreted as a very systematic campaign to induce students and families into a mentality of dependency and welfareism (FT, 8/00).

The PPP economy turns the Biblical prediction that "the poor you will always have with you" into "the poor we need to have always with us."

*A judge in New York City ruled that all food stamp recipients in the city must receive documents relevant to their food stamp recipiency translated into their native language. At the same time, the US government moved to reinstate food stamp eligibility for illegal immigrants. As we reported before, at one time, immigrants to the US had to have sponsors who would support them if they became indigent. These new PC measures could hardly be better designed to make more people mad, who thought they were being generous enough to give welfare benefits at all to indigent immigrants, and who on top are now expected to pay for the translation of welfare benefit documents into every conceivable human language (SPS, 11 Oct. 01).

*The administrative costs of transmitting welfare checks to the poor is quite high, and despite that entails many costly errors. Few people are aware of this indirect cost of poverty/welfare.

*A county in California gave more than 750 of its welfare recipients an average of $1,600 to move out of the county and off its rolls. People who thusly left moved to more than 40 different states, most of them actually finding employment in their new locations, at least initially. To its credit, the county only paid people to move to locales where unemployment was low, and poor people who later wanted to move back had to first agree to repay the money the county spent on their relocation before they could get back on welfare (SPS, 19/6/01).

*When train travel became common, it also became common for various charitable organizations to install railroad mission offices at major railroad stations, to help travelers who got stranded, had their money stolen, etc. In recent years, these rail station missions in Germany have begun to hand out free food, which in turn has attracted a lot of homeless and poor people who were not travelers. In turn, the German railroad system has been trying to ban this handout of food, triggering a bit of a warfare between the state and the churches (5/02 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

The Gulf Between the Haves & Have-Not

*Whom do they think they are fooling? In 1981, 1990, and 2001, the rich and the poor countries of the world met under UN auspices and agreed to end the poverty of the poorest nations (of which there are 49). Each time, the poor got poorer.

*Leaders of the top 8 industrial and rich nations of the world met for a few days in Okinawa in 7/00 and among other things discussed economic issues. The Japanese hosts spent $800 million on the meeting!

*The world could benefit from the example set by the US Oneida and Mohegan Indian nations. Having suddenly waxed rich from running gambling casinos, they shared $2.7 million with three other and poorer Indian nations in New York State (SHI, 7 Dec. 02).

*It appears that no matter how bad the US economy is, it will do just fine as long as things are yet worse elsewhere, because wealthy people all over the world try to protect or rescue their money by storing up US dollars, or investing in American securities. This is, of course, an extremely fragile affluence that some day could collapse overnight (Newsweek, 23/7/01).
*In the US, there were 4.6 million families (not just individuals) who were millionaires by 2001.

*In a moral society, the people making the biggest incomes would probably only earn a few times more than what the people at the bottom of the wage scale earned. This has in fact been pretty much the case in some of the Scandinavian countries, like Sweden, where a person high up might only earn about five times what a person near the entry level earns. In Japan, company CEOs make only about 11 times what the average blue collar worker gets (Time, 24/4/00). This gap has been growing for years in the US. E.g., between 1985-2001, the pay of US top executives rose by 866% while that of their workers rose only 63%, so that the former earned 70 times what the average worker earned (SPS, 26/6/02 & 30/6/02).

*As the richest fifth of Americans became vastly richer between 1995-2000, they not only spent all the new additional income that they got, but also spent 2.5% more than they had coming in. They did this by borrowing, spending their earlier savings, or cashing in their stocks and spending the earnings. All this immoral insanity only ended once the stock boom ended (Newsweek, 11 Mar. 02). But now, the average US consumer debt is 22% of income, whereas 10 years ago, it was 16% (Newsweek, 23/12/02). So people got poorer by becoming richer, or because they had become richer. Considering that the wealthier Americans generally are reasonably well-educated and intelligent, this displays an appalling lack of rationality which bodes ill for the making of any number of other decisions in which rationality should prevail.

*In 2000, former 4-star general Colin Powell gave about 120 speeches, usually for $59,500 each, and he has been doing this since 1999. He should be able to afford running for the presidency as an independent.

*The Republicans have always legislated the tax laws to the advantage of the rich, but there are a few (actually, about 100) very rich US business people who have recorded their belief that the rich should be taxed more (Newsweek, 26/2/01).

*The tax advantages for the rich exist not only on the US federal level, but even on the level of many states, and as with the federal tax system, the laws have been changing in recent decades to actually increase the advantage of the rich. In fact, people in the lower income range now pay about 150% more taxes than they did in 1960 (SPS, 22/7/02).

*"Oh England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I"
(The Last Buccaneer, Stanza 1, by Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875).

*Coffee from the slopes of Mount Kenya is some of the world's finest, and Americans were paying $13 a pound for it in 2001, while the farmers who grew it received only--one penny a pound (AP in SHA, 29/7/01).

*A man in the Netherlands concluded that when millionaires read a newspaper, they want it to make them smarter and not stupider. Accordingly, he started a new periodical for only the richest people.

*Those poor rich. One thing that always reveals what a profound gap there can be between the rich and the poor is when the rich complain what a heavy burden their riches are for them. A full-page ad for a trust company in The New Yorker (28/8/01) magazine told its rich readers that "Money is not the end of worry. It is the beginning. Face it. You have more dependents, more possessions, more investments, more taxes, more responsibilities, and more to lose. Yet still you're expected to fight your way through a zillion e-mails and voice mails each day, just trying to hang on to your sanity, your ideal weight and your quality time with your family. 'Everyone thinks we lead this charmed life,' you sigh, 'great jobs, a wonderful house, private schools. They don't see the flip side. The long conversations about how the money will impact our lives, the lives of our kids and maybe one day, their kids, too.' How can you explain to other people the fear that your children might never need to work? Or the incredible pressure of trying to protect a lifetime's worth of
missed weekends and vacations? And then, of course, who would believe all that money could ever feel like a burden rather than a blessing? We would."

*In 2/01, the wife of executive director Ken Lay who ran Enron into the ground tearfully told the world in a TV interview, "we have lost everything," at the same time as Lay's fortune was estimated to be still over $40 million. Perhaps when you were once worth nearly a billion, a mere $40 million may seem like the poorhouse (Time, 11 Feb. 02).

*And what is one to make of all the young people who want to make money quickly and retire at age 30, or as soon thereafter as possible?

Transfer of Wealth

Over 100 years ago, the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto established a theorem to the effect that "the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer" so that about 20% of the people will eventually own 80% of the wealth, and that this is the tendency in all economies. Apparently, the only thing that forestalls this tendency to some degree are taxes (if they are structured to transfer wealth from the upper to the lower rather than from the lower to the upper strata) and welfare programs.

We have long carried sections in the December issue that deal with the transfer of wealth, and another section that deals with signs of societal collapse (sometimes also covered in the signs of the times theme). We can now point out that there is a considerable linkage between the mechanisms of transfer of wealth from the bottom to the top, and the collapse of societal structures. A prime example of course are some of the financial scandals of 2002 when some of the world’s largest firms went bankrupt, or nearly so, when their executives made off with huge sums of money, and when the financial collapses of many firms also coincided effectively with discontinuance of their existence, and with the profound loss of citizen confidence not only in the financial market but also in the world of big business generally. Quite often, all sorts of societal enterprises that are very weak can survive if people have confidence in them, while much stronger enterprises can collapse when confidence in them becomes very low.

A CBS "60 Minutes" segment in 10/02 cited authorities that called the Wall Street malfeasances of the last decade one of the largest consumer scams in history in which virtually everybody on Wall Street participated to the tune of about $7 trillion in de facto theft, with 90 million Americans ending up with significant losses, many of these affecting their pension funds. What they largely got from their brokers, the investment firms, and their banks was either false or bad advice. In turn, these were corrupted by the sheer magnitude of the money that was at issue, and they thought they were invincible and could get away with their dishonesty. While all of this was happening, the supposed watchdog, the Securities and Exchange Commission, did nothing.

One amazing phenomenon at the time of the stock market meltdown in 7/02 was that an awful lot of people blamed various government officials for it, such as the US Secretary of Treasury, rather than the corruption that had become endemic in the corporate culture. Also, members of Congress who had earlier voted against various types of controls over financial dealings joined the chorus of criticism, as if they themselves had not been major contributors to the meltdown.

The accounting profession colluded in these grand thefts by developing a culture of in effect "cooking the books" so as to make the financial situations of firms nontransparent, which of course opened the door to all sorts of opportunities for somebody to make off with the money. The good side of this is that at least some of the guilty parties are hurrying to clean up their acts lest they be painted with a rather ugly brush.

While a transfer of wealth upwards can take place in zillions of usually clever and often concealed ways, some of the ways are rather habitual and large-scale. One of these that we keep pointing to is that somehow or other, peoples' pension funds keep getting raided, and even if people do not lose their pensions entirely, they often end up receiving only a fraction of what they would and should have received otherwise. One reason pension funds are so attractive is because they are a bit like a big heap of gold kept in a poorly guarded bank, or in a bank that can be acquired for a fraction of its assets. (More on this later.)

One way in which the financial collapses of some of the world’s largest firms are devastating elderly people is that pension funds have been heavily invested in these firms, the stock of which has become almost worthless. The Michigan state pension fund lost $116 million on the Worldcom debacle alone; Florida’s pension fund similarly lost close to $100 million, after having already lost
$300 million shortly before on Enron stock, and lost another $300 million when Worldcom collapsed; the New York state pension fund lost almost $150 million due to the collapse of three glamour firms (SPS, 28/6/02 & 3 July 02). And of course, these are only a few of the big pension funds, of which there are a large number.

The board members of some of the big public employee pension funds have been found to have conflicts of interest, and to have benefited financially (sometimes in a big way) from the companies in which the pension funds they directed invested (SPS, 1 July 02).

It is not merely large pension plans that have lost a great deal of their money, but almost everybody who had any kind of a pension plan that was somehow tied to the stock market, as almost all pension plans are. This means that scores of millions of Americans will either have to postpone retirement (which may actually be to the good, but not for the right reason), or will receive significantly less income in their old age.

Many employees of the big companies that have been going under had also bought stock in their own company to a very substantial extent, and have since lost all or most of what amounted to their savings, which is similar to losing one’s pension benefits.

Most American retirees say that they feel 17 years younger than their age (Time, 29/7/02). This is good, because they may have to go back to work.

Not only are vast numbers of people losing some or all of their pensions, but in the case of certain public pension funds (like the NY State municipal employees one), it is tax payers who will have to pay higher taxes in order to prop up the fund. Because the NY state employees fund lost $430 million on Enron alone, and $97 billion overall in 2 years, towns and counties have to dip into tax income, which they do by raising taxes. One irony is that people who lost their pensions will be paying higher taxes to protect municipal employees from not losing theirs. A double whammy transfer (SPS, 22/12/02).

There are also transfers of wealth from the rich to the rich, which can be very amusing. The 2000-01 collapse of the high-tech business bubble falls to a large degree into this category, especially since the young whippersnappers who ruled these new firms were often mindlessly lavish and grandiose spenders. For instance, the Telye firm even told its investors in 1999 that they had to be prepared to lose their entire investment, which at that time seemed to deter few people, many of whom plunked down $100,000 or more at a clip. That stock, at one point climbing from $10 a share to $130, ended up at about $3 in 8/01, and then went bankrupt. A major utility firm in NY State lost $44 million on Telye stock alone.

Another transfer mechanism prominent in 2002 was top executives getting unimaginably large compensations totally decoupled from the real assets and incomes of their firms. While the companies went bankrupt or experienced enormous losses (e.g., Tyco lost $80 billion), some executives made off with as much as $273 million. Tyco CEO L. Dennis Kozlowski was given by his firm a $16.8 million apartment in NY City, $14 million for renovating and furnishing it, $15,000 for an antique treestand, $17,000 for an antique toilette box, $6,300 for an antique sewing box, $445 for an antique pin cushion, $6,000 for one shower curtain, $5,960 for just one set of bed sheets, $1 million for a birthday party for his wife, etc. At the party, a nude male statue urinated vodka from its penis (Time, 30/9/02). Kozlowski and his financial officer and partner in crime Swartz are believed to have fleeced Tyco of $600 million. Tyco paid Swartz $44.8 million in severance pay, apparently just to get rid of this embarrassment (Time, 7 Oct. 02). This sort of thing was replicated all over the US economy, sometimes by firms that had never made a profit, and jubilated away the stockholders’ money. If these firms had not gone broke, this would have gone on forever! These excesses remind one of those of decadent empires in antiquity, and of the French nobility before the Revolution.

Shortly before filing for bankruptcy, the giant Agway agricultural cooperative gave its CEO $906,000 in severance pay, and a $93,000 bonus to its chief investment officer. The very day before filing for bankruptcy, the firm gave $560,000 in bonuses to seven top employees for the outstanding work they had done in preparing the bankruptcy filing (SPS, 13/12/02).

General Electric CEO Jack Welsh charged his firm $9000 a month for food, and $5500 for country club memberships (per month!). Now retired, he receives $357,000 per month.

Just before the Qwest Communications stock nosedived, the firm’s chief sold $2 billion worth of stock (Time, 14/10/02).

Worldcom was fleeced of an estimated $7.68 billion by its CEO. These guys think big! (SPS, 5 Nov. 02).
The CEO of Global Crossing learned that his firm was $200 million short of its forecast earnings, and promptly issued a statement that "record revenues" were coming in—and sold his shares for $123 million (Time, 7 Oct. 02).

With some victims of the burst bubble it is difficult to sympathize. This includes people who had been making huge incomes during the economic bubbles, thought this would last forever, and spent it as fast as it came in. Time (29/7/02) featured a number of such people. One woman executive had been earning $280,000 a year, but had saved only about $40,000, and her credit card debts were bigger than that; some rich people merely ended up less rich, and merely have to cut back on some of their extravagances; some people will not be able to send their children to expensive private colleges but have to make do (with many entitlement complaints and tears) with public colleges, including such outstanding ones as the University of Massachusetts; some people have to postpone their Caribbean vacation, or are no longer able to retire at age 54 (or even age 30) as they had planned. One man had invested $10,000 with the intention of making a quick fortune and did, in fact, trade this investment up to a value of $750,000—but then saw it quickly shrink to a mere $50,000. People like that are screaming holy murder and feeling themselves betrayed of their entitlements, even though they are still the beneficiaries of their totally unproductive engagement in what amounts to usury (e.g., Newsweek, 29/7/02).

We certainly hope that the stock market burn-out of 2002 has put the kibosh once-and-for-all on the idea of privatizing Social Security and letting people manage their own Social Security investments.

The scandalous practices in the US also have parallels in a number of other countries, particularly in Europe where there have also been collapses due to accounting scams (SPS, 13/7/02).

*One interesting aspect of the Enron collapse is that it has been categorized by experts as different from any number of comparable other kinds of collapses before in that it was a "total systems failure," meaning that all the major components of the system failed at the same time, such as the governance of the corporation, the executives, the auditors, the federal regulators, the creditors, etc. This probably also accounted for the suddenness of the collapse which only took a few months to unfold itself. To understand the magnitude of all this, we have to recall that Enron was one of the country's largest corporations, and indeed one of the world's largest ones. In addition to being a systems collapse, it was also a massive upward transfer of wealth, and as one writer pointed out, it is the kind of thing that eventually, if repeated enough or compounded by other bad things, can cause a revolution by the "masses."

*While people were making money unproductively in the financial markets, their conduct was called enterprise, ambition, gumption or savvy, but once they lost their shirts, they screamed for government protection against other greedy people in the corporate culture. However, despite the many excesses and defraudings of the public by the corporate world during 2001-2002, corporate muscle moved in on Congress and made sure that there would be virtually no reform (SPS, 9 Oct. 02).

*Many nonprofit and charitable agencies have been appealing to people to secure their retirement by purchasing an annuity from them, meaning that they would give the agency a large amount of money and then in turn get paid so much every month the rest of their lives during their retirement. Such annuities can also be purchased by making over property, stocks, and other valuables. This has been an attractive arrangement for many people because of certain tax benefits attached to it. Thousands of charitable, educational and religious organizations offer such arrangements to donors. It turned out that some scam artists caught on to the possibilities here, set up phony charities, and made off with the assets that prospective retirees had put into them. This is yet another way for people to be swindled out of their pensions. One woman lost $480,000 this way (AARP Bulletin, 12/02).

*For some reason, the US Internal Revenue service sharply increased audits of the working poor in 2001, while decreasing audits for Americans with the highest incomes, and for big companies. We can only assume that this is the result of having a Republican administration that is wedded to wealthy people and big business (International Herald Tribune, 2 March 02).
The Bush administration farm bill, which is giving hundreds of billions of dollars to mostly big and already rich agro-businesses in the US, could turn out to be an absolute disaster for many other countries such as those in Africa, because it will stimulate land-exploitative overproduction in the US at least in the short run, until lands are exhausted or destroyed, and in the meantime depress imports from poor agricultural countries such as several African ones (NCR, 9 June 02).

The US federal alternative minimum tax was meant to prevent very rich parties from not paying any taxes, but every year, its provisions have crept to the point where now, middle class people have to pay more taxes as a result of it. E.g., in 2002, it could hit a single mother earning $45,000.

A few years ago, sweatshop workers abroad making Nike sport shoes were getting $2.20 a day, while ballplayer Michael Jordan was getting $20 million a year to advertise them, and the CEO of Nike was worth $4.5 billion (SHJ, 22/6/97). Not too much has changed in this pattern.

Thomas Aquinas once said that greed was a sin against one's neighbor, because one person cannot over-abound in riches without another person lacking them.

Homelessness

Ed Loring, a Presbyterian minister, has been a leader of the Open Door Community in Atlanta that advocates for the homeless there and runs a meal and shelter hospitality. We do not agree with him on all points, but want to share two of his insights here. One is that while many of the homeless are alcoholic, lack education, are unemployed, and have all sorts of other problems, having a place to live (which he calls housing) is their most urgent and primary need, because without housing, they will not acquire health, education, or sobriety. As he puts it, "housing precedes life."

A second insight he had sometime after he had preached to the homeless about their exclusion from the American dream, apparently based on the pronouncement of Malcolm X in 1962 that the American dream for "white" people had long been an American nightmare for "black" people. Sometime later, Loring encountered one of his homeless friends whose head was all bandaged, including over his right eye. Loring was thunderstruck and horrified, and inquired of the man what had happened to him. The man replied in a fashion that seemed quite inappropriately cheerful for the occasion that "Some guys jumped me at the park and robbed me...I got knifed in the eye. It's gone; just got a hole in my head now." Loring was overcome, crying out how sorry he was, and imploring the Lord for mercy. The wounded man replied, "No, you don’t understand. I am getting a check now. I'll have an apartment in two weeks and my own kitchen. Just like you preached...I've got the American dream!" For that man, the loss of his eye had become the ticket to the America of his dreams. (Taken from articles published in the newspaper of the Open Door Community, Hospitality, and reprinted in a little book entitled I Hear Hope Banging At My Back Door, 2000.)

While we have written a great deal about institutions in North America being converted into prisons, we ran across one incident of the opposite happening when a former jail in the Bronx got converted into a homeless shelter (SPS, 13/8/02).

One of the more problematic groups of "homeless" people are teenagers who run away not so much because their home is really unbearably awful by objective standards, but because they want to engage in a decadent lifestyle in defiance of their parents. Some are rebellious against very elementary things, such as being required to attend school, making at least passing grades, and observing curfews. Many of these youths then lead a nomadic and decadent existence sleeping on couches in the homes of friends. As one such "homeless" 16-year-old put it, "I am definitely more empowered than I've ever been" (SPS, 9 Dec. 00).

We are a little late reporting this, but it is still noteworthy, especially in light of previous reportage on scandalous ways to raise funds for the homeless. This effort was launched by the president of the company that distributes Absolut Vodka. For $532,000, he had a very skimpy dress made out of gold mesh that looks a bit like an over-long T-shirt. It was the main attraction of a
fashion show to raise money for the homeless. The show also included a sterling silver dress valued at a mere $100,000. It is also scandalous that these dresses were modelled by anorexic young women who fast heroically to preserve skin-and-bone figures—while the homeless go without food for lack of money. Unfortunately, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless embraced the project wholeheartedly, and spokespersons have even said such garbage as this "gets the message out there" (AP in Evening Citizen, Laconia, NH, 21/11/89; source item from Karen Barker).

*Not as a fundraiser, but merely to improve its ratings, a California radio station created a version of the "Survivor" TV show, but with homeless people as contestants who competed to see who could race shopping carts and open cans of food the fastest, and pick up recyclable cans while riding a tricycle. The winner was to receive some cash, a haircut, and only a temporary home (SPS, 23 March 2001).

*In April 2001, a homeless man in New York City was apparently going about contaminating restaurant salad bars by sprinkling them with human fecal waste from a bottle (SPS, 9 April 01). Maybe he was trying to communicate something to yuppie people trying to keep down their weight.

*A disoriented homeless man in Syracuse was caught forcing open about 15 parking meters around the city with a screwdriver, and doing $3200 worth of damage. Apparently, he did it because, as he put it, the meters "wouldn't give change."

**Crime**

*It is hard to believe that there are 1300 street gangs in Los Angeles alone, busily killing and maiming each other. All this despite the fact that 100,000 gang members are in jails and prisons. Each month, about 3000 get out—and most of them promptly rejoin gang and crime life, and yet the PC lament the "3-strikes and you are out" laws. These people must have nothing else to do, underlined by the fact that increasingly their crimes are committed for the thrill of violence itself, and less for drugs or money as formerly. And here is another dilemma: due to a series of police scandals, the police are demoralized and stay out of the way (though probably most of us would too), and the gangsters took note and really unleashed. More and more, gangsters are said to have neither fear nor goals. The smarter ones move out of the state after their second conviction, and thereby spread their pernicious culture like a plague (Time, 3 Sept. 01). Hardened gangsters are like the Taliban and al-Qaeda: they can take more beatings, punishment and lock-down time than a humane society is prepared to deal out. Benjamin Franklin warned us: Ours is a republic only "if we can keep it."

*We remind readers yet once again of how the grossly abnormal can become totally normalized through a process that Helson called the adaptation level effect. For instance, in the Syracuse area, there are now multiple street shootings virtually every single day, and in some housing projects alone, there is a shooting about every other day. Naturally, with this having become so common, it no longer makes the news, even though some decades ago this would have been on the front page.

*Certain crimes are timeless, but certain forms of crimes, or even entirely new crimes, are signs of their times. These days, it seems to be a quite common occurrence for victims of automobile crashes to be robbed either at the scene of the accident or on their way to the hospital. Apparently, the thieves may include passers-by, pretend Good Samaritans, rescue personnel, or even police officers. Relatives or friends of victims on the scene are therefore well advised to secure the victim's valuables (including even overclothes, and especially expensive clothing) as soon as more urgent things have been taken care of.

*Apparently, there are scores of million of people all around the world who have nothing better to do than to sit in front of their computer and try to hack into somebody else's. The result is an explosion in computer crimes, but many parties who have such crimes committed against them are not informing the authorities. For instance, many firms are afraid of bad publicity, most likely of the kind that would get word around that whatever is in their computers is not secure. Also,
companies have great difficulty keeping their employees from abusing Internet access privileges (SPS, 5 June 01 & 9 April 02).

*A man from Ghana tried to smuggle heroin into the US in balloons in his stomach. Since this often kills the smuggler, doctors surgically removed the balloons. The smuggler saw this as his golden opportunity, and sued for "illegal search and seizure" (SHA, 26/9/99). This could turn one against multiculturalism.

*So many cab drivers have been robbed, assaulted and shot in New York City that they now must have either bullet-proof partitions for themselves, or video camera surveillance in the cab (AP in SHJ, 19/4/00).

*A rise in crime is bad news, but that crime seems to be getting out of control in London, England, is not without a few positive points, given the smugness with which our teaching about the collapse of the social order has been so commonly received in England. Pedestrians are now more likely to be mugged in London than in New York City. Also, at least some of the increase in crime is due to the great diversity which the British PC circles have been celebrating so deliriously. It is also very satisfying that a relatively big proportion of the crime consists of the theft of mobile telephones in street muggings, given that a great many people who walk around holding mobile telephones should be mugged. The British recently imported New York's former mayor Giuliani to tell them what he did to cut crime by about 50% in New York (SPS, 17/2/02).

*This is truly amazing news: 48% of British children between the ages of 11-17 have had a scrape with the law. For instance, one-third of teenagers aged 14-15 have committed vandalism, more than one-quarter have shoplifted, and 25% of boys ages 15-16 have at various times been carrying a knife or other weapon (SPS, 1 April 02).

*There has been an increased rate of assault against members of the clergy in Britain, with church workers more likely to be physically attacked than even probation officers, at a rate of 1 in 8 in the previous two-year period. This has motivated a number of priests, vicars, rabbis, and other church workers to take self-defense classes (NCR, 17/2/02).

*Identity theft has become the No. 1 consumer complaint, accounting for an astonishing 42% of all reports of fraud in the US. According to the US Justice Department, 1/2 to 3/4 of a million Americans each year have their identities stolen for fraudulent purposes (Newsweek, 9 Dec. 02). Just one single ring of Nigerians in the Bronx bilked 30,000 people by means of an identity theft.

*Every single week, tens of thousands of stolen credit card numbers are reportedly being offered for sale on the Internet. This crime scheme is reportedly operated mostly by people of the former Soviet Union. Other major malefactors live elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and in Malaysia. A typical cost for a stolen credit card is between 40 cents and $5, but usually they are sold in bulk, in lots of anywhere between 250 and 5000 cards. The card numbers are usually obtained by hacking. All this is inflicting approximately $1 billion a year in damages (SPS, 23/5/01, & 13/5/02).

*The world is being overwhelmed by ethnic crime groups due to the porousness of borders and "globality." Of course, the Colombians are responsible for a vast amount of drug smuggling. There are now international Asian, Mexican and Albanian crime groups as well, and the Russians seem to be among the very best, and are not very discriminating as to what kinds of crimes they adopt, such as prostitution, extortion, loan-sharking, kidnapping and home invasions. The Nigerians are infamous for fraud schemes, often involving the telephone. The Italian mobs in the US are now hard pressed. One Mafioso complained that if one had a beef with Albanians now, one had to kill them right away because there is just no talking with them. Apparently, being diverse, they do not understand what an offer is that they cannot refuse. However, the amount of attention law enforcement now has to invest in the other ethnic crime syndicates may give the Mafia a bit of relief (Parade, 11 Aug. 02).

*Copy and printing machines are now so clever that it is no longer a hard trick to make fake money; even mere kids can, and are doing it. Usually, they make fake bills between $10 and $100
so as to attract less attention. Sometimes, the counterfeit money is sold for about 15% of its face value to people who then try to use it in stores. Some counterfeiters like to play the big shot and give large portions of their fake money away in order to curry favors, apparently usually to people who think it is for real. There is also much connection between the drug business and the counterfeiting business.

*It is remarkable how well criminals have been taught by the larger culture to think about their offenses. In the larger culture, there are no longer such things as sins, but only "choices" and "mistakes." Thus, people who have committed heinous crimes will later admit that they made mistakes, or bad choices, rather than that they committed crimes or sins against the moral order.

*Apparently, in the ghetto culture (at least in the Syracuse area), juveniles and young men greet each other with "What up, Bro?", which is a demand that persons thusly addressed reveal where they live, so that the asker can determine whether they are part of the turf or an intruder. Being in the wrong neighborhood can mean anywhere from a bad beating to a killing.

*A Syracuse writer claimed that local ordinances prohibiting excessive noise-making were directed primarily against African-Americans in order to be able to harass them. She said, "I love my music loud. I pay taxes just like the next person, so who are you to tell me to turn it down? My loud music is my business. As long as every car comes with a stereo, I say blast it. That's what it is there for" (SPS, 25/7/01). A wonderful example of an assertion of radical individualistic entitlement modernism, not to mention diversity.

*We have probably all seen a peculiar phenomenon in the last 10 years or so, most of us without being able to explain it. Namely, somewhere on overhead wires in the streets there hangs a pair of sneakers tied together by their laces, and they may possibly hang there for years until the laces rot. Only in 6/02 did we learn that it has become part of the punk youth culture for bullies to gang up on a weak or isolated youth, take his or her sneakers away, tie them together and throw them up into the overhead wires. This is meant to humiliate the youth, who usually also gets beaten up. In the meantime, the humiliaters can point with pride to the dangling sneakers and remind everybody of the humiliation someone suffered. Apparently, this practice is particularly common in the African-American youth culture. The more valuable the sneakers, the greater of course is the humiliation--and some of these sneakers are amazingly costly.

*Equal opportunity mugging. Increasingly, it appears that young hoods target handicapped people for robbery precisely because they are handicapped and less able to defend themselves. An example is two youths in Syracuse who decided to hold up a man who was older, deaf, and only able to walk with crutches (SHJ, 5 Dec. 92). Perhaps there is a measure of justice here under the Americans With Disabilities Act, insofar as the muggers did not "exclude" the handicapped from among their victims, as used to happen more commonly in the days of darker public attitudes.

*A man in Syracuse who had a ghetto nickname got into the habit of carrying a squirt bottle with gasoline around with him--as well as a cigarette lighter. He then would start squirting people with the gasoline and chase after them to set them afire (SPS, 3 Aug. 01). Our advice: if somebody sprays you with gasoline, run away as fast as you can. Also, we hope that this will not set in motion a new trend.

*Two teenagers in trouble were made to visit the Sing Sing maximum security prison in New York as a form of shock treatment to deter them from crime--but almost immediately after arriving there, they called in bomb threats from the visitor waiting area of the prison (SPS, 26/4/02). We think they should have been kept there.

*A juvenile accused of killing someone with a shotgun on the streets complained to the presiding judge that he wanted a different lawyer. The judge replied that the free lawyer assigned to him was one of the best in town. The accused retorted that the lawyer's staff were afraid to go into his neighborhood to conduct a proper investigation on his behalf. His request was denied, but we wouldn't be surprised if he was speaking the truth (SPS, 15/2/02). This raises many questions about similar such cases.
One thing that keeps striking us as we read our local newspapers, and the national news media, is that juveniles who commit newsworthy crimes are very disproportionately from so-called broken families. At a certain point, one gets really tired of liberal researchers trying to prove that this is not so, when the phenomenology of one's everyday life overwhelmingly informs one that it is so.

Here is a good example of how delinquent parents spawn delinquent children. Four teenagers in the Syracuse area set fire to a Sikh temple soon after 11 September 01, and it eventually came into the open that the parents found out about it within hours, but told nothing to the authorities who eventually tracked the malefactors down in other ways.

When the good angels fight with the bad angels, we are not particularly worried because we know who will win. However, we did wonder what it meant when we learned that on Long Island, there has been a battle going on between the Hell's Angels and the Pagans gangs, with 400 members detained (in purgatory?) and more than 70 ending up in jail (in hell?) (SPS, 25/2/02).

Reportedly, old-fashioned high school high-jinks are increasingly evolving into destructive vandalism and personal injury worthy of criminal charges and damage suits. Quite often, very privileged students are involved who have money to spend on the paraphernalia that help them wreak such mischief (SHA, 11 June 01).

It must be a sign of our times that serious crime by senior citizens has been on the rise, including forcible sex offenses. One expert on aging called it a "warning light beginning to blink" (SPA, 26/6/00).

We are under the impression that it is during heat waves that there are more incidences of violence and other kinds of street craziness in poorer sections of cities. Of course, one additional contributor could be that heat waves send more poor people onto the streets where they get into arguments and fights than they would during a blizzard. After all, poor people tend to have fewer fans and less air-conditioning than more affluent people, and also often live in parts of town where there is a lot of hot stonework and paving. This makes heat waves particularly hard on them.

Furthermore, more fires break out in the cities during summers, which is somewhat counter-intuitive considering that in wintertime, there are many more heating devices, open fireplaces, etc. The explanation may be that as part of summer craziness, more people set fires, which appears to have been the case in Syracuse in 2002 when there was a record heat wave. Of many intentionally set fires, a significant proportion are set by juveniles playing with matches or lighters.

A new way of scamming the elderly is to try to sell them something with a guarantee that they can return the item for a full refund within 90 days, or even a year, and then take the older person's purchase money and go out of business. By the time a refund is claimed, it is also too late for an older person to dispute credit card charges (AARP Bulletin, 9/02).

According to Time (11 June 01), there are a lot of Americans living in Mexico while collecting disability checks at phony US addresses. It classed these people with those who live there who are trying to evade the IRS.

It is hard to believe that the founder of a Hasidic community in New York had stolen $40 million from US anti-poverty programs, for which (at age 76) he got a six-year prison sentence (SPS, 23/5/02).

Empowerment. We like the story of the man in Naples, Italy, who was in a convalescent hospital because of a broken leg, but wheelchaired himself downtown every day to commit a spree of crimes, such as breaking into cars to steal their contents, and robbing people at bus stops. He did this for months without anyone suspecting that a cripple was behind the crime wave (Report on Business, 2001).

Robino Hoodo. In Spain, a convict released from prison robbed a few banks, and very generously sent large sums of money to over 50 of his former buddies still in prison. He was caught
while in the process of stuffing more money into envelopes to send to his prison buddies (14/4/02 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*It is believed that in the US, shoplifters stole $13 billion worth of goods in 2000, more than half of it actually by store employees themselves. Customer shoplifting seems to be strongly related to externalistic personalities who either lack the internal morality not to steal, or the strength to withstand externalistic media bombardments appealing to their materialism and self-centeredness. This also seems to account at least in part for the steady stream of (mostly already rich) media "celebrities" being caught shoplifting (Newsweek, 25/2/02).

*In order to prevent criminal behavior in schools, New York State (with similar laws in effect in at least 38 other states) requires that prospective school employees (including not only teachers but also administrators, secretaries, janitors and others) have background checks conducted. Unfortunately, 5% of school job applicants in New York City were discovered to have serious criminal records, which of course fuels this sort of development. However, it turned out that requiring such checks was a virtually impossible task. In 2001, this would have required 70,000 background checks. A fingerprint analysis alone of a person would take about a month (AP in SHA, 25/2/01).

*In some jurisdictions, people can operate private child day care in their own homes to poor working parents at (in part local) government expense. In our county, there are apparently close to 100 such arrangements. It turned out that many such providers have criminal records, and/or will have them for collecting child care money fraudulently, drinking while sitting for children, taking in more children than the space allows, etc. Apparently, it is almost entirely marginal people taking care of the children of other marginal people--and that is what the liberals want more of (SHA, 28/1/01).

*An immigrant from Guyana began to sell life insurance to fellow immigrants in the New York City area, and also began to take out life insurance on some of them without their knowledge, with himself as the beneficiary. Then in some cases, together with an accomplice from Guyana, he killed them with injections of lethal tranquillizer doses, apparently when they were drunk--possibly as many as 21 (AP in SPS, 27/10/02).

*The DC sniper episode promptly spawned some copycats. One was an Oklahoma teenager who, after having been criticized for his bad driving, shot four neighbors, including a 2-year-old girl, and then went on a 20-mile drive shooting at 10 victims at random, 2 of whom died (SPS, 28/10/02).

*When the rich and famous commit a crime, and law enforcement tries to go after them, the latter encounter a phenomenon that they have begun to call "lawyering up," meaning that the defendants purchase themselves powerful (and often multiple) lawyers to get them off the rap.

*The American Civil Liberties Union has long been making war on so-called hate speech and hate crimes, and trying to get them made illegal--but has opposed the outlawing of death threats over the Internet (SPS, 10 Sept. 01). The hate crime insanity is leading to situations where prosecutors are beginning to charge that someone who is killing a woman, or several women, for selecting victims on the basis of gender (Time, 22/4/02). Apparently, it is no longer good enough to simply outlaw murder. We heard someone actually exclaim about a slaying, "It wasn't just a murder, it was a hate crime." Soon, hate crimes that are not murder will be judged more severely than murders that are not hate crimes. We can foresee a situation where a murderer will not merely be sentenced to be hung for murder if it was a hate murder, but will additionally be disemboweled, drawn, and quartered.

Another problem with so-called hate crimes is that the implication--or even explication--is that the crime is committed with "malicious intent," as if beating up somebody, robbing somebody, etc. did not have a malicious intent behind it. Furthermore, how does one distinguish hate from things such as intense dislike, rational adversariality or hostility, or ignorant bigotry? The establishment of hate crimes thus requires the government to run a form of thought-police that must make mental diagnoses of the motives behind crimes. It also opens the door for crimes committed with benevolent motives being treated very benignly, or even being decriminalized, such as killing somebody for their
own good. For the PC specifically, one point to consider is that "blacks" commit 12 times as many crimes toward "whites" as the other way around (FT, 1/02). Who will have the courage to call any such crimes "hate crimes"?

*France has also begun to pass laws that make certain crimes which we would call "hate crimes" incur higher penalties (SPS, 11 Dec. 02).

*While gun ownership often constitutes a temptation to use the gun for violent acts, recent research is not favorable to the notion that a dramatic delimitation of such gun ownership would result in a large decline in personal violence in the US. An Australian law forced the surrender of about 640,000 personal firearms in 1996 at a cost of more than $500 million, but instead of declining, homicides actually increased, together with assaults and armed robberies. Whereas previously, there had been a steady decline of use of firearms at least in armed robberies, this trend has since been reversed, and even homicides with firearms increased dramatically. One theory is that perhaps ordinary private firearm violence may have declined, but that use of firearms by criminals may have increased because they now feel more secure (NCR, 6 May 01).

*In 43 US states, it is legal to buy a stun gun, and to do it without a background check. This is amazing, considering that the more advanced stun guns, called tasers, shoot barbed needles into people's clothes or skin, and can precipitate people collapsing in unspeakable pain and convulsions (Time, 4 Feb. 02). We are tempted to the breaking point to get one and provoke a mugging, especially since a single taser can deliver about 200 zaps.

*Prisoners sentenced to US state prisons had an average recidivism rate of 67% in 1994, with men having an even higher rate, and "blacks" the highest. Highest of the high rates--82%--was that of obviously career criminals who were serving a sentence after many previous convictions. Data such as these, if valid, deal a severe blow to the bleeding hearts who demand that severe state laws against repeat offending should be rescinded, often citing the occasional case where the third offense, when the law kicks in, is a trivial one (AP in SPS, 3 June 02). Chances are that a trivial third offense is only the tip of the iceberg of that person's crime wave, as other studies have also shown.

*Obviously, no reliance can be placed on the castration of rapists as a preventive measure. A rapist who had been castrated by vigilantes was released from prison by a parole board, and promptly murdered one woman and is believed to have murdered another. This certainly seems to partially bear out what some feminists have been saying, namely, that at least some such crimes are not the product of sexual urges but of some kind of negative disposition toward women or certain types of women.

*It was only in the mid-1980s (when AIDS appeared on the scene) that we learned for the first time that humans had "fluids," and that there could be, or was, such a thing as "fluid exchanges" between humans. Now, we learn that criminal suspects are asked to "give fluid samples." We were very curious exactly what constituted such "fluids," and learned to our surprise that this includes not only blood and saliva, but also hair, not to mention the "fluid" that became prominent after the advent of AIDS, but that urine was not classed as a body fluid though it once used to be the only or main human fluid that people were concerned about (AP in SHJ, 31/8/99).

*We noticed that people sometimes get arrested and convicted for "indecent assault," which made us begin to wonder what "decent assault" might be, and whether somebody might actually benefit from it.

*We thought it a bit peculiar when we learned that the Rape Crisis Center in Syracuse employs 7 masters-level clinicians, plus 14 other employees, plus 40 volunteers. We had not been aware that there was that much rape in our locality to occupy all of these 61 (!) people. At first, we thought to ourselves that given the PPP realities, this agency would have to pay rapists to go out and create business, until we discovered that it had solved its PPP problem another way: at a certain point in the past, when its resources outgrew the incidence of rape, it started serving any victim of any crime (SPS, 26/9/01). However, suppose you were an elderly lady and had become the victim
of a purse-snatching, wouldn't you feel awkward, and perhaps a bit embarrassed, being served by a rape crisis center?

*In 1871, the British overlords in India classified 128 tribes as so-called "criminal tribes," which continued until the Indian government in 1952 reclassified them as "ex-criminal tribes," which by then included 23 million people! However, some of them apparently still have a tendency toward criminality to this day (McDowell, 1970).

*In our local newspaper, we ran across a very enigmatic headline: "Factors an Issue in Man's Slaying" (SPS, 24/11/02).

*We have often been told that people had books written by Wolfensberger stolen from their homes or offices, or borrowed and never returned. A friend of long-standing, Jack Pealer from Ohio, reported that in an Ohio hotel, he left the book The Theological Voice of Wolf Wolfensberger on his night table, and when he came back to his room, it had been stolen. This is the first book that he ever had stolen (presumably by a hotel maid, maintenance worker or manager) from him on his many travels.

**Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice News**

*We have mentioned in various teaching contexts that in the US, the police forces have de facto withdrawn from the ghettos. Actually, the pattern seems to be a bit broader in that police apparently try to stay away whenever members of devalued classes bash each other, and particularly so as long as they do it in devalued settings and locations, which of course does not merely include ghetto areas.

*A government's expenditure on keeping citizens in line is not necessarily an index of the prevalence of crime. After all, many governments have had a history of distrust of their people (including even democratic ones such as in France) and have spent much money on police, spies, surveillance, etc.

   However, in the US, the tendency has been the opposite, i.e., from the beginning or even earlier, law enforcement capacity has limped behind lawlessness. It is thus a sign of the times that a few decades ago, US per capita expenditures on police and prisons began to exceed those on education.

*Some authorities have been warning the public that when an innocent person becomes a suspect in a crime, any ensuing police interrogation in the US is apt to have little to do with eliciting the truth, but is aimed at getting a confession, and the police will use all sorts of strategies to get it, such as intimidation, emotional isolation, and in many cases, lies, e.g., that the police already have evidence of the suspect's guilt. The pressure strategies include "overcharging," i.e., charging a suspect with all sorts of crimes, or with many counts of crime for the same offense, so as to intimidate him or her to plead guilty to just one or a few of the many charges in order to avoid the risk of much longer incarceration. This explains in part why researchers found that many innocent people confess, and why eyewitnesses end up giving erroneous testimony, such as making false identifications of suspects. The same mentality is often found among prosecutors, which accounts for the fact that so many people have recently been found to have been falsely convicted, even of capital crimes, and even been sentenced to death, all because of prosecutor malfeasance. Further down the chain, juries typically have no idea how poorly the system operates, and the very fact that a suspect is brought to trial tends to bias them against the suspect (e.g., B&C, 7/02).

*In the US, felony defendants who get public defenders assigned to them are not doing as badly as some people thought. They are only slightly more likely to be convicted than those who can afford private lawyers. Where the difference comes in is that once convicted, those with private lawyers are much less likely to be sentenced to prison (AP in SHJ, 30/11/00). Of course, those who can manage or afford to really "lawyer up" do vastly better at all judicial stages.

*Some people who have been sentenced to prison for rape were convicted on the strength of the testimony of the victims, often after these picked out a suspect from a line-up or a photo album.
Amazingly, even after DNA evidence has exonerated someone, some rape victims continue to insist that the exonerated person was the rapist, which tells us a lot about the fallacy of victims and eyewitnesses (e.g., *Time*, 11 Dec. 01).

Yet another sign of how low the FBI had sunk came to light in 2002, namely, the FBI had been protecting Mafia members for several years even while these were committing up to 19 murders, and this had been going on for many years (CBS "60 Minutes," 14/7/02).

**Punishment**

With a breakdown in the social fabric and the rise in crime, the police, court and criminal justice system are of course also crumbling, and to a large extent are a charade to deceive citizens into believing that something effective is being done. One bit of evidence that makes this dramatically clear is that there is hardly any relationship between the jail sentences imposed and the length thereof that the sentenced people actually serve. When someone kills someone, almost everybody rejoices greatly when a long jail sentence is imposed--and the fact that this is largely theater escapes most people. A prisoner may serve anywhere between none or only a small portion of the sentence, and the discrepancy has become steadily bigger as prisons have become more crowded (*Time*, 14/5/90). Also, the police system hardly even tries to solve some violent crimes anymore, and particularly not those among people viewed as scum, or criminal themselves. Thus, murders occurring among habitual felons may be interpreted as a "shooting into occupied clothing."

One of the many signs that even the judicial system has become unmanageable is when a lot of court-decisions are overturned by higher courts. For instance, a study looked at almost 8000 death sentences in 34 US states over 23 years, and found that higher courts threw out 68% of either the sentences or even the convictions. One conceivable interpretation of this phenomenon could be that lower courts are incompetent, but more plausible these days is that there is confusion, disunity, and overload from too many laws, unintelligible laws, mutually contradictory laws, illogical or unclear earlier rulings by higher courts, etc. Another interpretation could of course be that the higher courts are clashing with jurors, and are *de facto* becoming both jury and judges themselves.

Apparently, punishment does deter teens from smoking, especially if this entails loss of drivers' licenses, according to a Florida study (*Time*, 3 Dec. 01).

Marc Rich, whom President Clinton pardoned in his last few hours in office, had been a partner in what is believed to have been the biggest tax swindle in US history, costing the US government an estimated $50 million. Even after escaping to Switzerland, Rich lived an extravagantly wealthy life there for 17 years, running a $30 billion business. This will make future government prosecution of small-time tax cheats much more difficult (*Time*, 5 Feb. 01).

Businessman Michael Bennet, who ran one of the largest corporate pyramid schemes ever, and hid $700 million of fraudulent gains in Switzerland, was sentenced to a year of house detention and 3 years probation (*SHJ*, 9 Dec. 00). The more you steal, the less the punishment per dollar stolen.

The trend to sentence people to be subjected to shrinkery is acquiring ever more strength, and is extremely frightening. It is certainly moving our traditional system toward a diktatur of shrinkery, and an imposition of whatever notions of normalcy or abnormalcy happen to be popular within shrinkery at a given point. It puts shrink people in power over others who are vastly less powerful, even though these days, shrink people themselves are rather pitiful in terms of their own personal lives, personal values, and adjustment successes.

One major thrust of the shrink culture in criminal justice is to let any criminal off if he/she had a wounded psyche or a presumed brain abnormality. As we keep saying, no one ever argues that these things often make people better instead of mean. The notion that a brain or mind abnormality must make a person mean or criminal is largely absurd, and a hold-over of social Darwinism.

A federal district court in Chicago ruled (*Time*, 4 June 01) that a woman who had embezzled a quarter-million dollars from her former employer should be exempted from serving her prison
sentence. The reason? She had embezzled all this money because she had been addicted to shopping. Of course, the mental specialists were right on the spot to testify that these kinds of addictions produced "diminished mental capacity," and are a form of "self-medication for depression." Interestingly, federal guidelines prohibit such clemencies even where crimes were committed under the influence of alcohol and drugs. One other bizarre element is that this woman had been earning $150,000 a year while she was embezzling, and when set free, she got an even better consulting job earning $175,000 a year.

* We are rarely told of the fact that the Western territories of China are widely populated by different kinds of ethnic stock, and that the Chinese have systematically been trying to colonize these territories, Tibet being a very good example. However, a great deal of the Chinese settlements in these territories have the character of penal colonies. If the central government in China loses strength the way the Soviet Union government did, we may see China break up much like the Soviet Union did before it.

* A number of US states have passed laws that require sex offenders released from prison to register with the police, and/or that permit parents of children in the school district to be notified that a (child) sex offender is living in their area. As of early 2002, 13,400 people with past sex offenses were registered with NY state alone. We were surprised to learn that in the county in which Syracuse is located, there were at that time 460 such registered sex offenders. We thought that these were relatively large numbers.

This measure illustrates the tension on the one hand between civil rights and privacy of people who once committed an offense but who have since been set free, and on the other hand the rights and welfare of potential victims (especially defenseless ones) who have often felt that they had fewer rights than offenders.

**Imprisonment**

* There are 3200 jails in the US run by local and county authorities, not counting the state and federal prisons. Some of the jails are for a mere handful of people, while others house as many as 10,000, as in Chicago. There are 630,000 people in these jails, and twice as many (1.3 million) in state and federal prisons. While the standards in jails are said to have increased over the years, they still vary dramatically from one locale to another (AP in SPS, 9 May 02).

* 2000 was the first year since 1972 that the US prison population dropped, except in federal prisons. However, a widespread pattern is that the rates dropped for the high-crime states, and increased sharply for the low-crime states. Apparently, the latter are "catching up" (SPS, 13/8/01). Also, one reason is not so much less crime as it is that many long-term sentences are running out, and the country is being flooded with 630,000 prisoners being let out in 2002 alone, making for 4.6 million Americans on parole or probation. In some neighborhoods, there are up to 100 such men in a 3-block radius.

* Supposedly, 85% of US prison inmates are addicted to alcohol or drugs (Psychology Today, 34, No. 1). Recent estimates have been that about 16% of the US jail and prison population are mentally disturbed, and that about 2% are mentally retarded (MR, 2/01), with the latter figure probably being derived from a very restricted definition of mental retardation.

* There are prisoners in the US who spend 23 hours every day alone in "special housing units." One such prisoner in New York State receives Holy Communion through a slit in his cell door (SPS, 8 Dec. 00).

* One constantly keeps learning new things about jails and prisons. One is that in some jails, the 2 main meals of the day are served at 4 am and 4 pm with a snack at 11 am. We had never heard of breakfast being served that early, though we had reported that in some prisons all three meals are served in very close succession to each other (within about 8 hours) for the sake of economy.
Night time brings out the demons in many prisoners who, around the time other prisoners start going to sleep, start screaming by the hour. To be able to sleep, other prisoners have to stuff toilet paper in their ears. Only around 2 in the morning does the screaming subside. We would think that some of these things are vastly more difficult to put up with than being in prison itself.

US jails and prisons have begun to dress different categories of inmates in different colors. E.g., high-risk may get white with black horizontal stripes, red for troublemakers, orange for worst offenders, tan may mean "not yet classified," etc.

Either entering or leaving the jail in Syracuse involves about 200 video cameras, 30 computers, and several staffed video monitors. Once detained, one cannot be released in less than 4-6 hours until a computer in the state capital far away has processed one’s fingerprints. Prisoners must relinquish every single item of clothing, and receive prison issue instead, though women are not allowed a bra for 72 hours. Prisoner clothing is stored on a computer-controlled carousel. If the computer system ever broke down, there presumably would be chaos, and probably even more so with getting people released than with booking and locking them up.

The last thing that people in prison need is to be exposed to sexually tempting occasions. Yet visitors to prison—primarily women—come in such stages of undress and provocation that the Syracuse jail had to issue a dress code, particularly since a number of the inmates are pimps, and the women who work for them "show up wearing what they wear, which could lead to inmates touching things they shouldn't be touching." On the no-no list are the following (SPS, 10/10/02): see-through clothing, bare midriffs, bare backs, plunging necklines, spaghetti straps, short shorts, athletic shorts, hooded sweatshirts or sweaters, jackets of any type, bathing suits, bare feet, or layered shirts or pants, etc.

A prison in Ohio (Mansfield) brings together "castaway dogs and castaway men." The dogs are from "dog death row" in the dog pounds, and are trained and socialized by the prisoners as pets. Though meritorious, it is the old story of "like with like" (AP in SHA, 26/3/00).

Certain amenities are provided in prison as privileges rather than rights, such as television-viewing and the use of the gym, which gives the prison administration a few incentives under conditions where incentiving is very difficult. However, rights nuts have begun to claim these privileges as rights, and have started to make court wars about it. This in turn is a very bad incentive for prisons not to give anybody any privileges because next one knows, these privileges would have to be given as rights to everybody (AP in SPS, 11 June 02).

Many prisons allow prisoners to pump up with exercise equipment so as to become more frightening to guards and the public when they get out—but the same inmates may be forbidden to have chess sets (CL, 9/00), even though chess has been very successful in making many prisoners less externalistic, and turning them more toward the inner and intellectual life.

US courts have ruled that inmates of US prisons have a right to health care, while no such right has ever been granted to the general citizenry. This accounts for the fact that prisoners who have committed heinous crimes are at the front of the line for very expensive medical procedures, such as multiple organ transplants. This leads to such strange scenarios, at least theoretically, as a heart transplant being given to a person about to be executed. Of course, one implication is that in order to get a certain expensive operation, a poor citizen might be well-advised to first commit a crime and quickly plead guilty so as to move to the top of the line (CBS "60 Minutes," 1 Dec. 02).

We have reported before that prisoners in America have the peculiar legal right to have sex change operations paid for by the taxpayers. We also pointed out that this could turn people against prisoners and criminals. The most recent outrage along these lines has been a man (who calls himself Michelle) who strangled his wife, was sentenced to life imprisonment, and then sued New York State to pay for a sex change operation plus hormone therapy to "allow him to live as a woman" (SPS, 4 Feb. 02).

Despite the above right to health care, some of our associates have begun to suspect that the numbers of deaths in US jails and prisons is increasing because of cut-backs in health care in such
settings, or because of the poor quality of such health services there. At any rate, one hears of many horror stories of sick prisoners not being attended to, and of many people dying in jails or prisons.

*A fair number prisoners run telephone scams. They look up the names of women in phone books all over the US, and call them at random (usually collect!) with sob stories, trying to get their money, or even if possible, inciting any sympathetic women responders into romantic relationships. It is to the credit of female nature that women in droves fall for these scams. Some women give their prisoner friends very large sums, and when their money runs out, that is usually when the prisoner bails out. Even a woman who presented herself as an authority on establishing volunteer friendships with prison inmates got scammed, and discovered that her prisoner friend was living high off the hog from money sent by many women whom he had fooled.

*A man in New York City running a securities fraud business got put into prison, but pretended to his employees that he was in Europe, and managed to continue running his scams from prison through them, bilking people out of $8.5 million (AP in SHJ, 27/2/01).

*Apparently, staging (or not interfering with) gladiatorial fights among inmates is not only done by the Los Angeles County jailers but all over the US. Jail and prison guards are often recruited from the male blue collar and lower classes who enjoy violence. Apparently, it is gang members in lock-ups who most enjoy violence for its own sake, and either beat up on other prisoners or command that they fight (SPS, 20/11/00).

*It was discovered that the US Census Bureau counts people in prisons as if they were residents of the local population, even though the prisoners may have been shipped to a prison in an isolated area from far away. This kind of deceptive counting allowed certain regions to claim to be racially "diverse," when in fact all the "diverse people" were the ones residing in the local prison (SHA, 22/4/01).

*We have reported before on the insane, inhumane, and we believe unconstitutional mass transfer of prisoners all over the US. A few years ago, in 5 Massachusetts prisons, a total of 299 inmates were woken up in the middle of the same night, shackled into sets of 3, driven to the Boston airport in a 100-vehicle convoy, and flown to Dallas to prisons in Texas.

*In 2002, a court blocked a plan by the city of New York to use a former jail as a shelter for the homeless, upon which the city investigated the possibility of purchasing retired cruise ships to use as such shelters (Springfield Union News, 21/11/02). The city's commissioner of homeless services said that such ships would be "ideal." For the first time ever, the media themselves called this a "ships of fools" enterprise (Syracuse Post-Standard, 24/11/02, p. A17).

*A town in the most isolated part of Nebraska, but near a large Indian reservation, has tried to get a private, locally-governed prison to locate there in order to get 170 jobs and use the profits to benefit the Indians, but to their credit, the Indians (though poor) were not cooperating (Omaha World-Herald, 17/10/00).

*Detention centers and prisons all over Australia have contracted health services out to private companies, some of them international companies, including American ones, but some have been using unregistered nurses (SMH, 30/12/00; source item from John Armstrong). Our comments: (a) same old story of using professional flunk-outs as in our bad old institutions; (b) to hire American firms to run parts of Australian prisons is an enormous violation of the principle of subsidiarity--not to mention common sense.

*The American-owned Australasian Correctional Management firm runs immigration detention centers all over Australia (WA, 28/11/00).

*Between early 2001 and early 2002, the price of shares of the largest private prison management company in the US rose 440% (Voice, Spring 02)! "The market" seems "to tell us" that it foresees continued dramatic rises in crime, or at least in imprisonment.
*The prison literature is full of incidences where people unjustly imprisoned, or even thoroughly dehumanized and tortured there, discover not only their sense of personal dignity as an individual but also their spiritual identity and the presence of God. They discovered that their torturers had absolute power over them except over the sanctuary of their conscience and their fidelity to truth. They often began to see death as a form of liberation, because if the torturers did things that actually led to an unbroken prisoner's death, then the torturers were unable to possess the soul of such a prisoner, which is what these kinds of struggles so normatively are all about. A dead prisoner is of no use to the torturers if the prisoner went to his death with an unbroken soul.

Many prisoners have also reported that it was under torture that they discovered that their inner light was not really and entirely part of themselves. If they had known the Quaker idiom, they would have known to give it the name "that of God" within them.

*In Texas, Kansas, Iowa and Minnesota, certain prisons have been handed over to the prison Christian fellowship of Charles Colson to run. Reportedly, these prisons are a shining contrast to the usual ones, and most likely because prisoners apparently have to volunteer to serve their time in these, and they are thus self-selected (FT, 11/02).

*Being an ex-con out of prison is not an easy job in the US for someone trying to stay clean. One such man had to attend 2 drug "treatment" meetings a week, see his parole officer once a week, go to his welfare office once a month, attend job training days to get food stamps, and submit up to three urine samples a week for drug tests—all in different locations hours apart. He may have to deal with dozens of agency people until "I'm psycho-socialed out" (Time, 21/1/02). Only the most determined people make it.

**Judicial Killing**

*We return yet again to the fact that almost the whole world where the death penalty is legal has embraced, or is embracing, lethal injection with the argument that it is the most humane method. But this is absolutely not true for certain people for whom no easy needle entry point can be found. Then they have to virtually be butchered alive to find an entry point. All the experts on death and the death penalty agree that the most humane way of killing someone is to blast them in the back of the head with a shotgun, but that is certainly not very "neat," and obviously, a media-conscious world is more interested in neatness than humaneness. Even when unpleasant phenomena occur during electrocution, such as the victims beginning to smoke or smolder, at least they feel nothing. Also, some people have phobias of needles whereas no one is likely to acquire phobias about electricity.

*The death penalty is one atrocity, televising an execution is a compounding thereof, and then trying to televise it on an "entertainment network" doubly compounds it, but that is what Entertainment Network Inc. tried to do in 2001 (SPS, 7 April 01).

*Apparently, being considered to be mentally retarded has come to be a very valued status for prisoners on death row in US prisons, at least in those jurisdictions where retarded persons cannot be executed. Some prisoners and their lawyers are falling all over themselves trying to prove how stupid such a prisoner has been all his or her life (source information from Jack Yates).

*A Virginia man confessed to a murder, was sentenced to death, and came within 9 days of being executed. In 2001, he was freed on the basis of DNA evidence that exonerated him of the crime. The media interpreted him as being a "low-IQ man" because of his reported IQ of 69 (AP in SPS, 13/2/01).

*Some people have said that the death penalty moratorium is the ideal solution. It still permits people to be sentenced to death for crimes, which mollifies many people, but there are no executions because of the many mistakes that have been made in the past executing people for crimes which they had not committed (NY Times magazine, 12 Sept. 01; source item from Lucy Gwin). Something like that is already happening de facto. E.g., there are over 600 inmates on death row in California but only about one execution a year. This is why California wants to build a death row prison for 1000, which may turn out to be mostly a long-term or life-long prison (SPS, 14/1/03).
Slavery

*According to some authorities, some kinds of slavery are found in virtually all countries of the world, though the form of slavery may not be recognized as such. Some of the modern more subtle ways of enslaving people are through prostitution, and illegal migrants across borders often ending up as de facto slaves toiling under inhuman conditions in sweat shops, fields, and even as domestics in private homes (SPS, 8 June 02).

*According to some reports, about 50,000 women from the former Soviet Union are somehow trafficked into other countries for the sex trade, many in a de facto condition of sex slavery (AP in SHA, 20/5/01).

*Estimates of the number of people currently enslaved around the world vary widely, from 7000,000-4 million (SPS, 8 June 02), to 27 million (Time, 11/12/00). Many of the slaves are children, who often get sold into prostitution, or into heavy agricultural plantation labor. Many are sold by their very poor parents, to provide a one-time income to the family, or by their school teachers (Syracuse Post-Standard, 15 & 18 April, & 5 May 2001; Time, 11 March 2002).

The Family

We have reported before that many circles, particularly US liberal ones, have been hostile to, and making war in some form or another, on the family for years (Remember the German term for this: "Familienfeindlichkeit," FFK). Some of this warfare has been very explicit, much of it has been very hidden and subtle. And sometimes, some parties may not even realize that an agenda they promote for some reason also has the effect of undermining the family. Also, even without outright warfare against the family, many of the values of modernism that people have adopted for themselves—such as sensualism and radical individualism—inevitably have the effect of undermining the family. Much of the material below speaks to all this.

The Current State of the Family

*In 1996, the US Census Bureau quit gathering data on marriages and divorces, deeming such information irrelevant in this new age in which families are no longer valued. In consequence, for the very first time, the US Census Bureau in 2000 did not ask people on its short form whether they were married. This is an example of a de facto official and deliberate dismissal of the family of which probably over 90% of Americans were unaware.

At the same time, the US Census Bureau has been saying that the nuclear family was making a comeback in the US, but what it was not saying was that this was at least in part a statistical trick accomplished by changing the definition of the nuclear family. For instance, a household that includes a grandparent no longer qualifies as a nuclear family. What does seem to be true is that the decline in the proportion of intact families has leveled off (FT, 1/02).

*There are more adults (82 million) in the US who are unmarried or shacking up than there are married ones (AP in SPS, 26/5/01). This is a mighty big interest block, and a big proportion of it has negative attitudes toward marriage. Furthermore, only one-quarter of American "households" contain a married couple with one or more children (SHA, 24/11/99).

*According to some statistics, unmarried women in their early 20s are less likely to marry the father of their child. While teen marriages have a high rate of instability, apparently those contracted by women in their 20s, including marriages entered into in order to legitimize a pregnancy, are no less stable than marriages in general (Time, 21/8/00; SPS, 13/6/01; NCR, 16/9/01).

*Between 1990-1999, the number of opposite sex unmarried couples living together age 65 and older rose 73%, and the reportedly major reasons for this all had to do with money and property protection (AARP, 7/02). In some states, the rates of change were extraordinarily high, being 120% or more in three southern states. This has been interpreted as a breakdown in Bible Belt morality (AP in SHA, 20/5/01).
We were amused to learn that couples who are shacking up together are sometimes being referred to as "life partners," even though such partnerships tend not to last, and often only for a few months (e.g., SHA, 20/8/00).

In Europe, people hardly believe anymore in marriage, with the marriage rates being lowest in the northern countries. This is the case across all social classes. All this has been accompanied by a higher rate of couples breaking up, and children being raised by single parents, or by a parent who is living with a second, third, etc., mate. Amazingly, the women apparently interpret all this as liberating even though they are the ones who pay the highest price. For instance, a 35-year-old female psychologist in Norway is rearing a 3-year-old alone, conceived with a man she had lived with who previously had lived with two other women with whom he had three children. He left the third woman when she became pregnant. Yet by Norwegian law, he is obligated to pay only 28% of his income to the 4 children of the 3 different women (SPS, 24/3/02). This is probably less than it would cost to raise one child in a stable marriage. This seems like a huge incentive scheme for weak men with weak morals to become even more irresponsible than they already are.

In 1965, when Daniel Patrick Moynihan was still a professor, he published a profoundly insightful book in which he warned that the Negro (then still a good word) family in the US was falling apart, and that this would have the most disastrous consequences. Almost unanimously, the Negro leadership and the liberal establishment rejected his thesis, sometimes even called it a racist assertion, and at least partially as a result of this stupid doctrinaire decision, family breakdown continued and became an avalanche. In 1960, "only" 20% of the children in "black" families were born out of wedlock, but by 1990, it had reached at least 65%. In fact, in 1990, the US Secretary of Health & Human Services publicly stated that "the collapse of the American family in the past few decades is historically unprecedented," and added that "nowhere is this trend more apparent than in the Black community where 86% of children spend part of their childhood living in a mother-only family" (FI, 5/91). More than 80% of black women will be single heads of households at some time in their life (NCR, 15-21/4/01). Of course, there is a vicious feedback cycle between such family breakdown, birth outside of wedlock, and poverty. The leaders who refused to take a stand on the family breakdown issues have, in essence, never confessed and repented their stupidity and error, or apologized to Moynihan.

Since 1970, the number of "grandparent-headed households" grew from 2.2 million to 5.4 in 1997, accounting for 8% of US children (SPS, 30/6/00). Some of these children's parents died, but more often, they are mentally unfit, on drugs, incarcerated, or had simply abandoned their children (Newsweek, 12 June 00). Sometimes, both the parent and the parent's children have to be taken care of by the parent's parents.

Americans eat 13% of their meals at restaurants. Amazingly, American families spent only somewhere between 15-30 minutes a day preparing meals, while singles spend at the most 15 minutes on the average (Consumer Reports, 1/01).

Marriage: Finding a Mate

The brokerage of marriages is an age-old tradition with innumerable institutional forms in different cultures. In the US, various forms of dating services have always been based on the assumption that the underlying goal of customers was to find a marriage partner. We now see the rise of a new version of this exemplified by "Together," which presents itself as "a personal introduction service" which, in its promotional literature, emphasizes "special relationships" and "falling in love," and speaks of "matches," but has not one word to say about marriage (source item for Karen Barker).

About 10 million people at any one time are signed up with just 10 major cyberdating services. Women are very disproportionately represented (Newsweek, 19/2/01). Obviously, they are still confused on the concept. If they were not dishing out sex so generously to loose-footed men, more of the latter would be interested in marriage.
A new way to screen members of the opposite sex for potential mates is "speed dating," in which someone arranges for couples to spend 7 minutes together discussing important issues, and then repeat this with several other candidates all on the same occasion, each person recording which other persons they are interested in, with the information being released the next day to those interested in each other (NY Times magazine, 12 Sept. 01; source item from Lucy Gwin).

*A place in New York City called the Learning Alliance offers a course on "How to Meet & Keep Your Politically Correct Mate." The description notes that even (!) "societally concerned individuals" "need to find and maintain vibrant, healthy, loving relationships. Is it possible to find a partner who is personally caring, socially conscious and involved?...How are personal and political differences overcome?" (Behind all this rhetoric stands the obvious assumption that if you love humanity, you will not have time for individuals, or will find it difficult to get along with them.) Participants can rest assured that the instructor is well-qualified, because she is described as a "housewife with a politically correct husband and son, a politically correct job as public relations consultant...and a card-carrying member of Match Makers of America." One wonders what the course would recommend for people who wake up one morning to discover that their mate and children are not politically correct: does one dump them, brainwash them, even make them dead? There are three different fees, ranging from $8 to $20, depending on whether one is a poor or well-off socially conscious individual.

*A survey of Americans in their 20s found that what they wanted in a spouse was peculiarly modernistic, namely (as the sponsor of the study put it) an emotionally deep but socially shallow relationship (SPS, 8 March 02). These people want "soul mates" whom, however, they would get rid of in a second over the question of who takes out the garbage.

Similarly, college women "want" committed love, stable marriage and children--but their behavior consists mostly of "hooking up," i.e., engaging in casual sex (NCR, 25/11/01). More confusion on the concept!

*There is the famous story of the single man who got older and older waiting to find the perfect woman, but when he finally found her, he was utterly flabbergasted that she rejected him because she was waiting for the perfect man. Yet this is no longer a joke because a lot of women who are postponing marriage say they are doing so because they feel entitled to a perfect spouse, and they are not going to make babies with just anybody. As one of them said, "We choose not to settle for Mr. Second Best" (Time, 6 May 02). Yet these women seem oblivious to the fact that so often, to the men they are not exactly great prizes as wives and mothers.

*One can now buy books of instructions on "starter marriages" for young people that are not expected to last for more than about 5 years.

**Marriage: Getting Ready for the Big Day**

*In Syracuse, the office at city hall where one applies for a marriage license has a sign that says "marriage licenses" and "dog licenses." This is not a good juxtaposition, and a lot of insensitive men who appear with their fiancées can't help but make jokes about wanting a license to marry a dog. It has been documented that in one such case, a woman turned and walked out, and we think that was all to the good because that marriage would not have lasted anyway. On the other hand, readers may recall our report of the man who married Spunky, his dog, because she had better qualities than any of the women he could find.

*Prenuptial agreements that settle everything in case one gets a divorce have become very popular. As of December 2000, such pre-nuptial agreements are legally binding in Australia--where one-third of marriages end in divorce--and may spell out not only "who gets what," but also who does what chores, sexual requirements by one spouse of the other, where to go on holidays, the number of children, and how they are to be educated (SMH, 27/12/00; source item from John Armstrong). This opens up whole new vistas of grounds for divorce, e.g., "refused to travel to Fiji for Christmas as previously agreed."
Some such agreements contain quite bizarre clauses. One woman would only marry a man if he pledged to bring her breakfast in bed the rest of their lives. Some couples agree to have an abortion if the wife should become pregnant. The proprietor of the Washington Redskins football team married his fourth bride after dumping the third for failure to carry out a prenuptial agreement to abort their baby (SHI, 30/5/90).

*People who somehow or other missed out on writing a prenuptial agreement are now trying to catch up by writing postnuptial or (so-called postnup) ones, often in response to a major change in their financial situation (Time 23/7/01).

Marriage: Help is (or Claims to be) on Its Way When Your Marriage Starts to Founder

*A study found that 86% of unhappily married people (who would probably have been counseled into divorce by innumerable parties) who stuck it out reported, 5 years later, that they were now happy in their marriage (PHAL, 5/02).

*Two authors have been putting out an entire series of best-selling books on love and marriage, all with the main title The Rules, the third one in 6/01 being subtitled Time-Tested Secrets for Making Your Marriage Work. For years, the authors have presented themselves publicly as "happily married" in order to bolster their authority. However, just as volume 3 came out, one of the two co-authors was getting divorced. But there is consolation: a number of other authors of similar books are also divorced (SPS, 29/3/01).

*The editor of the family column of Time (with a "timefamily" e-mail address) is a woman who has long been divorced.

*We continue to be amused by multiply-divorced singers publishing songs (and entire albums) on love.

*In Syracuse, there is a family therapist who has an advice column in the local paper. In one such column, a wife wrote that her husband had been pestering her to agree to a threesome sex of him, her and another woman who is one of her best friends. The wife complained that she was "uncomfortable" with threesome sex, and also concerned that it would ruin her friendship with the other woman. Apparently, this was the extent of her moral reasoning. The family therapist advised her to say no to the arrangement, and to explain to her husband that she did not want to risk her friendship with her friend, but not to convey the impression that she was not "open to experimentation." That was the extent of her moral reasoning. This sort of thing is now the moral reasoning of modernism, and is run as normative stuff, without controversy, and as good advice to the perplexed in our public media that further shape the modernistic mind. The same advisor also referred to a one-time adultery as "accidental," and as an "insensitivity toward your wife."

Marriage: Divorce & Re-re-re-re-marriage

*Obviously, there must be a divorce gene, because it has been found that identical twins were significantly more likely to end their marriages than fraternal twins (reported in PHAL, 5/02). This must be the result of a massive recent genetic mutation in the population.

*A survey found that even though Americans are very aware of the high divorce rates, they greatly overestimate the likelihood of success in their own marriages. For instance, with a national divorce likelihood of about 43%, they estimated their own personal likelihood at between 0-11%. Even the higher risk groups where the divorce rate is about 64% still only estimated their own probabilities at 12% (APA Monitor, 3/01).

*An Australian news commentator noted that while many people claim that marriage is "just a piece of paper," no one ever refers to a divorce as just a piece of paper (Australian Magazine, 25/11/00; source item from John Armstrong).
*Once the family was deemed junk, much propaganda appeared (in books, TV, shrinkery, etc.) about how good divorce was for everyone. The latest book (2001) in this series is For Better or For Worse by E. Mavis Hetherington and John Kelly. Of course, the wave of recent research on what happens to the children junks this junker.

*Communism in Russia did a very thorough job of destroying the family. About 80% of marriages end in divorce within about 4 years, and huge numbers of Russians do not know who their father is. Once a divorce takes place, fathers usually disappear from the scene (NCR, 8/01).

*Married couples in every US state except South Carolina can now fill out divorce papers online on an interactive website that translates their answers into the appropriate legal documents, works out parenting plans, and even calculates child support. The process takes between 30 minutes to 2 hours, and costs $250, which is a fraction of the time and costs of lawyer-handled divorces, and allegedly minimizes acrimony between the couple. The website even offers access to mediation for those who are open to it. If the divorce is uncontested, it will be processed automatically if the papers are actually filed (SPS, 28/7/02).

*Another bad trend in contemporary families is for elderly people to get divorced after many decades of togetherness. Very often, this also means that one or both spouses move to another locale, and therefore lose contact with their life-long relationship network, and this at a time in people's lives when they are less likely to form new friendships. Reportedly, the advent of the drug Viagra has made some contribution to men seeing new opportunities with younger women (Newsweek, 4 Dec. 2000).

*For some reason, at the very time when marriage is in a nose dive, and with so many people getting married again and again, there is now a boom in the bridery and wedding business of so-called "encore marriages," and a magazine launched in 1999 was even entitled Bride Again. Amazingly, it has a readership of half a million people whose median age is 39. One of its recommendations is that the new couples give golden pendants, called family medallions, to the children from their previous marriages (Time, 1 April 02). Somewhat surprisingly, we learned that second weddings on the average cost about as much as the average first wedding, i.e., $12,000; but almost twice as much gets spent on encore honeymoons, presumably because the older but not necessarily wiser participants have more money by that time. One other boon to the people in the bridery and wedding business is that encore couples are not as nervous as the first time, and their encore wedding day is no longer considered the most important day in their lives (Time, late 2000).

*Nowadays, one may be invited to a wedding where both the bride and groom have parents with second and third spouses, and/or live-in consorts, with all their unrelated children, all sorts of half-siblings, and even brides' and grooms' ex-spouses. Advice columns are beginning to fill up with desperate brides and grooms asking for etiquette advice on these situations.

*Apparently, it has become so rare for people to stay married to each other that Life Styles (a "journal of relationship patterns") has brought out a special issue on long-term marriages, i.e., marriages that have lasted at least 30 years. This falls into our good-news-that-makes-you-cry-from-grief category, such as the one we often use as an example: "Mother decides not to kill her baby."

Pregnancy & Child-Bearing: Resentment, Delay, & Even Hatred Thereof (Kinderfeindlichkeit)

*Australia's most famous radical feminist Germaine Greer has said that wanting to have a 'baby is irrational and even pathological, and that women who seek help to get pregnant are mentally unstable. She says that having a child is against women's own best interest and results in a catastrophic decline in their quality of life (The Age, 13 Dec. 2000). One might call this an honest modernism.

*Getting a Life by Helen Simpson is one of those yuppie books (2001) that promotes women's love of clothes but hostility toward families, men, husbands and children. The author has written several of these, and picked up a "cult following."
Newsweek (16 Dec. 02) ran a 1-page story by a mother who reported feeling stifled as a
teacher, and being tired of her wife and mother role, she decided to "create a life of my own," and
bragged that everyone profited from her getting divorced and giving her child up to her husband.
After all, what good would she be to a daughter if she "felt like only half a person," and was "passing
time instead of living." At one point, her daughter expressed regret that she wouldn't bake
cookies like some of her friends' moms, but this mother could only "explain why that could never
be me." What did this woman end up doing? Teaching "personal growth" workshops and writing
books!

*One of the UN human rights committees has issued a statement, called the Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Many people have characterized
this document as hostile to motherhood. The committee which formulated it has criticized countries
for instituting Mother's Day, and for setting up training programs in household management as
reinforcing objectionable "stereotypes" of women. It favors abortion and interprets maternity as
something like a disgrace, and has directed China to legalize prostitution (NC Register, 8 Oct. 00,
& 19 May 02).

*Why is it that it is particularly in the three English-speaking countries of the US, Australia
and Britain, that there is a major trend toward women remaining childless? It is also these three
countries in which huge strides have been made toward sexual equality in education and career
opportunities. The more a woman enters leadership positions in these countries, the more likely she
is to remain childless. One scholar has said (for whatever it may be worth) that childless people have
a weaker stake in society's collective future, and are more willing to let individualism run rampant
(SPS, 29/4/02).

*The average modern woman will take 6550 contraceptive pills during her fertile years (Age,
20/8/00). That is a lot of pills.

*Regular TV network channels have been running very offensive home pregnancy test ads.
They show couples very worried about whether the woman is pregnant, and then show the inspection
of the results of the home pregnancy test--and as the test is pronounced to be negative, everybody
breaks out in big smiles, having a big celebration, and saying things such as, "It's good."

*In honor of Mother's Day in 2001, an art festival was held in Grand Island, Nebraska,
dedicated to "Mothers and Udders," with a promise to be a "Udderly Grand Celebration of
Motherhood," with "various artists' interpretations of all mothering creatures," the announcement
showing a bovine-looking woman cuddling with a cow (source material from Sherry Cook).

*For reasons that are mostly selfish, people who have children these days often only have one
or two. This then means that when a child dies, they are in an entirely different category than
families in the past that had a larger number of children. Many things then happen. One is that the
parents may go into a sort of rage that their entitlement has been taken from them somehow, and they
may want to start suing somebody. Another common scenario is that they go into a life-long grieving
process, fed by endless support groups and grieving and bereavement circles and cultures. Thirdly,
they become envious and angry that there are words such as "widow," "widower" and "orphan," but
no word in English for someone who has lost a child. There are now actually demands that such a
word be coined so that people can define themselves to others by such a role term, and play a major
such role for life (WSJ, 6/6/02).

*While an increasing number of high-achieving women have been childless, few have been
happy about this. Even among those age 41-55, 25% still would like a child (though presumably not
more than one) (NCR, 21/8/02). Some of this research was published in 2002 by Sylvia Ann
Hewlett who had written the book Creating a Life, who chose this title apparently in direct opposition
to the book Getting a Life, mentioned above.

*The postponement of having children must be classed as a form of withdrawal from
reproduction, because it involves a game of chance whether one will still be able to have children at
a late date, and also almost assures that one will have few, if any, children other than the first one--if
one can even produce one at that stage. Yet further, it plays into the culture of artificial babymaking, since couples that waited a long time to have children tend to be the kind who want to be in total control of everything, and often very quickly take recourse to high-tech babymaking once they decide they want a baby. This, in turn, inserts them in a culture of Death.

Yet another bit of disastrous news for the modernists is that women who delay in having children are apt to have children with a lower birth weight. In fact, delayed childbearing is believed to account for most of the recently higher incidences of low birth weight, and for about 36% of early deliveries (SPS, 12 Aug. 02).

*It is also very ironic that women who waited until the last moment and then discovered that they could not have children start running to infertility support groups.

*A major conference of 4,000 fertility experts, meeting in 10/00 in California, was told by some speakers that it will soon be "reckless" for parents to conceive children naturally (NC Register, 12 Nov. 00).

*Even the liberal media have begun to ask, "Was Dan Quayle right about Murphy Brown?" (e.g., SPS, 7 Aug. 01), the TV character who brazenly had a child out of wedlock. And even they are now agreeing that unless people start being fecund and multiplying busily, there are going to be cataclysmic demographics ahead in most Western countries. For instance, it is not at all apparent at this time how a country can support a population in which one-third is above age 60, which is a prospect that countries like Spain face in several decades (AP in SPS, 7 April 02). One big problem is that hardly any politicians who are old enough to die before this happens will want to touch this issue.

*What is the point of surviving Hitler only to commit self-genocide? Surprisingly, in the Netherlands, 1/4 of the pre-war Jewish community survived the Nazis, but now, only 28% of Jewish couples in the Netherlands have children, and 1/3 of the Jewish women are still childless at the age of 40 (FT, 6/02). Could there be any link with the culture of drugs, sexual license and euthanasia in the Netherlands? Could there indeed be such a thing as a culture of Death?

*The year 2002 has seen an avalanche of bad news for modernistic preaching and practices about childbearing and childrearing. Considering how much research on these issues tends to be ideologically distorted in favor of modernistic claims, we are astounded that so much politically incorrect news was discovered and came to light.

One research study reported that having more children, and breast-feeding them longer, actually cuts breast cancer risk. In other words, the great increase in breast cancer in recent years had much to do with women having no or very few children. Also, many women who do breast-feed do so only very briefly these days, often because it interferes with their career. This information came from a mega-study of more than 200 researchers and involving 150,000 women worldwide.

On top of all of this, new research claims that the age when female fertility declines is even earlier than previously believed, but the PC media quickly added that the experts said that this "should not raise undue concern" (SPS, 30/4/02). They did not spell out what "due concerns" would be.

The Effect on Children of New Ideas About Marriage, Family & Parenting

As with the recent research on marriage, the recent research on the effects of modernistic parental life patterns has been most embarrassing to the proponents of these patterns, as many of the items below bring out.

*What the liberal and PC circles do not want the population to know is that in almost any conceivable measure of outcomes (such as health, academic achievement, emotional adjustment, experiences of abuse, etc.), children from traditional families as a group do better than those from any other type of family or upbringing configuration. By any reasonable way of thinking, the evidence (revealed by virtually any index that one might consider to be relevant) is definitely in and conclusive: efforts to redefine family and marriage are disastrous, especially for children.
Another one of those amazing studies is that men who are married (to women) and have babies with them are better fathers to their children than men who merely shack up (SPS, 16/6/02). Altogether, what the research is showing is that men, women, and children are all better off in intact marriages than in any other arrangement.

Among other things, teenagers who do not have a dad around are more likely to have sex before marriage, perpetuating the pattern of fatherless generations.

*It is amazing what research it takes to convince the PC of the errors of some of their ideologies. One study determined that when parents split, the continued involvement of a father is likely to result in the children having better grades, and especially so when the fathers are directly involved in their children's school work. Another study found that when parents divorce, children will fare much better when parents have joint custody.

*Another study recently reported that the school work of a child whose parents divorced will suffer for several years, and sometimes forever because once a child falls behind for several years, the child may never be able to catch up. Of course, this has yet further implications, such as that as a group, children of divorce are likely to have poorer career prospects.

*It is hard to believe, but a US government study claims that half of all absentee fathers have more than one set of children, and that 24% have 3 or more groups of children—either biological or step, and that this is why they so often default (NCR, 5 May 02). One would think that this is a powerful reason for endorsing family stability.

*Yet another study found that women who have never been married but who have children are more than twice as likely to suffer “domestic abuse” as married mothers, and they are also 3 times as likely to become victims of other violent crime.

Further, children living with their mother and a man who is not their father are 43 times more likely to become victims of child abuse than those raised by married biological parents. Even when the man who is living with a woman outside of marriage is the father of her children, these children are still 20 times more likely to be abused.

*The number of fathers in the US who are raising their children alone has been going up 62% in 10 years (AP in SPS, 18/5/01). Some people would call this good news, but at any rate it is sad news. Imagine not having a mother!

*When children live with a stepmother, their chance of having gotten a medical checkup within the past year is 46%, while children living with both biological parents get it in 61% of cases (Time, 28/8/00).

*One consequence of the 1-child policy of China is that thousands of years of tradition of family-centeredness is very suddenly collapsing. As the children from the 1-child families are growing up, they are rebelling against any notion of family, and in a break once unthinkable with Confucian tradition, many of them refuse to care for their parents or grandparents, which is creating a huge crisis because no care alternatives are in place.

As we predicted, the 1-child policy of China is already beginning to result in patterns of predation upon women, who are vastly outnumbered by Chinese men. One result is the abduction of young women into forced marriages. In 2000 alone, 110,000 such women were freed from a form of enslavement to a man. Rather stupidly, the head of the family planning commission of China
stated that no one had anticipated the social problems created by the 1-child family (Time, 6 Aug. 01). They obviously don’t read TIPS!

*It used to be believed that children grow up better if they have siblings. But with Kindereinheit now being normative among the educated, research has started to try to prove that children do not profit from the presence of siblings (e.g., American Psychologist, 6/00).

*One of the innumerable lies being propagated about homosexuality is that homosexuals are as good as heterosexuals in raising children. An example of the endless repetition of this lie is found in Newsweek (6 May 02). A corollary strident claim that one keeps hearing all the time in the mainstream liberal media is that research has shown that there is no ill effect on children from being adopted by homosexual adults, and even that "research has demonstrated" that it makes no difference whether children are reared by their father and mother, or by any number of other arrangements, such as two fathers or two mothers. However, some new mega-studies claim to have thoroughly discredited the research the liberals have been citing, claiming that these studies had unclear hypotheses, missing or inadequate comparison groups, invalid measurements, non-random samples, samples too small to yield meaningful results, and no or inadequate numerical analyses. For instance, a recent book by Lerner and Nagai entitled No Basis reviewed 49 studies of children being reared by two adults of the same sex, and 21 of these studies had no heterosexual comparison groups! Another similar such mega-study in Britain said much of this research was almost in the category of anecdotes. It also pointed out that even the lousiest studies get rave reviews if the result pleases the politically correct, while the most rigorous studies get savaged if they do not (NCR, 31/3/02). Discerning minds will find none of this surprising.

*Recent efforts to broaden marriage to include homosexual couplings have been likened to "opting-in clauses" to marriage that parallel the earlier loosening of "opting-out clauses." In combination, this "liberalization" has been satirized as having the following effect (FT, 8/00): "...A generation of American children has learned to keep its suitcase packed and a bundle of change-of-address cards on hand....On Sunday Junior’s with Mommy and her lesbian wife, Monday with Grammy and Grampa from Mommy’s first, non-gay marriage, Tuesday with Mommy’s gay biological sperm donor, Wednesday with Mommy’s lesbian’s egg donor’s boyfriend, Thursday with his turkey baster’s manufacturer’s ex-wife, Friday with his shrink. And, if the shrink’s not enough, he can join the rest of the most medicated generation of children in US history on his daily dose of Prozac and/or Ritalin, which seems to work pretty well, at least until the day the kid forgets to take it and guns down his schoolyard."

*Mindless liberals and self-determination advocates have commonly been at the forefront of calling for support for marriage and reproduction by mentally retarded persons, even claiming this as a “right.” A study in the 1/97 issue of the American Journal on Mental Retardation found that of 27 school-aged children of mildly mentally retarded mothers, not a single one was free of serious problems. Furthermore, the quality of the children’s home environment, and of the social supports that they got from their mothers, was lower than among a control group of children whose mothers were not mentally retarded but whose families were equally poor.

Attacks on the Family by the Media Specifically

*As we said, major segments of the population have withdrawn from marriage and family life, and some of them have interpreted the family as one of the most despicable social institutions altogether. Along this line, entertainment media have begun to switch from the depiction of happy families to depicting the family as a hell on earth, or something close to it. Even Time, and already in 1990, had said that this trend was exemplified by the TV series "Married...With Children," "Roseanne," and "The Simpsons," which even Time called "anti-family shows."

*A group that tries to work toward a paternal presence in the family found that 6 major TV networks during prime time portrayed fathers negatively 8 times more commonly than mothers (NCR, 3 Dec. 00). Since people tend to become what they behold, this amounts to a promotion of bad fatherhood.
*The entertainment media can be intentional or unintentional mirrors to their society. On 26/6/91, the ABC-TV channel in Syracuse carried a story of two lovers "growing apart" at 8 pm, a divorce story at 8:30, a story about a youngster who had two dads at 9:00, and then a man wooing the woman he had deserted at 9:30. During the same period, another channel carried a 2½-hour movie on a family going through "trying periods of separation..." During the same time slot, another program on NBC dealt with the killer of four women and the arrest of juvenile arsonists. Yet another TV channel (CBS) carried a Peeping Tom (i.e., bad man) story. On Sunday, 8 Sept. 91, at 9 pm, NBC television had a film about "a model husband accused of arranging his wife's murder"; CBS had a movie about "a woman's idyllic life is shattered when she learns that her affluent husband was involved with a high-class prostitute"; and ABC had a movie in which "a woman takes desperate measures to rescue her supposedly dead infant from her husband and his coven of witches." Sounds as if politically correct people had taken over the three major TV networks. Chuck Burkhous was right: one hardly needs to read TIPS anymore.

*The film "Chicago" depicts a married couple in "traditional roles" as having utterly meaningless lives, much as does "About Schmidt." In the film "Mrs. Dalloway," a housewife with a young child feels "trapped in a world of rigid rules."

*How is one to explain that all at once in the late 1990s, a slew of major movies (including "L.A. Confidential," "He Got Game," "Deconstructing Harry," "Mighty Aphrodite," and "Leaving Las Vegas") have the male lead give up on getting the girl, and take up with prostitutes instead?

*Here are some other/miscellaneous recent media depictions: a dysfunctional family and an immature father in the Fox TV sitcom "Grounded For Life," and an immature father in the WB series "The Gilmore Girls"; an unbearable family in the NBC sitcom "The Three Sisters"; Fox's "Temptation Island," which subjects 4 couples to relentless near-nudity to see if they stray; the film "Crossroad" with three young women where (a) the fiancé of one is the rapist of one of the others, (b) and another one was abused by her father; the book "Call If You Need" in which all 5 men of the 5 stories have had drinking problems and broken marriages; the book "The Corrections," about a failed family with all sorts of awful histories. This litany would not mean much in light of many other TV shows and books—except all the above got highly positive reviews in major media outlets.

*There has also been a recent craze of films, TV, and other media focusing on men beating up on or otherwise mistreating women in so-called "domestic violence"—despite the fact that 52 studies that included broad (rather than biased) samples have found that women in "domestic relationships" are at least as violent as their men. In the US, 835,000 men are said to be "battered" by their women, according to a 1998 US Justice Department report (Newsweek, 28/6/99). Of course, men are less likely to report such violence than women, and because women tend to be weaker, the men are less likely to suffer as much physical harm as a result.

*Similarly, both the entertainment and news media imply that people who fail to provide child support to their children do so because they are male, rather than that being the non-custodial parent—whether male or female—is what is associated with failure to make support payments.

Here is something that could make a man mad: a woman claims that a man fathered her child, and demands child support from him. The man claims that the child is not his, and DNA tests prove him right—but the courts sentence him to child support anyway. In an extreme such case, a man in Texas was sentenced to child support for 3 children, all (it turned out) conceived by his wife by cheating with other men, while the wife was duping the husband into assuming they were his (NY Times, 11 March 01). Of course, this lets the 3 wild Texas mustang studs off scot-free.

*It is of some importance for us to understand why the liberal media have been so avidly fascinated by the Andrea Yates case (she drowned her 5 young children), and have been outraged about her being convicted of murder. The underlying storyline is that she was a victim of her husband who mercilessly kept impregnating her and forcing her to bear babies. If only she had been strong enough to practice contraception or abort a few of the pregnancies, then she would never have been driven to kill all of her children. The pro-abortion mentality and propaganda often expresses itself in such subtle ways that most members of the public are not aware that that is what is at issue in the way a certain event gets covered by the media. As one columnist wrote, the reason Yates was
convicted (here is another storyline) is because our society is not well-informed about mental illness. The assumption here is that mental illness makes people do bad things, and poor Andrea was driven insane and murderous by her pregnancies and her children. One never hears anybody say anything about insanity making somebody do good things, unless it involves rich people giving away their assets, upon which their heirs have them declared incompetent. When poor people do good things to others, it is never ascribed to their insanity.

A psychiatrist who examined Yates said that she "doesn't realize the extent of her celebrity." Normally, one would not think of a mass murderer or child killer as a celebrity, unless one holds the kinds of beliefs that we have sketched above that women who have failed to contracept or abort their babies are entitled to kill them afterwards, and/or become heroes when they do (SPS, 22/3/02).

From the liberal/PC perspective, the biggest mistake Andrea Yates made is that she did not also kill her husband. That would have put her in the FFK Hall of Fame.

There is a distinct possibility that the Yates case has also spawned a number of other copycat crimes, as other young women began to wonder why they should not kill their children if they find them burdensome. Thus, a 24-year-old woman south of Syracuse who had 4 children killed the youngest one by setting her house on fire (SPS, 23/3/02). She apparently figured that she could handle 3 children but not 4. And in Michigan, a 24-year-old woman drowned her 2 young daughters in the bathtub, just as Andrea Yates had done, but then also shot herself to death (SPS, 23/10/02).

*Despite positive reviews from two of its own scholars, Harvard University Press refused to publish a book entitled The Case for Marriage, claiming that its "tone was too strong and its evidence too meager" (Wall Street Journal, 18 Oct. 00).

*While we have commented before on the recent flood of father- and mother-bashing autobiographies, it is remarkable that we have not seen more autobiographical works written by parents telling all about how bad their children were, especially considering that these days, this must happen very often.

*When an organization was formed that announced that it would seek an amendment to the US Constitution designating marriage as a union of one man with one woman, most of the bigger media chains refused to even report the story, on the grounds that they should not cover stories about a movement until the movement had been successful, which is of course ridiculous and hypocritical (NCR, 5 Aug. 01).

Attacks on the Family From the UN

*We already touched on this issue above and in previous TIPS editions. Years ago, rabidly anti-family parties somehow gained control of everything the UN has been saying and doing that deals with family issues. All the UN groups having to do with family issues have been relentlessly interpreting children as the property of the state and as having autonomy from their families, families being legitimized only to the degree that they function as factota of the state. A second thrust of these organizations has been a feminist attack on any kind of traditional roles for women. A third thrust has been an emphasis on sterilization, contraception, and abortion. Among these groups is UNICEF, which many na"ive people all over the world consider to be a most benign and beneficent organization, and to which they generously donate. To the degree that any of these policy thrusts are successful, the perpetrators then wonder at the awful kinds of societal collapses, warfare, and enlisting of children (including girls) in vast numbers into fighting forces that ensue.

Any organization or person from around the world that is pro-family and pro-life has stood little chance of being accredited at any UN organization. Thus, hardly any of the 3,000 or so organizations that are accredited fall into this category (NCR, 21/1/01).

*The politically super-correct UN Committee on the Rights of the Child claims that UN conventions prohibit parents from spanking their children. While this does not seem to be true, it would mean that any nation that has ratified that convention but has not criminalized parental spanking stands in violation of law, because generally, international treaties acquire the force of law in their respective countries.
UNICEF has begun to oppose adoption of children from poor countries by people in wealthier countries. Among the rationales is that one of the major causes of poverty in poor countries is their fecundity rate, and that by adopting children out, they are shirking their responsibility to control their population. Furthermore, parents in poor countries, and particularly single mothers, should pressure their governments to give them financial assistance, which such parents are supposedly not apt to do if instead they can give their children away. As a result of such UN pressure, a number of Third World countries have ceased approving out-adoptions (source information from Donna Marcaccio).

**Attacks on the Family by/From Other Sectors**

*One of the more common, but somewhat subtle and insidious, ways of attacking the family is to attempt to redefine it, so that virtually anything can be called a "family," "marriage," etc. Some parties may mistakenly believe that they are thereby upholding the family.

Considering that the politically correct and the left have been making war on the very words husband, wife, marriage, and family, someone has noted that if we lose these words, we will also lose what they stand for. In fact, in some circles, all these things are out, and what is in instead are "relationships." This is exemplified by a report of the Law Commission of Canada entitled Recognizing and Supporting Close Personal Relationships Between Adults. Also, there are many school districts in the US today that will simply not accept or use any course material that seems to endorse marriage (ET, 5/01).

*The idea that homosexuals of the same sex should be able to get married was first promoted by homosexuals themselves, and then gleefully taken up by the usual liberal suspects, most of whom see nothing special or sacred in marriage. The media, being almost entirely liberal, then began to militantly promote this notion, and finally, some liberal courts began to rule that it was unconstitutional to deny some kind of marriage form to homosexuals. All this confused so many modernistic citizens that they too began to cease objecting to this development. All of this is devastating to the institution of marriage. Natural law experts tell us that even quite aside from any other meanings of marriage, there is a natural law basis for it, and a natural law morality of it.

*A Canadian law, obscurely and misleadingly entitled, "An Act to Modernize Obligations and Benefits," changes about 70 federal laws in order to put "same-sex marriages" on the same legal basis as common-law marriages (ET, 8/00). One wit has referred to this as "the modernization of promises."

*Modernists have been so brainwashed, including those who believe they have a religious faith, that they generally assume that marriage is an entirely private affair between two people, that there is no cosmic significance in marriage, and that society should have no particular interest in the institution.

*Yet another new twist on the redefinition of the family is that obituaries may now list as "Survivors" people who are not related by blood, by legal sanction, or even by close affection to the deceased. For instance, some people are now listed as "surrogate children" and "surrogate grandchildren," as when the deceased was a homosexual and these were the natural children of the deceased's long-time sexual companion. Note that this is not the same use of the term as in so-called "surrogate" conception, pregnancy, and birth.

*Renowned Irish novelist Nuala O'Faolain declared that her sheepdog is "a genuine alternative to the loving-spouse route," which is understandable given her views of "the savagery of Irish domestic relationships, the cruelty to children, to women, and to the poor" (Newsweek, 26/2/01). We half-suspect that her dog is not allowed to mate, at least not to other dogs.

*There is some irony in the fact that at the same time at which homosexual relationships are interpreted as genuine and valid marriages, there is a renewed war against those Mormons who continue to practice polygamy. One would think that all the people in favor of "alternative" and "homosexual marriages" would arise in indignation at this development (Newsweek, 13/11/2000; AP in SPS, 27/11/00).
A group of 100 members of a Mennonite church had recently migrated from Mexico to Ontario, Canada. Somehow, it came to the attention of a local Children’s Aid Society (which is a quasi-public corporation in Ontario) that the church would not promise that its parent members would never physically chastise a child. The Children’s Aid Society thereupon mustered a dozen police officers and seized 7 children from their homes, and scattered them to various foster homes, even though there had been no evidence whatsoever that any child had been abused. The children were taken away screaming in terror, some being physically carried off. Thereupon about 100 members of the church, mostly mothers and children, fled to the US. To us, all of this seems like religious persecution, particularly since Canadian law permits parents to use physical force if it is reasonable under the circumstances. The people who have made war against this law are the same ones who have also been trying to lower the age of consent for male homosexual activity to 14, which apparently would not constitute child abuse in their eyes. The provincial Children’s Aid Society has also been claiming falsely that Canada was obliged to outlaw corporal punishment due to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but this convention has apparently not actually banned spanking altogether. Also, the authorities completely ignored that the harm suffered by the children from their arrest and removal might have been infinitely greater than any spanking they might conceivably receive (NCR, 19/8/01).

Bestowal of all sorts of rights on children that enable them to defy their parents and grow up without discipline or parental control has to be understood as a very subtle attempt at destroying families.

The so-called baby-boomer generation has been characterized as just about the most self-centered one ever raised. One result of its self-centeredness is that as baby-boomers age, they drift apart from their siblings, which is a trend also now recapitulated by subsequent generations. These people have been taught that nothing much matters except themselves, and as a result, the importance of family ties has faded (Time, 18 Dec. 00).

One very subtle way to attack and undermine the family is to instill into families such high materialistic expectations that even the wife who still has several small children is pushed to work a job in order to live up to those expectations.

Some people consider the psychoanalytic rebel psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich as the true father of the sexual revolution. Like almost all the early psychoanalytic leaders, he was more than a little bit screwy. Both his parents committed suicide, and he himself abandoned his first family in order to become a communist, and had 3 marriages. He began to oppose rational thought, and interpreted the family as the chief source of repression in the world. The Communist party eventually kicked him out. In 1939, he discovered a hitherto unknown cosmic energy (related to orgasms) which he called orgone, founded the science of orgonomy, and invented an orgone box to measure and collect orgone. Tragically and scandalously, the US government slapped him into prison for violating the Food and Drug Act where, after several years, the poor man died in 1957. However, his influence is said to have continued among radical feminists, secular sex educators, enemies of the family, left-wing university students, and various other circles (NCR, 5 Aug. 01).

A number of psychologists are beginning to jump on the ideology bandwagon that parents make zero contribution to their child’s development (e.g., Cohen, 1999). Quite aside from the question as to what does control children and their development is the question of who or what ought to do so. In 1977, Christopher Lasch, in his book Haven in a Heartless World, suggested that certain sectors of society were trying to wrest the power of socialization away from parents and transfer it to peers, modern commerce and government. This has in fact happened, though a major sector of commerce that should have been fingered is the entertainment media that now largely control the mentality of just about everybody, including children, as documented at great length in our TIPS issue of 12/00-6/01.

On 10 April 2002, a free staff training session was offered at the Central New York Disabilities Service Office called “Alternatives to Domestic Violence.” Again, this sheds a bad image on marriage, and even heterosexual shacking. Unintentionally, the title also suggests that some “alternative violence” might be engaged in to avoid being violent at home.
One author (Strickler, 2001) is defining "family violence against the handicapped" as including violence not only from natural, adoptive, and foster family members, but also any violence perpetrated on the handicapped person by fellow residents of a community group home, by staff of such a home, and/or by roommates in any unstaffed living situation. One might ask, who does this definition leave out? This not only makes the family an amorphous entity, plus inflates the figures on "family violence" and thusly makes families look bad, but also makes it impossible to separate out staff- and peer-inflicted violence, so that one cannot know the amount and proportion of violence from these parties.

Efforts to Strengthen/Uphold Marriage

*Government policies in the US for decades have been de facto (even if unintentionally) encouraging and incentiving early and unmarried sex, pregnancy, and emancipation of very young unwed mothers from their own parents by means of child-subsidy policies. Now there is finally a reaction to all these. Some sectors, mostly conservative ones, are arguing that in order to make more progress in reducing welfare dependency, marriage and two-parent families must be encouraged, and efforts within the government have been made to encourage unwed mothers to marry. If these mothers do not come in the first place from a multi-generational line of broken marriages and/or fatherless families, they quite often constitute the beginning of such lines. The liberals are absolutely furious over recent attempts to support marriages and to get people who otherwise would have "shacked up" to get married, and to even use public money to do so. The very same people who have been advocates for generations of big government measures and manipulation of family dynamics are now complaining (e.g., editorial, SPS, 30/9/01) that the marriage incentives are efforts of big government to interfere in family issues! One of their arguments is that laws and public funds will not work to strengthen marriage. This argument, amazingly, ignores the fact that the liberals have systematically contributed for decades to laws and financial incentives that work against marrying, and/or weaken marriages.

Actually, a much better argument would be that it is not wise to promote marriage between people who do not believe in the sacredness of the bond.

By the way, society has at least one very substantial interest in the family issue, and that is to hold taxes down by not having to support vast numbers of unwed or divorced mothers and their children, and to pay for the dependency and crime these children are known to fall into very disproportionately.

*The down-side to the federal efforts to strengthen marriage is that a big portion of the money that the Bush administration plans to spend on the promotion of marriage (especially tied to welfare monies) would go to family therapy centers, and hence shrinks. Some people have hailed this on the grounds that the poor had been "denied access to marriage counselors," for which they should actually be grateful.

The man picked by the Bush administration to head the marriage initiative is Wade Horn, who said that when his wife had two pregnancies, that made him "more sensitive to fetuses"--or at least this is how Time reported it (10 June 02).

*Because of the instability of marriages, some states are beginning to legislate two kinds of marriages which some people have characterized as "marriage heavy" and "marriage lite," the former being called covenant marriages which are much more difficult to legally dissolve. Observers have already reported that covenant spouses tend to think in terms of the long-run and anticipate that their best time is in the future, while "marriage lite" spouses concentrate on the present and what they are getting at the moment. Marriage lite seems to be particularly suited for persons who, from the beginning, do not have high expectations that their marriage will last even while they are getting married (Time, 24/7/00), i.e., the starter marriage people.

*For the first time, the Wisconsin state government is employing a full-time person to promote sound and lasting marriages. Several governors of other states are also deeply concerned about this issue. The Arkansas governor said that there was a state of marital emergency. The Utah governor has created a commission to strengthen marriage (FT, 8/00).
*The city of Sarasota, Florida, has one of the most expensive marriage licenses in the US, but couples get back a big chunk of it if they complete a marriage preparation class (SPS, 15/7/02).

*A book entitled The Case for Marriage systematically inventoried the benefits in the areas of health, happiness, finances, well-being, sex, etc., that couples reap first of all when they are married, and secondly when they are fully committed to each other. It reported that the research literature has overwhelmingly found that married people are happier, healthier, and financially better off, despite all the anti-family ideology of so many modernistic isms. Not surprisingly, the Harvard University Press deemed the book too controversial and refused to publish it, and another publisher had to be found.

*In response to the collapse of the family, a marriage movement has come together consisting of scholars, politicians, clergy and marriage counselors. It has issued a "statement of principles" in support of marriage and family, and described 6 aspects of marriage: a legal contract, a financial partnership, a sacred promise, a personal bond, a sexual union, and a family-making bond. It rejected cohabitation and any notion that marriage is merely a private emotional bond or undertaking without social consequences. Many people who would have otherwise endorsed the statement did not do so because it failed to reject the legitimacy of a homosexual marriage (NC Register, 6 Aug. 00).

*There can be little doubt that programs of education for marriage, including in the principles and competencies linked to marital success, can be expected to be vastly more successful than therapy-like shrinkery of individuals, couples or larger family units.

Miscellaneous Other Items on the Family

*We were rather surprised to learn that a man in New York State who had sex with his wife even though he knew he had HIV was convicted of "reckless endangerment" and sentenced to 5 years of probation. What adds amazement to this story is that he was condemned for having "unprotected sex," whereas "protected sex" would also have had a high risk of disease transmission (SPS, 19/7/02). So what this amounts to is the crime of knowing transmission of venereal disease to a wife, but of condom-less sex with a wife.

*One big contribution to the increasing demands for scheduled Caesarean deliveries is that women are very busy doing other things, and do not want these to be disrupted by an unscheduled delivery. Relatedly, more of them want the grandparents to be on hand to do some of the work of child care in the first few weeks, and this needs to be planned in advance, including so that the grandparents can get the benefit of a reduced airfare by buying their tickets in advance (Time, 10 June 02).

*A US court has resolved a peculiar "ethical dilemma" by ruling that a child conceived from her father's frozen sperm after her father's death was entitled to his Social Security benefits (AP in SHJ, 31/5/95).

*A teenage boy with Down's syndrome told his mother lovingly, while sitting in her lap, "I want a new Ma, you're always so tired and sad" (Band, 3/200).

*A family in Nebraska is the third generation to adopt children, starting way back with the grandfather who was himself adopted, perhaps as an orphan train child.

Children

Child Development News

*There are estimates that about half of the human genes (about 50,000) are dedicated to constructing and maintaining the nervous system.
*At age 2, a child's brain has twice as many synapses, and consumes twice as much energy, as the brain of a normal adult. It is between ages 2-10 or 11 that human nerve fibers have the greatest interconnectivity, with each neuron having an average of 15,000 synapses.

*The ability to learn a second language is highest between birth and age 6, and then goes into a steady decline.

*Parents from many cultures change their characteristic speech patterns in the same way when they speak to infants. They tend to put their faces close to the child, and speak in short utterances with an unusually high and melodic voice. Some people call this rhythmic high-pitched speaking style "parentese." In turn, infants are more responsive to parentese than to their parents' normal mode of speaking.

*In innumerable ways, children in the culture of modernism are in bad straits, but infants and toddlers are becoming physically sturdier and taller, so that the developmental charts of height and weight of earlier decades are no longer valid (Newsweek, 1 July 02). One thing that this underlines is that these growth curves are not as genetically determined as had once been taught, and in fact is still being widely taught.

*Of the many possible explanations as to why girls these days mature physically so much earlier, one is that daughters in a family may be going into puberty early when a new unrelated male (the mother's boyfriend or new husband) joins the household (Time, 3 April 00). Some people attribute this to stress hormones, but to us it seems more plausible that this is a form of unconscious entry into competition with the mother for the new man.

*On the one hand, kids are being dumbed down in school ever more, while on the other hand, we are being told that children's intelligence has been rising since the 1930s so that the average child today is as bright as a near-genius was 50 or more years ago. While this is probably grossly exaggerated, it presents a dilemma to almost all current popular theoretical schools of intellectual development, and argues strongly for the impact of both better health conditions and more stimulative environments. Of course, if that is true, then environmental stimulation is bound to work (Newsweek, 23/4/01). Time (30/4/01) also jumped on the bandwagon in headlining that "geniuses are made, not born."

One problem with hereditary theories is that regardless of what actually happens, the theorists always can craft an explanation for it, and such theories are thereby virtually eternally unfalsifiable, and according to some epistemologists, not truly part of science. One of the theories that is pressed into service to discredit the notion of the merit of environmental stimulation is that after age 5, many of the neurons that were grown before then allegedly shut down again, and that early stimulation therefore does not carry over. However, no one seems to be arguing that what was learned before age 5 gets forgotten! Surely, this implies that a child with twice the mind content of another child will have a huge head start.

*The intelligentsia and the pop-psychology culture seem to be painting themselves into a corner. On the one hand, they discredit genetic influences, and on the other hand they also discredit experiential ones, or at the very least parental influence and early stimulation while allowing for peer influence. However, it is almost self-evident that extraordinary achievement by a child can take place even when there are very much reduced peer influences; and that in fact, peer influences often press toward mediocrity, as is so very much the case these days in the African-American youth culture. If both kinds of effects are denied, then what is left? Apparently, what is left is the illogical implication that children are pre-programmed a certain way, but in a way that denies heredity and hereditary genius.

Child Health & Survival

*The media have been full of stories about the alarming steep rise of obesity in American children. Most of us are not surprised to learn that Malta and Italy have the highest rates of child obesity, but the US is now No. 3 (Time, 27/5/02). The biggest obesity increases have been among
black" girls. Much of this is due to irregular eating habits from poor parenting, including eating between meals; plus the schools feeding the children junk food and enticing them into drinking soft drinks. This is a major national health crisis with vast implications, namely poor life-long health and early dependency, all at the same time as economic conditions may be going downhill due to multiple factors. Obesity in girls also seems to contribute to early puberty—often even before age 10.

*It now turns out that children in the US have been receiving 3 million CAT scans a year for all sorts of complaints and injuries, even though CAT scans emit significantly more radiation than standard x-rays, and even though children are much more sensitive to radiation, thus in essence being administered a double-whammy. It may take decades to sort out what this may have done to all these children. Often, these CAT scans are administered as a form of defensive medicine. Some people have started a campaign to cut down both on the relatively indiscriminate use of CAT scans on children as well as on the dosage when they do get one, instead of getting the adult dose as has been the practice (AP in SPS, 29/10/02).

*Adults may have to smoke for up to 2 years, and at least 1/2-pack (10) a day, to become outright addicted to nicotine, but juveniles can become addicted after only a few cigarettes in only a few weeks, and especially so girls, who on the average get addicted within 3 weeks of a few and occasional smokes (SPS, 29/8/02). Thus, teenage girls are a prime target of advertisers, because if they get them to smoke only a few cigarettes, they will have most of them as steady customers for the rest of their lives.

*Suicide has become the sixth leading cause of death of children age 5-14 in the US. But even this figure is believed to mask a rise in suicides among very young children (SPS, 23/7/02).

The Vanishing of Children

*While everybody knows why there are few children in San Francisco, it is actually Seattle that has the second smallest percentage of children in the US, supposedly because too many Yuppies and Bobos have moved there who are too busy to raise children. Many neighborhoods have become virtually child-free zones (FT, 11/10/01).

*An environmentalist, Bill McKibben, wrote The End of Nature in 1989; and after having one child and then having himself sterilized, he wrote Maybe One in 1998. In it, he claims that the research shows that children without siblings grow up as well as, or better than, those with. Other people dispute this interpretation of the research. One can also point to the Chinese "emperor children" syndrome (i.e., only one spoiled male child) as opposing evidence.

*Children’s hospitals in the US may have to contract, convert, or go out of business because there are so many fewer children (AP in SPS, 7 Feb. 02).

*Margaret Sanger, eugenicist and founder of Planned Parenthood, visited Japan many times both before and after World War II. Her message was well accepted there, and Japan is rapidly being depleted of Japanese, as there are few children but many elderly persons. Playgrounds that once were crowded with children are now virtually deserted. Just to maintain its population, a country needs a fertility rate of at least 2.1 children per woman, but Japan, like every other developed country, falls below that rate and has now one of the lowest in the world with 1.4 (NC Register, 6 Aug. 00).

*The Italians, formerly so famous for their sense of love of family, have been so rapidly and thoroughly corrupted by the religion of modernism that Italy now has the lowest birth rate in Europe. Reportedly, this is less the desire of men than of women, who want the unfettered life. Italians may virtually disappear, but may be replaced by an onslaught of illegal immigrants, and Italy may even become Islamic (various sources).

*There are entire villages in Russia where there are no more children because these have all been given away to be adopted in the West. One way in which Russian children are made available for adoption is to have them declared handicapped even though they are not, because then the law
permits them to be taken abroad. Eager Westerners sometimes pay as much as $50,000 for such a child (NCR, 28/10/01).

Children Not Getting Parental Presence, Time & Attention

*Americans are as schizophrenic about childrearing as they are about religion: 75-90% think mothers with small children should stay home (SPS, 10 Sept. 01), but it is a matter of "do as I say, not as I do" because many fewer actually do stay home. These figures have not much changed since 1988. According to Time (30/4/01), only about 1 in 4 children is still being raised at home by their mothers.

*In a single generation, the practice of reading stories to children at night dropped from 93% to 40% in Britain (Time, 4 Dec. 00).

*The number of "latchkey children" who require some nonparental care before or after school hours is an estimated 24 million school-age children in the US.

*Apparently triggered by nation-wide publicity surrounding one or two specific cases, an explosion of publicity of cases of parents leaving children alone in their homes began to occur since late 1992. In one Indianapolis case, a woman left her 4 children alone in a virtually uninhabitable apartment for the better part of 6 weeks, one of these children being mentally retarded (Indianapolis Star, 30/1/03; source item from Joe Osburn). Because of the stench, people who came upon the scene had to don masks when they entered the apartment. The mother denied neglect, but she was enslaved to alcohol, and apparently not too bright.

*In a satire on recent news items about parents leaving their children at home unattended, a "Bizarro" cartoon showed yuppie parents leaving their teenage babysitter with these instructions: "There are snacks in the kitchen, the TV is in the den, Timmy goes to bed at nine, Janet can stay up till ten, emergency numbers are next to the phone in the hall, don't forget to lock the doors, make sure they both go to college at 18 and don't let them get married too young......Bye!"

*A town north of Toronto opened a gambling casino. Within days, so many parents drove to the casino, left their children unattended in the parking lot, and went gambling, that sometimes there were scores of children at one time roaming the parking lot or sitting in cars. Eventually, the casino expelled all the parents who had left their children outside. It turns out that this is a very common practice in gambling towns. For instance, in Atlantic City, children are often left unattended in hotel lobbies until the wee hours of the morning while their parents are gambling. A similar phenomenon broke out in Japan (Newsweek, 5 Aug. 96). A Winnipeg casino has gone as far as barring parents for life if they leave their younger children unattended while gambling (Globe & Mail, 8/8/96; source item from Barry Wever).

*According to some experts, teenagers are now more "adult-free" than any previous generation, and are to a very large degree developing according to peer and media influences rather than parental ones. Some teens hardly ever see their parents. Their moral identity is extremely confused, with most of them claiming some sort of spirituality, but with more of them lying and cheating than earlier generations. Their attitude has also been described as "God is whatever works for you." Differences between formal religions seem to be rather unimportant to them, and many of them incoherently cobble together bits and pieces of multiple religious traditions, and whatever happens to appeal to them at the moment. Also, they are a relatively angry generation, in part because their parents are not around. They claim they do not want to be told what to think by anybody, and at the same time are pitifully susceptible to influences from certain—and mostly unworthy—quarters (Newsweek, 8 May 00).

*When there are droughts in Australia, and wildfires break out, they often become so devastating and widespread as to burn up big parts of the continent. Tumbleweed-like balls of shrubbery, rich in tars and resins, catch fire and are blown through the air with great speed by the wind, so as to start new fires elsewhere. Considering this, Australians were enraged to discover that in a series of big fires in 2001-02 in New South Wales, about half had been intentionally set, and
apparently almost entirely by children and teenagers between ages 9 and 16, who were out of school for Christmas vacation (i.e., hot season), were bored, and not under supervision. This reminds us very much of the Devil's Day fires that have been trying to burn Detroit down once a year. As is usual in such circumstances, most of the perpetrators were males. Of course, if parents knew what their teenagers were doing, where they were and with whom, very little of this would be happening.

*Children have no business being on the streets without adult supervision late at night, except in unusual circumstances. Yet Dallas appears to be the first major US city in recent decades that in 6/91 adopted a night time curfew from 11 pm to 6 am for youths below 17. Stupid libertarian groups let out a howl, and yet the break-down of city life makes this kind of measure not only urgent but also relatively promising—assuming it were enforced.

*France has taken the courageous step of imposing a curfew at night upon juveniles under age 13 in many of its cities (NWP, 28/7/01).

*Researchers have reported the earth-shaking discovery that youths that are more closely supervised by their parents are less likely to get into trouble—but being PC, the researchers quickly disclaimed a cause-effect relationship (AP in SHJ, 21/2/01). Maybe they will soon tell us that it is youths who behave to whom parents give more supervision.

*While the PC liberals celebrate the destruction of marriage, the crazified adult children of dissolute modernists have been writing books of horror stories about their childhood with absent, distracted and self-absorbed parents. One recent (2000) book of this genre is *Black, White and Jewish.*

*Some years ago, many laws were changed so as to emancipate youths from parental control, apparently in good part in order to make abortion on demand available to underage girls without parental notification. Among other things, there were many laws that reduced the age of emancipation from 18 to 16 years of age. One result was that many teens stopped going to school, started taking drugs or drinking alcohol, had sex, ran away from home, etc., all in opposition to parental wishes, but parents no longer being able to stop their teenagers from doing these things. This also created situations where teenagers could do awful things for which parents were held responsible, even though they had little or no legal control over them, e.g., parents had to pay for damages if a teen vandalized property while out late at night. In consequence, there was an explosion in the number of youths who ended up out of control, and being declared "persons in need of supervision" (PINS), which usually meant becoming a ward of the state. In other words, the parental function was transferred to the state, much as envisioned by the UN, as mentioned earlier. Such emancipation laws were obviously based on false assumptions about human nature (e.g., about what teenagers were like, and would be likely to do with their freedom). After the disastrous results of these laws, New York State reversed itself and in December 2000 passed a law that returned to parents many of their traditional controls and authority over their teenagers.

*Parents justify their withdrawal from their children by invoking the new construct of "quality time": spend less time with the kids, but make what time you do spend a good experience. However, this construct received a severe body blow by a study that found that what parents deemed to be quality time (e.g., helping with school work), the children did not; and what the children thought was quality time (e.g., spending vacations with parents), the parents did not.

*When parents vanish from the lives of children, children may step into parental roles vis-à-vis other children, such as siblings. In 2001, we first learned that there was such a word as "parentification," referring to children assuming the role of parent. Hence, there is also the phrase "parentified children."

*We should be clear on one thing: if parents are failures as childrearers, the chances are very, very high that nothing else done to compensate for this will be able to make up for it.

*The poor (i.e., wrong), or insufficient, socialization that children are receiving is not merely expressing itself in more children being ever more badly behaved (including being "diagnosed" to be
hyperactive or inattentive), but also in becoming violent, and becoming violent in intolerable ways at ever earlier ages.

**Children Swimming in Corruptive Wealth**

Increasingly, modernistic children are swimming--sometimes literally drowning--in material goods, and very often in lieu of receiving the presence and attention of their parents.

*It appears that the less parents with some means engage themselves with their children, the more money they give them. This means that children ages 9-14, called "tweens," have more money than ever before, which is profoundly affecting the marketplace (NCR, 26/5/02).*

*When age 32, tennis pro Lisa Bonder married billionaire Kirk Kerkorian, age 80, for one month, conceived a baby from him, and then made these monthly alimony and child support demands: $4300 for eating in, $5900 for eating out, $2500 for movies and outings, $14,000 for parties and "play dates," $1400 for laundry and cleaning, $1000 for toys, books and videos, $436 for care of the pets, $144,000 for travel, etc., for a total of $320,000 each month (SPS, 20/1/02).*

*According to Newsweek (19/3/01), people are becoming obsessed with throwing ever more expensive and extravagant birthday parties for their little children, also creating a lot of anxiety about issues such as who is and is not being invited. Some children get so spoiled by guilt-ridden working parents that on their birthdays, they hardly have time for anything other than opening gifts. Some parents--even of the lower middle classes--consider themselves delinquent if they do not spend at least $500 on a child's Christmas gifts. One moral 6-year-old finally came up with a new idea, which was to have birthday parties where gifts were brought not for the celebrant but for needy people (SHJ, 9 Feb. 01).* Already, the shrinks are descending on parents such as the above, and some of them are beginning to specialize on advising parents about their children’s birthday parties. Perhaps we will soon see how-to books on the topic written by psychiatrists.

*New research tells us that in the culture of affluence, kids will endlessly nag their parents to buy what the children have seen advertised, often because the children themselves feel pressure from peers to possess the latest products. Parents may be subjected to 50 nags for a particular product, and over half of the parents eventually give in, which of course constitutes intermittent reinforcement of the nagging, which is one of the more difficult learning patterns to extinguish. Much nagging revolves around the waves of licensed products that nowadays accompany every blockbuster movie. The spending power of children ages 4-12 is also skyrocketing. It went from $17 billion in 1994 to $40 billion in 2002, and is expected to be $52 billion by 2006 (AP in Calgary Herald, 18/6/02).*

*The Chinese call the children in their 1-child families "emperor children," but increasingly, children of even ordinary families in Western societies--even if the child is not an only child--are developing emperor children characteristics, most of which are utterly obnoxious so that one can only say that the parents and these children deserve each other. Commercial firms have caught on to this and have increased their advertisements aimed directly at children 20-fold in just a single decade, so that even toddlers are beginning to ask for material goods by brand name, and do not want to appear in just ordinary attire in their peer circles and in school. Child-influenced parental purchases are said to have risen 6-fold since 1984. Parents seem to be powerless to control themselves, even though they admit that their children are defining themselves in terms of their possessions, prefer to go to shopping malls than on family outings, and that they themselves are buying their children products that they thoroughly disapprove of and that they actually know are bad for the children--merely in order to escape their children's harassment. Even relatively poor families living in tiny apartments with multiple children may have several television sets in each room, and own several video game consoles and several VCRs. Many such parents are also caught up in daily exhausting bedtime warfare, because they seem unable to simply announce rules and enforce them (Time cover story, 6 Aug. 01).*
*Designer firms have gotten into making and selling baby clothes and accessories at fabulous prices. A diaper bag from Gucci would cost almost $900, and some baby bags cost $1500. A baby mink coat costs over $4000, and Gucci baby booties about $165. Other than the usual suspects who buy such things (such as media celebrities), there are also very ordinary parents at modest salaries who are going into debt to buy these prestige items (Newsweek, 4 Dec. 2000).

*Not only are Americans convinced that today's children are more spoiled than ever, but 2/3 of parents even admit that they spoil their own children, and 3/4 believe that children have fewer chores to do than in the past (SPS, 30/7/01).

*According to Newsweek (5 Nov. 01), a kid can hardly show his or her face at school these days without toting a mobile phone. Among children 12-19, 37% use one. Of course, this explains why youngsters cannot walk anymore without holding a hand to one of their ears, regardless whether it contains a phone or not.

*One consequence of the affluence of the 1990s was that a huge proportion of Americans bought gigantic gas-guzzling vans and so-called SUVs as their regular cars. This was, of course, extremely foolish because when these vehicles wear out, people will have no lasting benefit from the wealth they once possessed. Also, if there were an oil crisis, people would not be able to afford, or get, gas for these guzzlers. But even worse is that an amazingly large number of parents gave their children such vehicles, so that college grounds are now stuffed with them. College parking areas have been overwhelmed by these because of their size. We know of one expensive student house where the cars used to be slick small expensive sports cars; now, there sit 6 vans and 3 expensive normal cars, parked beyond maneuverability. This is for single, unattached very young people who do not commute! Readers are invited to take a look around college campuses and take in this phenomenon.

*Looking at the research on how children and dependent youths spend their money, it becomes very obvious that they and we would all be better off if they had less money to spend.

Farming Out the Care of Children

One way parents separate themselves from their children is by "farming them out."

*One peculiar paradox that we have not seen commented upon so far is that the same age that warns its children relentlessly about the dangers of speaking or relating to strangers is the same one in which parents farm out the rearing of their children to strangers, including from a very early age all the way to their maturity. In other words, parents who take part in teaching their children to avoid getting involved with strangers then turn around and hand these very same children over to the care of people who, in most cases, they really do not know, but who are known to have a high rate of previous criminal involvement! One wonders what kind of message the children are getting (e.g., who constitutes a "stranger," which strangers are bad, if strangers are dangerous why are we being taken care of by them), and what may be going on in the minds and hearts of the parents. (Item submitted by Susan Thomas.)

*As recently as the early 1980s, most mothers of young children still stayed at home until the children reached school age. By 1997, there had been a big change, with reportedly 75% of preschool-aged children in some kind of day care.

*What was once day care has expanded to day-and/or-night care, so that parents who work odd hours or at night always have a place to drop off their children. This type of care has been rapidly expanding.

*Some parents are attempting to put their child on a waiting list for day care (especially for infant care) before the child is even conceived. People are so desperate for affordable day care that they are apparently even risking their children's well-being in hiring people to take care of their children who "don't speak English, don't know first aid, and carry a risk of having infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis."
A surprise check of 29 government-subsidized day care homes in the Syracuse area found that in 7, the providers had a criminal history, and many other homes had unacceptable conditions, were defrauding the government, etc. Only 3 of the 29 passed the inspection (SHA, 29/10/00). This situation was said to be similar to that in many other states.

There was much publicity about a 10-year study published in 2001 that found that the more time children spent in day care, the more likely they were to engage in aggressive behavior. Children who spend more than 30 hours a week at day care were found to be three times as likely to have behavior problems in kindergarten (PHAL, 3/02). (Big wonder, considering how children are brought up and who gets put into day care these days.) Even the US National Institute on Child Health and Human Development found in a study that children attending day care in the US these days end up three times more impatient, disobedient, aggressive and cruel than those who do not (NCR, 6 May 01). This politically incorrect study so embarrassed the liberal crowd (including the Children's Defense Fund) that they tried to prevent its publication. Why? Because the findings were seen to threaten women's career aspirations (NCR, 3 June 01). The chief researcher of the study has become a bit of a pariah. On the very day the study was released, the major news media led with stories that more federal money should be spent on day care, with the implication that if anything is wrong with day care, it is that not enough money is being spent on it. One newspaper article had the big headline, "Parents urged not to overreact to day care study" (SFS, 20/4/01), meaning of course that they should not react at all.

Some commentators have described the response to this research as typically post-modern anti-intellectualism that could not give a hoot about evidence, but exalts what people like, or would like to believe.

We believe that the problem is probably not so much that children spend too much time in day care, but that when they get there, they will be surrounded by a great many ill-socialized and uncontrolled children, and this is why they become aggressive. Also, the modern day care culture does not possess the mindsets or skills to create the kind of environment that Montessori schools did, which taught children to inhibit impulsiveness and aggressiveness, and to respect each other and each other's spaces.

Actually, with all the pressures put on women to get jobs and dump their kids, their scope for "choice" seems much reduced.

One 2001 cartoon showed a businesswoman mother reflecting on the above research findings, and concluding that she must do something about her situation, namely "...I've just got to start spending more quality time...with my therapist, to deal with this guilt I'm feeling...."

We were absolutely amazed that the PC academic culture permitted a study to be published in 7/02 that reported that the babies of working mothers developed more slowly than those of mothers who stayed at home. However, the study made up for this heresy by reporting that if the mothers waited until the child was one-year-old before going to work, no harm was done.

*Child divestiture becomes a problem anytime anywhere where cultures collapse, and anywhere where the culture of modernism destroys traditional predecessor cultures. It is estimated that worldwide, there are 200 million children that are both disconnected from their families and homeless (NCR, 3 Dec. 00).

Foster & Adoptive Care

*Time (13/11/00) carried a cover story on foster care in the US that was a terrible indictment of that service sector. The article was emphatic that the foster care system was just simply "not working" in much of the US, and particularly not in its larger cities. Between 1995-2000, the number of children in the US foster care system more than doubled to about 560,000. "Often these are held hostage to abuse and neglect, to bureaucratic foul-ups and carelessness, condemned to futures in which dreams cannot come true." More than 7,500 foster children are outright tortured "under what is technically government protection." A child may be taken away from parents, placed into a foster family where the child gets sexually molested, and then returned "spoiled" to its parents, ending up worse than if the child had never been removed in the first place.
In some states, there are many suspicious deaths of foster children, even if manslaughter cannot be proven outright. In many cases, there were people who had raised the alarm about a particular child situation, often repeatedly and urgently, with nothing being done by the agencies.

Many foster parents have always wanted to adopt foster children, and there has been a long tradition in the US of the child welfare agencies erecting road blocks where this would have been the best solution. Some foster parents drop out in frustration. All this from a foster care system where the personnel turnover may be as high as 70% in a year--higher than would permit the operation of a hamburger restaurant.

About 50% of the foster children are "black," often the victims of parental drug addiction, which is a terrible indictment of what is happening to Afro-American families. "Black" social workers and similar professionals can be more hindrance than help in that they have systematically, for many years now, blocked the adoption of "black" children by "non-black" families.

Very naively, many lawyers are proposing that courts should take over the control of entire state child agencies, as if that would be an improvement. *Time* had yet another naive solution, namely federalization and centralization of the foster care system, as if a child's boughten home could be run out of Washington, DC.

Already, the US government is sending entire teams of inspectors to actually track specific children through local systems, which is a nightmare remindful of the communist dogma of trying to run everything thousands of miles away out of the capital, such as Moscow.

Another ridiculous false hope is that if child placement agencies only computerized their records, many problems would be solved.

Some states have contracted out their child placement systems, but this is yet another naive hope for an easy solution.

"A brutal indifference has spread itself through the system," said *Time*.

*A Navajo Indian reported* (Plough, Autumn 01) that most Indian tribes have also tended to prevent adoptions to non-Indians, yet at the same time they themselves are extremely reluctant to adopt children that are believed to have fetal alcohol syndrome, even as tribal social work agencies are overwhelmed with such children.

*The Florida child welfare system lost a 5-year-old girl. Relatives thought she was in state care and the state thought she was in the relatives' care. There is some speculation that she may actually be dead (SPS, 2 May 02). However, it then turned out that overall, the state of Florida had "lost" 404 foster children (Newsweek, 27/5/02). Most of these losses were due to caseworkers not following up their cases, and simply filing false reports that they had. Furthermore, 1000 children who had been investigated by Florida child welfare for abuse were unaccounted for during a two-year period, and 60 ended up dead from neglect or abuse (*Time*, 22/7/02).

All this happened despite the fact that Florida has spent $170 million (!!) over 8 years to track the children in its care (*Time*, 27/5/02). And the liberals think that they can afford to destroy the family because there will always be foster care as the safety net for children!

*The foster care offices in New York City have been so bad that the city closed down its Manhattan and Staten Island offices (SPS, 30/8/01).

*Unknown to most people, in at least 26 US states, and at least one Canadian province, parents have to surrender legal custody (guardianship) of their children in order to get certain services from the state or province. In most cases, child welfare departments would take on the legal custody, and these have become notorious (at least in the US) for their moral and quality bankruptcy. In order to get services from the mental field, some states even require that parents admit that they have abused or abandoned their children, which in turn could get the parents listed in abuse registries to which other parties have access, including potential employers. Imagine competent parents having to give up custody to an utterly corrupt child welfare system in order to get services for--let us say--an autistic child! Such children may then get placed in foster care, or even institutions. This requirement is cruel, deceptive, takes advantage of parents’ desperation, and is a set-up for the junking of the child in and by the service system.
*Rather than moving children from foster parents to foster parents, some agencies are going back to a form of children's institution where the children stay and the "foster parents" will come and go. Amazingly, this is being interpreted as a great new innovation (SHJ, 13/4/00).

*In Summer 2002, a retarded man in our Syracuse area made the news by disappearing from his temporary summer job without a trace. It was feared that he had gotten disoriented and somehow lost, and possibly died. More startling was the news report that the man had 3 children plus 7 foster children, despite his low mentality and a troubled history. This certainly underlines how desperate the child placement agencies must be.

Not specific to this situation but of broader relevance is that it is very problematic when a mentally limited person becomes a foster parent to a much more intelligent child, who, by the very fact of being in foster care, probably has a very troubled past, and now discovers that he or she can manipulate the unintelligent foster parent.

*We predict that the US foster system will slide into ever-worse straits because on the one hand, foster children are becoming more and more problematic and demanding ("challenging"), and on the other hand, foster parents often end up with unexpected costs which are not covered by their subsidies. Furthermore, they are increasingly being subjected to false accusations of child abuse by their ungrateful and dissocial wards who have learned how to play the system. Thus, foster parents are becoming both exhausted and frustrated, and quitting (some people call it burning out), explaining why the number of foster families has been falling while the need has been rising (SPS, 15/5/02).

Child-Junking Via Sex Education & Marriage Preparation Programs

*An examination of 10 supposedly marriage preparation programs used in over 2000 middle and high schools in the US found that many hardly used the word marriage in their lessons. In fact, the curriculum "Connections" contained only one reference to marriage, and that only in the foreword to the teacher’s manual. Instead, the curricula dealt with "intimate relationships" that could be of any number of kinds, and focused almost entirely on so-called "relationship skills." Overall, teenagers are being led to believe that if they acquire good communication skills, such as listening techniques, anger rituals, and making proclamations about one’s feelings, that will be all it takes. While people who have poor relationship skills do tend to have bad marriages, one would think that there is something different about a marriage from other kinds of relationships, even other intimate ones. After all, a relationship between a mother and her child is usually very intimate. Of the few curricula that did use the word "marriage" liberally, several spent much of their time warning young people against getting married, such as the American Bar Association program which is slanted heavily toward issues of marital conflict, domestic violence law, and divorce—apparently, a lawyer’s idea of what marriage is about. Only one curriculum (Building Relationship Intelligence) did some teaching about teen dating being a rehearsal for marriage, and it was the only one urging teens to abstain from premarital sex. All the others ignored the research on the detrimental long-term impact of early sexual involvement and serial pair bonding during adolescence.

Also, most of these programs interpret marriage as a private emotional bond for one’s self-actualization, and say nothing about the larger societal implications of the institution, or about any civic, moral or even spiritual dimensions. In large part, all of this reflects the larger societal tendency to interpret all sorts of things as issues of technical information, in this case from a psychotherapeutic perspective. As an alternative, the surveyor pointed out that the book, The Art of Loving Well, teaches about romance and marriage via a literary anthology; and there is also Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar, which is of a similar nature (First Things, 3/01).

*One of the pro-sex ed campaign slogans is that sex is "just a natural body function." Of course, so is sneezing, coughing, vomiting, or killing your sibling in the nest.

*When members of the Arizona state senate were shown some of the graphic depictions of sex acts and sex devices that were in a federal sex education program, they were flabbergasted, and voted it out. They also learned that if they had accepted that program, teachers would be permitted to de facto promote homosexuality (NCR, 19/5/02).
*The school board of Anchorage, Alaska, instituted a required sex education textbook for children in middle and elementary schools that included explicit drawings and taught the use of contraceptives. When parents caught on, this created an uproar. As one mother said, her 7-year-old did not need to know how to use contraceptives, but what he did need was to learn to read, write and do math (NCR, 28/10/01).

*A Canadian study published in a British medical journal claimed that neither sex education in schools, abstinence programs, nor family planning clinics had any impact on Canadian teen sexuality. The publication was based on a mega-analysis of 26 previous studies of dozens of sex programs (Calgary Herald, 18/6/02). However, such studies often report what ideology dictates. The liberal media immediately announced that this finding should not be an argument against giving teens sexual information.

*The PC liberals have been in a rage about abstinence promotion programs, assaulting them with everything in their power. For instance, Louisiana’s sexual abstinence program seems to have been so successful that the American Civil Liberties Union even filed a suit against it, claiming that it violated the first amendment’s clause against the establishment of a religion (NCR, 2 June 02).

*The US Agency for International Development, long a staunch promoter of contraception and condoms in poor countries, has finally admitted that a message of sexual abstinence and monogamy actually produces results, but it nevertheless intends to continue its condom promotion (NCR, 23/12/01).

Teen Pregnancies

*The high school drop-out rate is reportedly driven largely by teen pregnancy. At one Chicago high school, 70% of the girls have been getting pregnant (Newsweek, 22/6/98).

*Yet another study found that if girls are vigorously challenged academically from elementary school on, they are less likely to become pregnant (Time, 20/5/02). This seems commonsensical to us. First of all, it gives girls something to think about other than boys and sex, and secondly, it gives them hope for an academic future.

*Yet another study, this time in Britain, found that when one tries to reduce teen pregnancy by providing contraceptives, one actually encourages sexual activity and promiscuity. In turn, with more teenagers then having sex, and with the contraceptives often failing, the net result is just as many pregnancies as before (NCR, 24/3/02). We must not be fooled by the sex education lobby that keeps insisting that there is "no credible evidence" that even the most graphic, lengthy and desensitizing sex education programs incite children into sex.

*The good news is that for equal amounts of fornication, American teens are vastly more open to life than European, or even Canadian, counterparts. American females had a birth rate of 45.7 per 1000 between ages 15-19, while comparable rates in several European countries were only about 10. Not only are fornicating American teens less likely to use contraceptives, but they are also less likely to abort (Time, 10 Dec. 01). Bad news has become good news by being less worse than yet worse news.

The Vanishing of Childhood: The Sexualization of Youth

In addition to money and materialism, one of the other things that contemporary children get a lot of is sexualization, at increasingly younger ages. Our entire culture pushes children from earliest age into sexuality. For instance, the entertainment media quite commonly these days put even babies and young children into roles with sexual connotations. An example is the television series "Baby Talk" where courtship begins in the cradle. People are then surprised later when children engage in sexual relationships at an early, and ever earlier, age.

*One would think that a film entitled "Scary Movie 2," playing in Summer 2001, would be extremely attractive to children who would expect to be titillated by a horror movie. What they will
get is explicit sexual innuendo, graphic sexual situations, toilet humor, profanity, slapstick violence, and jokes about molesting children.

*Syndicated columnist Maureen Dowd wrote a column (SPS, 23/7/02) pointing out that everybody was outraged about a series of sexual abuse abductions of little girls in the summer of 2002, and hardly anybody has said anything about the TV media relentlessly pandering to sexual themes, often aimed at teenagers. Many of these programs even feed on incest jokes.

*According to Newsweek (9 Dec. 02), almost every single TV program about teenagers, and aimed at teenagers, shows teenagers having sex.

*Despite the relentless exposure of youths to sex on TV, by 1997, there had been only 4 studies of how such exposure impacted on the sexual behavior of youths (Newsweek, 19/5/97).

*A Spanish-language TV show, taped in Peru but widely shown around the world, featured a 12-year-old girl talking about her sexual desires—to her mother's consternation, who slapped one of the boys who wanted to satisfy the girl's craving (Newsweek, 30/4/01). Oh well; Latins, especially in the tropics, and especially if exposed to TV, blossom early.

*Apparently, the early sexualization of youths, including by ever earlier sex education programs, has contributed to a sharp rise in lewd language and so-called sexual harassment by very young children, including groping, pinching and bra-snapping. In turn, this has spawned a slew of school regulations forbidding such things. (Progress!) Among adolescent boys, the attitude has become widespread that access to sex with girls is an entitlement, and a surprising majority of girls believe that if a girl has dated a boy for about 6 months, that he is indeed entitled to sex. Youths who receive little moral guidance from adults these days overwhelmingly believe that there is nothing wrong with extra-marital sex (Time, 15/6/98).

*Newsweek (9 July 01) carried shocking news about juvenile fiction aimed at girls. Some such novels even include multiple sex scenes. One is even entitled, On the Bright Side, I'm Now the Girlfriend of a Sex God, and another series is Ready, Sex, and Go. However, there are also not very edifying scenes of drug use, including hard drugs.

*To our consternation, we learned that a Catholic school in Central New York is putting on sock hops for children in grades kindergarten through five! It seems to us that the last thing children need these days is yet more premature sexualization. It would be entirely different if a children's party had been scheduled with children's games and perhaps even old-fashioned non-sexualized children's dances. Many parents send children to private religious schools in the hope that they would be protected from some of the decadences in the public schools, but there seems to be no bulwark against decadence anywhere anymore.

*The Girl Scouts did a study that found that girls aged 8-12 who a few years ago would have been playing with dolls are now already into make-up, figure preoccupation, and boys (Parade, 1 April 01). Thank goodness, the national Girl Scouts were very concerned.

*Actually, the Girl Scouts did not sample down enough. Time (5 Feb. 01) did a story on the sexualization of girls down to about age 5, who have been Britney-ized. There are even nail and glamour parties for 5-year-olds, and Disney has licensed Mickey Mouse and Winnie the Pooh characters to sell nail products! Time noted that with the outfits and what goes with them also comes a certain sexualized mentality and attitude. In turn, even 10-year-old boys (!) expect the girls their age to be Britney-fied, and plaster their school lockers with Britney pictures. Parents who oppose all of this get locked into warfare with their daughters. However, one commentator reduced the whole issue to "choices," showing how this abortion term has come to legitimize any form of radical self-will and sex behavior.

*In 8/02, we were struck by a big "Back-to-School" sales campaign by JC Penney which featured an array of nymphets with very tight pants riding low on the hips, skimpy tops with
prominent bust displays, and wide bare midriffs, and we could only wonder which schools allow this kind of Britney-ized attire.

*The latest bad habits that schools are having to combat is that at high school dances, children engage in what is delicately called "sexually explicit dancing," meaning that they are engaging in simulated sex acts on the dance floor (Newsweek, 19/3/01). What is going to be the escalation on that?

*A very commonsense finding is that elementary and secondary pupils taught in sex-segregated classrooms not only are less likely to get into trouble but also learn better (NCR, 19/5/02). What genius does it take to figure out that the presence of the opposite sex is distracting, particularly in today's increasingly sexually charged environment in which even preschoolers get sexualized?

*Almost 20% of young Internet users have received unwanted sexual solicitations; and in about half of the cases, it was other juveniles who made those solicitations (SPS, 14/8/02). Oh to be young again.

*A 15-year-old boy was dying from leukemia, and his father could think of nothing better to do for him than to send three Hooters waitresses (scantily-dressed young women with large upper endowments) to visit him in the hospital because "his hormones are still running like crazy" (Newsweek, 13/11/00).

*We are constantly amazed how many people have totally false naive ideas about what UNICEF is doing. It has become a major force in the world for the destruction of family and children (as we noted above). For instance, it published a book that suggested to children that they try all sorts of sexual practices, and the book was only withdrawn when the media gave it much attention (NCR, 19/5/02). And a UN conference in Lisbon in 1998 issued a "Declaration on Youth" which demanded among the "new rights of man" that children from age 10 on be "liberated from all sexual restraints...and have access to contraception of their choice" (Demographic Crash, 2001).

PERVERSION ALERT: We warn our readers that there is increasing support in liberal and academic circles for the legalization of heterosexual and homosexual acts between adults and children. Relatedly, we can expect that such sexual behavior will soon no longer be called "pedophilia," but will be given an image-enhancing name, such as "intergenerational sex" proposed by some people, or as the "Man-Boy Love Association." Also, among other perversions in The Netherlands, the law permits children as young as 12 to engage in sex with an adult as long as the child "consents" (NCR, 28/4/02). So the above scenario is not as outlandish as it may seem. Indeed, a group in Australia proposed that the law there be changed so as to allow adults to have sex with children from a mere age 10 up (in accord with UN demands), and that children of any age be permitted to have sex with each other as long as they are within two years of each other's age. (More on this on p. 72.)

*An unspeakably sad US public television "Frontline" documentary told the story of a well-to-do community 25 miles outside Atlanta, GA, which in 1996 discovered an epidemic of syphilis among its middle- and upper-class public high school teens. It turns out the teens had been engaging in almost every conceivable sexual practice (except apparently for sex between males), and with scores of partners; some 15-year-olds were discovered to already have had hundreds of sexual partners! A great deal of alcohol was involved in almost all these occurrences. The kids were not otherwise in trouble with the law, they were not doing poorly at school, etc. Many lived with both parents, and were swimming in material possessions (clothes, cars, etc.). However, their parents had largely surrendered oversight of the children, or assumed that there was nothing they could do to prevent their children from such behavior. For instance, one set of parents allowed their 17-year-old to live in a separate apartment in the pool house on their property, rather than in the same home with them. One young man said he lived with his "godfather" who gave him whatever he wanted whenever he wanted it. One father admitted that his family life was not what it should be, that "there is a TV in every room of this house," and that when his family is together in the house, they are often each in different rooms watching their own TV programs on their own TV sets. One single mother and her daughter almost always ate their meals separately, each in her own bedroom. Some of the girls had lost their virginity at age 13, regretted it, but said they did not believe that it was
possible for anyone to actually remain a virgin until marriage. The girls also did not find much pleasure in sex.

The children seemed to have been either literally or virtually abandoned by their parents or other adults in their lives. One girl said about the parents generally, "They care, but only as long as it doesn't mean they have to do anything." They looked to their peers for company and affection, and admitted doing many things they had not wanted to just because everyone else was doing it. The teens also claimed (falsely, as in most cases of such claims) there was little for them to do other than hang around and drink, which they did in the strip mall that was the town's center.

A middle school counselor noted that children crave attention, and if they do not receive positive attention, then they will settle for negative attention, because any attention is better than none to them.

When the syphilis epidemic was first discovered, a public meeting was held to explain the situation to parents, and hundreds attended. The regional public health director said that at first, parents were incredulous that this could be happening in their community, and that then they started blaming every party imaginable--the schools, the teen peer culture, television and the media--but not one of the parents blamed or looked at themselves, at least not publicly during that meeting.

There is a high percentage of church attendance on Sundays in this community, and one local pastor set up a teen program on Thursday nights. One young man attended it for a while, and says he was not drinking or doing drugs or having sex until one day he asked God for a "sign," which he did not receive, and he therefore quit going to church. Another young man said, "I decided I didn't want to live the way Christians have to live."

Teens who attended a private Christian school, and had vowed virginity until marriage, said they were very isolated from all other teens in town, and were looked down on and made fun of by these other teens.

Just a few days before the filmmakers completed filming, a 15-year-old boy at one of the public high schools there opened fire at the school, wounding several students before he was disarmed. He was described by other students as "no different from any of the rest of us."

*We have been getting some rather mixed and difficult-to-interpret messages about teen sex, pregnancies and abortions. According to some reports, these rates are declining, whereas according to other reports, only abortions are. Some teens are joining groups that promote virginity until marriage, and that help them try to attain this. However, there is also evidence that what constitutes "sex" is being redefined to and by teenagers, with oral sex now becoming the activity of choice that replaces intercourse, and still enables the teens to claim they are not having sex. For instance, while the number of high schoolers who say that sex should wait until marriage is increasing, there has reportedly been an explosion of sexual behavior short of intercourse among American children age 10-13. This includes social nudity, mutual masturbation and oral sex--not surprising considering that the media made a big thing a few years ago about then-President Clinton's oral sex scandal. Also, according to one survey, 55% of teens have engaged in oral sex, and many have cited the Bill Clinton argument that it isn't real sex. There are girls announcing proudly that they are and will remain virgins until they are married who have engaged in oral sex 50 times, and think no more of it than girls formerly may have thought of a goodnight kiss. There are in the youth culture oral sex parties, and the epidemic has even spread down to children in their early teens and sometimes even younger. There have even been instances of oral sex performances right in the classroom with 30 students present and the teacher not noticing. A lot of oral sex apparently gets done in other places in schools as well, or right outside of them. The boys rope in the stupid girls to do it, and often one stupid girl will do it for a whole group of boys, and virtually never the other way around (SPS, 12 May 02). (Boys are too smart for this.) Almost all of this is a trickle-down effect from watching movies and TV (SHJ, 14/4/00), though parents are almost always involved as enablers. For instance, half the parents whose 11-year-old children were dating thought it was "cute."

*Newsweek carried a cover story (9 Dec. 02) about a new "virginity" movement among US teens. We are rather skeptical of this movement as long as it does not purge itself of vulgarity, graphic sex education programs, and punk personal appearances, and a Hollywood media atmosphere.
Abuse of Children, in General

While reported child sexual abuse went down almost 30% between 1992-98 (USA Today, 6 Sept. 01), the question is whether this is a real decline or whether there was a craze hump of child sex abuse reporting in the early 1990s that wore itself out. In fact, the entire issue of child abuse has been extremely ideologized, so that one can hardly be sure any more which claims are true. Even what constitutes abuse is intensely contested. People who want to destroy the family will define even the slightest effort of parents to correct or control their children as abuse, while on the other extreme are people (sometimes the same people) who would legitimize sex between children and adults. No matter how they define abuse, many authorities stridently call for "treatment" of any child that has supposedly been abused, which means shrinkery, which in turn almost always entails mind drugs. One extreme estimate is that virtually half of all children have been abused, and therefore need shrinkery.

We are also told by extreme parties that children never lie about having been abused, and on the other side we find that more than one-third of teachers are afraid that false allegations of abuse will be made against them by children. Are children deemed to be so stupid that they cannot figure out that in today's context, there might be at least short-term advantages in accusing someone of abuse? (This is from Raymond Lemay's review of a 2001 book on Child Abuse and Neglect.)

Abuse (a Lot of It Sexual) of Children by Families, Guardians & Sitters

*In the 1980s, an owner of a day care center (the Rainbow Learning Center) in Florida kept nude pictures of some of the children placed in his care, but this was not sufficient to support a child abuse case (AP, in SHJ, 25/2/90). Today, this should be sufficient for at least a child pornography charge.

*A book on child abuse noted that a child under 7 might have a high risk of being abused in a day care center, but that this risk was much lower than being abused in the home (CP, 1990, No. 8). How is one to know whether these reports are true?

*According to some authorities, the US has a relatively high rate of incest, and supposedly it has been increasing in recent decades. However, what one is seldom told is that a great deal of what has been called incest is sexual abuse of women's children by their lovers or new husbands who are not the fathers of the children. Of course, more of this is going on now because of the breakdown of the family, insofar as the more women with multiple lovers there are who have children from earlier lovers, the more such abuse one will encounter.

Considering that much incest is either of the above type, or takes place between father and daughter without the mother's conscious knowledge, it is remarkable that there are cases where the mother actually encourages her husband to have sex with their daughters, as happened a few years ago in Baltimore, where a Maryland wife actually assisted her husband in raping his 3 daughters many times over a 9-year period, with the rapes causing 10 pregnancies, all of which ended in abortions. Perhaps the wife was trying to evade sex with her husband this way.

*In early 1993, a statue entitled "Coming Home" was erected at the US Defense Department depicting a returning Gulf War veteran embracing his teenage daughter. It was so realistic that somebody recognized the returning soldier as an Air Force sergeant who had since been sentenced to 5 years in prison for sexually abusing the very daughter who posed with him. Thereupon, the statue was speedily removed with the intent of "genericizing" the faces (1993 Newsweek clipping).

*An 8-year-old girl in eastern Pennsylvania had been physically and sexually abused both by her own family and in foster families. The latter should not be surprising considering the breakdown of the foster care system. When the responsible authorities were unable to come up with another foster home during the next 6 months (the child had been placed in a mental institution), a public interest law center intervened, obtained a hearing in a federal district court, and the court "ordered the city (Philadelphia) to find (the child) an appropriate placement," threatening a fine of $1000 per day. (Source item from Margaret W. Sager.) This illustrates yet again the naivety of people who believe that appropriate services can simply be ordered into being by the courts, and that somehow, court orders can halt the ongoing collapse of polity and social structures.
*A man in Florida went to a bar and offered his TV set and infant daughter for sale at $40 and $10 respectively. A couple was smart enough to buy the child in order to protect her (SHI, 29/7/91). If anyone offers to sell you their child, buy it quick in order to save it, but don’t let the seller know how eager you are, or the price may go up beyond the amount of cash on your person.

*CBS "60 Minutes" (13/1/02) revealed that world-famous high-powered medical specialists at the Massachusetts General Hospital had been assigning extremely esoteric medical diagnoses to infants and young children who were being brought in over and over, when what was really happening was parental abuse of rather extreme proportions and extent. The experts also performed treatment procedures when there were actually no diseases other than the injuries that the children had received from their parents; and as a result of these unnecessary procedures, these children often ended up even worse than before. Some mothers apparently have been abusing their children and then rushed them to the hospital to get attention, while in at least one case, one of the motives was to get special welfare benefits for having a sick child.

*One remarkable development is that even educated middle class parents, including some with professional jobs, are beginning to come to public notice as being incapable of child-rearing, and often as abusing and neglecting their children in very peculiar ways, such as starving them to death (Newsweek, 6 Jan. 92).

*One new development is ever more women sexually abusing or raping youngsters, or participating, or helping men, in such acts. This reveals how corruptive the culture of modernism is. In day care centers, 40% of child abuse is now perpetrated by females, and most cases of abuse involve more than one child. With women becoming increasingly perverted (as previously were mostly men), there has also been a shift to an increasing proportion of child victims being female (CP, 1990, No. 8).

*Yet another new angle to child-junking is relatively large parent rings getting formed to sexually abuse each other’s children. One such ring that was busted in 8/02 was international, and included 37 American children, aged 2-14 (SPS, 10 Aug. 02). These parents rather indiscriminately engaged in sex acts with both their own children and the children of the other parents in their ring, often sharing visual recordings of the acts through the Internet. This is like parents eating their young.

*Very little reported is intersibling violence (usually by an older toward a younger sibling), even when it is serious, even though it is said to be the most common form of intra-familial violence (Time, 4 Dec. 00).

*Very difficult to understand are cases where the family hides and covers up the grievous abuse of a child by a family member, and then when it all comes to light, blames the child agencies, as happened in a story that made the news in 2/01 (SHA, 4 Feb. 01).

Abuse (Mostly Sexual) of Children by Other Trusted Figures

We will deal with the sex abuse scandal of the Catholic priesthood in the later section on "Religion in Society."

*There was an epidemic of sexual abuse cases by teachers against pupils in one school system in the greater Syracuse area. A lawyer with the state education department said that it seemed that there was more and more sexual contact occurring between teachers and students, and that part of it is the result of family breakdown, and teachers becoming more a part of the lives of students. The response of the school system was to add to the curriculum yet further education of students on how to report sex abuse.

In one case in Pennsylvania, a teacher and his wife both engaged many pupils in sex and drugs for years. One boy claimed to have had sex with her at least 60 times.

In Montana, a teacher had molested pupils for 2 generations. It came out that some of the fathers of the recently molested boys had been molested by the teacher when they were boys.
A recurring pattern is that a teacher caught sexually abusing his/her school children had until then gotten very high ratings, and had been well liked by students and parents.

Particularly difficult to understand is women teachers or child care workers in their 30s and 40s (sometimes with husbands and children) having sex (almost always more than once, and sometimes for years) with boy pupils in their early teens, and sometimes even getting pregnant. One such woman teacher had been "teacher of the year."

A teacher suspected of sexual contacts with students may achieve a quiet and favorable settlement with the school that is afraid of scandal, or that lacks jury-proof evidence. A number of such teachers agree to resign but keep their teaching licenses, and can then teach elsewhere. In NY State, they get, on the average, $47,000 in severance pay.

*For 20 years, an elementary school teacher in a German village sexually abused a large number of both boy and girl pupils, with evidence of over 300 incidents plus evidence for possibly many more. During all this time, local educational, civic and police authorities covered it all up and even turned in a persecutory fashion on people who raised questions. One apparent motive for this was that the man seemed to be a good teacher.

*Schools educating Hopi and Navajo Indians had apparently become magnets for child sex abusers, especially boarding schools. Now, so many Indian adults have learned the abuse trick that sex abuse of such Indian children by Indian adults has become epidemic, often associated with the transmission of sexual diseases. With abuses so rampant, police are stretched so thin that it began to take an average of 3 days just to respond to a complaint.

*One class of service workers that keeps furnishing child sex abusers is school bus drivers. Many are lowly people and poorly screened, and have opportunities to be alone with pupils on the bus.

The first woman to be charged with rape in the county in which Syracuse is located was a 23-year-old married school bus driver who had sex with a 15-year-old boy whom she had been driving to school (SH1, 11 Jan. 90).

*Much like women teachers, foster mothers have also been found to have sex (and babies) with foster sons (e.g., AP in SHA, 20/8/98).

*The victims of sexual abuse by trusted service or education people are often handicapped. This is particularly tragic when the child had been placed into foster care for his/her safety.

*In one child sex abuse scandal in Canada in the 1990s, a ring of 54 men were caught, including a minister, teachers, coaches and principals who had lured homeless children, some as young as 8.

*An "Adopt-A-Godfather" program matched a 75-year-old man in an old-age home with a 10-year-old girl whom he promptly impregnated. There are actually many puzzling aspects to this case, not the least of which is that when it all came to light, the old man said, "My door is always open for her" (Newsweek, 29/4/02).

*A police officer in New York State who had been giving lectures to youths about not talking to strangers was put in jail for sexually abusing a 10-year-old boy (AP in SH1, 6 Jan. 92). Presumably, the boy thought he could talk to the police officer because he knew him. This also makes mock of the "Don't talk to strangers" campaigns.

*A 46-year-old woman doctor in Indianapolis who was married and had 4 children pleaded guilty to having repeated sex with a 13-year-old boy. A psychiatrist testifying on her behalf claimed that the boy had been the aggressor (Indianapolis Star, 20/5/93; source item from Joe Osburn).

*Considering how many stories and studies have shown that psychotherapists (of both sexes, though men more so than women) have sex with their clients, one can see the following scenario coming. Adult to child: "What do you want to become when you grow up?" Child: "A
psychotherapist. This way I can have lots and lots of sex with different men/women, and even get paid for it."

*There is a new Canadian website that specializes in combatting pedophilia around the world, and especially by people going pedophilia-touristing to other countries. It is working for the conviction of such people for child sexual abuse when they try to come back home. The Internet also claims that Cambodia has become one of the world's havens for pedophiles, and that especially the street children in its capital city supposedly have almost all been sexually abused by foreigners (Calgary Herald, 21/6/02). So when you hear of someone vacationing (or allegedly doing business) in Cambodia, be suspicious.

*Liberals take note: over a 20-year period, the Boy Scouts of America removed 1800 adult volunteers because of suspected child abuse (NCR, 31/10/93).

*Of course, a big problem is false and vengeful accusations of sex abuse, sometimes instigated by shrinks who tell clients they must surely have repressed memories of such. This issue keeps coming up in TIPS.

Sexual Abuse of Children by Other Children

Children of ever younger ages are now sexually abusing, and even attacking and raping, other children. But even this does not seem sufficient to shake adult society out of its insistence on sexual licentiousness, the sexual saturation of all of life, and the early sexualization of children.

We have a collection of clippings of all sorts of rapes and sex abuses of children by children, including boys as young as 7 participating in gang rapes, and children as young as 4 being sexually abused by older children. In most cases, not much gets done (or can legally be done) to the perpetrators because of their young age.

There seemed to be an explosion of such reports starting in the early 1990s. We will detail only 2 of these because of their "unusual" features.

*Three boys, aged 7 to 12, gang-raped a 10-year-old girl in Illinois. A state attorney rather stupidly said, "We need to find out where they learned their behavior if we're going to change it." Under the law, the maximum sentence the oldest offender can get is a month in juvenile detention, and the younger children will probably get off free (AP in SfS, 20/6/91).

*In the Chicago schools, a 12-year-old boy "forced" a 9-year-old girl to perform oral sex on him in a special education class. The Chicago Board of Education filed a suit against the girl victim and her mother, claiming that she "willfully and wantonly" failed to alert a teacher "of the alleged act before it was committed." Apparently, this insane suit against the victim was lodged in order to reduce the Board's liability in a suit filed against them by the victim and her mother (Newsweek, 16/1/95).

Media Influence on, & Messages to, Children

*According to Newsweek (19/3/01), the television networks are making a concerted effort to addict young children to TV for life, and we certainly believe it.

*The average American household has 2.4 TV sets, but the worst is that there is a TV in the bedrooms of 60% of teens, 48% of school children and 24% of toddlers (Consumer Reports, 1/01). On the average, a TV set is on for 7½ hours every day in American homes, even though it is only watched part of the time. Adult women are the most addicted watchers at 5 hours a day, with teens watching 3 hours (Consumer Reports, 1/01). Forty percent of US 2-year-olds watch more than 3 hours a day (Time, 3 Dec. 01).

*Sunshine generates vitamin D in the body, without which rickets develop. Rickets had virtually disappeared from the US, but is now making a comeback because children are spending too much time indoors, largely because they are glued to media gadgets (AP in SPS, 30/3/01).
Here is a real modernistic media paradox: for months, kids got primed by the media about the imminent advent of the new "Spiderman" film, and when it was released in 6/02, it turned out that it was one of the most violent films ever aimed at young children, and was banned in Britain for anyone under the age of 12.

Not only did Disney Movies acquire and release the controversial film "Priest" (which featured a homosexual priest and a non-celebate one), but it also acquired and released the film "Kids" which featured promiscuous teenagers who have AIDS—and all that within months of each other. Apparently, nothing is sacred, and poor Walt would turn in his grave if only he could.

A child searching the Internet for "Bambi" will reach a pornography site (CP, 3/01), or at least did a while ago.

We commented before on the very dramatic and rapid recent degeneration of the content of family-hour TV, in terms of the rise in its violence, sexual content and vulgarity. A detailed analysis of 6 weeks of family-hour shows during the 2000-01 TV season found that there was a continued increase in violence and coarse language, though a small decrease in sexual content, probably due to recent public protests. Worst by far was the UPN network, followed in rank order by NBC, Fox (which is supposed to be conservative), WB, ABC, and CBS, which latter was only one-sixth as bad as UPN (NCR, 12 Aug. 01).

In 5 recent children’s movies, there were no parents. In 4 of them, the parents were dead, and in one of them, the children were synthetic, having been made in the laboratory. Critics have said that this appeals to children these days who see parents as obstacles to doing what they want (SPS, 10 Dec. 02).

Even though the film, "The Matrix," played a big role in inspiring the two Columbine High School killers in Colorado, Warner Brothers is shamelessly going ahead making "Matrix II" and "Matrix III."

In early 2000, a movie entitled "Hannibal"--a sequel to an earlier movie and book called "Silence of the Lambs"--came out, concerning a cannibalistic murderer. The Syracuse Post-Standard (9 Feb. 2001, pp. 10 & 13) newspaper carried two separate items on it on the same day. The first was a syndicated review which stated "If it proves nothing else, (the movie) proves that if a man cutting off his face and feeding it to his dogs doesn’t get an NC-17 rating for violence nothing ever will." NC-17 is the movie industry’s most objectionable rating. Three pages later, the "Family Filmgoer" guide noted that the film contains "Deaths by hanging, disemboweling, throat-slitting, etc.; infant endangered in shootout; wild boar attacks a human; grotesquely disfigured face; crude sexual innuendo; profanity"--and then listed the movie as "OK for mature high-school students." What film might now conceivably be judged unsuitable for mature high-school students, or for any moviegoers whatever?

A group of California parents ran a full-page advertisement in their local paper saying, "TV is leading our children down the sewer," and pleading with sponsors of TV programs to cease their support of "sex, filth, violence and sleaze" (NC Register, 12 Nov. 00).

According to one study, a very simple way to reduce aggressive behavior in children is to limit their time at TV, videos and electronic games (SHJ, 15 Jan. 01; Time, 12 Feb. 01). Much neater than complicated and controversial gun control.

According to one study, children these days are massively involved as witnesses to all sorts of abuse and violence. People who attempted or committed suicide are often discovered by children, 10% of children are at home and/or directly witness 10% of the rapes that occur in homes, and thousands of children annually witness a parent’s murder. In one year in Los Angeles County alone, between 10-20% of the 2000 homicides were witnessed by children. Many of these deaths are gory, some involve mutilation, and many are accompanied by the desperate cries of the victims. There are a lot of people who believe that this increasing observation of actual violence by children is even
more destructive to them than the violence they hear or see via the media (source item from David Schwartz).

*Benetton has been promoting its clothes for young people with ads of people on death row, and of a nun and priest in a passionate kiss. Thank goodness that did it for Sears, Roebuck & Co., which pulled out of selling Benetton.

**Children: Dangerousness of Schools**

Some items in this section are dated, but we think they still retain relevance.

*Students shooting people in their schools would at one time have been front page news, but we noticed that such stories increasingly get relegated to back pages, because this is a deviancy that has been "defined down" and is thus less newsworthy now. School-age student shootings are also beginning to acquire a few new nuances, such as repeated such violence in the same school district, shootings by girls and not only boys, and shootings in Catholic parochial schools.

*There are now schools that have as many as 6 "grieving rooms." Are we better off now that we have such amenities?

*Altogether, it is estimated that as early as in 1987, 135,000 US students a day brought handguns to school. In Baltimore, a survey of public school students showed that 59% of the males from homes with one or no parents have carried a handgun (USN&WR, 8 April 91). In one elementary school in Ohio, the code phrase "earthquake drill" is used as a signal for the students to hit the floor to avoid gunfire. Throughout the country, school systems are borrowing heavily from the prison system in regard to metal detectors, security patrols, dress codes, etc. The physical design of urban schools also increasingly resembles that of prisons and insane asylums, where everything is indestructible, walls are made of tile or masonry, windows are up above reach (if there are any at all), there are bars across windows, bolted doors, and camera monitors. Some schools require students to wear ID badges. In some schools, visitors are escorted about by aides with walkie-talkies. In many schools, students who have been threatened will miss days because they are afraid to come to school. In New York City, not merely high schools, but even middle schools were beginning to install metal detectors as early as 1993 (SH1, 16/9/93). But no one in those days admitted that anything was out of control.

*Around 1993, New York City spent slightly more than a phenomenal $7000 per pupil year (and the school year in the US is relatively short), and yet students said that they absolutely need weapons in class to protect themselves (Newsweek, 22/2/93).

*In the Fall of 1990, a New York City firm began to market bullet-proof "back to school clothes" at a cost of $250-600 per outfit (AP in SH1, 9/9/90).

*Everybody claims to be surprised when a school child goes berserk/amok—except the child's schoolmates. If only they were asked regularly who among their peers they deem the most likely to blow up, one would get better answers than metal detectors do (Newsweek, 19/3/01).

*Some families of victims see their loss as an opportunity to get rich. E.g., some families of the 1999 Columbine shooting in Colorado have been suing for big money the manufacturer of the mind drug that one of the killer boys had been prescribed.

*27% of US school children claim that they do bullying and themselves are not afraid of being picked on by others, while reportedly 160,000 US children skip school every day because they are afraid of being bullied (Time, 2 April 01). Actually, bullying has to be understood as a natural outgrowth of a radical individualistic mentality that puts the self first and embraces a Nietzschean will to power, which is what modernism does.

*As France is becoming ever more secularized, and with ever more poorly socialized immigrant children, its schools and youth culture are becoming a jungle. Reportedly, adolescent gang
rapes have become initiation rites even in the suburbs, and schools have been warned of new strangulation practices among teenagers (NCR, 17/12/00). Several French companies have begun to offer "bully insurance" to French school children (SPS, 30/8/01). As with so many phenomena these days, many people would interpret this as enlightened progress, rather than as a sad sign of the times.

*Food fights in school are not what they used to be. One in Texas became Texas-sized, involving 400 pupils. The school had to be closed. Who would want to step into that dining room to restore order, especially since "black" children were fighting "Hispanic" ones, and some had knives (AP in SPS, 2 March 01)?

We commented before that the Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, where the massacre took place in 1999 seemed like a pretty decadent place. This is underlined by the fact that in 2/02, hundreds of its students got involved in a food fight in their brand-new dining hall that became so violent, the police had to be called.

*Syracuse high school students pleaded with school authorities to provide a safer school environment for them, even if it meant metal detectors at the doors and police in the hallways. In one school, nearly half the students signed such a petition. Only a few were opposed to the proposal, arguing that it would "create the wrong perception that the school is a dangerous place" (SHJ, 15/11/95). These latter kids must have liberal parents.

*Due to endless harassment by libertarian parties and their law talent, schools have been steadily losing discretions about what to do with troublemakers. In response to many spectacular school violence episodes in recent years, laws have been passed to restore various disciplinary discretions to school authorities, including the right to suspend unruly pupils, and deal with threats (AP in SHA, 1 July 01). Even strip searches are beginning to be allowed for weapons, or even for drugs.

*Even elementary schools are now swept by an unprecedented wave of violence by the children. For instance, for the first time in her teaching career of 32 years, a kindergarten teacher in the Syracuse area no longer put out knives, forks and spoons to her kindergarten class because of the degree to which violence has trickled down even to that level (SHI, 17/11/91).

*We suspect that the 3-year-old who brought a loaded gun to his daycare center in 1991 set a new record, or as they say these days, "broke a new taboo."

*In New York State, schools have begun to fingerprint the people they are hiring, in consequence of a new state law requiring criminal background checks. Again, some people seem to interpret this as wonderful progress to be proud of, illustrated by a big picture in the newspapers of a woman applying for a school job being fingerprinted while smiling ear-to-ear, at the same time as her fingerprinter did the same thing (SPS, 29/8/01). Oh what fun it is, it is, to print your fingers, fingers (singing).

*Not only do some schools in North America now have police forces, but some of them even have undercover police (Interim, 2/93). We are not sure how this works. Maybe they masquerade as janitors.

*High school principals increasingly report that they take their lives into their hands when they try to discipline their students. Not only the students but also their families begin to harass them personally and in their residences, savage their cars, and so on. Such principals have had to install very advanced and expensive security systems around their houses.

*A school board in Indiana explicitly permitted an elementary school principal to carry a gun to school. The good news was that he did not need it to defend himself against the children, and the bad news was that he carried it as a defense against parents who had threatened his life (Indianapolis Star, 15/11/90; source item from Joe Osburn).
*Even though teachers have increasingly been subjected to assault from their pupils, a Bronx teacher was told that nothing could be done when she sought protection from the threats of a violent 12-year-old student and his mother who had threatened her, and had already assaulted her once (AP in SHI, 29/3/95).

*Near Binghamton, NY, an English teacher did not permit a 15-year-old student to read a poem in class about suicide and killing teachers and family members, whereupon the student shot the teacher and very seriously wounded him. Unfortunately, the large (liberal) newspaper headline for this story was “It was a message, I need help” (Binghamton, NY Press & Sun Bulletin, 16/12/92; source item from Sue Ruff).

*Progress! The largest teachers’ union in the US is now offering a rider on its life insurance plans for a special benefit to school personnel who are slain at work. Some people would call this progress; after all, it is a new benefit.

*Bomb threats that force the evacuation of schools in session can be particularly hard on handicapped pupils who may have to go outside in inclement weather, often in wheelchairs, and sit around there for hours. Some bomb threats to schools do not merely shut the school down for hours or days, but even for weeks. Some school districts lost a quarter million dollars because of these threats in just a single school year. In one school, where the bomb threat was scrawled on a partition in a toilet, layers of partitions were entirely done away with. (What a simple ingenious solution!) Some schools started up Saturday classes to make up for lost time, but many students simply did not attend these (AP in SPS, 28/5/01).

*At one time, children in the US were never bussed to school on school buses; then later, only if the way to school was very long, as in rural areas. Then came court-mandated school racial integration, which entailed a vast amount of cross-busing of children from one school district to another. One consequence of this was that many children had to be at bus pick-up points before 7 am (and in the winter, this would be in pitch dark) because their route might take hours. Finally, school bussing became an industry with a vested interest in getting all children bussed, even for short distances (e.g., if they lived very close to the school), and even if it meant they sat on a bus for hours. Also, in the 1990s, parents began to insist on school bussing in order to keep their children safe (they thought) from bullying, street gangs, and gunfire on the streets. After Sept. 01, we saw many more parents than usual bringing their children to school bus stops, and waiting there until the doors of the bus had closed behind their child. Also, at hearings, it came out that distance was no longer an issue with many parents, but the only reason they wanted buses was for safety. What a sign of the times—and of course, only something a wealthy society can afford.

However, parents are finding out that the children are not even safe on school buses anymore. There is much bullying on these buses, and some of them working through ghetto areas have gotten hit by stray bullets.

Children in the Syracuse school system have become so uncontrolled and violent that school buses have a hard time keeping the seats functional. The children poke holes through the seats, slash them with knives, and cut the seat belts. Seat covers cost $9 each, foam seat pads $10, and seat belts $1.50—and school taxes are skyrocketing (SHI, 10 Jan. 94).

*When a young man walked into his high school in Germany in 4/02 and started shooting and killing, the German media announced that "American conditions have arrived." People apparently cannot understand that these are not American conditions but the conditions of modernism.

*We are surprised that nobody had noted the strong parallel between the berserk mass killing of 16 school children in Scotland in 3/96, and the story of the Pied Piper of Hamlin. According to legend, the Pied Piper had been wronged by the townspeople who broke their promise to him, and in revenge he led the town’s children into a mountain from which they vanished forever. It seems pretty clear to us that the killer, Thomas Hamilton, was making a statement to his community. Because he was considered weird and a likely pedophile, he had been squeezed out of work with the town’s youngsters, and so in essence he communicated that if the town did not entrust its youngsters to him, he would deprive the town of its children. By the way (liberals take note): Hamilton had recently been ousted as a Boy Scout leader!
*In 1998, a book on Violence in American Schools came out. On the one hand, one is shocked at how the experts writing it treat school and child violence as a "public health problem" requiring a "public health approach," and on the other hand, it is how this kind of low-level conceptualization is highly praised by reviewers. The book examines such things as intra-psychic dispositions toward violence, how schools can inhibit their pupils' violent inclinations, how safety in the neighborhood can be increased, what mental services can do, that there should be after-school programs, and so on. Also, over and over, the terms "intervention" and "programs" get played as trumps, and virtually nothing of the sort of analysis that we offer in our teachings on these signs of the times is conducted (CP, 8/00).

Similarly, there are books out on street drug addiction that treat the topic pretty far down from its sign of the times sources, and instead deal with the brain, genetics, pharmacology, drug tolerance and sensitization, and so on, but do not relate the issue far beyond illegal drugs and what it is about our society that produces an ever-increasing number of people enslaved to drugs, both legal and illegal.

*The 2001 book, Parents Under Siege, about the 1999 Littleton murders, seems to be a whitewash, and another denial of the larger societal context and of systemic school collapse. One evidently clueless superintendent of a California (!) district where there had been repeated school shootings said, "It is certainly something that makes us pause and wonder why we have a community, a society, where this kind of violence takes place" (SPS, 23/3/01).

*This is the way we go to school, go to school, go to school... A cartoon captured what it is like for at least American youngsters to attend school each day, when a boy reported to his mother on what his first day was like: "Well, first we got checked for guns. Then we got checked for lice. Then we had a moment of silence before the school police officer came around with the drug-sniffing dog.... Right after my locker was searched, I was sent to the principal's office for a dress-code violation. Then we had sex-ed and they gave away free condoms until we had to evacuate because of a phony Internet bomb scare.... Classes were canceled anyway and we all got counseling where I learned I can do anything if I just believe in myself!"

*TIPS readers can rest assured: despite all this bad news about schools, our local newspaper headline claimed "Study shows most feel safe at school" (SHJ, 16 Dec. 93)—despite the fact that 13% of students said they have carried a weapon to school at some time. Perhaps they feel safe because they are mostly the ones doing the threatening—as 6% of boys and 1% of girls had done, and 5% of all students had done to teachers.

*As one cartoon put it, the reason prayer should be allowed in school is so that the pupils can pray incessantly "Dear God, please don't let me get shot."

*The weapons and violence culture is not only trickling down to elementary schools and daycare centers, but also up into colleges and universities. Increasingly, campus police forces in the US are beginning to carry firearms. As the president of one state college in Central New York State put it in a classic of modernistic and imperial language: "The world becomes more complex." Another campus official said that the previous policy "wasn't providing the coverage that the campus community wanted" (SHJ, 12/92).

Syracuse University now has the 3rd-largest police department (nicely called the "Department of Safety") in the county.

Children Killing Children

*As more children are starting to kill other children, a major school of child expertise holds that all this is merely the result of rough play getting out of hand (Newsweek, 28/8/00). This is of course more denial of what is really happening in society by the people who are the ones who are ruining society.

*If one listened to the media, a terrible crime has taken place in a California school, the victim of which was a youth called Charles Andrew Williams. What really happened was that Williams killed three of his schoolmates and wounded 13 others. However, because Williams
claimed that he was upset by school bullies, he began to be put into the victim role by a lot of people, particularly in light of the fact that his friends and neighbors all testified what a nice boy he was.

*With more and more pupils being killed in and around schools, a New York City school board member said "There is something fundamentally happening in and around our schools that we are just not coming to grips with" (SHJ, 8 June 93). While this sort of admission—though understated—is welcome, it also reveals that speakers like this have not yet come to grips with the fact that this has nothing to do with schools, but with society as a whole.

*A liberal columnist (Richard Grossman in SPS, 19/3/01) said, to our amazement, that "No one really has answers" as to why children are killing children. Apparently, non-liberal answers are no answers.

**Other Child-Junking**

*Just how corrupt the US public school system has become is also evident in the way that it has allied itself with the food and soft drink industry against the very children entrusted to its care. School systems have been making mega-dollar deals with food and drink companies to sell foods and drinks that are known to be unhealthy and fattening. 43% of elementary schools and even more high schools have machines that sell soda, other sugary drinks, candies, and chips. These food/drink firms have tremendous clout in legislatures at all levels which will make it very difficult to put an end to all this. These industries have even de facto bought up the influential American Dietetic Association, which licenses 70,000 dietitians, to endorse the serving or selling of carbonated soft drinks to school children even when these drinks contain no minerals, vitamins or fiber. School administrators have also strenuously fought any reform because of all the money that the school systems are getting from these companies (Newsweek, 5 Aug. 02). At the other extreme are the regulatory nuts who demand that alcohol-like warnings against unhealthy contents be printed on food; and then there are the dietary nuts who would convert school meals to all vegetarian and organic menus.

*Possibly in response to the decision by the Boy Scouts to ban homosexual scout leaders, Big Brothers-Big Sisters has mandated that all of its 500 local affiliates in the US must accept active homosexuals as volunteers and mentors of children. Actually, to have a homosexual Big Brother or Big Sister is worse than having a homosexual scoutmaster, because unlike most scouts, children who are assigned Big Brothers or Big Sisters are generally very vulnerable children, usually with at most one parent, often with terribly bad histories, sometimes even residing in agency housing or foster families, and they often meet privately rather than in groups, as scouts usually do. These children will therefore have much less protection and advocacy than children with two competent involved parents, and are much more likely to be sexually exploitable without having credibility or recourse if they report it. On the other hand, they are probably also more likely to claim abuse when such has not taken place. Thus, we predict that we have not heard the end of this one, by a long shot.

*A longtime children’s comics character, The Rawhide Kid, will become homosexual in 2003. The series unfortunately will be called "Rawhide Kid: Slap Leather," which of course adds additional allusions to sadistic or masochistic sexual acts. The character will not formally announce that he is homosexual, but will show through speech and actions that he prefers men to women.

**Miscellaneous Other Items on Children**

*It used to be that a sign on the road that said, "Caution, Children Playing" meant that one should slow down. Nowadays, it may signal that one should speed up and get through the area quickly, because the children may be shooting at one and each other.

*A mother of two reflected how in her youth, teens used to work and babysit "because we were ugly, we needed the money and we didn’t have many other options." She and others cannot find babysitters anymore because the teens of today "don’t need the money, and they’re all so glamorous and cute."
*People can now install hidden video cameras that videotape what their babysitter is doing while they are gone. This service was started in 1992 by a firm called Babywatch, and now has many imitators, one of which is called Nanny Watch. The camera eye can be hidden in clocks, lamps, vases, etc. On the one hand, this sounds like a very nasty thing to do, but on the other hand, it has documented a wealth of bad behavior by sitters (AW, 27/7/96).

*Apparently, few American high school students these days ever look at a newspaper (Syracuse Post-Standard Stars, 13/10/02).

*US teenagers have become liars. They lie to parents, teachers, potential employers, and presumably everyone else as well (Time, 13/11/00).

*There is now a line of "ghetto dolls," called Ghetto Kids, that come with "biographies" about things such as drug-addicted parents, and having been abandoned or even sold. When this stirred up a protest, the company cleaned up their "biographies" (AP in SPS, 19/2/02).

*An English woman (Tracey Hogg) who abandoned her two children, and who has been caught making false claims as to her training credentials and degrees, has become a guru on child-rearing. That took nerve! Once again, gullible modernists are suckers for snake oil (Newsweek, 26/2/01).

*A corporation by the name of Ideon with nearly a half billion dollars in assets has launched a subsidiary called the Family Protection Network in which people can "enroll" their children, with the promise that if the children are reported missing, massive expertise and over 1000 licensed investigators will be launched on a search for the child.

**Religion in Society**

_Idolatrous Claims_

*Anyone interested in knowing what is wrong with human beings trying to manipulate nature so as to make themselves immortal might want to read "L'Chaim and Its Limits: Why Not Immortality?" in First Things (5/01) by the Jewish scholar Leon Kass of the University of Chicago. He points out that underlying people's desire to live longer is really a deeper desire to live forever, often coupled with a desire to remain young forever. He asserts that "victory over mortality is the unstated but implicit goal of modern medical science, indeed of the entire modern scientific project."

If somebody seeks perpetuation, the way to do this is not through immortality but through propagation. It is thus particularly revealing that it is in this--i.e., our--generation that refuses to propagate, and that has proclaimed the death of God, that the drive toward immortality has become the most intensive. This also sheds light on one of the five defining characteristics of modernism according to our teachings, namely, here-and-now-ism which seeks an endless present isolated certainly from the future and to a large degree from the past as well. Here-and-now-ism is bound to be hostile to children because they do symbolize--and are--futurity and our life's real answer to mortality.

Kass points out all the awful things that most of us never think of that would happen if humans lived much longer than they do now, so that it is not merely immortality that is undesirable, but even a significant extension of the life span.

One thing that we want to add to Kass' analyses is that if everybody lived forever, humanity would have to cease reproducing--or kill a lot of people all the time so that some could go on living.

*The New York Times, which thinks of itself as a god that is not sufficiently acknowledged as such, has (of course) a website which it has been advertising with the slogan, "Omniscience, Updated Hourly" (FT, 2/01).

*We are told that in England, one can see signs proclaiming "Clapton is God." Eric Clapton is a famous rock musician; among other things, he has had drug problems, and has fathered children with several different women, including out of wedlock. He may die young, but at least he has propagated.
The Incoherence of Contemporary People About Religion—as About so Many Other Things

It seems that in every December issue, we have yet more news to report on the most sadly amusing confusion and incoherency of Americans (but also modernists in general) about what they believe.

*Susanne Hartfiel found the following citation: "Thank God I am an atheist."

*Several surveys shortly after the 11 Sept. 2001 terrorist attacks underlined yet again that the vast majority of Americans do not believe in such a thing as absolute moral truth; in fact, only 22% believe it. However, what is surprising is that even among Americans who declare themselves as "born again Christians," only 32% believe it. What foreshadows the future is that the percentage gets very close to zero among teenagers, regardless whether they do or do not characterize themselves as "born again." When asked how they would judge a moral situation, the single biggest response was that it "feels right or comfortable in that situation." (Survey data from Marc Tumeinski.)

*Here is further evidence of the religious confusion of people in America these days. A California conservative Christian congregation ran a kindergarten school and required that parents sign a document agreeing with the church's "Christian commitment/philosophy." Yet one mother of a 5-year-old pupil in the school was found to be a nude dancer, upon which her child was expelled. The mother explained it this way: she had to do nude dancing in order to raise the tuition for the church-run school that she very badly wanted her child to go to (5/02 clippings).

*A few years back, it became fashionable for people to wear crosses merely as jewelry and decorations, and now this practice has come back, and even people in the worst of lifestyles are once again wearing crosses (often very large and bejeweled ones), including filth rappers and young women who swing crosses (sometimes a whole bunch of them) off their necks across their more or less naked breasts (7/02 clipping from Kathryn Smith).

*More crimes we like. When Liza Minnelli was driving through London on her honeymoon with her fourth husband, a hand reached through an open window. She was receptive to it, thinking it was an autograph-seeker—but the hand ripped off her $15,000 diamond crucifix necklace (SPS, 23/3/02).

*The number of different Bible translations has exploded, and the stated (but often not the real) rationale behind many is to make the Bible more accessible to readers, and yet with every year that goes by, American Christians have been shown to know less and less about the actual content of the Bible (B&C, 11/02).

At least a small contributor to this phenomenon is that if people read the Bible at all, they are now reading many different versions, and therefore are less likely to memorize any passages as they used to when almost everybody read the same version, and read it all their lives. In fact, one can now acquire virtually a wall of different Bible translations into English. And despite their ignorance about the Bible, Americans keep buying Bibles, so that the average American home now possesses five of them.

*In Germany, more people believe that there are guardian angels than that there is a God (Spiegel, No. 21/02).

*In Virginia, a Benedictine school called Blessed Sacrament merged with a Calvinist school, called Huguenot Academy, and became Blessed Sacrament Huguenot School. Our head reels. We hope that this was an April Fool's day joke (FT, 4/02), but fear it was a case of cultural sensitivity.

*The poor Headstart students and their families of a Syracuse school had to endure a Christmas Hanukkah Kwanzaa Ramadan celebration in December 2002, on a date that did not coincide with any of these 4 but that fell near them, or into their "season."
*A long-time leader of the British Wicca (witches) who once performed a pagan ritual in Canterbury Cathedral was hired by the Jesuits to lecture at their Heythrop College at the University of London (NCR, 17/2/02). Ignatius is also turning in his grave.

*The Church of England overwhelmingly voted that on the one hand, marriage should be a "solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman," but on the other hand, divorced people with a surviving spouse may now enter a second marriage in the Anglican church (SPS, 27/7/02).

*The new Archbishop of Canterbury, whom some people equate with America's left-wing Archbishop Weakland, had himself inducted as an honorary Druid in Wales (SPS, 10 Aug. 02).

*A guru commentator (Eldon Eisenach) on the religious scene has proclaimed that what the culture of modernism now needs is a "post-Christian" national theology, and that a major form of it would be "Protestantism without Christianity." He also said that the only institutions that can produce and disseminate such a theology are the university, and to a lesser extent, the public school (FT, 4/02). We thought the universities had already given modernism the religions of post-modernism and political correctness, and had been exceedingly successful at it.

What People Do Believe, More or Less

*The French intellectual Charles Péguy once said that there was a certain circle of snobbish intellectuals who "believe in nothing—not even in atheism."

*The Universal Life Church grants ordinations to any comers over the Internet, without pre-requisites or questions asked. This could well mean that if just about all adults in the US joined the church, that would in effect abolish the US tax system because of the tax-exempt status of its churches and church-related ministries and services. Already, over 18 million people have been ordained this way by early 2002. This is the contemporary equivalent of what used to be mail-order diplomas.

*In 2002, a new church formed in Syracuse, the Eden Community Fellowship, worship in which is built around health. Their religious service consists of an organic vegan meal, followed by a sermon, and once a month by holy communion which consists of a B-12 vitamin tablet washed down with lemon water. The minister, without any training in theology or ministry, was ordained over the Internet by the above-mentioned Universal Life Church through a process which the minister said is a point-and-click ordination. To join the church "you don't have to believe anything, you have to follow your beliefs...with enthusiasm and gusto."

*A writer in First Things (3/02) has pointed out that the explosion in recent decades of belief in the existence of intelligent extra-terrestrials amounts to a form of religion. These creatures are commonly attributed with virtually divine attributes, such as being so far advanced morally, spiritually and technically above humans as to have solved most of the problems with which humans have always been contending, such as strife, hardship, disease and even death.

One theory is that if we ever get a signal from aliens, they must be so far away that they have been around for a long time because of the time it takes for signals to travel. They therefore must have had the capacity to send such signals hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of years before humans did. In turn, this means according to some of the "believers" that such civilizations could never have had religion, or had outgrown it, because to them religion means constant strife and warfare, hence arrest at a low level of development. Accordingly, a lot of people are looking to "alien saviors," and this in turn may explain yet another phenomenon, namely close to 1 million Americans supposedly have claimed sometime during the 1990s to have been abducted by aliens, and apparently this number continues to increase.

*As an illustration of just how much the minds of the people of modernism are filled with junk from the media, it was found that 70,000 Australians believe in "the force," a certain spiritual energy field featured in the early Star Wars movies (NCR, 8 Sept. 02).
What people do on their Sundays in the US has changed dramatically during the last generation or so, reflective of their new/real beliefs. It used to be going to church, visiting, going for a walk, and literally resting. Now, people increasingly work at a job, do their domestic chores, go shopping, or frantically transport their children to all sorts of events. This is also one reason why fewer people are going to church on Sundays (Des Moines Register, 28/8/01; source item from Rod Braun); there is no time left for it.

The editor of First Things (2/02), Richard John Neuhaus, met Peter Singer, holder of Princeton University's chair for bioethics in its Center for Human Values, in a debate in 11/01. Neuhaus describes Singer's system of ethics as the individual preference version--"individual preference utilitarianism" for short--of utilitarianism based on Jeremy Bentham. Its goal is to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. At least Singer's version thereof definitely counts some humans as being more human than others, and the less human one is, the more killable one is. One implication of his ethics is that one has as much or as little ethical duty to a member of one's family as one would have to a stranger 2000 miles away, which to us seems to confuse the notions of equal valuing of lives with the notion of prioritizing one's limited engagements. As to parents killing their children, he said it was nobody else's business but the parents in consultation with their doctors, which most illogically ascribes a peculiar expertise to physicians. Singer also commented that it is everybody's own business whether they grow to be moral or not, and if they decide not to be, then it is simply up to others to make sure that they are not being interfered with. Even though his own morality has gone down the slippery slope for years, he denies that there is such a thing. In 2000, Singer came out in defense of sexual relations between human beings and animals as long as the human does not cause the animal any pain. (The situation becomes ethically murky if the animal causes the human any pain.) We don't understand how all this hangs logically together, but anybody who denies that there is an objective morality or advocates deathmaking these days is apt to be called a philosopher or ethicist, and most certainly so if they hold a professorial chair.

A lot of people talk about religious fundamentalism, but one hardly ever hears the phrase "scientific fundamentalism," which however is a religion that also exists, and is a form of extreme materialistic reductionism with some form of Darwinism as its major pillars.

A very large proportion of Catholic theologians these days are extremely sensitive liberals. When the new archbishop of Milwaukee casually referred to certain Catholics as "meat-and-potato Catholics" who were the strength of any diocese, the Catholic Theological Society of America met in emergency session and adopted a resolution condemning the bishop's "insensitivity to our animal companions," and reminded people that vegetarianism was "the more excellent way of Christian nutrition." Other liberal Catholic pundits feared that the bishop's "gustatory imagery" and "extravagant carnality" were attempts to sneak the Pope's so-called theology of the body into the archdiocese. A Boston Globe columnist said that a meat-and-potatoes Catholicism smacked of anti-Semitism (this is the one criticism that is the most obscure to us). One critic with apparently a bit more humor said that the brie and chardonnay Catholics of his circle felt discriminated against (CS, 25/7/02).

The Spiritual Hunger of Homo Religiosus

Some people assume that the rise of a number of totalitarianisms in the 20th century, in part based on philosophical systems of the 19th century, was a sign of the immaturity of rational and humane understanding of politics, economics, and related fields. This seems to be a rather naive notion to us, insofar as there are such a vast number of extremely intelligent and well-educated people at the beginning of the 21st century who have chosen to adopt an amazing blindness to many fundamental—-and even quite obvious—-truths, including truths about human nature. Thus, nothing has really been learned, except that when radical positions are formulated, they may be false in different ways than previous ideologies, but no less false.

The endless generation of false -isms has one positive element to it, namely, they are initiated and fueled by the innate human spirituality, quest for meaning, and belief in a better world. In other words, there is something that is good and true at the origins of these -isms, even if it is not what their creators realized. However, the trouble is that so many people are oppositional to at least some very real high-level—or even cosmic—truths, and therefore set out to craft alternative assertions and
belief systems. So often, these ideologies insist that humans can gain control over events, and even physical creation, and can at last bring about some kind of societal perfection. At any rate, these ideologies get linked to practices and customs that are typical of religions, including the less savory ones, such as intolerance, and persecution of dissenters, or even merely of nonbelievers.

All this also helps explain why the -isms tend to appeal much more to certain population segments than others, namely, to those that are spiritually the most empty. For instance, in Germany, it was the educated rationalistic materialistic circles, such as the medical profession, that furnished proportionately the largest number of Nazi party members, and their membership in the SA and SS were respectively 2 and 7 times that of teachers. Today, it is people who once were Marxists, or had Marxist leanings, who have turned into constructionists and adherents of political correctness, even though these two systems are incompatible.

*While most people these days are very confused about religion, even in their confusion one can detect the universal human religiosity, and a spiritual hunger. Below are some vignettes that seem to illustrate this.

*There is a high concentration of occultists, "witches" and covens in the Bedford Hills, NY, area. Even the schools, in the name of "diversity," have involved pupils in New Age activities giving earth gifts, modelling Hindu gods (some of whom have naked women in attendance), making worry dolls as amulets against bad dreams, tarot readings, fortune-tellings, etc. As part of math classes, the children were taught an occult card game called "Magic: The Gathering" that is filled with, among other things, satanist symbols. For geography, the children were taught not India but Hinduism. Why Bedford Hills? One of its telephone prefixes is 666.

*There are now Pagan Pride days celebrated in many places. Apparently, 22 September is Pagan Pride Day (Worcester T&G, 8 Sept. 02).

*In Japan, there apparently prevails a sense of doom, with the national economy being in a deep and enduring down-slide after unprecedented prosperity. In consequence, many of the Japanese are turning to all sorts of religions and cults, and there are now more than 10,000 new religions in the country from which people expect some sort of "salvation" (Time, 10 June 02). Interestingly, even the Aum cult that killed people by spreading nerve gas in the Tokyo subway has not been discredited by this, and continues to attract people.

*The recent large-scale movement toward spirituality, but outside the context of a major religion, is descending more and more into regression to religious primitivism and superstition, with New Age-related practices playing a significant role. Even the move toward more and more people seeking spiritual directors falls at least partly into this category.

*It is ironic that a psychic guru using old tricks, John Edward, ran a show that became the highest-rated one on the Sci Fi TV network (Time, 5 March 01).

*Many people who lived in the former communist East Germany grew up without ever having heard a Bible story or being familiar with the Christian vocabulary that most Westerners have known, at least until recently. Strangely enough, when East German men now serve in the German armed forces abroad, as for instance in the Balkans, they may have their first meaningful exposure to Christianity, and their first personal contact with a member of the clergy, and some of them have begun to seek baptism.

*A writer (Ptolemy Tompkins, in The Beaten Path, 2001) noted what an awful dilemma spiritually hungry modernists are in. They have to "choose" from among Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shamanism, Wicca, any number of contemporary self-development cults, and from subcultures within these, such as Zen, Sufism, etc., etc. Young members of earlier or more isolated societies had it much easier and simpler.
Contemporary Judaism

*While American Jews are eminently prominent in societal affairs, Judaism itself is rapidly fading away, due to a combination of indifference to religion, intermarriage, and Jewish women--being generally well-educated and "progressive"--not reproducing. Their reproduction rate between the ages 30-34 is only about half that of other women, which is itself not very high (SPR, 9 Oct. 02). Among American Jews, there is a dramatically lower rate of attendance at services than among Protestants and Catholics, and attendance declines the further away Jews are from their immigrant generation (FT, 8/02).

Another contribution is the movement of Jews from the cities to the suburbs, where they live in a more dispersed fashion remote from many of the Jewish institutions that used to hold them together in those parts of the cities where they were highly concentrated. Someone likened this to moving from 24-7 or even 9-5 Judaism to a drive-thru Judaism (FT, 8/02).

Many Jewish writers have argued that a community must have commonalities. However, a very big problem is that for most American Jews, the religion of Judaism no longer provides that. Instead, the de facto religion of many American Jews has been said to have become the remembrance of the Holocaust, and/or a commitment to the State of Israel, and possibly a sense that if Jewish people ever let down their guard, "they will do it again." The difference has been described by one rabbi as that between getting up in the morning to praise God versus getting up to curse Hitler (FT, 5/02). Unless a huge number of Israeli Jews flee to the US, then within another two to three generations, American Judaism will be a mere remnant of a remnant.

Secular Jews, in America especially, are under the impression that there can be such a thing as being perpetually Jewish without Judaism, but in the absence of persecution, Jewishness is not sustainable in the diaspora apart from Judaism, and probably not even in Israel, where it would become a merely tribal state.

To us, it seems that one way to respond morally to the Holocaust would have been to make a commitment to fecundity, to make up for the loss of millions to a God-hating persecutor, and to do honor to the slain by "raising seed" for them. Perhaps this is taught among the Hasidim, but we have never run across such teaching within the Jewish community in America or elsewhere.

*Here is a real dilemma for diversity celebrators. Intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles has risen so rapidly that it is now over 50% of Jewish marriages. This means several things. One (good news) is that obviously, people no longer hate Jews but want to marry them. Secondly, research shows that the children of Jewish-Christian marriages usually end up as neither. Thirdly, there will soon be very few Jews left in the US. Fourthly (really bad news), liberal and progressive rabbis will have a very hard time telling or convincing their congregations that marriage among homosexual Jews is not a threat to Jewish values while marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew is (FT, 2/02).

*Some wit said that almost the only reason for some Jews to think of themselves as Jews anymore is because of the presence of so-called anti-semitism. Without it, they would be, or have been, assimilated into generic modernistic secularity.

The Warfare About "The Naked Public Square"

*The current concept of separation of religion and state was unknown to the founders of the American republic, and is not found in the Constitution, i.e., is not what the Constitution meant by the "anti-establishment" clause. The concept was also foreign to US culture until the 1830s, when Protestants became afraid of Catholic immigrants. The first Supreme Court ruling invoking the concept occurred in 1878, and most of the current understanding of the concept derives from a 1947 ruling, which only now is being rolled back a bit (Philip Hamburger, 2002, Separation of Church and State, Boston, Harvard University Press; also First Things, 12/02, pp. 43-47). The majority of the US population is still opposed to a judicial stripping of all religiousness from public life.

*A Syracuse elementary school skipped its traditional Thanksgiving celebration because it fell into the Ramadan season, and the few Muslim children in the school would have felt "left out" because they would presumably have been fasting while the other children were feasting.
*How the ACLU Grinch stole Christmas.* In the name of "separation of church and state," the American Civil Liberties Union forced a Georgia school board to no longer refer to the school vacations at the end of the year as "Christmas vacations."

*The town of Kensington, Maryland, banned Santa Claus from its public 2001 "holiday" celebrations because two local families claimed that his presence would make them "feel uncomfortable" (NCR, 6 Jan. 01).

*People in Westchester County, NY, were told in December 2001 that the local schools could not sponsor a trip of the pupils to see "The Nutcracker" ballet because it was religious. How is it religious? It is about Christmas. Actually, the only way Christmas appears in the ballet is via a Christmas tree (NCR, 6 Jan. 02).

*Syracuse public schools give students the day off for Good Friday— but in 1997, the school district changed the name to Recess Day, so that they could continue to give the day off without offending "anybody," although it offended a lot of Christians.

*A kindergartener in Saratoga Springs, NY, was forbidden to say a meal prayer out loud in her elementary school (NCR, 7 Feb. 02).

*One Illinois school gave up and announced that students would not be allowed to observe any holidays anymore, be they Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentine’s Day, or Hanukkah, all because the school should "respect each individual’s uniqueness but also help us look for and celebrate those things we have in common," which latter is, of course, a tradition-free naked square, and the idea that hints of hints of hints of religions in the usual sense are dangerous enemies (FT, 12/02).

*Though cartoonists tend to be PC, some of all this was too much for one who showed a big judge at a school door searching a tiny child and finding a handgun, saying, "Oh, it’s only a handgun. For a second, I thought you were trying to sneak in a picture of Jesus."

*The square-strippers have become so vehement and extreme that they are now even trying to outlaw (always by court decision, never by the legislative process) Christmas trees themselves, poinsettias, holiday lights, downtown decorations such as lit-up bells or candles, and even the colors red and green, all for being "religious," and the worst kind of religion (Christianity) at that. A new "inclusion" dogma is that of "the sensitive person veto." One city announced that if even one single person objected, down would come the Christmas trees. Another city banned Santa Claus because 2 people complained (FT, 12/02). Of course, there will always be a very, very "sensitive" person to object to something and anything.

*The American Red Cross sent out instructions that at Red Cross gatherings, no songs are to be sung that have the word "God" in them, such as "America the Beautiful." Thereupon a California choir cancelled its performance for Red Cross volunteers and fundraisers. Seeing yet another potential revenue source go down the drain, the Red Cross once again quickly reversed itself (NCR, 24/3/02).

*A Christian woman who visited hospitals to pray with patients was first arrested and then banned from the University of Florida hospital in Gainesville, Fla. However, a program focusing on Native American spiritual tradition (being PC) was allowed (NCR, 14/10/01).

*The American Psychological Association had planned to de-accredit any religious college or university that granted degrees in psychology if it did not promise to hire professors without regard to their faith or "sexual orientation," but backed down in the face of threatened legal action.

*Because US public schools are now so utterly awful, a group of Protestants, called the Child Evangelism Fellowship, has begun to run an after-school program for elementary school children that meets on Wednesday afternoons, called The Good News Club. It meets in houses, parks,
fairgrounds, etc., but also in some public schools. This has scandalized and energized liberal circles. E.g., *Time* (4 June 01) fumed that the children are even taught that "Satan is real."

**Persecution of Religious Belief and Believers**

*Today, no religious group in the world suffers more persecution than Christians. E.g., although there is only minimal coverage of it in the mainline media, it is becoming quite apparent that since "the events," there has been a dramatic increase in the persecution of Christians in Islamic countries, or at the very least a lessening of tolerance. Amazingly, this is true not only in Afghanistan itself, but in many other Islamic countries as well. However, it surprises one somewhat to learn that the same thing is happening in India, where Christians are increasingly being attacked not only by Indian Muslims but also by Hindus, and that even the minority Sikhs, said in the West to be so very tolerant, are tightening the screws on the Christians in their areas of influence.

*With three-way warfare breaking out in India among Muslims, Christians, and everybody else, it looks as if the country may be beginning to fall apart from its excess of diversity."

*Unbeknownst to most people, the largest group of Christians in the Middle East are the ancient Copts of Egypt who in recent years have become the target of severe persecution by militant Muslims (FT, 8/01).

*One of the things that contributed to the decline of Christians in the Mideast is that they began to ape Western modernism by having fewer children than their Muslim neighbors (NCR, 25/8/02). One could say that the Muslims kept their faith, and the Arab Christians began to lose it.

*A form of new persecution of religion has broken out in Europe, especially France and Germany, that have passed laws or decrees against "sects," including some that in the US would be considered rather ordinary run-of-the-mill religions, such as the Quakers, Mormons, Baptists, Catholic charismatics, Hasidic Jews, and others on a list of 173 "dangerous sects" (NCR, 10 June 01; 29/7/01). This is all the more remarkable insofar as France has been quite tolerant of Islamic radicals.

*Flying from Montreal to Paris on Air France, an observant Jewish businessman began to pray to himself in a barely audible fashion in the back of the airplane (as we all should when flying these days), whereupon a steward told him, "This is an airplane and not a place for occult practices" (Calgary Herald, 18/6/02). Perhaps the steward interpreted the man's praying as a sign of lack of confidence in air travel.

*Belarus seems to be sinking back into the Soviet era. It passed a new law that requires the registration of all religious organizations, and government approval of all religious literature, and forbids most church-related meetings in private homes (NCR, 17/11/02).

*In China, it is illegal to teach religion to children under 18 (VOM, 9/02).

*The news media have been carrying stories for the last 2 years or so on North Koreans fleeing into China. This mystified us: why would they flee one despotic Marxist country for another? In 12/02, we discovered that many of these North Koreans were Christians who saw no way to flee persecution except by going across the northern border, which is apparently much easier than going south; also, in China, there is a rapidly growing interest in religion, and most of all in Christianity, so that refugees have a chance to find help and hide-out (VOM, 12/02). We were surprised that the media had not explained this, but their PC religion apparently forbade it.

*Some attacks on religious faith are much more subtle. For instance, four physicians of the University of California in San Diego published an article that asserted that the Hebrew judge Samson, written about in the Jewish biblical book of Judges, had an antisocial personality disorder because he met 6 of the criteria specified by the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders...*
of the American Psychiatric Association, even though someone only needs to meet 3 of the criteria to qualify for the diagnosis (PHAL, 5/02).

*The Boston Brewing Co. that makes Sam Adams beer shot itself in the foot by sponsoring a raunchy radio show ("Opie & Anthony") that in turn sponsored a game that awarded people so many points for having sex in risky public places. The top prize went to a couple copulating in the vestibule of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan on a busy holy day, the Feast of the Assumption. The show’s operators admitted openly that they were motivated by antipathy to Catholicism.

The Sex Scandals Involving the Catholic Priesthood

There is a great deal to be said about, learned from, and done about the sex scandals that have recently become public involving the Catholic priesthood. Only some of it is relevant to TIPS and its readership, and some of our comments will make reference to topics that have been carried previously in TIPS. Because of the ideology and emotionality that surrounds this issue, and because emotionality so often begets irrationality, let us be clear from the outset that any sexual contact of any adults with any children is wrong.

*While the code word for the "terrorist" attacks of 9/01 is "the events," the two code phrases for the recent exposes of sex scandals involving a number of Catholic priests and bishops are "the situation" (NCR, 3 Nov. 02) and "the current crisis."

*In order to understand the media’s response to the scandal--rather than to understand the scandal itself--we have to appreciate that the vast majority of contemporary media are hostile to Christianity, and to Catholicism specifically which teaches a morality that is totally opposed to the self-indulgent, morally relativistic beliefs and lifestyles of the people of modernism. For instance, until recently, all of Christianity (as well as all Judaism and Islam) had taught that pre- and extramarital sex, sex with animals, masturbation, and homosexual acts are immoral, and that impulses toward, and desires for these, needed to be curbed by certain disciplines, such as controlling one’s attire, gaze and fantasies. All of this obviously also included sex acts with "children," though what constitutes childhood has varied over time. E.g., in many cultures, girls were marriageable as soon as they reached menarche.

All these religions have always appreciated that humans are weak and will sin, but that regardless of their shortfalls, humans needed to be clear on what the moral precepts were. In contrast, modernism has endorsed virtually unrestrained sexuality, and is rapidly moving even to the endorsement of sex between children, sex of adults with children, and sex with animals. The media are one of the foremost proponents of modernism, and would like to discredit any proponents of traditional morality. That is why they have focused so intently and gleefully on sexual shortcomings among Catholic clergy, seeing Catholicism as their most formidable adversary among Christian churches.

Among the innumerable hypocrisies of the media and the liberal culture they stand for are the following.

1. The media have interpreted the Catholic clergy sex scandals almost entirely as "pedophilia," when in reality, most of it consisted of homosexuality. Obviously, the media cannot admit this since they themselves have exalted homosexuality to being as good as, or even better than, heterosexuality. The persistence with which obviously homosexual conduct is interpreted as being pedophilia, and homosexual priests are being described as pedophiles, is utterly amazing and a profound deliberate deception. It persists almost throughout the entirety of the current media treatment of this scandal, and in any one medium, such as Time or Newsweek, on an ongoing basis (including in cover stories) even though the writers and editors most certainly know that they are perpetrating a gross deception.

One thing that is at issue here is that homosexual men like to predate on teenage boys, much as heterosexual men of almost any age lust after teenage girls. After all, such teenagers represent youth, beauty, health, innocence and virginity, all of which are valued as much among homosexuals as among heterosexuals. That a significant proportion of homosexual men predate on much younger males is ancient wisdom, but has been vehemently denied by the PC and "gay" culture, and this denial has been sustained by the media but is now in the process of breaking down.
In the current context, the "gay" culture will at least publicly almost reflexively condemn as homophobic any assertion that when an adult man wants to have sex with a 17- or 18-year-old boy, he is homosexual rather than pedophilic (FT, 5/02), so when you try to seduce a teenager of the same sex, you are obviously not "gay" but pedophilic. When a 13- or 14-year old youth wants to engage in consensual homosexuality, that is increasingly being considered to be his or her right, or even gets "celebrated," but when it is done with a priest, it suddenly becomes pedophile-abuse, and in order to maintain the fiction that most cases of priests having sex with minors is pedophilia rather than homosexuality, the media have sometimes even referred to 18-year-old youthful male sex partners of priests as "teenagers" (e.g., AP in SFS, 24/12/02), as they might refer to a 13-year-old, rather than as "young men." Many of the priests who have predated upon young boys themselves admit that they were homosexual, but the media insist on calling them pedophiles anyway (e.g., Time, 1 April 02).

People these days are so media brainwashed that even Catholics, and the Catholic media themselves, keep using the term "pedophilia" when they mean adult homosexuals preying on adolescents of the same sex.

One other reason the media insist on the term "pedophile priest" is that it has such a euphonious alliteration, which is harder to get out of one's mind than "homosexual priest" or "gay priest."

2. Because their aim is the destruction of the Catholic church, the media have not been reporting the great extent of sexual malfeasance among non-Catholic clergy, teachers, scout leaders (and especially not them), other youth workers, or in human services generally, but have gone on a feeding frenzy about priestly malfeasance and episcopal cover-ups. Indeed, the rates of sexual abuse among professionals working with children, and even among Protestant clergy, is apparently much higher than among Catholic priests. Nationwide, there have been in recent years about 70 allegations in the US per week of sex abuse directed at churches, church agencies and church officials, the vast majority of these not being Catholic (FT, 6/02). In a 6-month period, 244 allegations of sexual improprieties of teachers toward pupils were reported in the US in 1998 (NCR, 7/7/02).

While there is vastly more sex abuse by teachers in public schools than by priests, the liberal media have made very little of this except for an occasional scandal on a local level, because they try to pretend that the public school system is not morally bankrupt, whereas they would eagerly give the death thrust to Christianity and especially the Catholic church (AP in NCR, 7/7/02).

In the middle of the homosexual priest scandal, a married Protestant pastor with 7 children was caught in Syracuse in a true pedophile situation—with a child, not an adolescent, and one of the opposite sex. Compared to the pages and pages on "pedophile priests" news, the news coverage on this real pedophile pastor event was vastly more modest.

Of course, the fact that others abuse children does not make such abuse by priests any less wrong; it merely illustrates the very disproportionate media coverage.

3. Another irony is that in other contexts, when men have homosexual relations with somebody else, even youths, the PC liberals think that this is a wonderful "diversity," and perhaps the two should even get married. In fact, one of the most wonderful developments according to the liberals is the advent of "marriages" between homosexuals. Yet not once have we heard the media calling for priests who had sex with boys or young men to marry these and make "honest partners" out of them. Actually, that would be one of the liberals’ worst nightmares, because what would that leave them to rage about?

Just how much homosexuality is valorized in liberal circles was underlined by the following: the pastor of a fashionable Congregationalist church in Denver, and father of 3 children, announced to his congregation that he was homosexual and was walking out of his marriage. This was awarded by a standing ovation by the congregation, and an outpouring of its "love and compassion" (FT, 4/02). Presumably, this drowned out the sobs of the wife and the 3 children, who apparently did not need compassion. And what would have happened if he had announced that he was dumping his family in favor of another woman? We hope his congregation would have cheered twice as loud and twice as long, especially if the woman had been the (pregnant) teenage daughter of one of the pastor’s deacons.

4. One (very successful) media propaganda thrust has been to interpret priestly sex with minors as a legal crime—after all, the liberal media do not believe in sin. However, never before have these same media made an issue of adult men having sex with under-age girls. One reason is that this would undermine the sex and abortion culture, in that many girls who seek contraceptive devices or abortion from Planned Parenthood, school clinics, or other sources are/were sexually
involved with adult men, and if these agencies reported these legal crimes, the sexually involved or pregnant girls might stay away from them. For instance, many school districts have allowed Planned Parenthood and similar organizations to come right into the schools, and not merely conduct sex education classes and give out birth control information, but even provide condoms, and make abortion referrals. Even when this happens in schools, and the girls there found to be pregnant are underage and to have been impregnated by an adult male, there has been no effort made to call the male to accountability as the laws require (NCR, 18/8/02).

A woman pretending to be a 13-year-old called 19 abortion clinics and told them that she was pregnant by a 22-year-old man. For an adult male to have sex with a 13-year-old girl is a felony everywhere in the US. Yet over and over, the caller was told how to get an abortion but not to mention who the father was, or to hide the man’s age so as to avoid him getting prosecuted. Obviously, getting abortions done has been deemed vastly more important by the Planned Parenthood and other abortion agencies than putting a check on a sex crime. Some abortion clinics have performed as many as 3 abortions a month on 12-year-olds without reporting any sexual crimes that resulted in these pregnancies to the authorities. On top of that, they use an idiom that interprets the 12-year-olds as "choosing" abortion (NCR, 16/6/02). Since this has obviously been going on nationwide for decades, the state attorneys all over the country are finally beginning to demand that pregnancy and abortion clinics report to them cases of statutory rape, or plain rape of minors.

5. When girls aged 13, or even younger, have sex and get pregnant, the abortion lobby, and largely the media as well, have been referring to them assiduously as "women." One never hears slogans that children or girls have the right of choice and control over their bodies, only "women." Also, what these parties make war against is abstinence, and they instead emphasize "safe sex" and abortion access without knowledge, or the right to interfere, by parents. Yet a 17-year-old boy who has consensual homosexual relations with a priest is interpreted as a crime victim.

6. Even boys aged 17 or 18 are interpreted by the media to be "children" if they have had sex with priests—and that by the same liberals who are trying to decriminalize almost all forms of sex acts, including sex by children from age 13 (or even younger), and sex between children and adults (see our above coverage on p. 50 in the "Children" section). And the same liberals have been vigorously campaigning for unlimited access to pornography by children. Judith Levine, who had a satisfying sexual affair with an adult when she was a minor has academicized her experience by publishing a 2002 book, Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children From Sex, promoting this kind of sex. Published by the University of Minnesota Press, the first printing sold out so quickly that it got reprinted. Note that to liberals and academics, the traditional concern for protecting children from sex has now become a "peril" (NCR, 28/4/02).

7. Another common theme in the media is a message somewhat along the lines of "Oh my gosh, look at the Catholic church self-destructing like that. Isn't it awful?", which is the grossest hypocrisy considering that this is one of the media's most hoped-for events, and the very one they had been fervently working toward.

*It was rather ironic that Newsweek ran a cover story on "pedophilic" priests on 4 Mar. 02, and in total unconscionness followed this story immediately by a 3-page feature on a homosexual artist under the heading, "This Man Will Decide What Art Is." Only a few decades ago, the media would have decried homosexuality as much as they decry priestly "pedophilia" today. Perhaps a few more decades hence, they will "celebrate" it, and make it illegal to "discriminate" against real pedophiles. People who let it be known that they think pedophilia is wrong will be pillorized, and denied academic appointments.

*In "Primal Fear," it turns out that an archbishop who gets hacked to death with 76 blows had engaged in pedophile sex orgies which he videotaped—on top of which he was also a political conservative in cahoots with the local power structure. Perhaps the liberal media shot themselves in the crotch here, because the film could almost turn one against even liberal pedophiles.

*It is extremely problematic for all sorts of parties, and especially a bishop, when a priest is accused of sexual impropriety when there is a reasonable possibility—or even high likelihood—that the accusation is false. While a priest who has engaged in such impropriety may be tempted to dissemble (and some have), there are bound to be false accusations; and in fact, a number of priests and bishops accused of improprieties with children or with male youths have vehemently insisted that they are innocent. In the current atmosphere, they are more likely to be assumed guilty until proven
innocent, which may never happen, or take years, as in the case of the false accusations against Cardinal Bernardin a few years ago, and another cardinal since. Even though a church body arranged a financial settlement with an accuser—almost invariably on the advice of insurance firms and lawyers—it was sometimes with the understanding that the priest was considered innocent but that the settlement was a sort of hush money to keep it all quiet, and to avoid a trial where the money award might be even greater even if the accused was innocent. In a sense then, church authorities have willingly surrendered their moral authority to the utilitarian considerations of lawyers and insurance companies (ET, 4/02).

One reason why Catholic clergy are more likely to be sued than Protestant clergy, school teachers, scout leaders, etc., is because an entire diocese can be sued, and the prospects of financial gain or recovery are vastly greater than in the case of most other kinds of targets.

*While there is simply no excuse for bishops allowing homosexual priests to be in positions where they can continue to predate upon adolescents, even with our recent history of epidemics of false recovered memories, there are bound to be many such false memories now with all the media frenzy and all the liberal shrinks pushing mentally fragile males of homosexual inclinations into "recovering" such memories. After all, they did it for years to mentally fragile women.

We suspect that with the gleeful mass coverage by all the media of "pedophilic priests," there will soon not be an externalistic person left who will not "recover" a memory of having been sexually abused by a priest (or at least a minister) as a child. In fact, we seem to have already seen the beginning of this trend (Newsweek, 4 Mar. 02, p. 52). For instance, the founder of the Legionaries of Christ (a Catholic order), a man now in his 80s, began to be accused in 1997 of sexual offenses with seminarians supposedly committed 40 years earlier. The accusers are people who were in essence kicked out of the order long ago, and some of whom had abandoned Catholicism. Even when one of the accusers under oath recanted his accusation, the accusation kept living on (ET, 3/02).

In some cases, malicious or crazy people are beginning to allege sexual abuse from a priest who already stands accused, apparently thinking that such a person will make the easiest target of all. E.g., 2 youngsters falsely alleged recent abuses against a Syracuse area priest who had earlier been accused of sexual abuse of minors several decades previously. A man who has been married five times and spent time in prison for felonies accused a priest in the Syracuse area of having abused him 30 years earlier (SPS, 27/5/02). Instead of interpreting accusations by such persons as dubious, the liberal lobby claims that it was the alleged sex abuse that turned the accusers into criminals or made them insane.

We also suspect that there will be a small avalanche of false memories, or even plain lies, by women accusing priests of sexual assault, with some such accusations recently in the news already seeming to have been of this nature.

*There are several additional things that strike us about the recent wave of Catholic clergy scandals. (a) The story one gets from all the media, and even from the church authorities, is that even the real victims with whom the sexual activities were actually committed seem to want big money, more than anything else. One would have thought that any of them who were truly embedded in their faith would want, first of all, acknowledgement of what happened, repentance, an apology, and an assurance that steps would be taken that it would not happen to other youngsters; and such a person would want to do all of this privately unless there was a breach of any of these promises. (b) The whole thing is a very delicious feeding frenzy by media sharks, almost like pieces of human flesh being thrown down from above for them to feast on. For instance, our local newspaper in Syracuse sometimes carried multiple news items daily about these scandals, day after day, and on one of these days, three full pages of them which is as much space as was devoted to the Afghan war at its height. Not much could have pleased them more, short of the Pope being discovered to have taken himself a mistress and having sex with her using condoms.

*In terms of cosmic import, we believe that there are much bigger scandals in the Catholic church, and in others as well, than that of actively homosexual (or even pedophilic) priests, such as Catholic health services participating in abortion or other deathmaking, Catholic and other denominational human services accepting government funds so that they can no longer serve in accord with their religious beliefs and traditions, the same thing happening to religious institutions (including Catholic ones) so that they will no longer teach their religions, clergy who no longer even believe
in God or traditional morality, Catholics getting marriage annulments so easily that it appears to be a form of divorce, Catholic colleges/universities promoting or condoning premarital sex and abortions, etc., etc. To cite just 2 small such scandals: an alumnus of Wheeling (Jesuit) University shot and wounded his former girlfriend in 1997, then killed her new boyfriend, and then himself. Amazingly, somebody set up a scholarship fund named for the malefactor and gave it to Wheeling University—which equally amazingly accepted it and even named it for the killer (NCR, 17/3/02). Something like that is vastly more scandalous than a priest giving in to homosexual inclinations and having sex with a teenager. Why? Because the latter is a sin of affection, the flesh, and personal weakness, perhaps soon repented, whereas the former bestows an enduring institutional honor on someone who committed murder and suicide without likely having repented. Lemoyne (also Jesuit) College in Syracuse accepted an endowment in honor of a man who openly practiced homosexuality at the time of his death.

*The American bishops were so demoralized by the revelations of what had happened, and so scared by the media, that they did not reform but surrendered, thereby compounding their earlier shortfalls. This delighted the liberals. Among the bishops’ implosions were to presume priestly guilt until innocence is proven; treating sex with minors as primarily a crime rather than primarily a sin (one diocese has begun fingerprinting priests, which certainly signals a total breakdown in things (SPS, 31/5/02)); making interactions between bishops and priests adversarial rather than paternal/filial (some priests said they would no longer dare visit their bishop without their lawyer); and ruling that no priest can ever meet with children for any reason whatever without another adult present, except presumed in the confessional.

*Those who hate Catholicism or even Christianity and see the sex scandals as a golden opportunity to destroy at least the Catholic church have begun to try to change the laws so as to require priests (and most likely other clergy) to report to law enforcement authorities any sexual sins against minors confessed by penitents in the confessional. The Catholic church requires that a priest should accept death rather than to break the seal of the confessional.

*The media say that the Catholic church in England and Wales is "ahead" of the US because it has a unified office for child protection, child protection officers in each diocese, strict reporting requirements, and the beginnings of a national data base of church workers (NY Times, 28/4/02). We would not call it progress but a sign of the times.

*In contemplation of the priest sex scandal, a Catholic convert from the Episcopal church said that it might just be worth converting back because in the Episcopal church, you can practice your vices without a scandal (FT, 6/02), alluding to the drift of Episcopalianism toward "anything goes."

**Miscellaneous Religion News**

*The idiom of many Western languages has been profoundly shaped by the Bible, but increasingly, people have no idea where the biblical phrases that they use came from. Below is a very small sample of such phrases and sayings.

Being at one’s wits’ end (Psalm 107:27);
Being in the belly of the beast (Jonah 1:17);
The blind leading the blind (Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39);
Casting pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6);
Driving the devil out through Beelzebul (Matthew 12:24-27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-19);
Forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:17);
Hiding one’s light under a bushel (Matthew 5:15);
Having feet of clay (Daniel 2:33-42);
A good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37);
In season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2);
The last first, and first last (Matthew 19:30, 20:16; Mark 9:35, 10:31; Luke 13:30);
A leopard cannot change his spots (Jeremiah 13:23);
Let us now praise famous men (Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 44:1);
The mark of Cain (Genesis 4:13-15);
Nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9);
The patience of Job (book of Job);
The pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46);
Pride goeth before a fall (Proverbs 16:18);
The prodigal son (Luke 15);
Salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13);
The skin of one's teeth (Job 19:20);
Something being as difficult as a camel going through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25);
Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7);
Turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39-40; Luke 6:29-30);
Wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28);
Walking on water (Matthew 14:22-32);
Wash one's hands of something (Matthew 27:24);
The wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:25-40);
The widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4);
The (hand)writing on the wall (Daniel 5:5).

In addition, there are phrases that do not come from the Bible, but from Christian discourse. One small example is "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Many people have no idea where these phrases came from.

*A Calvinistic theological journal published an article entitled "In Praise of the Humble Condom," which among other things asserted that once a couple produces one child, it has fulfilled God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). (Mathematically, one would have to say that the couple had divided the number of people in half by not having more than two children.) The article also asserted that the condom was "in some ways an appropriate symbol of the Reformed life," meaning that of the reformed Calvinistic church (ET, 2/02). Will we see the day when Calvinistic churches will be recognizable by their steeples shaped like condom-clad phallics? Or will crucifixes in their churches have condoms glued or nailed to them?

*We commented before on the vulgar Calvin Klein firm using ck as a trade mark for a perfume, capitalizing on the obverse of the news media commonly featuring the f-word as "f...". You are supposed to see it as "...ck." Now, Christian fundraisers have appropriated ck as the symbol for "Christ is King" (source document from Doug Mouncey). No good can come of this!

By the way, this whole episode underlines why the churches should not adopt the ck symbol for anything, or they will end up with much ck going on in church itself.

*We have noticed a new phenomenon for which we have no explanation as yet. It consists of students at high school, and even college and higher, graduations wearing stoles that one would ordinarily take to be the kind of stoles that priests or ministers wear during performance of a sacramental or worship function. These stoles do not carry religious symbolism but are usually multi-color in nature—but that has also been the case increasingly with the stoles worn by many priests and ministers.

*Mega-churches are a little bit like institutions. There are so many people and so much to do that things have to be objectified and automated to get them all done. At one such Protestant church, it took 30 work hours to fill all the individual tiny communion cups. In response, somebody invented a "communion dispensing machine" made of a stainless steel bucket with 40 plastic tubes running into batteries of cups on trays, dispensing wine or grape juice in measured amounts. Perhaps even more progressive was a Protestant church in Denmark that mailed communion wafers in small plastic containers to the faithful so as to have time for other things during church services (ET, 11/01).

*Unlike in the American armed forces, clergy for the German armed forces are not members of the military but are equally as present and available to soldiers (NCR, 31/3/02).

*Catholic dioceses have been in a financial crunch recently, partially because of the aftermaths of the sex abuse scandals. One of the first things that was eliminated in many dioceses was the
position of a specialist, consultant, or director of ministries with persons with disabilities (AAMR Religion Division Quarterly, Fall 02).

*Like many other professions, the ministry seems to be getting increasingly difficult. Among Protestant pastors specifically, 70% said that they felt less good about themselves than when they started in the ministry, in part because they felt unable to meet the demands of their jobs, and 33% characterized their ministry as a hazard to their family life (PHAL, 1/02).

*Not many religions around the world have an equivalent of sacred script, and of those that do, hardly any that are not connected to the Bible claim to record God's direct revelations to humans in historical time. Further, biblical religion broke with almost all earlier religious and philosophical traditions in asserting that the universe did have a beginning, which is now taken for granted even in the world of secular science.

*While most people these days are aware that there now are a very large number of translations of the Bible, few people are aware that many of these translations have been made in order to promote a particular ideological agenda. In other words, the concern of many of these translation enterprises is not to produce a more accurate or even more intelligible translation, but to promote this-or-that ideology. This means that quite often, a translation can be astonishing in its deviation from the original text or the originally intended meaning, which had been willfully edited away by the translators.

While some people are familiar with one of these agenda battles (namely the one about "gender inclusive" language which often even edits away the fact that the original Bible relentlessly spoke of the first person of the trinity as a "Father"), there are other and often vastly more subtle translation agendas. For instance, some translations try very hard to change any language that refers to unborn children in the Bible as children, because the agenda is abortion-supportive. An example of this is the passage in Matthew 1 that speaks of Mary being "with child," which in recent decades has sometimes gotten translated as "being pregnant," because it is much easier these days to agree to a "termination of a pregnancy" than to the killing of a child, and one would certainly want to be sensitive to women who have already committed abortion and not make them feel guilty when they want to read the Bible.

*The Rastafarians of Jamaica have been banging their drums 3 times a day praying for the death of the Pope (NCR, 26/5/02). The PC love the Rastafarians for their multiple diversities, though some multiculturalists are not all that very nice or, for that matter, tolerant.

*A University of Pennsylvania mega-study of 669 previous research projects showed that people who believe in God and attend worship regularly are less likely to get into drugs and alcohol, become depressed, develop high blood pressure, engage in promiscuity, delinquency and criminality, or have children out of wedlock; they are more likely to pursue further education, to live longer, and to have lower suicide rates; they have a better outlook on the future and are more likely to have larger support networks and relationships; their families are less likely to be plagued by male domestic violence. All of this is in gross contrast to the liberals' perception and interpretation of religious people generally and Christian ones specifically, in that the liberal and media stereotype is that these people are irrational, repressed, self-loathing, misogynist, and poorly educated, as even a 1993 front page Washington Post article put it: "Largely poor, uneducated and easy to command" (NCR, 21/7/02).

A meta-analysis of more than 80 research studies published over a 100-year period found that one major factor linked with lower rates of depression was participation in some kind of a religious community. The difference was very large, about 60%. Obviously, if it were true what the shrinks say--namely, that depression is genetic--it would follow that non-depressed people must have a going-to-church gene (PHAL, 5/02).

But then there is a finding that people "with depression" are much heavier smokers than people without, which further complicates the genetic picture. Are the genes for smoking and depression linked? Are smokers less likely to have the going-to-church gene?

In the US, urban African-American women who are active in their church are more likely to be married when they have babies than those who are not active, which is why one researcher said that "religious institutions are bulwarks of marriage in urban America" (SPS, 27/7/02).
*It is said that Thomas Jefferson thought that if there were a heaven, it would be a bit like the US Senate in perpetual debate (FT, 12/01).

Religion in Human Services

*On the one hand, it has become virtually outlawed in the US to talk about religious values in any public forum and in regard to any public issues, because the courts over the years have ruled that this would violate the separation of church and state. On the other hand, there has been a greatly felt need to discuss issues in reference to some values, and in human services, this has been expressed in the new phrase and craze of "values-based training" for human service workers. Even this is very problematic if public monies are used to fund such training. There are trainers who seem to manage to provide supposedly "values-based training" that might be described as "value-free values-based training," particularly if they do not actually teach any values but merely lead participants to talk about their own. This meets a demand for values-based training without running the danger of "offending" anyone.

*There is a Christian shrink-craze called theophostic ministries. Its founder and guru, Ed Smith, has been one of the promoters of so-called memory therapy. He reportedly does a lot of work with victims of childhood sexual abuse, but there is considerable likelihood that his counselees ended up believing that they had been sexually abused as children after this had been sufficiently strongly and often suggested to them (PHAL, 3/02).

*At a church service, a couple reported that prenatal tests had indicated that their baby might have Down's syndrome. They described their anxiety in great detail, and then their joy in discovering upon giving birth that it was a "perfect baby." The congregation broke into applause—in the very presence of another couple who had a 5-year-old with Down's syndrome whose mother wondered what would have happened if he had heard this message himself when he was a bit older and could understand it, or how his brothers and sisters would have responded (Celebrate Life, 9/97).

*One writer (de Hartog, 1964) equated the narcotics box of a hospital ward or emergency room to a tabernacle in church, and said that when a hospital moved to a new building, the transfer of the narcotics box resembled a procession carrying the consecrated host out of a church building, signifying the end of its identity and mission.

*In the Kentucky countryside, on a 75-acre plot, a priest has started a residential institution for victims of priestly sex abuse (NCR 9 June 02). It is amazing for what conditions people think we need institutions.

*When someone has a mental affliction among the Berbers in Morocco, relatives and friends stage a gnaua that can last anywhere from all night to several days. People dress in colorful clothes and put on perfumes, a certain kind of hypnotic music is played almost incessantly with everybody clapping their hands and dancing, there is good food and drink, and there are incantations and prayers. While there are also public such events for entertainment, the ones for afflicted persons are held in private (Smithsonian, 8/02). We bet gnauas work better than most of our service practices for mental problems.

*One of the profound errors of modernistic teaching, and the therapiizing of society, is the assertion that personal psychological well-being is the foundation of moral conduct, rather than that being reared into a moral identity is the foundation for personal well-being. However, some authorities are finally saying that there is really no foundation for claiming that psychological well-being will produce moral conduct. Nevertheless, many evangelical Protestants of great prominence have engaged in a psychologizing of Christianity, and have tried to frame Biblical morality in the terms of popular psychology.

Similarly, some critics have said that the communitarian movement in recent decades has also fallen into the error of tying communitarian behavior to self-esteem. Traditionalists assert that truth should come first, and all else will follow to the degree that this is possible in a disfunctional world, and not that all else follows from the peculiar modernistic sense of psychological well-being, whatever that may be. To us, it looks extremely illusive and elusive anyway.
News of the Season

*Spending on Halloween alone more than doubled in just 7 years, to a total of almost $7 billion despite the decline in the economy (Newsweek, 27/11/02).

*We remind our readers that traditionally, Christmas did not start until the eve of December 24, and the season continued either through the Epiphany on January 6—or even till February 2, the feast of Candlemas which marked the end of the 40-day period of purification of the mother following birth that was prescribed by Jewish law, when both Mary and Jesus would then have presented themselves at the temple in Jerusalem.

However, in modernistic society, the Christmas season can start anytime, and end as soon as the day after Christmas. In 2001, we saw our first lit-up Christmas tree on the first of October. In 2002, we saw the Christmas season begin in September, virtually as soon as the back-to-school sales were over. Christmas programs also began to appear on TV several weeks before Thanksgiving. It used to be that Christmas for much of the commercial modernistic world started the day after Thanksgiving, but all of this bodes very ill for Thanksgiving which now seems to be merely an inconvenient and nonlucrative interlude between the Halloween and Christmas "seasons." Indeed, for the first time ever, we observed in 2002 that Thanksgiving was pushed almost totally into the background as the Halloween and Christmas "seasons" overshadowed it at both ends. We also saw for the first time decorations that syncretistically blended the themes of Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. In Syracuse, we noticed some Christmas decorations that had been put up in mid-November being taken down 3 days before Christmas; and many Christmas trees were already on the curb on December 26. Christmas decorations and candies went on clearance sale the day after Christmas, so that stores could make room on their shelves for—Valentine’s Day candy.

As one cartoon put it, "It’s not even Thanksgiving yet, and the stores already have all their Easter stuff out."

Christmas catalogues also come out earlier and earlier. One that we received early this year is called Heartbeats (2001 Detroit Road, Cleveland, OH 44116, phone 1-800-808-1991), which sells products manufactured by small local cooperatives of artisans in developing Third World countries, parts of the former Soviet Union, as well as in poor areas of the US. The crafts range from the quaint to the beautiful, and some are practically useful as well. All the organizations try to provide some employment for people in these countries who would otherwise be idle, on welfare, homeless, etc.

The only "season" people do not seem to be confused about is Lent. If they observe it at all, they never start it early (except for certain orders of monks) and they never continue it beyond Easter.

*We recently also discovered a hitherto unrecognized or new season, namely, bridery season. Like Valentine season, it starts right after Christmas, but extends through June when so many people get married. Bridery season is marked by an endless series of bridal shows and showers, and other events designed to merchandise weddings and bridal self-displays.

The Social Advocacies

The Need for Advocacy

*Child Protective Services in Michigan was notified several times that a cerebrally palsied boy with seizures did not seem to be properly cared for by his father with whom he lived. Among other things, the school bus driver who took the boy to a mental retardation center had called the agency repeatedly to report that the boy showed up on the bus smelling of urine and body odor, with uncut hair, and was missing school a lot, and that he suspected neglect. Nothing was done when the boy failed to show up at the center until he had been gone for several weeks. When a school official finally went to the home to check up, the boy was found dead on the floor amid empty beer bottles and rotting food, and it was determined that he had lain there decomposing for 6 weeks after having died from a combination of starvation and dehydration (NRLN, 10/02). This vignette underlines once again just how vulnerable many handicapped people are, and how little advocacy they have even when there are advocacy and protection bodies about. Furthermore, the vignette underlines how maladaptive it is to leave children, and especially impaired ones, in the care of inadequate parents,
and how reluctant authorities are to move in even when neglect is very obvious. In other words, the
advocates tend to be overwhelmingly on the side of the parents rather than on the side of the even
yet more vulnerable handicapped persons or even children.

*People always assume that as a dependent person becomes more independent, the person
becomes less vulnerable, when in fact, the opposite is often the case. As a dependent person begins
to move out from under the (constant) surveillance of others, they often are exposed to greater risks
than before, or at least to new risks that may not have been anticipated.

*One reason mentally retarded people may be spared from receiving all sorts of junk mail is
that they may have no bank account or credit card, and may never themselves have bought anything
on time. Thus, their name and address may never have been sold to commercial enterprises.
However, once a mildly retarded person begins to make any commercial transactions in his or her
own name, then junk mail, and all sorts of confusing and tempting offers, may begin to pour in.
One such man was helped to start a small credit account to buy a few pieces of furniture for his supervised
apartment. In consequence, a finance company sent him a fake check for $3,000 which he was on
the verge of attempting to cash when his supervisors caught on to it. Supposedly, one can have one's
name deleted from such solicitation lists, but this apparently does not really work as claimed. (It
never has for us.) All of this underlines that retarded people will always need more than ordinary
protection in their lives.

*We continue to run across atrocity stories of how the protection of the confidentiality of
information about service clients is used as an excuse for covering up wrong-doing. One example
is a human service worker refusing to talk to his supervisor about a client, because this might violate
such confidentiality. Of course, this would merely serve as a way of obviating any kind of
supervisory process over direct service workers. Another example is a client making a phone call
on a pay phone to somebody he/she knows, suddenly running out of coins, and asking the other party
to call back. When the other party calls back, a staff person answers, and when told that the caller
wishes to talk to person "x," the staff REPLIES THAT THEY CANNOT LET THE CALLER KNOW WHETHER PERSON "X"
exists or is at the location, because this would be divulging confidential information.

*In early 2002, it was discovered that an Alaska nonprofit guardianship agency stole much
money from the people under its charge. Some publicity on the case called the organization a
"predator of the unsuspecting, incapacitated" (Anchorage Daily News, 3/02; source item from Fritz
Robrecht).

*With the conversion of all sorts of services in Britain to an entrepreneurial model, operators
of residential services have begun to pay up to £1,000 to "freelance agents" (who actually are bounty
hunters) for every client channelled their way (VIA News, 1997, No. 90). And to think: with that
kind of bounty on their heads, the PC in Britain would deny special protections to the mentally
impaired on the grounds of "self-determination."

*In the good old safari days of empire and exploration, it was common to treat native porters
Pretty much like animals. It now turns out that those days are not entirely over, and that all sorts
of wilderness tours to poor countries convey the impression to the tourists that the local porters are
virtually superhuman, can carry tremendous weights, and are unaffected by rain, cold, and high
altitudes. Not only that, but when porters get injured or fall ill, they are sometimes outright
abandoned by their tours, and then may die. In Britain, a humanitarian group has been formed called
"Tourism Concern" that tries to prevent such abuses (SPS, 5/5/02).

*A book came out in 2002 which spoke about people being liberated from oppression, but
being "set free into a society that instantly contrived new ways to confine, exploit and humiliate
them." The TIPS editor said to himself, "This sounds like what happened to handicapped people
when they got liberated from the institutions." However, the book was actually about what happened
to the former slaves during the so-called Reconstruction Period after the US Civil War.

*Here is a spokesperson vignette told us by the stepmother of a very severely handicapped
woman who does not speak. When the handicapped woman had to be hospitalized, the stepmother--
along with other family and friends—accompanied her during the hospital stay. When the woman was in pain, she might moan or grimace, as would anyone else. One of the nurses asked the mother how she understood what her daughter was feeling, since the young woman could not say "I hurt" or "I'm hungry," etc. Having lived with her daughter at home for many years, the mother had come to know how her daughter conveyed what she did or did not want, so she told this nurse, "I've lived with her long enough, I know how she shows what she's feeling." The nurse then recorded in the chart for the patient, "Mother communicates with daughter via telepathy."

Issues—Mostly Perversions—Associated With Self-Determination

*One link between radical self-determination and the philosophy of Nietzsche is that according to Nietzsche, absolute self-sufficiency is a precondition for happiness, and an attachment to any other person constitutes a prison. One must "not cleave to another person, though he be the one you love most," because this other person is one's prison. Hence, others must be viewed as adversaries. Actually, Jean Vanier said something very similar from the other side, in pointing out that one reason people are so often afraid of approaching a suffering or needy person is because one knows that one might become encaptured by that other person's neediness, and then feel an obligation to care for that person. This phenomenon is also behind the common reluctance to look in the eyes of a beggar on the street, because if we do, we might start handing out money to the person, and one thing just might lead to another.

Radical self-determination is also contrary to many religious traditions that have taught that people are to bear one another's burdens. The radical rights and radical self-determination ideology holds to the insane belief that one has radical entitlements that others must fulfill toward one (e.g., by providing services, paying for one's dependency) without one having radical corresponding obligations to anyone. At most, one has an obligation to leave others alone to do whatever awful things they want to do that do not immediately hurt oneself.

*Some staff member in a group home for 4 mentally retarded men in Pennsylvania put lime-green anti-freeze into a plastic juice bottle, put a label on it that said it was anti-freeze, and stored it in the basement. One of the men who either could not read or was not in the habit of reading found the bottle, poured everybody in the house a drink, and put the bottle in an ice box. It does not help that anti-freeze has a sweet flavor. They all got desperately sick (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 14/2/98). While intellectual limitations are of the essence of mental retardation and can result in a literal infinity of specific incompetent behaviors, modernistic fools go around preaching self-determination, and abolishment of all kinds of directive supervision for retarded people.

*Dave Hingsberger (Mouth, 5/97) told the story of a mildly retarded young man who had grown up in an institution, ran away from it at age 16, and took up the life of a homosexual prostitute on the streets. He made it very clear that he preferred that life to being under human service agency control. And furthermore, he decided that he would never, ever live with another person because that would give the other person too much power over him, which he would never allow as long as he could help it. As he put it, "The street saved me from them." He said that moving from being a vegetable to a fruit, and a fruit to a tart, was actually stepping up in the world as far as he was concerned. This story underlines the absurdity of radical self-determination. Such radical individualists would destroy all give-and-take relationships, including marriage, in order to be in what they think is total control all the time. Of course, handicapped people learned these radical attitudes from the culture around them.

*A retarded youngster was taught in his special education class how to use the phone in case of an emergency. Back at his group home, he was told by a house parent to make his bed—upon which he used his newly-learned skill to phone the police and report "child abuse." The police did in fact arrive quickly. One wonders whether this was a lesson learned for better or for worse (Plough Shares, Summer 1989; source item from Ann O'Connor).

*On the other extreme, some health care gurus are now saying that physicians fail to grasp just how incompetent people are to make their own health care decisions, and that there are people who seem to be competent but really are not, so that "regrettable decisions" get made (Mouth, 11 Feb. 02). Doctor knows best!
*A young woman tried to establish communication with a severely physically handicapped young man who tried to spell out messages to her on a so-called communications board. Unfortunately, the very first message that he spelled out, painstakingly and requiring much time, was, "Can I feel your leg" (Mouth, 7/99). There are many lessons in this vignette. If he can be that self-determining, why can’t she slap him one? Also, where did he learn about leg-feeling? Probably from TV.

*An organization concerned specifically with severely handicapped people requested applications for grants to enable such persons to pursue “inclusive activities” with non-handicapped persons. But it stipulated that the applications had to be made in the first person, e.g., "I want to do this activity...." It said that if someone was incapable of completing the application him/herself, then he/she could dictate it to someone else (source item from Jack Yates). But many severely handicapped persons are neither capable of writing the application nor of dictating it! Are their servers to be forced into dishonesty (e.g., John wants to do this), instead of being permitted to state honestly, "We think this would be good for John because..."? Also, what if the people who are supposed to be the includers do not want to engage in "this activity" with "Joe"?

*Some people (we are not sure who—maybe some protégés?) of a Citizen Advocacy program in Australia decided that they didn’t like the term "protégés," whereupon the Citizen Advocacy program decreed that henceforth they were to be called either "people" or by their names. Other "people" are going to be mighty confused as to who are people and who are "people," and what the program is doing when its advocates and protégés are being signified by their names rather than by their functions or statuses, and why the program should be funded with taxpayers’ money.

*As mentioned above, the UN is attempting to have all the countries of the world adopt a Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other things, this would give children the right to form their own views and express them freely, meaning (among other things) that authority figures cannot shut them up. This clause has already been used in the United Kingdom against parents who tried to remove their children from certain sex education classes. If the rules were adopted in the US, they would have the force of treaties, which become the law of the land and supersede all federal and state laws. UN teams which are not elected, and not accountable to any particular nation, could roam around and monitor and enforce the elements of the convention.

*In 1997, there was a conference at a German institution for 1200 mentally retarded people—and an entire day was devoted to the topic of empowerment and self-determination even though the people had to live in an institution.

*We have been receiving the flyers of a retirement planning vulture who invites people to a free dinner to hear a spiel on retirement planning, and the flyer was headed with the phrase "Retirement=It’s All About Choice!" This is about as low-level an example of trying to capitalize on the choice image as we have seen.

*A handicapped woman who ended up in a nursing home because no other alternatives were made available to her systematically sabotaged the nursing home by doing things such as disconnecting computers and telephones, throwing connecting wires away, calling the state Department of Health to come for surprise inspections, opening fire doors and pushing medication carts out of them, cutting many wires (including to the electric doors so that they could not be closed), stopping up toilets, etc. (Mouth, 9/02). We suspect it would have been a lot cheaper to pay her attendant care at home. Now here, we would say she has a lot of self-determining capacities.

*We have noticed that in individual service plans, it may say that one of the goals is to enable a person to "make (more) choices." Interestingly, we have even noticed that sometimes, it is said that the person’s health and safety should be increased so that the person can make more choices. This is a most peculiar way of conceptualizing desiderata for a person. It is almost as if the only reason for keeping the person healthy and alive is so that the person can practice self-determination or make more "choices." Once again, this not only elevates a modest desideratum into a major one, but even reverses the place of means and goals.
*In California, what we call "people-funding" was called "self-determination" in 2002.

*Reportedly, there is a dramatic increase in left-handed children, which we attribute to the self-determination ideology being applied to infants.

"Empowerment" Issues

*As we keep pointing out, any old scheme can be reglamorized by attaching a name to it that is associated with the latest new popular craze. So any kind of education or service whatever may now be called an "empowerment."

*The US government evolved a scheme some years ago of designating certain urban areas as "empowerment zones" which receive special tax exemption privileges and low-interest loans. It reminds us a bit of "urban renewal," which ended up being called "urban removal."

*A pyramid scheme that duped hundreds of women out of thousands of dollars was promoted under the catchy name, "Women Empowering Women." Those who fell for it were probably enamored of the empowerment notions (SPS, 16/11/02).

*A headline in TASH Connections (5/02) said "Assistive Technology Should Empower, Not ‘Help’ People With Disabilities." But what if even the assistive technology does not enable a person to toilet on their own? Should they be left in their excrement in the name of power?

*The Dilbert cartoon (SPS, 9 March 02) made fun of the empowerment cliché by having the office director decree that every employee will wear a button that says "I am empowered." When one employee avers, "I don’t want to," he is told "You have to!"

Issues--Mostly Perversions--Associated With Rights

*There is a 1977 city ordinance in Syracuse, NY, prohibiting loud noises that are a nuisance to others, because city residents complain that such noise (e.g., from TVs and stereos being played very loud) is one of the biggest offenders against their "quality of life." People have been ticketed for playing their car stereos and "boom boxes"--sometimes in the middle of the night--so loud as to be heard blocks away, and by neighbors. However, several such convictions were being appealed in 2002 on the basis that the statute is unconstitutional. Obviously, people think they have a "right" to impose their unbridled self-will on others, in total disregard of others’ welfare, and will try to recruit the law to do this.

*People have begun to assert that they have a right to conduct very loud telephone conversations on their cellphones while attending public plays or movies. One problem with these kinds of new rights is they actually make a total and complete mockery of the entire rights construct. Firstly, it is an assertion of rights for oneself without any regard whatsoever to any other person or party: "I have rights, but you don’t." Secondly, when one considers the relatively few basic rights that people under tyranny in the past have always wanted, the assertion of these peculiar and minor but annoying personal whims as rights makes a mockery of the suffering and sacrifices of people who have worked or fought for the overthrow of oppressive tyrannies. It is also a mockery, and deeply disrespectful, of people who lost their very lives in struggling for freedom for their descendants, because they certainly did not die for someone’s right to blow smoke in other people’s faces, keep them up at night with loud music, or interfere with their attention to a theater play by loud personal phone conversations nearby.

*A Kentucky man fathered 12 children by 11 women, then insisted that this was his right and he had no intention to stop, even though he is "disabled" by blindness, and has a heart problem and high blood pressure (SPS, 27/3/02).

*The Nobel Prize-winning novelist Ernest Hemingway had a son named Gregory who often dressed as a woman and went by the name of Gloria. When he was found walking around naked in the Miami area, he was taken to jail--but to a women’s section (SPS, 5 Oct. 01). One would think
that imprisoned women would have a right not to be jailed together with men, but apparently, in an age where people are seen as entitled to define their own gender and everything about themselves, it seemed to have been the right of a man playing a woman's role to be put in jail with women, and he had all the rights and they had none.

*A whole new perverse civil rights development is that in the US, one can sue a firm in court for job discrimination without ever having either worked for it, or even applied for a job there. Four women successfully sued a family restaurant run by a woman for allegedly discriminating against women employees because it did not have the proper ratio of women employees, but only one of the 4 had ever applied to that restaurant for a job. The women who had never applied were even awarded damage money (SPS, 26/7/02).

**"Enable: People With Disabilities and Computers," 1999, color, sound, 45 minutes. This video is very problematic. It has The Flying Karamazov Brothers, a 2-man comic juggling act, but it is never explained why these are part of this video. Why not some other entertainer, such as Madonna or Snoop Doggy Dogg or Wayne Newton? Why entertainers at all? Why not Bill Clinton, or Nelson Mandela, or Osama bin Laden? The Karamazov Brothers are shown having supper with 3 handicapped people at a restaurant. One is a blind man, another a deaf woman, another a man with a severe physical impairment (apparently a degenerative condition), such that he is in a wheelchair and has little use of his limbs. These 5 people do not talk about computers and the handicapped, but snippets of their dinner table conversation are interspersed with footage of various other handicapped people who do talk about how much computers have enhanced their lives. These include a paraplegic, a quadriplegic, a man with severe cerebral palsy, and 2 deaf women. Why these two filmings are interspersed with each other is not clear. The dinner table conversation focuses on attitudes towards impairments and people with impairments, and the ideas of the 3 handicapped people about these attitudes and how to improve them. Unfortunately, these ideas are almost stereotypical of the so-called "disability rights" movement which thinks one can change people’s attitudes by talking at them, and by demanding one's rights. At the conclusion of the first 45-minute video is another 45-minute video which is an exact duplicate of the first, except that it includes narration for blind viewers (e.g., "now the woman is writing notes in class"). The film was produced by Microsoft, the computer giant, which presumably has an interest in selling as many computers and computer programs as possible, including to handicapped people.

*One of our friends found an unruly handicapped middle school boy padlocked to his desk, and asked the teachers, "Isn't this illegal?," to which the teacher replied, "Yes, but I simply don't know what else to do." This illustrates the plight that a lot of people in human services are put into by all sorts of mandates from far away that they, on the direct contact level, simply cannot manage. The appropriate responses would probably be programmatic ones, but what we call the rights nuts and formalizers would reply by yet another punitive directive from far above.

Miscellaneous News About Social Advocacy

*Sharkey, J. (1994). Bedlam: Greed, profiteering, and fraud in a mental health system gone crazy. New York: St. Martin's Press. This book is an expose, by a journalist, of the for-profit private mental and drug-and-alcohol rehab facilities that grew explosively in the 1980s. It exemplifies so many PPP dynamics, such as identifying ever more people as having problems that require service address; identifying as problems things that once would hardly have been noticed, or at least would have been dealt with very informally; agencies soaking the government and other insurers for as much money as possible, and then dropping or dumping clients when the funding runs out; and buying and selling clients among agencies so as to obtain maximum reimbursement rates.

An example of what happens to those who stand in contradiction to a perverse human service system occurred to a physician in Texas who opposed his hospital's practice of keeping people with supposed mental, drug, and alcohol problems only as long as their insurance would pay, and then declaring them cured and discharging them. A special hospital committee declared him to be mentally ill, accused him before the state medical association of being "likely impaired," of dereliction of duty, and certain other offenses, and attempted to have his medical license revoked. He lost his job as a result of these attacks (pp. 211-214). This is the typical fate of "whistle-blowers."
*Utah became the first US state in 2001 to legislate the establishment of a state office of a pornography ombudsman, to address citizen complaints of obscenity or pornography in the media and by the public. Efforts along similar lines are underway in other states (NCR, 24/2/02).

*In 2002, a man sued 4 leading fast-food chains, claiming that they had made him fat so that he suffered high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart attacks and diabetes. He also claimed that he had been led to believe that decades of eating fast-food was good for him (SPS, 27/7/02). This has since become a class action suit; a judge dismissed it in early 2003.

*It has become very chic now in a lot of PC circles to claim to have been abused as a child or teenager. At least in some of the Canadian provinces, it was only in the 1990s that many middle-aged graduates of federal schools for natives began to claim that they had been abused many decades earlier. Eventually 15,000 "survivors" joined a lawsuit, and the churches that had run these schools for the government began to fall all over themselves apologizing and paying off, even though hard evidence of such abuse has been sparse. In fact, some research has refuted many of the accusations. The schools generally taught what other residential schools did all over the British world, but this has since come to be interpreted as having constituted cultural and emotional abuse, and about 90% of the claims are for "cultural genocide," probably referring to things such as the children being taught Shakespeare and Robert Louis Stevenson. Research has also shown that when the government and churches wanted to close any of these schools, it was the Indian bands that wanted them kept open. It was further shown that contrary to claims, native children were not forced to become Christian, because already in 1871, before the schools even opened, 96% had already identified themselves as Christian (FT, 4/02).

*In efforts to take a big load off the courts, New York State started a program to resolve automobile insurance disputes in a month's time through a process of arbitration under the state's no-fault auto insurance scheme. Instead, either disputes increased or arbitration slowed down to the point where it took more than 2 years to arbitrate disputes (AP in SPS, 10 July 01).

*A single mother of 5 in Canada had a severely retarded son who was becoming more aggressive as he grew into his teens. So she had him castrated, upon which she, the doctor and the hospital were sued by her province's public guardian. But rather than merely suing over the castration, they included in their suit the peculiar charges that the castration would cause sex drive loss and took away the right to parenthood. Also, a peculiar conflict of interest developed in that the courts put the public guardian in charge of the retarded man's financial affairs at the same time as the public guardian was suing for big compensations for the man, which if successful would put the guardian in charge of a lot of money, and Canada has had a very bad history of public guardian offices living off the properties of the people whom they supervise. It also does not help that the human service workers on the scene have been pretending that handicapped people are not handicapped, and that they could become perfectly competent parents, as came out not only in connection with this case but with others as well. Some parents have called these service workers "delusional" (5 & 6/02 clippings from Kathryn Smith).

*In early 2002, there was a "World Summit on Disability" by nongovernmental organizations that took place in China with participation from all continents. It issued a Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People With Disabilities in the New Century. Coming from China, this strikes us as rather ironic. Has no one any shame anymore?

*Related to the above: here are some of the nations which have representatives on the UN Human Rights Commission: China, Libya, Syria, and the Sudan which is one of the world's worst considering how widespread slavery and genocide there is. That is like putting a whole herd of coyotes in charge of the chicken house.

*Among handicapped people, a new phrase is "discovering one's anger" (Mouth, 2000). We suspect that often, it is being whipped into anger by other angry handicapped militants.

*Mouth (9/02) told a wonderful story of people who had a beef with the shrink unit of a Rochester, NY, hospital, and who telephoned the handicapped advocate for the handicapped, Justin
Dart, in DC to talk to the administrator. One of the advocates handed the imperial administrator the phone, saying "Justin Dart wants a word with you." She sucked in her breath and said, "The Justin Dart of DART Industries?" The protestors saw dollar signs in the woman's eyes and quickly reassured her yes, it was Justin Dart himself, and that he had important connections with the Americans With Disabilities Act, which whip-lashed the administrator into thinking big lawsuits, and she listened to Justin for 15 minutes without hardly saying anything, such as the usual crap dished out to protestors and advocates.

*From an article in VIA News (No. 90, 1997), we learned for the first time that there is such a thing as Black People First, and one of its members said "I feel proud to be a black person with a learning difficulty...." A mimic of "black pride" and "gay pride" is now "mad pride," which implies one should be proud of being insane. In Oregon, hundreds of members of Mad Pride gathered in a "normal-free zone" at a fair (Mouth, 3/2000).

*There is an organization of mothers of handicapped children who call themselves "Mothers From Hell" who publish the Brimstone Bulletin, headquartered in Illinois.

*Now that it has become almost normative for advocacy organizations--and sometimes service corporations as well--to put competency-impaired people on their governing boards, an unmentioned and probably previously unforeseen consequence is that it vastly increases the power of the executive director vis-à-vis the board which no longer has enough competent members. Nowhere have we seen this addressed in the relevant literature. Of course, this is an extremely maladaptive long-term situation insofar as the board is supposed to be the boss of the staff, and organizations with strong directors usually experience an atrophy of board control and board competency, which will avenge itself viciously over the long-run, particularly when a strong executive director leaves and another one of lesser competency is employed. Since the presence of affected people on such boards is desirable, the adaptive solution seems to be to try to select competent ones, or to keep their proportion within bounds.

*The old pre-1970 practice of requiring parents to relinquish guardianship over their children in order for them to receive services continues in at least 26 US states as of the year 2000.

*In some states, the word "capacitated" is used to refer to a person being legally competent.

*A man in British Columbia wrote a software program that allegedly spots conflicts of interest in public documents, but we have serious doubts about how effective this program is (SPS, 15/7/02).

**War & Its Toll**

*An English Quaker's son, Lewis Fry Richardson (1881-1953), made a systematic study of war deaths. First he inventorized all identifiable wars between 1820-1950, and classified them as to scope and number of deaths, ordering them into 7 categories. Of these, 315 were of "magnitude 2.5 or greater," i.e., entailing 300 or more deaths. The two world wars were magnitude 7. But there were many more little wars at the bottom that nonetheless added up to 9.7 million deaths. Seven conflicts rated magnitude 6, and yet most people have never even heard of many of them: the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), the North American Civil War (1861-1865), the Great War in La Plata (1865-1870), the sequel to the Bolshevik Revolution (1918-1920), the first Chinese-Communist War (1927-1936), the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the riots in the Indian subcontinent (1946-1948) (American Scientist, 1/2002).

*Iraq contains one of the largest oil reserves in the world, and according to some authorities, the main reason the Bush administration has wanted to make war on Iraq is in order to secure these oil reserves for the West. By securing access to cheap oil, the administration would placate its rich capitalist backers and postpone the kind of austerity measures that Republican businesspeople (and Americans generally) abhor.

*To keep a US armored division on the go requires, every single day, 395,000 gallons of fuel and 213,000 gallons of water, to say nothing of other supplies (Newsweek, 30/9/02).
If one colors in on a map all the countries of the world that possess weapons of mass destruction, about one-half the world qualifies, including some very poor countries. Virtually everybody possesses chemical weapons of mass destruction, and almost everybody has biological ones. Although this has long been predicted, it seems to have slipped up on the rest of the world. Even Romania, living on the edge of starvation, has biological such weapons, and the Sudan which has long been in similar straits, has chemical ones. Among other poor nations that have such arms are Laos, Myanmar and Ethiopia (AP in SPS, 22/9/02).

It seems that the US Republican administration was blindsided by North Korea, which used the Bush administration’s obsession with Iraq to develop nuclear weapons. It also appears that the US ally Pakistan has been helping North Korea to acquire nuclear weapons. In return, North Korea has apparently given Pakistan medium-range ballistic missiles (Time, 28/10/02).

One reason why Iraq made so much military progress was that when Iran was the big threat in the Middle East in the 1980s, Iraq was befriended by the US, and given much help to fight Iran to a draw. The latest deceptive governmental outrage is the discovery that the US actually helped Iraq in its chemical warfare against Iran and the Kurds, and now wants to make war on Iraq for possessing these weapons (e.g., SPS, 18/8/02 & 30/10/02; NCR, 6-12/10/02). Even after the Gulf War of 1991 (World War IV), firms from all over the Western world, including 30 German, 11 British, and 10 American companies, were selling technology to Iraq which might be used for chemical, biological or nuclear warfare. It is ironic that British and American planes have been bombing Iraq on and off ever since 1990 while these countries were busily selling it armament potential (SPS, 18/12/02). Of course, this is the perfect PPP arrangement: sell the material up front, then use up bombs to destroy it at the other end so that one can sell more. One of the firms that did much business with Iraq in 1998-99 was the very firm (Halliburton) of which current Vice President Cheney was the executive. He is now one of the most vigorous promoters of war against Iraq. Maybe he does know what weapons it has because of his sales.

Stinger missiles fired from the shoulder by a single person have become a major threat to civilian aircraft, as we recently learned from the Islamic warrior attacks in Kenya in December 2002. Only then was it revealed that such Stingers had shot down a number of aircraft in recent years. These weapons were made in the US and then sold or given away on the international arms market, and one can buy one as cheaply as $2,000. It is a great mystery why first of all, the US would keep releasing such missiles so that they can be used against US and allied planes; and secondly, why would the US not buy back all the available Stingers on the black market for this ridiculously low price. Such a purchase would cost a tiny fraction of what it would cost to lose even a single aircraft, and the money that would have to be paid out in insurance and lawsuit settlements thereafter.

According to CBS "60 Minutes" (13/1/02), the US has been spraying powerful defoliating poisons all over Colombia in a program that some people have called the Agent Orange of this decade, as a result of which much of the country is being poisoned, rain forests are destroyed, crops, fish and livestock are being killed, poor farmers and Indians are being made terribly sick, and the Amazon Basin is poisoned (some of the above probably irreversibly). There has been uprooting of entire villages, again as in Vietnam. Colombian mayors and governors have begged the US to stop, but to no effect. Ironically, none of this has been able to stop coca production, which is why the death squads have shown no interest in stopping the spraying because the coca trade just keeps going on.

In 1980, the world was somewhat prematurely declared to be free of smallpox, with Russia and the US having the only vaccines left. Even as Russia was pledging to eradicate smallpox, and everybody agreed to destroy these vaccines, Russia was secretly developing smallpox biological warfare agents, so the US eventually decided in 1999 to keep its vaccines. We have commented on this whole issue before. The staggering number of 60,000 scientists in Russia were working on biological weapons overall. Now these biological weapons experts are scattered all over the world, in part working for rogue regimes such as Iraq (which is believed to have the virus) and North Korea (CBS "60 Minutes," 1 Oct. 00).
*Experts in biological weaponry keep warning us that the dangers of some rogue country or rogue faction, such as terrorists, using biological weapons is vastly higher than people realize. Once such weapons are used, the biological agents can spread far beyond the intended victims, and could even cause a worldwide epidemic. Further, even for some of the merely bacterial agents, there are no effective antibiotics (e.g., American Scientist, 1/2001).

*Modern warfare ordnance has increasingly contained environmental pollutants from depleted uranium in armor-penetrating shells. There are also toxins in conventional explosives, and particularly so in the propellant substances for rockets. One ironic consequence is that the survivors on the ground will be likely to die from diseases caused by the toxins.

*As of 10/02, 175,000 (almost one-third) of the roughly 540,000 American veterans who served in the Gulf War are believed to have some form of the "Gulf War Syndrome," which includes neurological and neural immune illnesses. This was the first time that we heard of this huge number, which apparently has been kept out of the news. It is also remarkable that the Pentagon denied for years that soldiers had been exposed to chemical contamination during the war, even though it knew that that had happened. It also denied for years that the Gulf War Syndrome was real (Syracuse Post-Standard, 25/10/02).

*An article in American Scientist (1/03) made clear that a decision taken by the US Department of Energy in December 1998 has once again closely wedded the civilian production of nuclear power with the military production of nuclear weapons by having commercial nuclear reactors produce tritium which is necessary to make nuclear weapons, or keep existing ones functional.

The National Academy of Sciences in the US has pointed out repeatedly that the plutonium that gets separated from spent nuclear fuel in nuclear power stations can readily be used to make nuclear weapons. We have always said that nuclear power production could not be separated from nuclear weapons production, and this bears it out, as in the recent developments in North Korea.

*As is usually the case with what appears to be a nuclear limitation treaty, the one that was signed by Bush and Putin in 5/02 has vastly less substance than it appears to. First of all, while nuclear warheads are supposed to be greatly reduced, they don’t have to be destroyed for 10 years, meaning that they can simply be stored for future use. One expert openly admitted, "There is no actual reduction, just an agreement on the deployment of forces. You can’t even call it an arms control treaty." Furthermore, the treaty may make things even more dangerous because Russian nuclear weapons may now be transferred from well-guarded military bases to insecure storage sites where they are guarded by guards who often are homeless and hungry, and sometimes abandon their posts to forage for resources, not to mention that the site alarm systems often do not work. Thirdly, the treaty can be abrogated with a 3-month notice, so one side could wait 9½ years before doing anything and then at the end of it suddenly cancel the treaty. The treaty does not call for any detargeting, and each side has enough missiles to still destroy the other, all targeted and ready. Nothing in the treaty affects the thousands of small "tactical" nuclear weapons on either side. The Bush administration also wants to start nuclear testing again.

*While over 8 million people in Ethiopia are at risk of starvation, Ethiopia has spent $300 million on arms and war (against Eritrea) between 1998-2002.

*Self-deluded anthropologists continue to insist that there was never any cannibalism except the ritual kind, but even the warriors of the recent African wars have openly admitted that they killed people, cooked them, and ate them, and that there was nothing ritual about it but it was a matter of trying to get enough to eat. Sometimes, they would also drink the blood of the people they had slain or were about to slay. One problem is that very few of the many African men who have been engaged in atrocities in many African countries in recent years will admit that they are responsible for grievous offenses. They tend to blame somebody else for having "made them do it" (Newsweek, 13/5/02). This goes together with one of those multi-cultural regional customs of not facing facts and reality that we find in much of Africa, as well as of the Islamic world. However, we do not recommend that the diversity of cannibalism be celebrated, or even made mandatory in US colleges and universities.
At one time, soldiers had to carry back-breaking burdens around with them. Because of the "miracles of modern science," the tools of warfare today are much lighter than they used to be. One consequence is that this has opened up unimagined opportunities for children to become warriors, and an estimated 200,000 children under the age of 15, including young girls, are now soldiers in warfaring armies and rebel groups around the world (Time, 18/6/90; Monitor, 9/01).

We are often unaware that little wars in the Third World are often also proxy wars of great powers. For instance, there has been civil war in Liberia (the African country established by former US slaves) since the 1980s, and at various times, it involved in various ways 15 other countries: Gambia, Nigeria, Guinea, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Libya, the United States, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Lebanon, Japan, Britain, and France (B&C, 1/01).

In the US military, there were 58,000 incidences of domestic violence in a single recent year, with 3 times the civilian rate of killings. As with so many other things involving the US military, there have been massive cover-ups not just of this fact, but also of the individual incidents of violence and killings. Very little gets done in any particular instance, and the assaulters are often "sentenced" to nothing but counselling, which they often ignore (CBS "60 Minutes," 1 Sept. 02). We find it hard to believe that training of soldiers generally, and that of US soldiers specifically, does not desensitize them to violence, and that participating in actual warfare does not do so as well.

A 1999 photo showed an experimental US interceptor missile sticking out from a silo, and to our amazement, attached to it were 5 big logos of firms that had contributed to its production, like giant outdoor advertisements (SPS, 16/12/01).

It is hard to believe, but there are 40,000 colonels in the US Armed Forces, and possibly more during periods of mobilization.

The TIPS editor came to the US in 1950, settling in Memphis, Tennessee. Shortly thereafter—around 1952—there was held the last reunion of the US Civil War veterans of the North and South, who for decades used to meet separately in "encampments" until there were so few that meeting jointly made more sense. The reason this reunion was called the last was that there were fewer than a dozen veterans able to attend. The event was marked by the issuance of a moving commemorative stamp, showing a man as a young Civil War soldier and as a very aged veteran. It is now 50 years later, and not only are all the Civil War veterans gone, but there are only a few hundred veterans of WW I left, and they are dying off rapidly. Unlike the Civil War veterans, they never met in a single body nationally (as far as we know), but in subgroups, the same as the veterans of WW II. The latter are also rapidly fading away; in the US, about 5000 are said to be dying every day.

The Labour government in Britain has proposed that handicapped people should have the legal right to join the armed forces. We are much in favor of this, because the more soldiers are retarded, deaf, blind, crippled, overweight, diabetic, and have weak hearts, the less they are likely to be able to make war. However, senior brass, though calling it "a joke," were not really amused (Mouth, 3/01). Of course, there is a third problematic side to this, which is that if other countries do the same, and then somehow manage to go to war anyway, all these handicapped people will end up killing each other.

Before the Hutterites embraced nonviolence in the 16th century, there were two factions. A member of the pro-violence one was called a "swordler" (Schwertler), and a nonviolent member was called a "staffer" (Stäbler), i.e., someone with a staff instead of a sword.

Further Coverage of the Role of Insane Political Correctness in the Genesis of, & Response to, Islamic "Terrorism" & Societal Breakdown

The next series of modules all speak to a topic opened up in the last TIPS issue: the insanities of political correctness, and their corollaries of the "celebration" of "diversity" and "multiculturalism," and how these are destroying the nations where they are gaining either widespread acceptance (e.g., in Canada), or where they are being imposed by sheer force by an alienated foolish
Intelligentsia upon an unwilling majority (e.g., in the US and Germany). In many ways, this is a topic related to the one on "Religion in Society" as well as to the one on "War."

The Korean War was really a World War, so the first (1991) Gulf War was really World War IV, and the war in the Balkans was World War V, because a large number of countries in the world had some kind of part in these. We are now obviously into World War VI, and it is likely to be a very long and extremely costly one on all sides. As in World War I, there is plenty of blame on both sides, but it is the Muslims that started the shooting. It is a war between that part of the world that takes Islam very seriously, and the whole rest of Western culture. Some people call it a "clash of civilizations," and that it is, but one that has escalated from clash to war.

The current Islamic war against the West can be said, in retrospect, to have broken out in the 1980s when a shadowy Iraqi organization, called Al Daawa, began to suicide-bomb US embassies in Beirut and Kuwait, and 5 French sites in Kuwait, and kidnapped Americans in Lebanon and held them captive for many months.

The world-wide nature of this warfare is still unfolding, as Westerners discovered when, to their surprise, they learned of the more recent Islamic attacks in mostly Hindu Bali, the religious riots in Nigeria, the double attack in Kenya, and the attacks on Christians all over the Islamic world, and on and in Christian cities of the Philippines.

One thing the liberals and the politically correct have not yet woken up to is that their self-blaming and diversity-celebrating position is totally irrelevant to radical Islam, which sees them as much the enemy (and possibly even more so) as the rest of the West. It is a little bit like the traditional relationship between the liberals and the communists in the countries that were eventually swallowed up by Communism: one of the first things the communists did was to kill all the liberals who had helped usher them in by defending them against the conservatives. And in fact, it had been the liberals who had contributed heavily to the fall of Russia to the Bolsheviks because for years prior to the revolution of 1917, they had propped up the far left and protected it. After all, it is the radical liberal worldview (what some people call radical secular fundamentalism) that is promoting the form of modernism that radical Islam objects to the most.

Given that the war at issue is an unconventional world war, unlike most other people we use the term "terrorism" for Islamic attacks in this war with some misgivings. If it were sometimes not so awkward, we would prefer to use the idiom of warfare, or even Jihad against the West.

As we keep pointing out, radical Islamic warriors do not care, and are even less likely to care in the future, which Westerners they kill. Many countries will have to learn this lesson apparently the hard way.

Blaming al-Qaeda for almost all Muslim "terrorism" against the West has become a bit of a mantra. We need to wake up that this is a long-term world war where the troops on the Muslim side are not necessarily centrally directed, but function on the Führer principle, i.e., they infer what someone like Osama Bin Laden would want to have done, and do it without being ordered to.

World War VI & Its Impact on the Economy

Just before "the events," it was expected that the US federal budget would have a $127 billion surplus. A year later, the forecast had become a $515 billion deficit. Overnight! Readers may recall that we had predicted that this new world war would have devastating long-term economic impacts, including on human services. We also said that we doubted the forecasts of the economists that the US economy would quickly resume its growth. At least by Summer 2002, there were still economic gurus predicting a "Dow at 36,000." However, we would not be surprised if the 1990s turned out to have been the peak of Western affluence, never to be equalled again. At any rate, we also predicted that the impact on human services would be severe and long-lasting, and that has become very obvious. The full impact on human services may take years to become clear.

Facing Up to the Realities of a Recalcitrant But Rather Admirable Islam: Continuation

This section continues our analysis in the previous TIPS issue. There has been a flood of publications on Islam since "the events," falling roughly into 3 categories: those that try to tell the truth about the nature of Islam and Islamic history; those that try to exalt it; and those that try to do the latter but dissociate Islam from war and terrorism, and interpret the recent Islamic radicalism as an aberration or perversion of Islam. (Reviews of these 3 types of books have been carried in recent
issues of First Things and Books & Culture.) Some of these—especially of the first kind—have been eye-openers as to certain historical realities, and some of these will be shared here.

*According to long-standing Islamic tradition, the world is divided into the abode of Islam, and the abode of war, the latter being all territories not ruled by Islamic law. In the abode of war, there is to be no lasting peace until it has become the abode of Islam, which eventually is to be the whole world.

Another Islamic tradition is that if an Islamic country is attacked by non-Islamic forces, then everyone, including women and children, are to fight (ET, 6/02). This is the thinking behind the al-Qaeda war in response to American forces stationed in the Mideast, and women and children becoming suicide bombers in the Holy Land. This ideology has also been recently generalized to apply to situations in which the Islamic rulership of a country have been interpreted to be stooges to nonIslamists, e.g., in Iran, Egypt, and Algeria. In fact, as some Muslim authorities put it, a Muslim who cooperates with an infidel becomes an infidel. Finally, no Islamic territory may ever be allowed to become non-Islamic, which suggests that not long hence, Islam will lay claim to all of the Balkans, Spain and southern Italy which it had once conquered.

One problem is that those Islamic leaders who want to dissociate Islam from violence and terrorism are pretending (e.g., AP in SPS, 20/2/01) that the latter are not part of Islam, which is propaganda. In fact, even suicide terrorism, contrary to much propaganda, is actually an ancient practice of at least certain sectors of Islam, as at least partially pointed out in the last TIPS issue (see also Newsweek, 15/4/02, p. 31).

*By Islamic law, the infidels in an Islamic nation must be left in safety, and allowed to own property (though subject to special taxes), but they must live as dhimmis in dhimmitude, i.e., a form of second-class citizenship. They may keep their religion, but practice it only in a very private way. It is comparable to the way the Jews were allowed to live in most European countries in the past. Living in such second-class citizenship, and always at risk of waves of greater intolerance, deeply stamps the psyche of the dhimmis, much as it did of the Jews. One still sees vestiges of this psyche even in Jews who have lived freed from formal oppressive rules for many generations.

A Jewish scholar, Bat Ye'or, has been touring campuses trying to dispel romantic and PC propaganda about Islamic tolerance, and instead has made clear how oppressive the status of dhimmitude is (NCR, 17/11/02).

*Since readers may not learn it from the liberal media, here is the fatwa (authoritative religious ruling) issued already in 1998 by bin Laden and four other Islamic leaders from several countries: "In compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of the lands of Islam...This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, and 'fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,' and 'fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God'" (ET, 6/02). The subquotes in the fatwa are from the Koran.

One of the problems of fatwas is that like the word of God, and the rulings of the rulers of Persia, they cannot be retracted.

*Unlike the Christian martyr concept, the Islamic one has always had a tendency to engender suicidal kinds of warfare or personal attacks, such as that of the Madhi armies in the 19th century, and the Assassins of the Middle Ages, as we had mentioned before. It is a sign of our times that this kind of mentality has been highly intensified in Islam recently, with even young teenagers and teenage girls seeking to attain glory by blowing themselves up as human bombs, and taking as many as possible of the people they see as their enemies with them. This is even more remarkable than the kinds of suicide attacks we saw on 11 September 2001.

*One conflict between Islam and the West is that in many Islamic cultures, and especially those of the Middle East, politics trumps economics, and politics in turn is shaped by the Islamic religion. It used to be that way all over the world, but now Islam has become the single biggest opponent to a paganized Western materialistic commercialism. We respect this phenomenon as a
positive and honest feature of genuine Islam. Compared to it, Christianity as held by most Western Christians is empty and impotent.

*Considering how extensively Islamic Nigeria is, it should not have been a surprise that its Muslim population thought that bringing 92 beauty queens to Nigeria in 11/02 to "revel in vanity" (as the Muslims put it) was outrageous. As we keep saying over and over, it is exactly this sort of decadent Western modernism to which Islam objects so strenuously. The result was widespread riots with more than 100 dead, who can be considered to be a human sacrifice of and to the Miss World beauty contest--which was blithely carried on in another location.

*One serious clash between the culture of the West, and many non-Western cultures, including that of Islam, is that in the latter, there has not evolved (for both better and worse) the kind of objectifying rationality that the West evolved, especially since the 17th century. This explains at least in part why "evidence" carries so little weight in many non-Western cultures. This further explains things such as why so few people in the non-Western Islamic world believe that an Egyptian pilot out of New York City suicided his own plane in 10/99, or that Muslims flew the four suicide planes on 11 Sept. 01, or that bin Laden had any hand in it, or that Saddam Hussein used poison gas, and on and on. Only 18% of the people in six Muslim countries believed that Arabs were responsible for the 9/01 attacks! In Kuwait, recently rescued by the US, 89% did not believe it. Even in Turkey, held up by the PC as the model Islamic country, 43% did not believe that Arabs had a hand in the 9/01 terror acts. Even among Muslims in the US, 79% say that US foreign policy is to blame for the 9/01 terrorist attacks (FT, 3/02). This is like blaming the Jews for the Holocaust: if only Jews had not been so pushy, people would not have hated them so much.

*The lack of objectification in Islamic and Arabic culture may also account for a different relationship to time, and that in turn may account for the fact that polyphonic music has not caught on in the Middle East, because it requires precise timing by participants, and cooperation among them (B&C, 7/02).

*Perhaps the lack of objectification is also behind the difficulty that Islamic orientals have in dealing with reality, and discoursing veridically about it. This looseness with reality in forms of discourse is not necessarily bad if it is understood for what it is, as it is in the cultures where this prevails. We can find it expressed in some of the flowery and hyperbolic discourse of the orient (e.g., "the mother of all wars"), and even in some Biblical passages. One other form this takes is telling people what they want to hear, in order to please them. But a third form is out-and-out lying, of the kind that has been encountered endlessly from Arabic Muslims since "the events," such as the large-scale forging of identity papers, of untrue answers about real identities and other things during border crossings, the deceptions about money flows, the lying by Arab Muslims accused of crimes, etc. (Our files are full of examples.) Lying is also a habit on the Islamic diplomatic and national levels. Islamic countries constantly lie about many things--including to each other, but they understand that what is said cannot be taken at face value while Western people do not. Much of this lying also involves betrayals, such as we learned are normative in several Eastern cultures, including the Afghan one. Until Yemen got caught in 12/02 importing rockets from North Korea, it had denied it was doing it (SPS, 12/12/02).

However, the lying at issue is almost certainly not a result of Islam, but part of many of the cultures in which Islam became established. In contrast, the lying that we now see so commonly in the West is at least to a large degree the outgrowth of the new culture of modernism of which radical Islam wants no part.

*There are identification paper and passport forgery factories all over the Islamic world, and in those Western countries that have sizable foreign Islamic populations. Apparently, Pakistan is the forgery Mecca, so to speak. Prices range from $220 for a forged Egyptian visa to $25,000 for documents to get into America. One Pakistani travel agent, in typical Islamic manipulation or even inversion of reality, said, "If only the (foreign) embassies treated Pakistanis right, they wouldn't need(!) to forge visas" (AP in SPS, 5 Jan. 03).

*One universal theme in the Islamic discourse for generations has been that Islam has been a victim of the West. The crusades are pointed to as prime examples, and are often mentioned as
if they took place yesterday. (Partly, this is due to a different time orientation.) The fact is that early in its history, Islamic warfare overran three-quarters of what had been the Christian world. Already in 1990, historian Bernard Lewis spoke of the "clash of civilizations" between Islam and Western modernism. The Islamic world sees itself victimized, he said, and has responded by a "downward spiral of hate and spite, rage and self-pity, poverty and oppression." He said that this downward trend started with the defeat of the Turks at the gates of Vienna (!) in 1683. Another way of putting this is that they got real pissed because they did not win, after 1000 years of mostly winning.

*One of the expressions of the hatred of the PC for Christianity is that there is very scant media coverage of the current persecutions of Christians in the world, including in many Islamic countries, even in instances where hundreds of thousands are being killed. Sometimes, these persecutions are construed as ethnic wars, as in the Sudan. Also, some of the persecutions are not covered because they pose "delicate" political problems, such as the massive oppression of Christians in Egypt (a US ally), and in Turkey (a NATO ally and aspirant, and alleged model of Islamic enlightenment). From the media, one would hardly know that since 1990, an average of 160,000 Christians have been killed every year for being Christian, mostly by Muslims in the Third World (NCR, 27/10/02).

*Where Turkey, Iraq and Syria adjoin, there used to exist a large Syriac orthodox Christian population for 1600 years, much of that under oppressive rulers, since they are actually the only indigenous people in that area. They still speak the ancient Aramaic language spoken at the time of Christ. But today, less than 3000 are left, since the area became strife-ridden about 30 years ago (NCR, 24/11/02).

*It has become almost impossible in Turkey for Christians to rent or purchase places of worship, and some Christian places that have been operative have been told to shut down because they "will incite religious, sectarian and Dervish-order discrimination, harm religious and national feelings, and create offense in society" (VOM, 9/02). Turkey is what the PC call a "model Islamic country."

*Even in relatively moderate Islamic nations like Egypt, conversion to Christianity is nonetheless a capital offense. In some such countries, including Pakistan, a mere disrespectful mention of Mohammed deserves beheading (NCR, 26/5/02), and Christians there (some since long ago) are now under severe attack.

*The persecution of Christians in Indonesia has resumed with new fury, as whole Christian villages are being burnt, and their inhabitants massacred. If Christians were doing this to Muslims anywhere in the world, the liberal press would make very big news of it (NCR, 25/8/02).

*One reason why, in the Indian subcontinent, there is so much hostility by Hindus against Muslims is that (PC and diversity celebrators take note!) the Muslims invaded India in the 8th century, and again in the 14th century, wreaked much harm, destroyed Hindu holy places, and oppressed the Hindus. In what is now Bangladesh, they managed to convert most of the population, which is why it was given to Pakistan when India was divided after World War II. However, only a few years ago, Bangladesh was viciously savaged by its Islamic Pakistani overlords, with hundreds of thousands of its women getting raped. Now, the Bangladesh Muslims, whipped up by Islamic fundamentalism, are persecuting their Hindu minorities, many of whom are fleeing to India (NCR, 25/11/01). Not much diversity to celebrate there!

*Only a few years ago, and at great expense, the US saved first the Muslim Bosnians from genocide, and then the mostly Muslim Albanian Kosovars. Even now, there are still US soldiers in Bosnia to make sure the Serbs will not attack. Now, Bosnians are furnishing, or harboring, Islamic terrorists (e.g., SPS, 21/3/02; 24/3/02). Also, even though the Islamic Bosnians and Albanians are now safe, Muslims from other countries (such as Pakistan) have been infiltrating the Balkans to attack Western presences there, and even the very ones that saved their co-religionists (SPS, 3/3/02). One of the rationales may well be that the Balkans was once Islamic territory, and must be rewon.
*In Mecca, 2 million Muslims prayed in early 2002 for the triumph of Islam and the destruction of its enemies (SPS, 21/2/02).

*Even hyper-politically correct Newsweek finally admitted (2 Dec. 02) that "There is a thin line between militant Islam and terrorism...."

*While the Muslims have their own version of political correctness, it has very little in common with Western political correctness. An Afghan clergyman said about the two young Christian missionary women who had been held by the Taliban in early 2002: "How can you let a snake into your home?" (AP in SPS, 24/2/02).

*The Soviets were right to be worried about radical Islam creeping in from the South, because after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it happened. From Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has spread much into Turkmenistan (the worst), Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Christians in these countries either are already persecuted, or coming under much pressure. In Bangladesh, Islamic radicalism grew after Islam was declared the state religion in 1988. Indonesia has the largest Islamic population in the world, and rampages against Christians constantly keep breaking out.

*While there have been many religious wars in the world, and even more non-religious wars invoking religion as a justification, the God of the Jewish Bible never directed the Jews to make wars of conversion, or to kill people for failing to become Jews, the way Muslims are told to do to the infidel in the Koran. This needs saying only because of all the lies we hear these days, such as that Islam means "peace," or about how peaceful Islam is.

*While Islamic culture is still steaming over the crusades as if they happened yesterday, the crusader kingdoms actually permitted Muslims to practice their religion freely. They were also equal opportunity warriors in that they sacked Christian Constantinople as well.

*No sooner had the politically correct world pointed to Turkey as an outstanding example of tolerant Islam (which was a lie) than Turkey voted in, by a landslide, a much more radical Islamic government in 11/02. The former prime minister said, "We committed suicide!" This also ups the ante for Europe that had let in millions of Turks as settlers, many of whom have recently begun to make common cause with the radical Islamic Arabs in Western Europe. Not to mention that Turkey is still brutally persecuting its Kurdish minority--even as it denies that it even has such an ethnic minority.

*In desperation, the media hailed the outgoing dictator of Malaysia (for 21 years) who had elections rigged, the press controlled, and his rivals imprisoned, as a "moderate Muslim," "an enlightened despot," because he did not tolerate radical Muslims (SPS, 28/6/02). The same media never gave Franco of Spain an inch.

*It has become clearer over time that the US government was right about one post-9/01 claim: Islamic charities were massively involved in sluicing money to terrorism-related causes. Contributors may not have known about it, but the charity big shots have been earnestly lying.

One good news is that the crackdown on Islamic charities in the US has also led to a similar crackdown on non-Islamic charities linked to terrorism in Ireland and Spain (AP in SPS, 1/1/02).

*While Bush is putting armed forces in dozens of Islamic countries, he has been saying that Islam is a religion of peace! He does not seem to realize that we are rapidly becoming less stupid on this issue.

*Charles Colson, with decades of prison ministry experience behind him, says that there are multitudes of angry men in prison who are smoldering to "get even" with the society that put them behind bars, and this makes them prime recruiting ground for radical Islam that wants to enlist warriors in its war against modernism and Western civilization. Much of the effort to recruit radicals in US prisons to Islam has been funded by hundreds of millions of dollars of money from Saudi Arabia. He also said that he had encountered many such prisoners who had already converted to Islam in their anger against society. In fact, one of these schools of radical Islam has made the
prison population one of its priorities for conversion or recruitment. Even two weeks after 11 Sept.
01, a Muslim chaplain of the Albion prison in New York State had to be suspended because he was
telling inmates that bin Laden should be hailed as a hero. All this has also been noted by authorities
in other countries, such as the French government (FT, 11/02). However, in our opinion, it has
coming to it what it is getting because of its mindless political correctness over a period of decades.

*One thing that amazes us is that no one has commented on the similarity between al-Qaeda
and some of the private international crime, terror, or world-conquest-seeking organization of films
and TV series of the 1960s-1970s, such as SPECTRE, CHAOS and SMERF. Think about it, those
of you old enough to remember. Al-Qaeda has even been revealed to have a navy, most recently
(31/12/02) estimated to consist of about 15 freighters that constantly change appearance, names and
registrations.

*An Egyptian leader of an Islamic group had been married to 95 women in short order, 4 at
a time, but he slipped up counting one day and woke up with 5—for which he was arrested. Islam
requires that before you pull in a fifth, you have to throw one of the other 4 back out (VOM, 4/02).

The Holy Land Situation & Its Links to the Clash of Civilizations

As we made clear in the last TIPS issue, one of a small number of overarching reasons why
the Islamic world is so resentful of the US is the support the US has given to Israel even when Israel
acted unjustly and brutally toward the Palestinian Arabs (Muslims and Christians alike), often in
violation of trade or treaty obligations that Israel not use weapons provided by the US against its
domestic Arabs. We have even had Israeli soldiers admitting on American TV that they have
committed war crimes, including shooting unarmed civilians. Of course, Israeli brutality is largely
a reaction against multi-generational Arab warfare against the Jews. Both sides are immoral and
irrational, and apparently recalcitrantly so, headed for a Mideast Götterdämmerung that most likely
will spell the end of Israel, but not of Arabic Islam.

Amazingly, Jews and Arabs are stepbrothers, and when one sees pictures of them mourning
or infuriated, they look alike.

*The situation in the Holy Land is one of the best examples one would probably ever find of
both sides in a dispute being totally wrong. This was certainly illustrated by the Israeli siege of the
Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. (Source: many news clippings.) On the one hand, the
Palestinians brought arms and explosives inside this very holy place, and extensively trashed it, even
though they were given gracious hospitality. Despite the fact that the monks stayed (at least in part
to prevent a blood bath) and shared their food, their quarters were broken into and ransacked. Altars
were desecrated, and got used for cooking meals, and walls for urinating against. Apparently, no
efforts were made to set up housekeeping and hygiene routines. Some of the Arab gunmen fired
automatic rifles from the windows of the church compound. However, there was apparently no theft
of artifacts.

Can you imagine how the Muslim world would have reacted if a group of militant, or even
armed, Christians had shoved their way into one of Islam’s holiest places? There would have been
riots (some very bloody) world-wide!

On the other hand, the Israelis were—if anything—even more disrespectful, because they
actually shed blood. Israeli snipers killed 8 people in and around the church compound, including
a mentally retarded bell ringer, and injured 22, including a monk who got shot in the head looking
out the window. Another brother who opened a door got shot at with 4 bullets that missed him.
Israeli soldiers spray-painted Israeli stars all over the place, and the Israelis also told a lot of lies
about the Palestinians looting the religious artifacts in the church.

From violence by both sides, 35 doors got broken, 55 windows shattered, and a stained glass
got cracked (AP in SPS, 6 April 02).

Israelis also savaged Catholic Bethlehem University. They shot at some of the brothers, broke
into many rooms and defaced many doors with green paint—all this despite the university being
described as the least political one in the West Bank (NCR, 26/5/02). Further, Israelis inflicted much
gratuitous damage on the little town of Bethlehem itself, including destroying a monument erected
as recently as 2000 with parts of the spire of Cologne Cathedral; it was run down by tanks.
One thing that is amazing is how little outcry there was from the Christian world about this
totally unnecessary siege, and the behavior of both sides. There was also vastly less outcry from the
politically correct than there would have been if a Western power had besieged a Muslim holy place
in a comparable fashion.

There is one good news. We were overjoyed to learn that some of the armed gunmen most
wanted by Israel who took refuge in the Church of the Nativity are being given asylum in various
European countries, and possibly Canada. They certainly deserve each other, though from Canada
they would have no difficulty attacking the US.

*In part because of the constant warfare in Israel and Lebanon, and in part because of Islamic
oppression, the Middle East is becoming depopulated of Christians who had lived there for 2000
years. This started with the Turkish genocide of the (Orthodox) Armenians during World War II,
which took place not merely in what is now Turkey but in several of the other countries that are now
south and east of Turkey. (This is still being denied by Turkish authorities and intellectuals from the
top to the bottom. Note what we said earlier about the relationship to truth and evidence among
Muslims.) Areas that once had hundreds of thousands of Christians are now down to hundreds.
More recently, there has been a mass exodus of Christians from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and
Egypt. Ironically, the Israeli government applies oppressive measures against its Christian population
very similar to those that we find in many Islamic countries. For instance, it refuses building permits
for Christian buildings, and makes it difficult for Christian owners in the Jerusalem area to connect
to city utilities. The old city of Jerusalem was once 52% Christian, and is now only 2.5%, with
Sydney, Australia, having more Christians born in Jerusalem than Jerusalem itself. Not long ago,
Palestine was 10% Christian and today is about 3%. The Copts of Egypt have found themselves
increasingly in unlivable conditions (B&C, 5/02 & 7/02).

*There is a vast amount of confusion, especially among Christians, about the fact that the
State of Israel is not identical to Jewry. There were Jews before Israel, there will be after Israel, a
large proportion of Israeli citizens are not Jews, and most amazing of all, the majority of Jewish
Israelis do not adhere to Judaism.

*One of the bitter fruits of multi-culturalism in many Western countries today, and particularly
those that have sizeable Jewish populations, is that the war in Palestine is being carried to their
countries, with Muslims and Arabs of the first and second immigrant generation, and often even later
generations, being lined up in intense conflict, sometimes of a violent nature, with the local Jewish
population. On the other side, Jews whose families have been in the respective country for many
generations, and who are not Israelis, have taken up the Israeli cause militantly one-sidedly. As we
said before, this violates a basic rule for allowing people from another culture to settle in one's
country, or at least in countries like the US: leave your old quarrels from your old places behind,
or else stay out.

Mostly, it is Muslims attacking Jews and their facilities, but not always. One example is that
of a Jewish physician in Florida who began to lay in an arsenal of weapons and explosives in order
to destroy Islamic centers, and a Jewish comedian refused to let a comedian of Palestinian descent
perform with him. In Syracuse, many small grocery shops in poor areas are operated by Palestinians,
often actually Christian ones, but they may openly make nasty comments about Jews to their
customers.

In France, the situation is so bad that the media hardly ever inform us that the attacks on
Jews, synagogues, etc., are being carried out by Arabic Muslims, often of the second generation, and
often wearing the kinds of picturesque (multicultural) hoods and masks that we have also seen the
Palestinians use in their violence toward the Israelis.

This atmosphere of escalating conflict also contributes to an atmosphere of partially justified
paranoia. For instance, when there is an incidence of unsolved arson at a synagogue (as happened
in Syracuse, NY), one cannot help but wonder whether Islamic radicals or their skinhead
sympathizers were behind it.

*Illegal Jewish settlers in the West Bank have been harassing their Arab neighbors so much
that some have vacated entire villages (e.g., SPS, 20/10/02). It is a bit like what Americans did to
the Indians—except that one day not far off, these settlers will be driven out in turn.
*According to American law, Americans may not fight for foreign powers under foreign command except in very special circumstances. In fact, doing so is grounds for revocation of US citizenship. We believe that any American citizen who goes to the Mideast to fight either for or against the State of Israel should be decitizened.

*In the midst of Israeli attacks on Arab communities in 2002, there were at least 100 "We Stand With Israel" rallies across the US, including two in Syracuse alone, one of these on the campus of Syracuse University. At these rallies, horror scenes were shown (on video) of Arab terrorist atrocities, but apparently not of Israeli atrocities. Apparently, these rallies included the playing of the Israeli anthem, and many participants wrapped Israeli flags around themselves, all of which presents a serious problem to the traditional US immigrant ethic--and took a lot of chutzpah. This must have been extremely hard on the huge number of PC Jewish multi-cultural diversity celebrators. No wonder the shrinks are thriving.

*Blind rage. Mostly unbeknownst in the West, there has been one Palestinian police agency (Preventive Security) that was trained by the CIA and that has for years incarcerated Palestinian terrorists or prevented them from striking at Israelis. Yet in their recent mindless rage, the Israelis bombed them out too. Israel also made war on the Palestinian equivalent of street cops who direct traffic and go after petty criminals, and who were not fighting Israel (Newsweek, 29/4/02).

*One of the rules of "civilized war" is that legitimate combatants must be prepared to risk their lives rather than to commit atrocities. For instance, it is not permissible to simply blow up a city full of civilians just so that one can avoid a nasty house-to-house battle. Relatedly, one practice occasionally employed by the Israelis that is explicitly forbidden by the Geneva convention is using civilians as human shields. This is not even defensible if the other side does it. A Palestinian housewife was shot dead for sticking her head out a window to call her husband and 4 children to come in from their garden, fearing they might get shot at. Other recent Israeli atrocities even included firing on an obviously unarmed group of international peace advocates near Bethlehem, wounding 8 (SPS, 2 April 02). However, Israeli atrocities are given scant coverage in most US media, and we obviously learn of only some of them.

Foreign journalists, even in groups of 20, and thus not easy to mistake for combatants, have also been fired upon by the Israelis, and many wounded, to say nothing of attacks on journalists with usually nonlethal weapons, such as gas and rubber bullets (e.g., SPS, 12 April 02). Obviously, the Israelis do not want the world to see what they are doing. While the US military has the same attitude, imagine the outcry if it fired into a crowd of American journalists--or for that matter, Swiss, Norwegian, Italian and Indian journalists! That would just about put the jinx on that war. Even more than the American military, the Israeli one never seems to admit its "mistakes."

We find it totally unconscionable that the very people who are screaming "never again" (in respect to the Holocaust) are not uttering one peep at the war crimes being committed by the Israelis, and we are not even talking about alleged war crimes but well-documented ones. This is the very opposite to "never again," in that it is "now once more, but by us."

*One claim one keeps hearing from Israelis over and over is that theirs is "the most moral army in the world" (e.g., SPS, 20/4/02). Perhaps the seemingly increasing tendency of Israelis to lie about what goes on, and the atrocities they commit, means that they are reverting to the nonobjectivist Mideastern culture and its strange relationship to truth.

*Among the many things that one can say about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is that without any doubt whatsoever, the Israeli military is becoming ever more brutalized, and desensitized toward committing war crimes. Again we point out that this is the very same thing that happened to a great many Germans under the Nazis who started out as ordinary people, but ended up as war criminals and participants in genocide.

*When we learned that the Israeli army had seized a Palestinian TV station and promptly began to broadcast pornographic videotapes on it, we knew with a flash of clarity that the state of Israel would not last much longer (SPS, 31/3/02). How is its end likely to come about? One very likely scenario to us at least is that millions of its people will no longer be able to tolerate the constant turmoil and insecurity, and simply and quietly emigrate one by one to the point where the
country is no longer viable. But those who were oppressors and warmongers we hope will emigrate somewhere other than the US. France might be a good place, to balance off its new Arab population and assure "equality of diversity"; or maybe Russia that is becoming depopulated.

*One other harbinger of the end of Israel is that there has been a dramatic drop-off in the number of Jewish-American youths visiting Israel--from about 6500 a year to almost nothing (Newsweek, 26/8/02).

*In Palestine, an Arab man with a very bad back wore a medical support, and when ordered to lift his shirt by Israeli soldiers, they shot him dead the moment they saw his corset, thinking it was a bomb belt, and for good measure they shot his nearby father as well, who survived (Time, 13/5/02).

*In 8/02, the Israelis called out for everyone in a house to come out, including a man who had no legs and only one arm, and when he did not come out, they bulldozed the house which killed him. It turned out that he was the only one there, and may not have been able to come out (e.g., SPS, 16 Aug. 02).

*Liberal CNN founder Ted Turner got some of his own medicine when he referred to the Israeli military as engaging in terrorism. This elicited such outrage from many quarters that he quickly issued a cowardly "clarification." By and large, the TV media have been much harsher on Palestinian terrorism than on Israeli terrorism (Newsweek, 1 July 02). As we said before, while the liberals are PC, they are also pro-Israel, and this makes them schizophrenic.

*An Israeli youth group that has been giving singing performances across the US has, as the newspaper put it, "sung passionately in Hebrew, English and Arabic as they danced, jumped and clapped" (SPS, 22/7/02). We are sure that their singing in Arabic only fooled the PC, especially since back home, they are probably all members of the Israeli armed forces who use their Arabic when they are sent to terrorize the Palestinians.

*Americans are to be pitied in several respects, and one is that now, they are intimidated by Muslims, Arabs, and their own small but vastly disproportionately powerful Jewish population. Almost without taking a look at what was going on, and without qualifications, the US Congress (House and Senate) endorsed the new Israeli strategy of attack on Palestinian areas (e.g., SPS, 3 May 02). To Bush's credit, he tried in vain to prevent this resolution.

*A German politician said that a Jewish talk show host was risking arousing anti-Jewish tendencies because he defended what the Israelis were doing to the Palestinians. For this obviously truthful comment, he was virtually crucified, and being a politician, he apologized, though the apology was not accepted (SPS, 1 June 02).

*When a Palestinian turns himself into a person-bomb, his or her family announces the death in a way that reads like an invitation to a wedding (Time, 15/4/02).

*Whenever there is a successful Palestinian suicide attack upon Israelis, as many as 10,000 Palestinians may pour out into the streets for a big celebration, as happened in 8/02 when a Hamas member injured 80 and killed almost 10. Once again, we are dealing here with the kind of diversity that the PC pretend does not exist. It will still be several more generations before PC Westerners will shed their residual Christian consciences and will openly show their joy at martyring professing Christians to death.

*Let's all play suicide terrorism! A new game for children in the Arab world is to dress up in costumes of suicide bombers, complete with fake explosive belts.

*Over the decades, the Israelis have alienated so many former or potential allies or neutrals that now, even Christian Arabs rejoice over Islamic suicide bombings, even though if Islam wins, they will live in oppressed dhimmitude. They apparently prefer Islamic dhimmitude to Israeli dhimmitude.
*Muslim authorities who surely know better have once more begun to tell the old lies that Jewish rituals require human blood, and that some specifically require the blood of Christian and Muslim children (e.g., *Newsweek*, 1 April 02). This is one more reason why Jewish physicians should not become abortionists.

*An Arab commentator formerly employed by the Democrats was given a column in *Newsweek* (11 March 02) that had the nerve to call the Palestinian intifada "nonviolent." Does anyone know the Arab word for chutzpah?

*A huge amount of money for Palestinians gets raised in the US. Most of this is undoubtedly for hardship relief which the oppressed Palestinians badly need, but a certain amount apparently goes to terrorism as well (*Time*, 15/4/02).

*When Arafat was surrounded by bloodthirsty young Arab terrorists in 1972, but decided to play down his terrorist card, he was at a loss how to control his young warriors. The answer came from an advisor. A ball was held to which were invited the most beautiful unmarried young virgins of Lebanon, and before long, virtually all the young terrorists were married. Then each was given by Arafat a nice place to live and a desk job, and apparently none of the young men returned to terrorism (*SPS*, 22/3/02). Apparently, the one virgin in the hand proved preferable to the 72 in Paradise. Obviously, he has either run out of eligible pretty virgins, or has no intent to reign in terror.

*It is a very bad sign that Saddam Hussein is becoming a big hero to the Palestinians. It signals an abandonment of all rationality and morality (*Newsweek*, 6 May 02). Apparently, this has much to do with the Palestinians’ disenchantment with Arafat, but it is equivalent to replacing Beelzebul with Mephistopheles.

*As we said last time, while there may never be peace again between Arabs and Jews, and Islam and the West, the very very least precondition to such a peace would be Israeli withdrawal from isolated indefensible settlements in Arab areas. Israeli schizophrenia has been manifested by the fact that on the one hand, it finally abolished a few such settlements on the West Bank in mid-2002, but on the other hand, it has continued to provide lavish incentives for its citizens to settle and live in other enclaves in Arab areas—even in the Gaza strip, which is the very worst place to attempt Israeli settlements. Gaza was never Jewish in ethnicity (and rarely politically) even in antiquity.

*In the midst of the Israelis and the Palestinians viciously slaughtering each other, the US was giving $200 million to Israel and $50 million to the Palestinians. Also, $12 million was given to Indonesia which is a hotbed of Islamic terrorism, and $10 million for Muslim student exchange, which could be a two-edged affair, if we might invoke the symbolism of the sword (AP in *SPS*, 25/7/02).

*People seem to have forgotten that Arafat once got the Nobel Peace Prize, though it has become pretty evident that he never ever intended for there to be peace. As we said before, the Norwegian committee that awards Peace Nobels has used them as political tools and to shape policy, rather than as rewards of real accomplishments, as intended, and as in the case with the scientific Nobels.

*It has turned out that Edward Said, one of the persons considered to be one of most authoritative spokespersons for the Palestinians in America, who commanded immense influence for his powerful analysis of the Palestinian plight, and who claimed to have been born in Jerusalem, actually grew up in Cairo, had not attended the schools he claimed to have attended, and had never even lived in Jerusalem (*Vanderbilt Magazine*, Fall 02). Once more, this is the kind of peculiar relationship Middle Easterners seem to have with the truth that we commented on above.

*In the Holy Land, the Palestinians have more than twice as many children per couple than the Israelis, and at these rates, there will be as many Palestinians as Israelis by around 2035. The Palestinians should quietly breed rather than fight. They might even find it more fun.
Miscellaneous Other Items on Political Correctness, Diversity, & Multiculturalism as it Relates to (Mostly Islamic) "Terrorism"

*The PC rampage.* We reported before that after 9/01, the media soon went into overdrive carrying material "celebrating" diversity and multiculturalism. This frenzy (of which we have some delicious examples in our files) has continued. Even the endless, vast and grossly disproportionate coverage of Afro-American culture, history and recent news in many media (e.g., our local newspaper) has to be understood as an indirect attempt at salvaging other political correctness causes. As we said, we believe that 9/01 sounded the death knell for political correctness, and the desperation of the PC to valorize Islam is driven by a dull awareness that this may be so. Below follow some examples of the post-9/01 PC rampage, in addition to those recorded in the above sections.

The very PC US National Education Association instructed teachers to stress "American intolerance" in their teaching about 9/01. If they mentioned Islamic intolerance, they would be accused of hate crimes.

Many people in academia seemed unable to say after 11 Sept. 01 that the terrorist attacks with hijacked airliners were morally wrong. Of course, these are the same people who wanted, and got, diversity in the first place.

It was also amusing how "diversity" issues were worked into the most unlikely topics. For instance, a big issue was made at Syracuse University about working "diversity" into programs of teaching students to write. All this would be amusing if only the public were aware of what the agenda behind so much of this material is, i.e., a desperate attempt to salvage the bankrupt religion of political correctness.

After Black History Day and Month, Kwanzaa, and the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday "Season," all occurred in close succession, one school teacher said (SPS, 19/1/03) that he was "King-ed out," and that maybe all that was left to tell was the story of King's insatiable philandering. Even King's best friend said that he had sex with 3 different women the night before he was assassinated.

The University of North Carolina began to require that its new students read a PC interpretation of the Koran. (Imagine the stink if students were required to read the Bible or some edited positive interpretation thereof!) Students who refuse are required to write an essay on their refusal. We hope they keep this essay short.

After 9/01, PC teachers in many schools quickly began to dress pupils in Islamic costumes, give them Arabic names, and teach them Arabic phrases as a "learning experience," and as part of hastily devised units in history, geography, social studies, etc. There have also been pretend pilgrimages to Mecca. More time is now spent in California schools on the teaching of Islam than any other religion (SPS, 22/1/02). Can you imagine children being taught Christianity (or even Judaism), or involved in mock crusades, or in pilgrimages to Rome, Camostella, or Fatima?

Newsweek (11 Feb. 02) ran a lengthy analysis of Islam that included pictures of Mohammed. A Muslim wrote in, saying his family was "emotionally and mentally disturbed" by this, demanding that this never happen again because Islam forbids such pictures—and Newsweek (4 March 02) dissolved in abject apologies for having "offended," and promised to be "sensitive" in the future!!! Newsweek relishes in constantly offending people with its vast amount of vulgarity, lavish citations of use of the F-word, pictures of cheesecake (why did this not offend the strict Islamic writer?), and attacks on Christianity and Catholicism. It would never apologize for these things. Hypocrisy seems to be an inextricable element of the religion of PC.

Newsweek also showed on its cover an Arabic Koran page and an English Bible page. A reader wanted to know why the Bible page was not in its original language, or why the Koran page was not in English. Newsweek answered that it did this to "show respect for Muslims, since that (Arabic) is the language of the book's revelations," as if Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek were not the Bible's.

The Western PC are claiming that if only the Koran were properly interpreted, it would support "women's rights" (Newsweek, 11 Feb. 02). Such hypocrisy—or self-delusion—makes one sick.

An annual academic symposium at Syracuse University adopted as one of its themes "Beauty in Cross-Cultural Contexts."

Reading clubs quickly adopted texts with "multicultural" themes for their members.
On US campuses, openings for faculty in Islamic studies and Arabic have skyrocketed. The government may have to open the floodgates to Islamic terrorists in order to help fill all these positions.

Our local newspaper ran article after article of favorable coverage about 4 local refugees from ethnic wars in Africa, though with the usual PC unconsciousness, the paper seemed unaware just how badly that imaged multiculturalism.

Our local paper wrote an editorial on Ramadan headlined "A Holy Time is Marred by Hatred" (SfS, 4 Nov. 02). The paper was referring to authorities who had pointed out the religious intolerance of Islam. Again, how unself-conscious. Who is hating whom? And whence did the attacks in places such as Bali come? From Christian fundamentalists?

Our local newspaper ran a big editorial (SPS, 14/6/02) claiming (as its subtitle said) that "the notion that one religion is superior to others is un-American." It was in response to a Baptist minister saying at a Baptist Pastors' Conference that "Islam is not as good as Christianity," and then compounding his blasphemy by pointing to Mohammad's polygamy and child brides.

Our local newspaper even printed a big feature on female gladiators in antiquity (including female gladiators slaying male ones), and not many readers would have been sophisticated enough to detect the PC agenda behind this.

After 9/01, the President and other authorities begged Americans to report "anything suspicious." But when in 9/02, a woman in Florida did overhear three Arab Muslims talking approvingly of the 9/01 attacks, and reported it, she was mercilessly pilloried by the media when it turned out that that was all that they were guilty of. The PC media people have no sense of decency or honesty left in them. That is why serious Muslims hate them.

The media shamelessly promoted their celebration of homosexuality by vastly disproportionately playing up people who lost a homosexual lover in the 9/01 attacks, e.g., under headlines such as "widows seek justice against terrorists" (AP in SfS, 20/2/02). One would have thought that the real widows would have protested.

When it was found that the person who had put mail bombs in mailboxes across five mid-western states was a mid-western college kid, the media went into overdrive pointing out that this terrorist was native-born and had light crew-cut hair, and did not fit any "terrorist profile" (e.g., SPS, 12 May 02). Of course, now he does, because he created one.

When Jose Padilla was arrested for allegedly wanting to set off a dirty (conventional but radioactive) bomb, the media were delighted because they could trumpet over and over that he was a "Brooklyn-born American citizen" and "a Roman Catholic" who had converted (in prison) to Islam and changed his name. However, the PC shot themselves in the foot yet once again, because this only goes to show that once even a non-Arabic non-Islamic American-born citizen turns Islamic, s/he becomes susceptible to seduction into terrorism, making their diversity a bit less attractive.

The entertainment business recovered its second wind a few months after 9/01, and has come out with a number of songs sympathetic to Islamic terrorists. One song takes the perspective of one of the airline suicide terrorists of 11 September, and another one looks at things from the perspective of John Walker Lindh, with lyrics such as, "Sometimes a man has to fight for what he believes," even though Lindh claimed that he was not a fighter. Why no songs from Hitler's or Stalin's perspective?

It is not that stories about female gladiators, homosexual people losing lovers in the WTC, etc., lack interest and information, but that their sudden massive clustering and often distorted or deceptive slanting is tendentiously motivated, without the motive being revealed, or obvious to the public.

*Syracuse University launched a "Bachelor of Professional Studies" which tries to teach eight things, one of which is "diversity awareness." It seems to us that all we need is a few more big terrorist attacks in the US from people from other countries, cultures and religions, for all of us to be intensely aware of diversity without going to college and getting a Bachelor's degree in it.

*We like the cartoon (Mallard Fillmore, SfS, 21/1/02) that described bin Laden's racial slurs against "blacks" as "his last desperate attempt...to get American college professors to dislike him."

*The liberal media are profoundly hypocritical in calling for sensitive listening to radical Muslims when they themselves are not honest about (a) what it is that the radicals object to, and (b) that it is precisely the PC agenda of radical liberalism that they do reject.
*Before "the events," the No. 1 PC issue that was covered almost daily in the print media was the one of stem cells, with the PC media of course promoting the use of such tissues from aborted babies. A bit further down was the killing of her 5 young children by a distraught young mother (Andrea Yates), the PC angle being that women should not have many children, and if only they would practice birth control, get sterilized, or perform abortions, things like this would not happen. Both issues virtually vanished from the media scene for several months until the war in Afghanistan reached its end game around late January 02, with massive positive coverage of diversity and multiculturalism replacing the previous PC priorities. However, once the war wound down, stem cells and the child-killing mother made a significant comeback, joined by cloning reportage. Generally, liberals are in favor of it, since it is linked to artificial baby-making and abortion.

*When people in the West appear dressed in Islamic garb and headgear, the PC erupt in applause—but they advise Americans going abroad to try not to look like Americans, the obvious message being that one might thereby avoid being attacked by Arabs or Muslims. Imagine having to disguise oneself so as to be safe from the multi-culturals whom one is supposed to be celebrating, and admit to Western countries in yet larger numbers. The US military even tried to get its female soldiers to don Islamic attire in Islamic countries. Much easier would be not to send them there in the first place.

*Islamic terrorist suspects brought to Guantanamo, Cuba, for screening have been treated with exquisite PC sensitivity. The first thing was that signs in Arabic were erected pointing to Mecca, so that the detainees could "pray properly." Quickly, meals were designed to be both "religiously correct Islamic meals," as well as ethnic in style. They all were given Korans, prayer shawls (we doubt Jewish prisoners in the US get these), and traditional lamb stews for Muslim feasts (SFS, 20/2/02). A US Navy Muslim cleric visits daily. Compared to all this, prisoners in US jails and prisons are treated barbarically. We hope that when we get arrested for subversiveness, we get treated as sensitively, and will continue to be supplied with TIPS issues.

*When FBI agents enter the home of a suspected Islamic terrorist in the US these days, they sensitively take off their shoes first (Newsweek, 28/1/02). Isn't this called pussyfooting?

*Another thing that we have learned is that the media and the authorities are now very reluctant to at least initially attribute a new Islamic radical or terrorist attack to these sources and motives. For instance, when a gas-filled truck exploded in front of an ancient synagogue in Tunisia, killing 19 people, most of them German tourists and the truck driver, it took some time before it was admitted that this was an act of Islamic terrorism against Jews. Similarly, only the Israelis were quick to say that the shooting and killing of a number of people at the Israeli airline counter in Los Angeles by an Islamic Egyptian was terrorist in nature. Apparently, many parties do not want to apply either the phrase "terrorism" or "hate crime" to crimes committed by one Islamic person (or even several persons) in the absence of an evident wider conspiracy by the criminal(s). Also, Arabic Muslims committing terrorist acts inspired by Islamic radicalism are often not identified as such by the media. E.g., such a man who resides in Sweden or Britain will be interpreted as "a Swedish man" or "a Briton." Only when pictures reveal what was not said does radio and newsprint spill the beans.

*Since 9/11, Arab-American comics have been working overtime trying to make Americans laugh, and forget their irreconcilable cultural differences. The liberals who are out of touch with the people have been eating this up (Newsweek, 22/4/02). They may, in time, laugh themselves to death.

*Arab and Islamic organizations were so frantic about the blow dealt by "the events" to their image that they scoured the safety and rescue rosters of the US East Coast, discovered that there were 4 Arab or Islamic police officers in 9/01 rescue work, and 1 such firefighter from Virginia, and promptly held a feast to honor these (NCR, 10 Feb. 02).

*Before the 9/01 attacks, FBI internet monitors accidentally ran across messages among al-Qaeda terrorists that might have tipped them off about the impending attacks, but seized by political correctness, they destroyed the evidence (AP in SFS, 29/5.02).
After 9/01, everybody tried to show how "ecumenical" they were by participating in worship with other religions, and only observant Jews had the integrity to refuse to worship in the buildings of other religions.

Doubly amusing is when the liberal media have to deal with anti-Jewish "black" Americans, such as the NJ poet laureate who claimed in 10/02 that 4000 Jewish workers stayed away from the WTC on 11 Sept. 01. His appointment had been an act of demonstrative political correctness, since he was known to have been a beatnik, black nationalist and Marxist.

While there are reports of quite a bit of Arab-bashing after 9/11, so there are now a lot of reports of Jew-bashing, apparently mostly because of the way the Israelis are treating the Palestinians. However, while everybody with a PC bone in them came to give comfort to the Muslims, many fewer have come to give comfort to the Jews, particularly in France and to some degree even in the US. Almost totally silent on this issue have been the Islamic clergy world-wide.

We thought it in poor taste and counterproductive for the National Council of Churches to ask that the first anniversary of the 11 September 01 attacks be observed by holding love feasts with Muslims (SPS, 1 June 02). We can recall no love feasts during or after World War II with even innocent Germans, Italians, or Japanese, and not even with resistors in these countries against their regimes. Thus, such stagings are a bit like Jews observing Holocaust Day by inviting former concentration camp guards to their homes for a feast. But come to think of it, wouldn't that be wonderfully multi-culturally diverse--yes, even Christian--and show how open-minded we are?

Contrary to PC propaganda that relentlessly portrays Christianity as an enemy of freedom, 90% of nations rated as "free" today by the think tank Freedom House are nations with Christian traditions, and most of the other 10% have at least large Christian populations.

Because of their resentment of long Christian oppression, Jewish scholars began in the 19th century to extol the enlightenment of Islam, and its toleration of religious minorities (ET, 11/01, p. 63). They were joined in this propaganda by the forerunners of the PC of our day, namely liberal anti-Christian non-Jewish Western intellectuals. Contemporary Jewish scholars now regret that this strategy was adopted.

Columnist John Leo said (23/6/02) that American culture after the 1960s increasingly embraced what he called "soft values," such as sensitivity, tolerance, a therapy-based view of behavior, self-esteem, relativism, nonjudgmentalism and subjectivity. Among the "hard values" he included individual responsibility, self-control, strong social expectations, commitment to moral judgments, and patriotism. He said that it was the culture of the "soft values" that greatly facilitated the 9/11 attacks, and since then has continued to soften the American response to them (source document from Marc Tumeinski). This position is quite a contrast to the PC one that blames American "insensitivity" for the 9/11 attacks!

As we keep pointing out, to the PC, "diversity" and "multi-culturalism" means ethnic and non-Christian feast days, ethnic foods, dancing in ethnic costumes, etc. They seem impervious to the deeper differences, as illustrated by the High Islamic Council of Saudi Arabia which issued a fatwa that ruled that women should become suicide martyrs for Islam, the same as men (SPS, 3/3/02). It is things like these, throat slittings, public decapitations, cock fights, human sacrifices (still done in the Andes), female circumcision (as in Africa), forced abortions (as in China), dancing in the streets when a suicide bomber kills Jews, etc., that are the real diversities and multiculturalisms, not the prancing around in ethnic costumes.

By the way, any exposition of not merely opinions such as the above, but even of facts, is automatically and categorically interpreted by the PC media as exhibiting "hate."

Sporadic But Belated Retreats From Political Correctness

It took the catastrophe of 9/01 for a lot of people to wake up. One response has been a massive move to the right all over Europe (Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal) by an electorate that was sick and tired of crime and lax law enforcement, too much street drug
trading and use, indiscriminate admission of immigrants, welfare abuse, and being ignored by government. This is one reason the Dutch government fell in 5/02. About one person in 8 in the Netherlands is of recent immigrant stock, and nearly half of these are from Islamic countries. (What the electorate was apparently not worried too much about was rampant euthanasia.) The Netherlands has also regained a wee bit of sense in returning waves of asylum-seekers to their countries of origin, many of whom had actually fled their home countries because they had criminal records.

A related response has been close scrutiny of cross-border movements, and of illegal residents. E.g., the US finally toughened visa requirements for all foreign men visiting the US between ages 16-45, requiring them to fill out a form. (Shouldn’t the women be screaming “discrimination”? 

Also, belatedly (only in 2002) did the US government see to it that noncitizens who had been ordered to leave the country but had failed to do so will be entered into a database accessible to law enforcement agencies (Newsweek, 17/6/02).

In Canada, a trained assassin and suspected terrorist from Iran entered in 1991 as a refugee because the Iranian government was after him, and when the Canadian government wanted to deport him in 1993, he fought it successfully for 9 years. Only in the aftermath of “the events” was he finally deported in 6/02 (Calgary Herald, 21/6/02). Also, formerly, someone could claim asylum in Canada an unlimited number of times. Now, the Canadians have eaten humble pie and allow only one such application in a lifetime.

Apparently the least progress has been made by Germany, thereby courting further shifts to the right.

*We do not expect the liberal left, including academia, to give up its insane and self-destructive falsehoods about diversity and multiculturalism until the personal lives of such proponents have become very severely disrupted by Islamic warfare, or the threat thereof. However, even then, these people will not return to truth and reality, but will turn to another idolatry. What it will be is difficult to foresee, but hedonistic nihilism is one distinct possibility, especially since the so-called postmodernist ideology has already ploughed the ground for this weed.

The Inadequacies of Liberal Democracies in the Face of Non-Western Fanaticism

*As the US founding fathers kept futilely emphasizing, a liberal democratic republic only works for a very special people; others need different forms of government. This is underlined by the fact that liberal democracies are extremely vulnerable to attacks by totally unscrupulous parties, and cannot deal well or at all with mass lawlessness or disrespect for societal institutions. A good example is that the US judiciary cannot deal well with terrorists. Trying even one single terrorist, such as Zacarias Moussaoui (possibly the 20th of the suicide bombers) is a nightmare, can take forever, cost vast sums, and may not resolve anything.

*A Jordanian student in the US who lied under oath that he did not know one of the 11 September hijackers had his case thrown out of court by a judge because the suspect had been held in jail which was deemed to be unconstitutional (AP in SPS, 1 May 02). There we go again: the US Constitution was simply not written for just any kind of people, but for one with civic consciousness and an appreciation for democracy. Islamic terrorism may very well finish off what is left of American constitutionalism once the Supreme Court judges began to usurp government in the 1950s.

It is interesting to read the history of South America, and to learn that some of the countries there, initially set up as democracies, have never worked. Of particular interest is to learn that Colombia, that is now in such turmoil, has always been that way. As we said, democracy is not for everyone, and some constitutions (such as ours) simply cannot work in certain countries. By the way, the prescription that foreigners in the US must be treated as if they were citizens is not in the Constitution, but was invented by the Supreme Court.

*An Indian Muslim pilot who planned to crash a plane into the British parliament was charged in India with an offense that carries the death penalty—and then he was promptly released on bail (SPS, 10 April 02).

*A Muslim living in Germany and working for Lufthansa at one of the world’s busiest airports (Frankfurt) brought flyers to his workplace justifying the WTC attack, and calling for holy war
against the US. His firm fired him, he sued—and won. A German PC court ordered him reinstated, plus awarded him $25,000 (FR, 28/3/02; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*Further examples of the confused impotence of liberal Western democracies in the face of a determined unconventional Islamic war will be carried in future TIPS issues. The prospects for liberty are grim.

**The Increasing Militarization of Society**

We have commented on this threat in many December issues.

*For decades, the US military has been getting huge allocations for health and medical research that could just as readily be conducted by nonmilitary entities. E.g., hundreds of millions of dollars for breast cancer research have been channelled through the US Defense Department. In 1993 alone, it was $210 million; by 1998, it had declined to the still huge sum of $135 million. Merely because there are women in the military is not a reason to do all this research through the military, since otherwise by this logic, all health research on adults could be done through the Pentagon since the military is made up of adult men and women. Other peculiar research studies conducted by, or funded by, the military have included artificial hip research, alcoholism research, and tracking of desert tortoises.

Similarly, we were perturbed to learn that an Air Force fighter wing has begun providing medical services to children of poor and mostly ghetto families in Syracuse. To underline our point, the personnel are wearing their uniforms while they do this (SHJ, 17/7/93). In 5/93, the US Army and National Guard started setting up free immunization clinics in some of the poorer counties in Texas. This was apparently the first such use of the military inside the US (AP in SHJ, 5/5/93).

*We keep warning over and over against deploying US armed forces for domestic and civilian purposes. Such measures either pave the way, or are signs of, an eventual military dictatorship whenever civilian government becomes even worse than it has been. As early as 1992, the Mayor of Chicago had declared that in parts of the city, there had taken place "a complete breakdown of society," and the chairperson of the Chicago Housing Authority even called for the National Guard to be deployed in parts of the city’s public housing (Time, 2 Nov. 92). After the 9/01 attacks, airports were militarized for months.

*We believe that it can only be a matter of time before US police officers—at least in some locations—will be routinely equipped with machine pistols and light automatic rifles. When you see this sign, know that the end is near.

*We have been observing that the security measures instituted after 9/01 have had a peculiar effect on much of the population, affecting their mentalities in strange but very deep and unconscious ways, not all of which are very clear yet. However, one thing we can observe is that the passive acquiescence to new and/or intensified security and surveillance measures in almost all walks of life is further reducing people’s resistance to a police state or military dictatorship.

**Miscellaneous**

We couldn’t think of any other way to finish off this page, so we decided to insert two time-proven hobo jokes which had previously been bumped out.

A tramp came to the door of a motherly old lady and said: "I haven’t eaten in three days." Lady: "That’s no good. You must force yourself to eat."

"Lady, could you give me something to eat?"
"My good man, have you no work?"
"Kind lady, I am an artist."
"What do you do in art?"
"I make house to house canvasses."
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