TIPS, Volume 23, No. 6, and Volume 24, No. 1 & 2, 2004

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Woe is us! We had a year packed with training events and other demands (some unexpected), and so have been unable to put out an issue of TIPS until now. However, this is good news for TIPS subscribers and readers, because you will now receive a triple-issue packed full with in-depth coverage of topics. Also, another issue of TIPS (on human service history) is almost ready for publication, which we hope to get out very soon.

Because we are behind, and because of the approximate time when this issue will be mailed, we will cover in this issue what we usually cover in the December issue, focusing mostly on children and the family, the poor, the homeless, those in prison, the enslaved, and news on religion and philosophy in society and human services—the latter because religion narrowly, and ideology more broadly, play a crucial role in social policy and service practices.

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The State of the Family

Miscellaneous

As we have noted in earlier issues of TIPS, the social institution of the family—the foundational building block for a functioning society—is increasingly under attack. One’s family consists of those to whom one is related by blood, and if one is married, one’s spouse of the opposite sex, and close relatives of that spouse. Other definitions of family are contrived, usually for ideological reasons.

*Some families, where both parents work and the children are involved in all sorts of extracurricular activities, hardly ever meet together. Some families have to make a major effort to schedule a weekly get-together (Time, 27/10/03).

*Imagine how bad and desperate things must be when even the liberal media start coming out in favor of family and motherhood! One thing that has contributed to this recent reaction is that the generation that grew up out of divorced families and with absentee working mothers (divorced or otherwise) did not think that their childhood was as glorious as the ideologues and media in decades past made it out to be, and they do not want their own children to experience the trauma that they did. This accounts for the first significant drop-off of married mothers in the workplace in recent decades, and amazingly, the drop-off was largest among well-educated Caucasian mothers over 30—the very ones whom the feminists and liberals have been trying to drive into the workplace at all cost.

However, some die-hard feminists will never yield on this issue, and have called this development a "step backwards for younger women" (Time, 22/3/04). In response to this response, some non-feminist women have asserted that the feminists have simply ignored or denied the very primitive urge of most mothers to spend a great deal of time with their children. Instead, the feminists have been interpreting the maternal presence around children as an unbearable burden, or at the very least as an unacceptable interference with what is really important in life.

*Imagine a country with a 1-child policy as in China, and a family's only child is handicapped or becomes so. Then those parents have no family server to call upon for help, no siblings, cousins, aunts or uncles, nieces or nephews. A much better solution would be to sterilize two-thirds of the population and encourage the rest to be fecund.

*In the human service culture where caretakers spend most of their time doing paperwork, it is actually more efficient to pay family members to stay home and take care of a dependent family member because such a family member would not do any paperwork, and one would get 2 or 3 times as much real personal care out of such an individual than from a paid service worker.

*Some years ago, a study found that when mothers run away from home, 83% of them will eventually come back. We wonder if the percentage has changed in more recent years.

The State of the Estate of Marriage

*A review of dozens of books on sex and marriage in recent years found not a single one that taught that marriage has social and communitarian dimensions, and does not simply affect two people. Many of these books are of the guru-type that instruct people that if they follow 9 or 50 or 100 simple and easy rules, they will have a happy marriage (B&C, 9/04).

*Here is a modernistic view of marriage expressed by a writer to the "Dear Abby" advice column. A husband wanted his wife to go on some of his travels with him, but she did not like to travel. One writer said, "If she doesn't like to travel, she shouldn't be forced to just because that's what her husband wants. She has every right to live her life the way she wishes and not be coerced to do something that she doesn't like just because she's married." Apparently, being married changes absolutely nothing over being single in the minds of modernists.

*According to one study, the greatest marital satisfaction is experienced by wives of men active as Evangelical Protestants (B&C, 9/04). One theory is that this comes from the sense of
security and comfort that these wives experience that is missing in many "progressive" marriages, where the possibility of insecurity and instability looms like a shadow over the marriage.

*How can a celebrity woman marrying her fifth husband make sure that this "marriage" will not last either? She can have Elizabeth Taylor as the matron of honor and be "given away" by Michael Jackson, and wear an expensive diamond crucifix neck chain, as poor Liza Minnelli did in 3/02. (This "marriage" did indeed not last either.)

*In the 1920s, inspired by social Darwinism and eugenics, there was much talk of "free love" and "companionate marriages," meaning temporary cohabitation without having children. Contraception was promoted for eugenic reasons. Apparently, the first Christian church to endorse artificial contraception was the Anglican one, in 1930. The Pope immediately reaffirmed the traditional Christian teaching, upon which the (US) Federal Council of Churches (the forerunner of today's National Council of Churches) endorsed artificial contraception for married couples in 1931-- almost as if in order to spite the Catholic Church. Conservative Christians, and even much of the secular culture, were taken aback by these endorsements, and the Washington Post in 1931 called it "the death knell of marriage as a holy institution."

*A peculiar but ancient Anglo-Saxon legal tradition has been common-law marriage. Tossing this tradition aside, a Pennsylvania appeals court in 2003 threw out the validity of common-law marriages on the grounds that it created an impossible situation for third parties trying to determine whether co-habiting people were or were not married, considering that almost everybody these days is co-habiting.

*The courts keep surprising us over and over again. One recent such ruling has been that in at least some states, a married person who has sexual relations with another person of the same sex (that they are not "married" to) does not constitute adultery.

*The courts in the US that have been ruling that "marriage" between persons of the same sex is, and must be made, legal have done so against the overwhelming opposition of the population.

*At a conference at a college in the 1970s, some undergraduate with a grease pencil changed all the toilet doors signs from "men" to "men and women," and from "women" to "women and men"-- and lo and behold, everybody began to actually share these 2-sex toilets, and women thought nothing about marching to their stalls behind a row of men at urinals, even elderly women who had been modest all their lives. This just underlines how sometimes, even deeply ingrained habits and expectancies can be changed with relatively minimal cues by what appears to be an authority. Now comes the continuation of all of this: judges have begun to do the very same thing. They simply issue rulings that turn upside-down things that never in human history had been turned upside-down, such as that two people of the same sex can get married--and everybody falls over and agrees with them. In order to maintain one's grip on reality, it is imperative that one thinks of these judges as undergraduates with grease pencils relabelling the world.

*One liberal journalist had himself sworn-in as a marriage commissioner for San Francisco specifically so that he could "marry" 2 women to each other. When he did so, he said to them, "you have restored my faith in the institution of marriage" (Newsweek, 8 March 04).

*All over the media world, the abortion-originated term "freedom to choose," or "freedom of choice," has come to be used incessantly in the promotion of so-called "same-sex marriage."

*It has struck us that the media keep talking about "gay marriage," when they really mean "marriage" between two people of the same sex. After all, given the current value climate, it is quite conceivable that two people of the same sex who are not homosexual may also want to get married to each other. For instance, a mother and daughter may decide to get married, or two feminist nuns who are not homosexual but want to make a statement.

*The play, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, by Edward Albee, was first performed in 1962, and caused a bit of a scandal then, in part due to language that was then shocking, but has now
become quite common. A September 2004 production of the play was put on because "the backdrop this time is that thing called marriage--and the related debates about the nature and purposes of families, gay unions, and Constitutional amendments" (SPS, 16 Sept. 04). This plays into the idea that since heterosexual marriages can be just awful, why not have homosexual ones in which the partners really love each other?

*A "blessing" of homosexual unions is already practiced in many Christian denominations, including the Episcopal and Presbyterian ones, and in some Methodist churches. It is also practiced in Reformed Judaism. Many other churches are considering it and will probably approve it, and may already have done so by the time this appears in print.

*Divorce courts generally do not like divorces, and judges tend to heavily promote conciliation and mediation, which latter is often seen as the next step when conciliation (without any mediators) fails. However, the promotion of divorce mediation has provoked intense hostility from...divorce lawyers, and even the American Bar Association who, unlike the courts and judges, love divorces and the adversarial process. With mediation attempts having become more common, the literature has discovered that one needs to be aware of some of its pitfalls, and that previous promoters of mediation may have oversold it a bit.

Marriage Counseling

*Marriage counselling is a huge business. The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy listed more than 47,000 marriage and family therapists in the US in 2001, and estimated that they "treat" 870,000 couples a year--all this despite the fact that the research has not shown that any of this is empirically valid and effective. In fact, marriage therapists often legitimate breaking up. Amazingly, the couples themselves give very low ratings to marriage counselors for competence, but apparently word has not gotten out. One of many problems in this sub-culture is that the therapists often pretend to value neutrality while the people who come to them are often the children of divorce, and actually see marriage as something worth preserving (Time, 19/1/04).

*Many people who are either family therapists or faculty members of family studies departments have themselves had unstable family relationships and divorces. Perhaps this has contributed to a certain intellectual-academic ideological tradition that instability of relationships with members of the opposite sex is as good as or better than stability, and that the children of these unions suffer no damage from this.

*With one kind of couple therapy after another proving to be a fizzle, one after another gets invented in order to give couple therapists an excuse for their business. A recent such innovation, designed by a UCLA professor, is so-called acceptance therapy that tries to teach couples to live with each other's inadequacies or perceived shortcomings.

The Situation/Plight of Children

Next, we look at the situation of children, and of services to them. Even ordinary children are deeply affected by service systems, such as the school system and the generic health system; if the children are impaired or devalued for some other reason (e.g., poverty), they are even more apt to be enmeshed by service systems, and affected by the (usually low) quality thereof.

Schools

*Both teachers and parents agree that bad behavior and poor self-discipline are major factors in the decline of US schools. More than a third of teachers have considered quitting because of it. The children are well aware of their rights, and readily threaten teachers with lawsuits. Over half of the teachers in a survey said there is an armed police officer on school grounds. Many teachers say they are doing "crowd control," rather than teaching, and that "disrespect" is everywhere. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, even parents support so-called "zero tolerance policies" that kick students out for a first violation of rules--even though it is often poor parental and home discipline, and poor child-rearing, that results in badly behaved children (Parade, 1 August 2004).
*A school system near Boston invited 1000 parents to a drug and alcohol seminar, but only 2 showed up. Parents generally stayed away from parent-teacher conferences and other opportunities to meet with education people—with the exception of discussions about sports events—and all of this in a school district in which pupil attendance is actually very high. School officials say that when they report to parents that their child has a problem, the parents in essence say, "you handle it."

*When a pupil issues a call for sadistic violence and killings on a Satanic website, and his school then suspends him, the courts rule that his right to free speech was violated (SPS, 26/9/03). If the school had done nothing and the pupil had subsequently gone on a killing rampage, the school would have been held culpable, and liable for zillions of dollars.

*In their insanity, politically correct (PC) and "sensitivity" people are carrying so-called anti-bullying policies to extremes. For instance, even casting a dirty look at another child may be considered bullying. So-called "ridicule-free zones" are established. You can no longer say that another child has done something bad, but must phrase it as "I feel bad about"..., such as "I feel bad when you tear up my book." Teasing other pupils is out, and is punished by having to write "reflections" on it which the parents must sign. The pupil who witnesses another child being gossiped about may submit a written "request for assistance" to the school; etc. Some people are concerned that all this phony hypersensitivity will not prepare children for real life.

Hostility Toward Children (Kinderfeindlichkeit)

*According to some authorities, the withdrawal from reproduction—and particularly from mothering—that is so pronounced today had some of its origins in the eugenic era when the intelligentsia and some of the early behaviorists began to promote "scientific motherhood." Eternal practices hard won through experience over the ages were belittled, including a lot of nurturing behavior, of which much fun was made. One result was that this undermined women's faith in their own judgment in the informal transmission of mothering skills, which also contributed to women becoming increasingly isolated from each other.

Then before Dr. Benjamin Spock began writing books for parents about child-rearing, there was a book, entitled The Dangers of Too Much Mother Love, that was a bestseller in the 1920s and 1930s. It chided mothers and grandmothers for being oversolicitous, doting, and indulgent to children, and even cast doubts on the benefit of walking, cuddling, singing to or playing with infants. The president of the American Academy on Pediatrics wrote in 1923 that young children "suffer from" the attention showered on them by family members and friends. Also, the government began to issue oodles of manuals on child-rearing. All of this also undermined women's faith in age-old practices and their own judgment, and advice from their own mothers, relatives, and friends, and they instead began to rely on experts. Thrown into confusion and insecurity, 125,000 women a year began to write to the US Children's Bureau for advice on child-rearing, on even the most trivial matters. All of this also began to engender a belief that one could raise perfect children if one did things right, and this turned to anger when one was told that one had to live with certain imperfections of a child, even with birth marks or freckles (B&C, 11/03).

*We have reported repeatedly on the virtual collapse of fecundity in Europe. This is not the first time that European countries ceased reproducing. After WW I, birth rates in several European areas—especially the big cities—fell below the replacement rate, which is one of the things that alarmed eugenicists, and got the Nazis going on a campaign to boost breeding, at least by its untainted population sector.

*In certain German circles, and mostly homosexual ones, infants are currently being called "Scheissebündel" (shit bundle) (source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

Child-Junking: Abandonment/Neglect of Children, & Poor Child-Rearing by Their Parents & Its Legitimization by the Intelligentsia

management of children. The historical coverage has quite a bit of material on the history of foundlings. Of particular value may be the chapter that deals with the heyday of false accusations by one or both separating parents that the other parent is abusing their child(ren). In such disputes, virtually everybody winds up getting hurt.

The authors argue that the traditional administrative standards of what is "in the best interests of the child" have been so abused by ideological and political agendas as to have rendered them harmful to children.

In order to get an accurate picture of how many marriages end in divorce, one must look at first-time marriages rather than all marriages, because quite obviously, time itself limits the amount of divorce that can take place in second and third marriages contracted late in life. Divorce of first-time marriage is rarely reported as such, but it and permanent separation combined are said to hover around two-thirds in the US, which is absolutely phenomenal. Unfortunately, it is precisely first-time marriages that are most likely to result in children, who are therefore then subjected to the consequences of marital break-up.

*Something very interesting is going on. Parents with allegedly autistic children have been telling the public that their children often explode into all sorts of rages and tantrums (commonly referred to as a meltdown), but now parents of "normal" children are replying to them that they should quit making such a big deal about it because their perfectly normal children do the same thing all the time (e.g., Newsweek, 17/11/03). Could this mean that a child nowadays only gets called autistic if its parents cannot get used to its meltdowns?

*While 27% of all parents in a poll believed that instilling moral values into their children was one of their biggest challenges, only 21% of parents working full-time did so (Time, 29/5/2000). This almost sounds like denial to us.

*One area of research that has become so ideologized that it has been de facto kicked into the trans-empirical domain is the outcomes of child day care. Experts and researchers on the side of feminism and modernism report on how wonderful such out-of-home day care is for children, while traditionalists are accumulating data on very detrimental impacts.

Child-Junking: Abandoning Children to the Media

*A study has finally found what we have actually known all along, namely, that watching TV competes with a child's learning to read, and yet about 1/3 of US children age 6 and younger have TVs in their own rooms, while another 1/3 live in homes where the TV is on almost all of the time. The positive side of all this is reported to be that as long as the children watch TV, they are at home and safe (AP in SPS, 29/11/03).

*One new phenomenon, hardly remarked upon, is that for many children today, their life situation has become such that the only two things they do at home are sleep and watch TV: they eat, bathe, are clothed, do homework, exercise, pray (if at all), etc., etc., in school and other programs. And we are not even talking about handicapped children, though usually, the children to whom this happens are of the multi-generationally poor.

*One of the elements of the media gaining control of people's minds from earliest age, and of child-junking, is the increasing linkage of items marketed to children--toys, cereal, snack foods, clothes, etc.--with media characters, such as cartoon, film, and video characters. Much of this advertising is done in ways so that at least young children are unaware that they are being manipulated. For instance, supposed surveys are posted on children's websites, though the survey's real and only purpose is to establish or heighten the children's awareness of specific brand names.

Of course, while this development is much decried, none of it would be possible if children did not have so much influence, or outright control, over so much spending money: $600 billion of family spending that US children under 13 are said to influence, and $40 billion of what is called "pocket money" (Time, 28 June 2004), even though pockets are no longer big enough to hold the coinage that used to be called pocket money.
*Here is an example of how confused the minds of modernistic children become due to their exposure to the media. Driving through a US Civil War (1861-1865) battlefield, a child asked, "Dad, did the Civil War guys drive army tanks?" When the father said "no," the daughter wanted to know, "Is that because gas was too expensive?" When the father said that gas had not yet been invented then, a fourth child instructed him that, "Yes, there had to be gas, because it comes from dead dinosaurs, and they had already been dead by the time of the Civil War." At this, the first child wanted to know whether it was the Civil War guys that had killed all the dinosaurs, and he also insisted that all the Civil War guys and the dinosaurs drove submarines and ate cheese pizza. All the exhausted and insanerated father could say was, "Ask your mother" (CL, 5/04).

Child-Junking: Inducing Children Into Early Sexuality, Sexual Immorality, or Seductiveness

*Some observers of the current scene have referred to the promotion of pedophilia by certain people on the left as "pedophilia chic," if it is done in certain ways. An example is Calvin Klein advertisements for children's underwear.

*The popular entertainment industry particularly seems to be outright fond of child sex abusers, and many of its members regularly spring to the defense of any such, particularly when one from among their own ranks gets caught in a sex crime or in possession of child pornography. While the media act indignant over such things when priests do it, they forgive everything of somebody who will make nice films, and even give them awards for it (Newsweek, 24/2/03; NCR, 6 April 03). As we reported before, a prime example is famous film director Roman Polanski getting an Oscar in 2003 despite having drugged a 13-year old girl, then having had sex with her in his Los Angeles jacuzzi, getting her pregnant and an abortion, and then fleeing the country ahead of the law.

*In Spring 2002, the US Supreme Court struck down a law banning virtual child pornography, apparently meaning that it became legal to sell on the Internet images of children having sex—as long as the pictures are phoney.

*Planned Parenthood advises teenagers to carry a condom at all times just in case they make a "heat of the moment decision."

*More and more Girl Scout organizations teach their child members at ever earlier ages the typical secular sex education programs, sometimes in collaboration with Planned Parenthood. Also, more and more lesbians are said to have been accepted into leadership positions in the Girl Scouts. Many parents have pulled their children out, and entire scout troops have disbanded as a result (NCR, 9 May 04).

*A very peculiar phenomenon is religious schools in the US adopting the same sex education programs adopted by public schools which apparently never work, and on top of it all violate the moral precepts of the denominations that adopt them. Among other things, a lot about sex is explained as involving "2 people," rather than husband and wife, or even a male and a female (NCR, 16/11/03).

*There are areas in Brazil where 70% of girls are pregnant by the time they are 14 (NCR, 5 Sept. 04). This means that more than 70% have had sexual relations by age 13.

*Late in 5/04, the ads for erection pills had moved up to 7:05 p.m. on the CBS TV channel.

*Adolescent girls who live with their biological fathers have been found to undergo puberty later than those who live with unrelated adult males, such as a stepfather or the mother's boyfriend. The obvious implication is that girls who go through puberty earlier are also more likely to engage in sex earlier. Unless one thinks that is a good thing, the intact family then has both psychological, sociological, and biological merits, as the much maligned familists have always pointed out (FT, 21/04).
Child-Junking: Children Swimming in, & Being Junked by, Material Goods & Indulgences

*While the economic downturn in recent years has reduced the amount of money people have been spending on their clothes, the amount that parents have spent on their children's clothing has continued to increase, and in fact much of this increase is due to the purchase of luxury clothes for children (Time, 24/11/03).

Already in first grade, a girl is a nobody these days if she does not wear expensive and uncomfortable thong underpants that can cost up to $20 apiece. And why would a little girl child want to wear such? Because "basically, every girl at school is wearing one" (Time, 6 Oct. 03). We can easily imagine what kind of religion and spirituality these children will embrace when they become adults.

*There are now women's magazines that feature page after page of full-page ads of very expensive Ralph Lauren designer clothes for children down to babyhood.


*In 2003, the US federal government subjected 32 states to a review of their child welfare policies, including child protection and foster care placement. Not one single state passed the review criteria.

*An episode in the Chicago area is very indicative of where things are going in child welfare in modernistic countries. In 2/94, 19 children were found quasi-abandoned under abject conditions in a Chicago apartment. By and by, it turned out that they were the children out of wedlock of six women, five of whom were sisters, who among them were collecting $4,700 a month in welfare. All the mothers were disfunctional and several were on drugs. While the courts dealt with the situation, another 9 children were added to the 19, some who had not been in the apartment and others whom the mothers continued bearing out of wedlock. When the children were placed into foster care, the mothers and their lawyers went on the warpath to get them back. In time, there were 28 children, 6 mothers, 22 fathers and 22 attorneys involved. One of the claims of the mothers was that it was the police who had trashed their apartment and set them up. One of the children had cerebral palsy and had been exposed to dreadful physical abuse. Some of the older children were so afraid they would be sent back to their mothers that they would go into hiding when case workers visited--and dozens of social workers, counselors and therapists did. One of the defenses used by the mothers was that they were "victims of poverty." Despite the strength of the case against the mothers, it took three years to terminate their parental rights (one surrendered them by saying "I am not ready to grow up at this time"), and to get the first child adopted. One bit of good news was that one foster mother quit her nursing job in order to be able to take in 5 siblings (Newsweek, 24/3/97). Five other children were deemed to be too old to be adopted.

The public guardian for Cook County in which Chicago is located had, as of early 1997, authority over 46,000 abused and neglected children, and a staff of 125 attorneys working for his office (Newsweek, 24/3/97). Such figures are so large and abstract as to almost make the individual tragedies behind them unimaginable.

*In Camden, NJ, child welfare workers had visited an adoptive home dozens of times to check up on 4 children placed there even as the parents were starving these children. One wonders whether they had only taken in these children for the sake of their subsidy. Nine welfare workers were suspended (AP in SPS, 6 May 04). Camden is one of several cities in the US in which there are hardly any functional adults left, but at least it votes for Democratic candidates.

*In late June/early July 2004, the Syracuse Post-Standard ran an interesting series on the child welfare and protection system. From it we learned that a man was considered to be qualified to become a child protective service worker in our county's children's division who had been emotionally labile, and an alcoholic and drug-addict all of his life, who had had 3 children out of wedlock with 2 different women, one of whom was extremely emotionally unstable and whom he met at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that both attended. The man had also spent years in prison.
*To our surprise, we learned that in California, and possibly elsewhere as well, child welfare agencies desperate for placements will place English-speaking Caucasian children with Hispanic foster parents who do not speak English, and who live in Latino neighborhoods. And probably the very same child welfare workers are the ones who will not permit Caucasian parents to adopt African-American children (e.g., SPS, 1 July 04).

*According to some sources, at least 250,000 children are being raised in the US by homosexual "couples." If true, this would be a huge number, and might help explain why child placement agencies have begun to go this route, considering how desperate they are for placements (Time, 5/04).

*In 2003, the National Adoption Center in the US gave its Family of the Year award to a homosexual man who had adopted 3 boys.

*Two new books on children's services in England were Children's Homes (1998) and Going Missing (1998). From these we learn that children who run away from child care services, including residential homes, are not tracked, perhaps because they are considered to be exercising self-determination. Thus, many children just come and go as they please, which one of the books calls "official helplessness." Also, 48 children's homes were evaluated, using three different evaluation methods that we would not consider to be likely to be effective, at least in light of our own experience with the PASS and PASSING instruments. However, the study did come to the conclusion that the children's homes need to "specialize" more, which to us sounds like they need to become more model-coherent.

Miscellaneous Child Junking

*In so-called patchwork families, there may be a natural parent who begat a child, a "genetic parent" by artificial baby-making, a legal one (as through acknowledgement or adoption), as well as a socio-familial one, referring to a parent who actually takes care of a child. Politicians in Germany have decided that some children are being ripped apart by these parties and their close relatives. Some of these people will on the one hand fight over who has access to these children, and on the other hand will suddenly disappear from sight (3/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*In the US National Basketball League, there are at most 450 paid jobs as players, but hundreds of thousands of youths, particularly in the ghetto culture, are being led to believe that they might become professional basketball players and earn huge incomes. Many children are being groomed for this from age 10 upward, and many others who would have qualified for college forego it in a futile quest for a basketball career.

Childhood & Youth Violence

*It is believed that Luke Woodham, who as a teenager in Mississippi in 1997 killed his mother and 2 classmates, and wounded 7, was the model for a whole string of teen killings of parents, teachers and fellow students. If these youths do not end up dead themselves, they are highly likely to end up on shrink drugs and in prison for long terms. However, in some states with lenient laws, these killer youths are let out of prison when they reach 21, or even only 19 (Time, 28/5/01).

*A student at a Syracuse high school prom got stabbed, and casually said, "I'm still new to this whole stabbing thing. This is only my second time being stabbed" (SPS, 13/6/01).

*We find it awful that 25% of parents think that more counseling made available in and by the schools would reduce youth violence (Time, 24/4/00). This is a typical end-point response to a problem that has a high-level source.

Child Health & Attacks Thereon

*A group of people in the US, the Commission on Children at Risk (sponsored by several prestigious bodies including the Harvard Medical School), reported a dramatic decline in the welfare
of adolescents during the last 50 years. Now, about 20% of teens are said to suffer from "serious" emotional or behavioral problems, their suicide rate has quadrupled, only about half the children spent their childhood with their biological parents, and particularly devastating is the situation of children in so-called low income neighborhoods (which is largely a euphemism for racial ghettos), where so many youths do not finish high school, do not work full-time or at all, and have children without marrying, and where there are very few authoritative communities left. Suicide is believed to be a particularly sensitive barometer of societal welfare. After all, it tells us whether people think there is anything about life that is worth living.

However, the report stated that some of these deleterious rates had somewhat stabilized, and in some respects even improved, during the last 10 years, perhaps because people have discovered the wrongness of so much of what the liberal and intellectual establishment and the media has tried to foist upon society (FT, 2/04). However, only time will tell.

The report also pointed out that one of the single biggest safeguards against poverty is marriage. Even women from low income communities who managed to marry and stay married were not much more likely to remain or become poor than women in more affluent communities.

*After an endless barrage of news items and statistics about all the awful things that are happening or being done to our children, the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development issued a report that looked at 25 health and social indicators, and concluded that by-and-large, things are just great for American children except that some are overweight, and some are poor (Time, 26/7/04).

*The US Environmental Protection Agency had established a limit of 0.3 micrograms as being the danger threshold of mercury in the body of a child. However, many vaccines given to children for decades have contained a mercury preservative, and a single such vaccine may have contained as much as 118 times the daily limit for a child as set by the EPA--all this despite the fact that as early as 1935, mercury preservative was ruled undesirable for use with vaccines for dogs. Administration of these mercury doses since 1935 to virtually the entire US child population is now suspected by some people to have been the cause for all sorts of later problems, including possibly so-called autism (Mouth, 5/04).

Slavery

It is good to always remember those who are in bonds. There are many different kinds of bondage; here, we will look specifically at the bondage of slavery.

*Somewhere between 700,000-4 million people around the world each year fall into some form of slavery and "human trafficking." Part of this involves child labor, and part of it sex slavery (NCR, 23/3/03).

*The UN has estimated that there are 27 million slaves in the world today (CASA, 1/04). Even in Western countries, there is an underground black market largely dependent on immigrants from Third World countries where slaves can be bought and sold. For instance, two 13-year-old girls were bought in London by a child prostitution ring for $1200 each.

*Among the many bad things that have been going on in the African country of Nigeria are child enslavement and child slave labor. Business enterprises in Nigeria have been importing about 6,000 or more children from the neighboring country of Benin, who have often been sold by their parents (AP in SPS, 17/10/03).

*According to some authorities, the major reason why slavery was such a common practice in Islam, has survived so long in it, and still is encountered in pockets of Islam today, was that Mohammed himself bought or captured, owned, and sold slaves (FT, 8/03).

Torture

*The US government happily hands out export permissions for torture equipment made by US manufacturers to be sold to countries that the US State Department has cited for employing torture.
More than 60 companies in the US export such items. In order to get around export limitations, they sometimes export torture devices as kits that need to be assembled, because these do not require an export license (Harmony, 5/04).

*Vis-à-vis prisoners of different cultures, it seems to be becoming a Western habit to try to break their resistance by incessantly playing decadent songs and music to them that is culturally offensive to them. This is what the US military did to some Iraqi prisoners, and apparently it is very effective (Newsweek, 26/5/03).

Violence in Society

Despite all that they can be and do which is good, humans are violent by nature. Thus, wherever there are human beings, there will be violence by human beings, including violence against other human beings. (More on human nature later.)

In earlier issues of TIPS, we commented on the statistics that are interpreted to show a decrease in violent crime in the US. Whether true or not, there are always overarching societal dynamics that either incite to violence, or inhibit it, and if people's inhibitions against violence are lowered, then actual violence will break out.

Violence as Normative in Some Locales & Sectors of Society

*In some neighborhoods of Syracuse, there is so much shooting going on--every day and mostly on the streets--that it has desensitized people so that they no longer call the police when they hear gunfire. A woman who heard at least 2 shots that struck down a young man in front of her apartment house did not report the incident because, "Around here you don't pay that much attention to that stuff. I figured it was just somebody else playing with a gun" (SHJ, 30/7/94). In fact, in neighborhoods of some cities in the US, people (usually juveniles) are shooting off out-and-out machine guns almost every night (Time, 12 Sept. 94). About the only time gunfire may be reported is when the results are spectacular. We suspect that the same is the case elsewhere in the US, and perhaps beyond, and that people may not know it because it is not reported.

*A new line of glassware advertises, "celebrate carefree with bullet-proof glassware," presumably appealing to citizens in neighborhoods where there is much gun play (CR, 9/99).

*Once drive-by shootings had become popular in the US in connection with drug wars, some people began to take up drive-by shootings and killings as a sport, for the mere thrill of it. One such sportsman terrorized a neighborhood in Washington, DC, and in about 6 weeks in early 1993, he did at least 7 shootings, wounding 5 and killing 2 (SHA, 11 April 93).

*In a number of US cities, insurance companies have long been scanning the news for drive-by shootings, and then they quickly send insurance agents into that neighborhood to sell burial policies (Newsweek, 22/10/90).

*In some US cities, people have started to spray-paint the spots on the streets where somebody was violently killed. There are corners in New York where one cannot walk without stepping on such a spot, which seems a little like walking over somebody's grave.

*We have reported previously that mail carriers in many urban areas are highly at risk of being attacked and robbed, particularly on days when they are delivering government checks. The situation has gotten so bad in Los Angeles that more than 100 armed postal inspectors started guarding the most dangerous routes there (Newsweek, 27/2/95). We suspect that people in other countries find this situation virtually unintelligible.

*In the early 1990s, Japanese tourist literature for the US began to include such essential phrases for Japanese travelers as "stick 'em up," "don't move a muscle," and "move and die" (Newsweek, 9 Nov. 92).
*The Dominican Republic is being kept afloat in large part by its citizens plying the drug trade in the US, and sending home billions of dollars every year.

*In some US western states, Forest Service officers no longer go out onto federal lands alone, but in pairs because they are afraid of being gunned down by radical anti-environmentalists (Time, 1 May 95).

Violence By & Among Children & Youth

*There is massive evidence that watching violent entertainment, or participating in violent video games, desensitizes children and raises the likelihood that they will subsequently become aggressive and violent. However, the findings are still hotly contested because they are so unpleasant--this despite the fact that no research on the issue is even needed, since the relevant influence dynamics themselves have been known for a long time, even thousands of years. However, parents seem to be either absolutely powerless or unwilling to restrain their children from these media, including parents who will not permit their children to play with toy guns (Discover, 4/03).

*It is among younger people that we see progressive lowering of inhibitions against violence generally, and deathly violence specifically. Unlike older people, they may never have been exposed to higher and contrary values; because of their youth, they have been more impressionable in regard to the newer values and lifestyles; and unlike older people, they have been raised on, and virtually by, the media and their peers, and thus their entire lives have been filled with nothing but the messages of modernism. This tendency of course is not merely observed in the US but all over the world.

*There is a whole new class of children growing up in the US--particularly among the decadent sectors of the impoverished classes--who have what is appropriately called a "depraved indifference to life." They will kill each other or anybody over absolutely nothing. The rate of children's arrests for murder increased 9 times as much as that for adults during a 10-year period. These children have themselves had a very cruel and abusive upbringing, but often deny it. An interesting question is how far this trend will or can go (Time, 26/10/92).

*Apparently, the spread of youth gangs into certain US cities that previously did not have them in some instances has something to do with gang members from Los Angeles moving eastward to colonize smaller cities.

Even in such solid cities as Omaha, Nebraska, drive-by shootings by juveniles had become so common by the early 1990s that they no longer even made the newspapers.

*Frankie Lewis told us of an incident where a young man who had gotten himself into some trouble in his neighborhood pronounced, "I have got to get out of here; I only have 27 bullets left."

*We were amused by the big headline in the APA Monitor (7/90): "Psychologists Can Help Youths Stay Out of Gangs." But apparently, the other psychologists did not find this funny.

Supply & Demand for Weaponry

*In some parts of the world, people might be surprised and appalled if they learned that more than 11,000 New Yorkers were licensed to own guns, but that would not be the truth. Instead, what is true is that more than 11,000 New Yorkers are licensed to buy and sell guns.

*In some US housing projects for the poor, some people run thriving gun rental businesses. In one such Brooklyn, NY, project, a 9mm automatic pistol costs $20 a night, but $100 if the gun gets (or got) used to shoot someone.

*There are work places and buildings in the US where so many employees are licensed to carry guns that, like in the old West, they are politely invited to please check them in at the front desk before they go to their offices.
Fear of Violence

*We have been told that in parts of New York City, midnight masses (for Christmas and Easter) were cancelled for the first time in 1993 because of fear of street crime. Since then, "midnight Mass" is normatively held in the early evening in virtually every urban area in the US, at least in part because of parishioners' fear of being out late at night. It has become very difficult to find a midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

*Protecting one's reproductive investment. In recent years, anytime there was national publicity about the kidnapping of a child, parents nationwide began to exercise higher vigilance, monitoring their younger children's movements, and especially those of little girls. There have also been so many shootings in poverty areas in which nearby children got hit by errant bullets intended for adults that this has also become a vivid parental fear. Immediately one could see many more children being accompanied by a parent on their way to the school bus stop. Parents would not even leave until the child was actually inside the bus and the doors were closed. We have seen this regularly in Syracuse, and especially so when a local girl was kidnapped in Spring 2004. The sociobiologists would call this "protecting one's reproductive investment." Furthermore, there were immediate demands that no child ever anywhere should be allowed to walk to school anymore, or anywhere else for that matter, not even a block or two. It has even been proposed that letting a child walk anywhere alone should be criminalized. One of the ironies is that these are the same parents who think nothing of delivering their children to things such as parties that are de facto sex parties. And there are still people who deny that one can read signs of societal collapse.

The Geneticist Ideologies About Violence as a Disease or Genetic Trait

*Was he born that way? In the late 1970s, a big controversy flared up when some scientists claimed that there was such a thing as a violence gene, and that this gene was particularly prevalent among African-Americans. This craze theory is now being recycled yet once again by University of Wisconsin researchers, though in a slightly more sophisticated form (SPS, 26/8/02).

*Early in the 20th century, there were extremely few serial killings, and the motive was often material gain. Since ca. 1970, serial killings have skyrocketed, and sex is a major motive in some form or other. There are now scientists who actually claim that there are genetic predispositions to people becoming serial killers.

*Miscellaneous Items on Violence

*At one time, US school sport teams had names such as the Violets, Poets, Gentlemen, Monks, Princes, Quakers, Missionaries, Pilgrims, Medics, etc. In more recent years, these names have more commonly carried images of violence: Panthers, Jaguars, Sharks, Grizzlies, Raptors, Avalanche and Lightning (Globe & Mail, 1 Feb. 1996; source item from Robert Flynn).

*A rather peculiar but also revealing phenomenon is that as more and more people are engaging in violence in society, so are their pets. Animal control officers are reporting that they are running into ever more mean dogs.

*The good news is that girls are now as likely as boys to physically attack their dates (Time, 15/10/01).

*Yet again, PC researchers very severely degrade the meaning of "violence" when in their studies, they equate bodily and physical attacks with big-mouth bad talk, such as name-calling, and call the latter psychological violence.
*Case Western Reserve University has established an endowed professorship in "anti-violence," which is a new phrase to us. We have heard of nonviolence and pacifism, but never of anti-violence: We also wonder what it would do to the mentality of a professor of anti-violence to be expected—as is the case here—to be an expert in securing grants for a university institute (Monitor, 9/01).

**Violence in Human Services**

*A human service agency that uses electric shock to try to wean handicapped people from undesired behaviors went to the state authorities to get permission to raise the voltage on its electric shock administration gadgets. In 2004, it went back and asked that restriction on all upper voltage limits be eliminated.

*In 2004, we learned of a residential service where every worker wore an emergency telephone call button around their neck which, if pressed, directly summoned the police. The idea was that they should press that button if a client in this residential service became assaultive. However, there had not been any occasion to use the button for 9 years, showing how a practice once instituted seems to linger even when a perceived need for it no longer exists. Actually, we were surprised that there were not more assaults in this service considering that wearing such buttons could so easily have been perceived provocatively by the clients.

**Crime-Related Issues**

Another reality about human nature is that wherever rules are established, there will be people who break them—and at least a proportion of these will get caught doing so. There are both high-class and low-class breaking of the rules, though usually, it is the low-class ones that get called crime, and that get prosecuted and severely punished.

*It is amazing to consider that housing, urban renewal, and welfare officials in the US considered it a good idea in the 1960s to build housing projects congregating together as many as 60,000 poor people, which of course became notorious disasters and eventually were razed because of all the crime and other trouble occurring there.

*We never cease to be amazed by what does not get reported by the media, and one of the many such things is that despite the lenient immigration and deportation policies of the US, and its porous borders, about half-a-million (!) people have actually been deported from the US. And equally amazing is that most of them have not been deported for having high profiles for being potential terrorists, but for having committed common crimes of major proportions. For instance, 340,000 such criminals have been deported back to Mexico alone, and the US has deported 7,000 (!) Hondurans living illegally in the US for having committed serious crimes there, which is now turning out to destabilize Honduran society because it had apparently simply been exporting its criminals to the US in the past. For instance, virtually overnight, murders in Honduras increased over 400%. One also wonders how many Hondurans are illegally in the US who have not committed a major crime, or who have but have not yet been caught. In Jamaica, about 1% of all males over the age of 15 are criminal deportees from the US, and 10,000 of them (!) now live in the capital city of Kingston and are devastating it. But we have the answer: deport them back illegally to the US!

The very fact that these criminals continue to be major criminals when they are deported underlines the legitimacy of deporting them from the US, where they never should have been in the first place if the authorities had not been so casual about illegal immigration.

This kind of information gets worse the more one learns about it, including that 60% or more of criminal deportees end up back in the US somehow or other (AP in SPS, 26/10/03). So one thing all of this means is that if one sneaks into the US illegally, one has to commit a major crime before one will be deported. One good bit of news about this is that Australia was heavily settled by criminals being brought there legally.

*The 22/2/04 CBS "60 Minutes" program told us that the US is overrun by South American mall theft teams, almost all of whom are in the US illegally. They will generally go into a store in a group that distracts its staff while members rob it blind, and re-sell the merchandise abroad. For these teams, this is a full-time occupation, and there are reportedly about 1,000 such teams thieving...
on any particular day. We were surprised to learn that this has been going on for almost 15 years with hardly any media publicity. Some of these teams go beyond theft into outright robbery. Often the thieves are relatively lowly people but they are well-trained, and when they are caught, instead of being ruthlessly deported, they are let go altogether, or let off with easy sentences, only to pick up again immediately where they left off.

All this is certainly a form of foreign aid, and perhaps the only 3 things wrong with it are that the thieves are in the country illegally, it is private business people who are delivering the foreign aid instead of the government, and they are doing so involuntarily.

*On the one hand, one should not be surprised that when men are trained to become cold-blooded killers, they will be more likely than other people to end up killing somebody. On the other hand, it is yet another sign of the culture of blaming other people for one's misdeeds that when 4 American soldiers back from Iraq murdered one of their buddies in a drunken brawl, they blamed it on the army for the way it had trained them (Newsweek, 22/3/04).

*There seem to be a lot of people who think that just because somebody killed a lot of people and is now spending decades or a lifetime in prison, such a person must be wonderful, because some of them have entire fan clubs as if they were entertainment celebrities. One young man in Oregon who killed both of his parents and then 2 students in his high school gets sent money in the mail from total strangers. Another young man who killed 2 fellow students in California has 5 fan clubs on Yahoo dedicated to him, plus a dozen homemade websites, and gets about 40 letters a week, which is more than he can answer (Time, 28/5/01).

*After the series of long-distance sniper shootings in the Washington, DC, area in 2002, the news media were reluctant to report on other serial sniper shootings, apparently in fear that they would fuel copy-cat episodes. For instance, only belatedly was one able to learn, and only from very minor coverage, of subsequent other sniper shootings elsewhere, including in West Virginia.

*Some people on the Internet will scan somebody else's published book and post it for the world to read, with the result that the publisher loses sales of the book and the author gets no royalties. Interestingly, even some professors (probably those who have not yet published books) are doing this to make the book readily available to their students, even using university websites to do so.

*A mother had apparently been systematically coaching her children to give false testimony in her series of lawsuits against various parties for all sorts of damage money. One was a slip-and-fall suit against a chain store, another was an acrimonious divorce battle, and yet another was allegation of sexual abuse of one of her children. If this is what she did, it stands to reason that as with everything else, she is not likely to be the only parent who has been doing this (Newsweek, 1 Dec. 03).

*According to some reports, 1/3 of the people on the roads in California have no driver's license. Many are probably people who have good reason not to show up at a license bureau.

*It is now being claimed that under the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union, opponents of the regime often had themselves tattooed with secret symbols that signified their opposition. The meaning of these symbols was communicated among these opponents, but was allegedly unknown to the regime or other outsiders. Stars tattooed on the two knees meant that one should never kneel before the regime. A snarling leopard on the shoulder signified one's opposition to dictatorship. A picture of Lenin or Stalin tattooed on the chest saved some people's lives because executioners did not dare to shoot at these pictures. Having a cross tattooed on one's chest enabled one to escape forcible induction into the Communist party. A commercial logo signifying product quality was adopted by many convicts in order to signify that they were persons of quality, etc. (2/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).
A rather peculiar phenomenon since the University of Texas tower shooting in 1966 (in which 46 people got shot and 16 died) is that police departments all over the US have been trying to establish SWAT teams, about whose killer mentality we have reported before. It now turns out that even relatively minor police departments (i.e., for small areas) may have a SWAT team, instead of collaborating to have a single SWAT team for--let us say--an entire metropolitan area or a county. For instance, the greater Syracuse area had 5 SWAT teams as of 2004. Of course, this adds a great expense, with each police department outfitting its own SWAT team, and of course, once these are established, there would be much opposition by anyone except the taxpayers to giving them up for a consolidated effort.

Police forces in the US have pulled back from attending to "the usual crimes," in part because they have had to devote more time to anti-terrorist security, and in part because of budget cuts in the wake of the burst economic bubble of a few years ago (Newsweek, 10 March 03). Part of the budget problems are due to having to spend so much more on police overtime in the wake of 9/11. In various places, public housing police have been cut; and in others, the tracking of sexual predators; elsewhere, attention to drunk driving; etc.

On 3 Aug. 03, our local newspaper reported on a man who drank, drove, and ran head-on into another car killing its 2 occupants. The man was sentenced to a mere 6 months in jail. The very next day, the same newspaper reported (without any reference to the case above) on another man who had had a long history of drunk driving and drunk driving convictions followed by relatively low sentences, who also drank, drove again, and ran into a van with a family of 7.

For years, we have been bombarded (especially by the PC) by statistics about the high imprisonment rate in the US, and only now are we being told that a huge proportion of these prisoners are foreigners, and that on top of that, they were never even legal aliens.

Not only all of that, but a quarter-million (!) foreigners are serving time in US prisons, and probably worst of all, instead of being deported, they are eventually let out on parole or probation. The most stunning figure of all to us was that there are in the US now millions of foreigners who technically are not only deportable because of their illegal status, but who are convicted or unconvicted criminals. The PC media kept all of this a secret.

If one looked at the census figures, one would think that certain counties in the US have a remarkably high percentage of minority members, and they might accordingly advertise themselves as being racially diverse--until one discovers that most of these people happen to be prisoners in a local prison to which they got sent from other places.

Among those who are in bonds are the imprisoned. With deinstitutionalization, jails and prisons in America became madhouses, with about 20% of their inmates, or 420,000 by about 2002, being mentally disordered. The percentage is even higher for female inmates. There seems to be no end in sight to this reality and all the resultant problems. One dilemma is that many inmates do not want to be put into a cell with a mentally disturbed person, and as a result, the latter get put into solitary confinement where their condition gets even worse. The libertarians would like to reduce this practice, but that would be at the expense of the other prisoners (SPS, 1 Nov. 03).

As we keep saying over and over, many of the things that happen in our area are almost certain to be representative of what is happening elsewhere. A survey in our local jail found that 56% of the local inmates said that their lawyer had never visited them, and 58% said that they can never contact their lawyer, in part because for 46% of them, their lawyer's phone has a block on it (TO, Spring 04).

Justice in Canada's Wild West, by F. W. Lindsay, 1963:

"The Outlaws of the Early Days
were bad, immoral men
and when the policemen caught them, they hauled them to the Pen.
And justice of the Early Days
was sure and swift and clean."
And it didn't pay the Outlaws to be nasty, rough and mean.

For The Beak looked from the rostrum, a gavel in his hand, and judged the case and sentence passed in the Wild and Savage Land.

"Your name's Joe Blow, you've got to go. You killed a man named White. And so I'm going to hang you—and may the noose be tight!

And God have mercy on your soul—what little soul there be. There's no appeal and no remand—and I'll show no clemency. You killed a man, you dirty cuss, to rob him of his gold, and I have been instructed the Queen's laws to uphold. And so, Joe Blow, you're going to hang... And may the noose be tight. I'm going home to have a drink. God bless you boy. Goodnight!"

*We like the cartoon that featured a woman complaining, "I don't understand it. I always fall for the wrong guy"--to her Married Men and Convicted Felons Dating Service.

Poverty

Issues around poverty are almost as highly ideologically controverted as those around human nature. The poor are certainly devalued in our society, they are often oppressed, and they are often in bondage. Unfortunately, the service system that is supposed to benefit the poor is often one of their oppressors.

Miscellaneous

*A problematic book, entitled The Working Poor, and an accompanying literature and propaganda campaign, have been asserting that there is little truth to the idea that the poor can work their way up out of poverty, even if they are the working poor. However, the book brings out that persistent poverty among the working poor is often the result of their own bad habits rather than of obstacles being put in their way. The media that have reviewed this book have played up some of its conclusions, and then attacked others that have pointed to the bad habits of the poor that either got them into poverty or keep them there.

*There are all sorts of indices that are correlated with poverty in the US, but it is not clear to what degree they play a causative role in poverty. For instance, poor people are vastly more likely to have children while they are still very young, and poor people are extremely disproportionately more likely to be among the racial and ethnic minority groups. But perhaps the greatest dividing line between the rich and the poor is education. Most likely, there are some very complex feedback loops.

*We are constantly being told how many people in the US suffer from hunger, but then the news pictures that show such people, including people eating free meals at all kinds of meal hospitality places, so often depict very obese people. Parade (4/4/04) ran one such article of pitiful stories on hunger in America, but unfortunately it was punctuated with pictures of obese families and children. One could truly say, "What is wrong with this picture?" This underlines the paradox of what poverty in a wealthy society means, and how different it is these days from what poverty used to be through all previous human history.

*On the average, Americans drink 50 gallons of soft drinks per person per year (3/04 news item). Youngsters below college age in essence have drunk away the cost of their college education in soft drinks alone, and children from the culture of poverty who drink pop for breakfast have drunk away their future. Oh, for the good old days of normal poverty!

*The utility company serving our Central New York area loses about $60 million (!) a year in unpaid utility bills, almost entirely from customers who rent housing rather than lease or buy. The company tried to start a policy of having renters pay up front a 2-month security deposit of between $200-$400, but this stirred up a firestorm of protest about hardships on the poor. It should be easy to see that a loss of $60 million a year is a major problem, and tells us that an awful lot of people are not paying their bills. But if a private firm is not allowed to collect its debts, then there should be a public guarantee underwriting them.
*A few years ago in Chicago, a beggar was found by the police to be carrying $24,000 on his, which turned out to be his life-savings. He was committed to a public mental facility, forcibly drugged, and the money was used up to pay for it and for a lawyer. If he had not had any money on him, he would have been let go.

*The Third Wonder, by Edwin Markham:
"'Two things,' said Kant, 'fill me with breathless awe:
the starry heavens and the moral law.'
I know a thing more awful and obscure,
the long, long patience of the plundered poor."

Homelessness

*O'Connor, P. (1963). Britain in the sixties: Vagrancy: Ethos and actuality. Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books. The thrust of this book is that vagrants embody in their existence and way of life a stance of contradiction to the overarching norms and values of a materialistic society. The author apparently believes that society owes such persons decent food, shelter, and health care, but should not ask anything of them in return because doing so requires the vagrant to conform somehow to society. He suggests the establishment of some kind of cooperatives (though he is very vague about what form they would take) in order to provide safety for the vagrant and to induce in him a more cooperative (as opposed to the currently societally valued competitive) nature. He believes that such a cooperative could be comprised of both vagrants and "other authentic outsiders" (pp. 184-185). Earlier, the author confessed great admiration for the ethical precepts of Communism, though not for its enactments, and his suggestion certainly seems consistent with that ideological bent.

He includes many interesting vignettes of vagrants telling their own stories; and of private, often church-related attempts to provide at least some minimal food and shelter to vagrants, as well as of state efforts to do so, though the quality of these is very variable--but hardly any of them are in his estimation even decent let alone good.

*Rossi, P. H., & Wright, J. D. (1987, Spring). The determinants of homelessness. Health Affairs, 6(1), 19-32. This article reported on a study of the homeless population in Chicago, which found that despite all of the many differences among homeless people, they had three characteristics in common: extreme poverty; a high incidence of some kind of impairment or devalued condition; and almost total social isolation from family and friends who might otherwise have provided support and assistance. This certainly underlines that when structures fail--as they are doing increasingly, and vis-à-vis greater numbers of people, and with more and more tragic results--the only thing that can truly provide any semblance of security for a vulnerable person is relationship commitments (what this report called social supports) given to that person by (mostly) competent others. In the case of homeless people, what might have prevented--or could still remedy--their homelessness would be family, friends, or other supporters who could provide space in their own home for the person, who could supplement or subsidize the person's income, etc.

*According to one definition widely accepted in hobo circles, a hobo was a man who travels to work, a tramp was a man who travels but will not work, and a bum was a man who won't work whether he travels or not.

*In the early 1900s American hobo idiom, washing dishes was called pearl-diving, a newspaper was called a Hoover blanket (after US president Herbert Hoover), and when somebody died, the person was said to have "caught the westbound to heaven."

*In 1900, a group of hobos from Chicago called themselves the Tourist Bureau Union No. 63, and began to hold national hobo conventions in Britt, Iowa, where they also began to crown a "king of the hobos." In 1933, the Britt Chamber of Commerce got into the spirit of things and sponsored an almost annual such event, though primarily to lure tourists. At it, a "king of the hobos" was crowned with an empty coffee can. There have been 61 such crownings. Amazingly, some of the hobos of those days who started riding trains as teenagers are still alive.
*One old-time hobo claimed that during the Great Depression some hobo camps in the US West were huge, and might have thousands of campfires at night (NY Times, 25/1/04).

*Hobos relied on a graffiti code to communicate with each other. For instance, a jail was indicated by a grid ( presumably representing cell bars, and the letters OK in the grid ( ) meant a good clean jail. A drawing of a cat ( ) indicated a kind lady, and a black oval ( ) indicated a mean one. There might also be multiple signs with the same meaning, e.g., a vicious dog could be indicated by a black oval as above ( ) or by a crude sketch of a dog ( ) (several source items).

Hobo, Poverty, Beggary, or Jailhouse Songs, Poetry, or Jokes

*Russian convicts being marched to Siberia in the late 1800s commonly wailed a pitiful begging song as they dragged themselves along in chains:

"Have pity on us, O our fathers! Don't forget the long-imprisoned.
Don't forget the unwilling travelers, Feed us, O our fathers--help us."

(George Kennan, in American Heritage, August 1961).

*We had reported before that an old English beggar's song goes:

"Pity, pity palmus, One for Peter, One for Paul,
Please give us almos (alms) And one for Christ who saved us all.

However, we found another version of the song:

"One for Peter, Two for Paul,
A threepenny loaf will serve us all."

This solves a mystery: one needed 3 pennies because that is what a loaf of bread cost.

*Just some of the words to the song "The Hungry Hobo" ran:

"I don't feel very hungry. My appetite is failing.
Just bring a couple of hams, Just bring a couple of whales,
A barrel of salt and pepper, A hundred pounds of bread,
and two or three fat lambs. and fifty ginger ales!"

*Two songs from The Great Depression of the early 1930s sound amazingly contemporary:

"I Don't Want Your Millions, Mister"

I don't want your millions, mister,
I don't want your diamond ring.
All I want is the right to live, mister;
Give me back my job again.

I don't want your Rolls-Royce, mister,
I don't want your pleasure yacht.
All I want is food for my babies;
Give me my old job back.

Think me dumb if you wish, mister,
Call me green, or blue, or red.
This one thing I sure know, mister:
My hungry babies must be fed.

We worked to build this country, mister,
While you enjoyed a life of ease.
You've stolen all that we built, mister;
Now our children starve and freeze.

"Soup Song"

I'm spending my nights at the flophouse,
I'm spending my days on the street.
I'm looking for work, and I find none,
I wish I had something to eat.

Chorus: Soup, Soup, They give me a bowl of Soup.
         Soup, Soup, They give me a bowl of Soup.

I spent twenty years in the factory,
I did everything I was told,
They said I was faithful and loyal
Now even before I get old: (chorus)
I saved fifteen bucks with my banker
To buy me a car and a yacht,
I went down to draw out my fortune,
And this is the answer I got: (chorus)

"Up, beggars! Be joyful, for joy is our own;
Our garments are tattered, and bald is our crown.
Beloved, want presses us; what shall we do?
Why, want is one wo, discontent would make two!"

"Let's enter the inn, though we stay but a minute,
For the bottle looks mournful when nothing is in it;
Legs weary, bags empty, and what shall we do?
Why, bearing one burden, we need not make two!"

"On Friday we dine, from a halfpenny pot;
Sour broth, ragged bones, bread and water we've got.
And fish? To be sure—in the Danube, the sea,
Which are fresher and sweeter than caught fish can be.

Then Saturday comes—that's perplexing and rude—
And Sunday, with hunger; but where is the food?
We sit at the table—poor devils!—to eat;
Were the table but covered our task would be sweet!

Our cooks are sad pygmies; they cannot be less:
They needs must look small when they've nothing to dress.
Can they carve from a fog, make of darkness a stew,
Or turn a stag's ghost to a venison ragout?"

"A cry for help. Does anyone know the words to the song "The Old Jaw Bone on the Almshouse Wall"? We very much would like to see a copy. It was often sung in the medicine-show skit known as "The 3 O'clock Train" (Calhoun, 1976).

"We reported before that "Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight" is considered to be the ancestor of the hobo songs. We can now add that one Methodist minister in the Wild West often began his street preaching to cowboys and miners by singing this song, and reminded his listeners to write to their parents "back home" (CH, No. 66, 2000)."

"The following jokes are from Lurie, 1928, Make 'Em Laugh Again!"

"Willing"
"A tramp applied at the back door of a farm house and asked for help.
'Madam,' he said to the farmer's wife, 'would you help a poor man out of his troubles?'
'Certainly,' said she. 'Would you rather he shot or hit with an ax?'

"A Distinction in Words"
"An Englishwoman was at luncheon, when the back door bell rang. 'Go see who it is, Mary,' said the woman. The servant came back in a few moments.
'Please, ma'am, there's a poor man at the door.'
'Well, what does he want?'
'Well, ma'am, he wants a bath, but he's asking for something to eat.'"

"Sure Evidence"
"When a tramp called at the back door of a house in a small town and asked for something to eat, he was met with such a tongue lashing that he retreated toward the gate immediately. The woman wound up her remarks by saying, 'You get right away from here, or I'll call my husband!' 'No, you won't,' said the tramp, 'because your husband ain't home.'
'How do you know my husband ain't home?' she asked.
'Because when a man has a wife with a tongue like yours, he's home only at meal times,' said the tramp, as he went over the fence."

The Transfer of Wealth Upward

We have noted in earlier issues of TIPS that one of the most subtle forms of stratification in society is the transfer of wealth upward from the lowly to the higher-ups. Often, this is done in outright illegal ways, but even when it is, it is rarely severely punished. And when it is done legally, it still contributes to oppression, even if the law does not recognize it as an injustice.
*One good thing about President Nixon was that he asked for a modest funeral which cost US taxpayers only $300,000, while the Reagan burial cost $10,000,000 (Newsweek, 5 July 04). Here was a man who shifted the wealth from the poor to the rich, and even in death "took it with him."

*One bad thing that Republicans have done that was typically Republican was to cut down to the lowest level in 7 years on the number of audits of the tax returns of business firms, while the audits of tax returns of individuals remained at roughly the same level (SPS, 12 April 04).

*In 2000, it required the combined pay of more than 500,000 retail clerks to match the pay of the top 400 bosses of their companies. This is a discrepancy that is almost 100% higher than what it was in 1992 (Time, 2/2/04).

*On top of all of the other financial market and corporate scandals in the last several years, the public has recently learned of yet another one, namely that apparently all or almost all of the mutual fund investment culture has been corrupt in a big way, and has stolen about $9 billion a year from shareholders in recent decades (Newsweek, 16/2/04).

When someone buys a stock at a known price and later sells it at a known price, they know exactly how much money they have gained or lost; but when they invest in a mutual fund, their assets and the transactions become non-transparent, and this has enabled mutual funds to levy invisible charges on their transactions which sometimes have amounted to as much as 45%. Investors may not know this as long as stocks go up, nor may they notice it when stocks go down because they think that the losses are just simply part of the declining stock market (CS, 3/04). This all came to light in 2003 and created yet another financial scandal. Once again, this hits particularly hard at elderly people who considered their market investment part of their old-age income scheme.

*Cesar Chavez died in 1993, and since then, California has been celebrating an annual Cesar Chavez Day. It is a paid holiday for government workers—but for the farm workers for whom Chavez was the leading advocate, it is just another day of labor in the fields.

The Gap Between Rich & Poor

There is a huge gap—indeed, sometimes a gulf—between the haves and have-nots, both between and among nations (with some being very wealthy and some very poor), and within societies. Often, the transfer of wealth upwards from the lowly to the higher-ups contributes to this gap, as the wealthy nations extract resources from the poorer ones in ways which further impoverish the poor ones, and do not reflect the real costs of the extraction.

*In 1970, poverty in the world was concentrated mostly in Asia, where 76% of the population was poor, but only 11% were poor in Africa. By 1998, Asia had become relatively well-off, containing only 15% of the world’s poor, while Africa had 66%. In world history, this is a rare dramatic reversal, particularly since Africa and Asia had not been at war with each other, with Asia defeating and plundering Africa, which is how such dramatic reversals in the past have often taken place (FT, 8/04). A lot of modernistic ideologues would have a hard time explaining this convincingly.

*In the 6/03-2/04 issue of TIPS, we pointed out that it is utterly wrong to describe certain countries as poor when it is not the country that is poor but only its people. A new example of this that we came across is Equatorial Guinea, where huge amounts of oil were discovered, but none of the wealth reaches the people because the rulers take it all. Its president has several mansions in Washington, DC alone, and interprets himself as being divine (16/11/03 news).

*Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, was once the breadbasket of southern Africa, until "liberation" in 1980 brought in an evil and irrational dictatorship. The country is now a basket case of hunger and want.

*It is hard to believe that in the Congo, one of the world’s richest, but also most unstable, nations and plagued by individual poverty, there has sat for several decades a nuclear power plant working with one of the world’s most dangerous substances, namely uranium.
*It is really ironic that instead of spending money on what people need, the First World has been inundating the Third World with so many condoms and birth control pills that people are totally saturated with them and have a surplus of them, and then try to think of ways of using them. One common use is to apply birth control pills as fertilizers to flowers, and children use the condoms to make balloons (NCR, 2/2/03).

*According to one author, most of the protesters against economic globalization and abolishment of trade barriers come from backgrounds of sociology and English literature, and very few know anything about economics. We would not be impressed by this bit of information were it not for the fact that most of these protesters have been brainwashed either in Marxism or constructionism (FT, 8/04).

**Philanthropy**

*Many people who give to a "charity" are concerned that their gift go to "those who need it most," rather than to salaries--not to mention perks--for staff of the organization. A database called GuideStar.org on the web provides financial information on more than 850,000 organizations (Time, 5 Nov. 2001). This may allow donors to compare potential recipient bodies--if they find time for it.

However, it is a totally false belief that some non-profits should not spend much or all of their money on staff activities. After all, some non-profits do such things as public education, analysis of legislation or policy, responding to inquiries, etc. Activities such as these can in most cases only be done on a large scale by paid staff. Even the distribution of donations to needy parties may take much staff time, and doing it with minimal expenditures on staff could be extremely false economy. People who are obsessed with this issue should find ways of giving to the needy directly, or as near to them as possible. For instance, money might be better given to a specific minister in Africa than to the international church body that channels funds in round-about ways to needy people in Africa.

Relatedly, temptation and sinfulness afflict both individuals and organizations, but when individuals succumb, they usually do less harm than do organizations. This is why we recommend that as much as possible, people give directly to needy persons, rather than going through organizations, even if the needy people abuse one's gift.

*Here is a very commendable kind of philanthropy: a Seattle woman in her 70s began to give away what amounted to more than $100 million over a period of about 10 years, with the stipulation that her name would never be attached to any of her charitable projects. Furthermore, she established housing for the poor among the mansions of the rich in Seattle, contrary to the way that the government has tended for decades to put large numbers of dysfunctional poor people together in large housing projects far away from the rich or even the middle classes (SPS, 9 March 03).

*The US government has a program under which all federal employees can make charitable contributions, much as employees in the private sector often do to a United Fund campaign. They can designate to what kind of charitable organization the money should be channelled. This is called the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). In recent legislation, government has ruled as ineligible to receive monies from this fund any organization that employs people who are on a government terrorism watch list. This is probably intended to cut-off money from any Islamic fund-raising organizations that are supposedly charitable, but that have been sending monies to terrorist organizations, or have used it to indirectly support terrorism as by making awards to families who lost a member engaged in terrorist activities. This got the American Civil Liberties Union up-in-arms who rather admirably decided to no longer accept monies from the CFC as of 8/04.

*There are allegedly ways to set up a tax-exempt "poor man's charitable foundation" with as little as $5000 ($10,000-$25,000 is preferred), and even endow it with objects of value, such as real estate or art works. More information in Time (27/11/00, p. 100).

*We are aware of two kinds of recipients of charity that are swimming in money. One we mentioned before, namely so-called "hospice" services. So many grateful families give money to them (at least in many locations) that they do not know what to do with it. The second one we became aware of only recently, and that is "AIDS." It is staggering how many media celebrities and events are raising money "for AIDS." We do not have any data on how it is spent, but would not
be surprised if it went mostly to medical research vultures rather than supporting the lives of people in acute advanced stages of AIDS.

*We are sorry to report that in 2003, the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon, assisted by entertainment celebrities such as Cher, Celine Dion, and Don Rickles, raised a record $60.5 million in pledges.

*Between 1990-99, the Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations in the world have lost 115 million volunteers (Time, 15/11/99). However, despite the reduction in volunteering in recent years, 56% of American adults still do about 3.5 hours work every week for some non-profit group (Consumer Reports, 1/01).

Among the voluntary associations that have declined dramatically in membership in recent years are the Lions, Elks, Jaycees and Masons.

*Some employers are now allowing their employees paid time off for volunteering, assisting them to find volunteer opportunities, and allowing them to do some work related to their volunteering at their jobs (Time, 22/1/01). Whatever good it does for others, it benefits the employer by making employees more loyal.

*Not surprisingly, people who practice a religious faith are between 2-3 times as generous to those in need as those who do not (NCR, 25/11-1/12/01 & 1-7/9/02).

*Some modernistic people have very peculiar ideas about unselfish giving. When movie stars Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones married, they asked that, in lieu of gifts to themselves, people donate money to a fund so that their son would have money to give to others when he grew old enough to decide what to do with it. The idea that one should give of one’s substance, or even out of one’s want rather than one’s surplus, is too challenging to modernistic individualism, sensualism, and materialism.

*We continue to report that non-profit organizations that bring in professional fund-raisers often get very little of the money raised by the fund-raisers, and sometimes even lose money when less is raised than the fee charged by the professionals. In New York State, there were at least 588 telemarketing campaigns for non-profits in 2001, and in all but 40 of these, the costs exceeded 35% of the money raised, and overall, only 32% of the monies raised went to the non-profits. But that was only the average, and for many organizations the results were much worse. For instance, one Shriners chapter got only $2,000 out of $88,000 raised. The people who donate usually have no idea that their money first of all goes to the telemarketer, and that the charity only gets any money at all if a certain minimum amount gets raised (SPS, 10 Jan. 03).

*Some firms that engage in fund-raising by appealing to people’s charitable impulses actually are non-profit firms, but not charitable ones. Particularly misleading, perhaps surprisingly, are police fraternal and benevolent organizations, some of which spend hardly any of the money donated to them on charitable purposes. Most of the money goes to fund-raising agencies, and the rest can go to almost anything, such as office renovation, or even parties for the organization’s members.

*In 2003, it became public that the executive director of the United Way of Washington, DC, had been siphoning more than $1.5 million from the agency for more than 15 years for his own personal use, and that the few board members who knew about it kept it a secret from the rest of the board. One of the results was a 60% drop in donations to the United Way (e.g., SPS, 19/8/03).

*Internetting has begotten Internet panhandling. People who run out of money get on the Internet and appeal to the general public to make contributions to them. Often, these are people who simply spent more than they had any business spending, and ran up large debts, such as a TV executive who went $20,000 into credit card debt and begged on the Internet for people to help her pay off her Gucci, Prada, and Bergdorfs bills. She argued that if people gave her money now, maybe somebody else would give them money when they needed it later on. Sure enough, more than $13,000 in donations flowed in. Some ask for money to buy their spouses an automobile.
Apparently, strangers send money to such beggars because it makes them feel good (Time, 9 Dec. 02).

The Collapse of Societal Institutions, Glues & Even Entire Societies

Societies need a certain amount, and certain types, of "glues" in order to function. A shared history, shared language, a common religion, social bodies for resolving problems (such as courts), and intergenerational cohesiveness are some examples. When these glues "dry up," crack, or come apart, then the society will also fall apart.

*In many countries, there simply is no such thing as what we would call civic virtue which people have internalized to function for the public good. This is the case in many Third World countries, including apparently Iraq, where things only worked previously because of the iron hand of Saddam, much as in Russia things fell apart once the police state collapsed.

*Some of us at least would not be surprised to learn that a relatively recently created country turned into a so-called "failed state." However, it is somewhat surprising when a country that has existed for several 100 years is suddenly termed a failed state, as the media began to refer to Liberia in 2003. And yet, Liberia used to be the richest nation in sub-Saharan Africa, but it has not had electric power since 1992 because the electric power stations were destroyed by its own citizens. Again, it only thrived under strongmen.

*Here is what happens when countries either never get on their feet, or collapse. As a former Haitian government official said, "The only people that Haitians have to trust are street-gang members, assassins and drug traffickers" (Time, 8 March 04). In some countries, one might have added "tyrant dictators and warlords." Haiti has never worked. If ever there was a failed state, it is Haiti, but too many people are too politically correct to be willing to say so.

*It is widely believed that an ecological disaster brought on by the policies of the Communist government over a period of almost 80 years caused the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now, there are authorities that are predicting a similar fate for China because of its almost total disregard of the environment (The River Runs Black, 2004).

*It is really remarkable that Newsweek itself said (28/7/03), "There is a sense that California has lost the ability to govern itself. Its civic life makes the last days of Rome look serene." California has an economy that is larger than all but 4 nations in the world, and disorders there therefore have worldwide repercussions. In response to reigning corruption, California passed a law a few years ago that so severely limits the terms of legislators that now, no one in the legislature has been around long enough to understand what is going on. In essence, this hands government over to lobbyists and consultants. The people are in a rage but do not know what to do, except to vote big money for stem cell research based on abortions.

*A civil rights lawyer said in 2004 (Newsweek, 14/6/04) that "Los Angeles is on the road to Fallujah."

*One thing that is amazing is that there can be a riot in an American city during which bricks are thrown, shots are fired, and 20 houses are burned by rioters, some with people inside of them, and a major police force has to be mustered to control the riot--without there being any coverage of it in the national daily media news. Such an incident actually happened in Benton Harbor, Michigan, in 6/03. Perhaps the media did not feel that reporting the riot was PC because it was staged by so-called "blacks."

*Newsweek carried a cover story (17/3/97) on the "black culture," particularly the wave of black "youth culture." Amazingly, as PC as Newsweek is, it had hardly anything good to say, and one gets the impression that now even the liberal media have given up on what is happening and where things are going (e.g., the "hip-hop culture"). Within that culture, the world is truly turned upside down. For instance, being uneducated, stupid, not having a job, not having a family, being on drugs and being habitually involved in crime is equated with "being black," and youths who do
not fit that mold are taunted by their peers as "going white." Finally, we are also seeing an admission that the black pride reaction in the 1960s that had rejected racial integration was in fact a terrible mistake, and not what all the liberals had been saying all along, namely a necessary stepping stone toward an eventual future integration by first establishing identity and pride.

*In 1961, at the edge of the urban renewal euphoria in the US, Jane Jacobs came out with a book entitled The Death and Life of Great American Cities, which was greatly ridiculed by the utopians who were about to destroy American urban life. She has since written other books along similar lines, and in 2004 came out with Dark Age Ahead, which essentially predicts the imminent downfall of our culture. Ha, Ha, Ha.

*In some localities in the US where unions are strong, one has to hire painters who will paint a wall only up to 10 feet, and different painters to paint higher up and ceilings (Newsweek, 24/11/03).

*Here is one of many signs of governmental breakdowns in the US. The New York State legislature has not been able to bring a budget out in time for decades, but keeps finding time to pass about 5000 resolutions in its Senate and about half that many in its House of Representatives, where members constantly interrupt proceedings as, for instance, to recognize the blueberry muffin or proclaim antipasto day, and to formally introduce their guests (Press & Sun-Bulletin, 10 May 04; source item from Susan Ruff).

*We recently heard a speaker accidentally say, "courts are passing laws," and we realized how appropriate this phrasing is these days in many Western countries.

*In 2003, we heard for the very first time of a public hearing at which no one was allowed to speak. This happened in Syracuse in 2003 to allegedly get the views of the public about Veterans Administration provisions. Citizens were only allowed to submit written questions or comments beforehand, and public officials would then respond to them.

*Wise old curmudgeon news commentator Andy Rooney said on 23/5/04 that for the first time in his life, he is now fearing for the future of the American nation because of the signs of decadence. While we have said the same, and even much more harshly, and that for 30 years, we were gratified that Rooney has finally read the signs of the times, and we hope that many other people will begin to do so as well.

*In his 1985 book (already reviewed in a previous TIPS issue), Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, Leo Postman said: "When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility."

*A 2/04 program of "Nature" on the public television network pointed out forcefully that the way the "cattle industry" has gone in the last few decades is utterly unsustainable in the long run, because it relies on cheap energy and massive antibiotics. (One could call these the 2 stoicheia of the cattle industry.) The massive drugging started when cattle were crowded together in feed lots rather than being allowed to roam over the land while grazing. The energy issue comes in especially with the feeding of corn to cattle, instead of letting them graze. Of course, the massive feeding of antibiotics to cattle is one of the things that is likely to have devastating impacts on humans when antibiotics no longer work on them.

*In electricity blackouts, the following things no longer work: cordless telephones, electronic key cards in hotels (imagine being locked out of your room for a day or two), ATMs, and credit card machines, among others. A lot of modernists carry very little cash with them, and we delight in a fantasy of them being locked out of their hotel rooms without a landline phone, no money, no access to money, and perhaps with few clothes on. When that happens, maybe some of them will finally say, "The end is near."
*It is amazing how many people gave up so-called land line telephones in their homes in favor of portable cell phones, even though in an emergency, including power failures, it is the land lines that work and the cell phones that give out. It is obvious that the minds of modernists simply do not work properly anymore, no matter how high their IQs may be.

*In 4/04, a bird shorted out a power line to the Los Angeles International airport, and 100 (plane) flights had to either stay in the air or on the ground for hours, even though the resultant outage was very brief (SPS, 13/4/04). As we keep pointing out, the more complex systems become, the more weak spots they develop at which they can become disabled.

*The McVeigh Oklahoma City terrorist bombing case was--until that time--the largest case ever handled by the FBI, eating up the time of about half of all of its agents, plus $82 million. Again, we point out that this was a relatively very low-tech act of terrorism with vast and costly consequences.

*When oil and gas prices become astronomic, as eventually they must, many wrenching things will happen. A lot of people will be stuck with gas-guzzling vehicles that they cannot get rid of, and millions of people who built homes along rural roads to which they commute from their city jobs will have to sell them for a song, or may even have to abandon them the way so many farmers abandoned their homes and barns.

*Contemplating the demographic trends in Germany, one of the government ministers said, "We cannot afford to become, at the same time, fewer of us, older, and stupid as well," referring to the dumbing-down in education (early 04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*With the end of public civility in Britain, the end must surely be near. People spitting at transportation workers, such as on buses, trains and subways, has reached epidemic proportions, to the degree that transport workers are being issued 11,000 kits for collecting people's spit so as to identify them via DNA analysis and bear down on them. Some bus drivers have been covered in spit all over, often by entire gangs of youths spitting at them. In addition, bus drivers routinely are getting shouted at, threatened, punched, hit by thrown objects, and occasionally stabbed (SPS, 16/5/04). Strangely enough, none of our British correspondents have yet commented on this.

**Surveillance**

Earlier issues of TIPS have warned repeatedly that the capacity for, and the practice of, surveillance is increasing in developed societies--and what may be even worse, vast numbers of people are ignorantly playing right into the hands of the empire by uncritically embracing all sorts of technologies that enable such surveillance, often because these technologies offer them some immediate short-term benefit.

*Virtually nothing can be kept secret or hidden anymore. More evidence comes from the book The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America (C. Parenti, 2003; New York: Basic Books). The computer is the primary mechanism behind this tremendously increased capacity. As always, methods of surveillance are first introduced for other purposes (as "easy" forms of identification, to find dangerous criminals, to monitor traffic patterns so as to improve traffic flow, etc.), and unfortunately, most people see only the advantages and therefore eagerly embrace them. Surveillance now pervades virtually all public spaces: schools, hospitals, airports, highways, buses, parks, sports facilities, banks, government offices, etc., etc.

Unfortunately, the increase in surveillance is gradual, so that people become habituated to its small incremental progression--and then, when it is full-blown, they have become desensitized and accustomed to it (source material from Marc Tumeinski).

*When the US first began to issue Social Security numbers, and for many decades thereafter, the government swore up and down that these numbers would never be used for anything else, but in fact they have become an identity number for citizens that makes it possible to track them for a vast number of purposes other than Social Security, including non-Social Security.
Electronic tags can now be made so small that they can be inserted into almost any item. Consumers may eventually own hundreds of items or even more that contain electronic tags, and these tags can be read in any number of public places through which they pass. For instance, going through a store entrance, all the tags on a person's clothing, shoes, handbags, etc., etc., may be read, and thereby the person can be identified, perhaps because one or more of the tagged items was bought with a credit card, by mail order, etc. (CS, 3/04).

In January 1973, in Roe v. Wade, the US Supreme Court granted a virtually unrestricted right to abortion on the basis of a "right to privacy," which the ruling admitted could not actually be found in the US Constitution, but only in a "penumbra" of other rights throughout the Constitution and earlier court rulings. In subsequent abortion-related rulings since then, this supposed right to privacy has trumped all other possible rights, including the rights of the child, the right of the father to be informed of the pregnancy or to have a say about the abortion, and the rights of parents of a pregnant minor (even one in the very early teens) to know about the pregnancy or stop the abortion.

However, in June 2004, in the case of Larry Hiibel, the same court ruled that a person who is asked by the police to give his or her name, but refuses to do so, can be arrested even if the person has done nothing wrong. Where now is the right to privacy? And is refusing to give out one's name any worse than invoking the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution, under which a person can refuse to answer a question in court if the answer might "incriminate" him/her? And should not the privacy "penumbra" that allegedly permeates the Constitution also grant to citizens the right to keep their identities private if they so choose?

Things are moving very, very rapidly toward a police state, as we have been warning for years.

Morality in Society, Business & Government

The morality of a society both is shaped by, and shapes, the morality of its social institutions.

*After a night of revelry, Prince Hal comes into the presence of King Henry and boasts of having given revelry new dimensions. The king, however, is unimpressed, and tells the prince that he has only committed "The oldest sins the newest kind of ways" (Shakespeare, King Henry). A pre-modern form of modernism!

Corporate scandals, and particularly the Enron and WorldCom scandals, inflicted unbelievably large losses on the citizens of New York State alone. The state employee pension fund alone lost $9.1 billion. Older workers lost on the average $10,000 in retirement funds, and employees in their mid-years lost an average of $8,000 each. All this came on top of several other billion dollar losses to the state's economy. It is amazing how such crookery ultimately steals from everybody in round-about ways that most people do not perceive (SPS, 24/8/03).

One of the many motivational and morality guru personalities in the US is John C. Maxwell who wrote things such as the bestseller The Twenty-One Irrefutable Laws of Leadership and There's No Such Thing as "Business" Ethics. Its book jacket explains that he speaks "in person" to more than 250,000 people each year. Maxwell used to be a pastor for many years before becoming a guru. The good news is that Maxwell teaches that there is only one principle of sound ethics, namely the golden rule, i.e., to do unto others what one would want to have done to oneself.

One problem with interpreting the golden rule is whether the criterion is "what I would want done to myself," or "what we would want done to us." In the current cultural atmosphere of radical individualism, one's own personal preferences and impulses might be invalidly imputed to others, and what I would want done to myself could be something extremely self-centered, bad for a community, and outright wrong.

With the US government running up the biggest budget deficit ever that will be with us for years to come, it still found $50 million to build a tropical rain forest in Iowa under an artificial dome, rather than to develop a real one in near-tropical places such as Florida, Louisiana, or Puerto Rico.

Economist Robert Samuelson has asserted that more and more, Congress treats important large federal programs (such as Medicare) as pork barrel projects, and that neither political party has
the honesty and courage to act rationally and in the interest of both the public and the beneficiaries (Newsweek, 1 Dec. 03).

Religion & Philosophy in Society

We have long taught that humans are by nature religious (homo religiosus), and even the most strident atheist has a religion (in this case, atheism). We have also long taught that human services are deeply shaped by the values and beliefs of those who found, direct, run, and provide them. Therefore, religion and philosophy in society as a whole are of the greatest importance to human services.

Contemporary Philosophy

*We commented earlier on the problem that irrationality is normative in non Western societies. Not enough credit is given to how almost 2500 years of philosophical efforts in the West have left a deep imprint on how the Western mind thinks, starting with the logic lessons of the Greeks to the evolution of scientific cause-and-effect and proof-based reasoning in the Western era of scientism. Westerners therefore keep getting astounded at how easily non Western people fall into irrational thinking or superstitious beliefs, or for thoroughly implausible rumors.

For instance, throughout the non Western world, a very effective propaganda ploy for generations has been for manufacturers of certain commercial products to spread the rumor that a competitor's product would result in sterility in women or impotency in men, or cause penises to retract irretrievably. At times, these rumors have been launched at products such as Western cola drinks.

Similar insanity has manifested recently. For instance, for decades, the Muslim world wanted the Israelis to withdraw from occupied territories such as the Gaza strip; many of the Palestinian youths throwing stones at the Israelis in Gaza even said that they wanted to "kick them out" (e.g., SPS, 22/4/04). But when the Israelis actually began to withdraw, there was a worldwide outcry in the Islamic world. Let's face it: the Israelis will be damned if they stay and damned if they withdraw, and the important thing to Islamists is not so much whether they stay or withdraw but that they be damned.

Another example is all the many times that Islamic terrorists perpetrated atrocities in Iraq by blowing up fellow Muslims--and the Iraqis then angrily blamed the British or the Americans, and said either that they did it, or that they could have prevented it.

The Western PC simply do not understand what kind of a mentality they are dealing with.

*There has been considerable debate to what degree it is possible to maintain morality in a society in the absence of explicitly religious beliefs that underpin morality. The founding fathers of the American republic strongly believed that religion provided the foundation for the morality of its citizens, but conceivably, ideologies that are not recognized as religions might also do so. For instance, Marxism inspired many people to practice a morality of the common good, on what one might call a golden rule in the abstract for the benefit of humanity in the long run, though not necessarily applied to individual people, and particularly not to opponents of Marxism. Even without a belief in an afterlife, many Marxists sacrificed their lives for their beliefs. For instance, Marxists were among the more principled opponents of Nazism, including in the concentration camps.

Today, secularists in American and Western societies generally no longer believe that morality requires a sustaining religion, and with the death of Marxism, there have not emerged any new secular religions that could sustain modernistic people in a personal morality. This is one reason why modernism--being essentially secular--sinks so quickly into decadence.

*A scholar writing in Parabola (Summer 04) claims that the widespread sense of alienation among modernists is one of the maladies of the modern world caused largely by its philosophical materialism, because it deprives humans of a sense of where they are and belong, such as all religions had provided. He likened alienation to AIDS.

*Alexis deTocqueville suggested almost 200 years ago that it was religion that might help democratic societies to remain democratic, in part because it would contribute to the citizens of a democracy being trained in a disciplined life, and being oriented toward something other than self-
interest and material gain. These are notions that are now anathema to liberalism even though de Tocqueville has a great deal of cachet in academia (B&C, 5/04).

*A crucially important question is whether there is such a thing as a proper balance between individual license and the public good. The vast majority of people would agree that there is indeed such a thing as a desirable balance point, though they will disagree as to where it falls. Some thinkers say that the point of imbalance is reached when the promotion and pursuit of individualism erodes—or no longer even permits—the formation and/or sustenance of relationships that provide either individuals with essential emotional sustenance, or society with sufficient functionality.

*Craig Venter, one of the leaders in mapping the human genome, said that this work was "about looking for meaning in having existed" (Discover, 3/04). Apparently, without knowing what is in the genome, existence has no meaning.

*At one time, most scientists, as well as materialists generally, taught what is called reductionism: i.e., the further one goes down the chain of complexity in both living and non-living entities, the simpler would become the building blocks, until ultimately, all higher-order and more complex phenomena could be explained in terms of the lawfulness of operation of these smallest components. To the infinite chagrin of the kinds of parties that had preached this ideology, it turned out that complexity persists all the way down. A good example is the mind-boggling complexity even within a single living cell.

*Some people have called the culture of modernism a neo-pagan one, but some thinkers say that is not true. After all, people who used to be called pagan were intensely religious, whereas the citizens of modernism are, in a certain sense, nihilistic about religion. For instance, historian Christopher Dawson posited that a secular society that had only self-satisfaction as its own end would be incapable of surviving, and would destroy itself (FT, 2/04).

*In Greek mythology, Lethe is the river of forgetfulness that one crosses to reach the underworld from which there ordinarily is no return. So the Greek philosophers referred to truth as aletheia, or unforgetting, because they believed in the unchangeability of truth. They also saw it as inseparable from justice (Parabola, Winter 2003).

The Nature of Human Nature

We have decided to institute a new column, called "human nature," and to primarily run it in the issue that comes out in December. Many things that we formerly had difficulty classifying now very clearly qualify as being concerned with questions or beliefs about human nature; and many of these questions have psychological, philosophical and religious dimensions.

*Intelligence and education guru Howard Gardner claims that studying a few subject matters deeply benefits the mind more than studying a lot of them superficially. In fact, he claims that the study of truth, beauty and goodness is more productive than a great deal of what gets taught in school these days (CP, 12/2000).

*About 40% of Americans never use the human capacity to develop a certain amount of night vision, because their environments are so light-polluted (Discover, 8/04).

*According to the feminists, there are essentially no differences between males and females except in the reproductive organs, and yet researchers tell us that brain density peaks at about age 11 in girls and at 12.5 in boys. Apparently, another critical period follows this during which whatever brain parts and functions are exercised most intensively are strengthened, and others are weakened or even lost.

*Edmund Burke (1730-97) was a philosopher of tradition and conservatism. He posited that adherence to tradition may not always be right, but nonetheless had many merits, in that its abandonment often led to even greater problems than this abandonment was meant to cure. He likened innovators to an ignorant man who thinks that he can take his clock apart and put it back
together. In other words, proposed cures for all sorts of shortcomings are often worse than the
disease, and that has certainly proven to be the case considering the many terrible -isms of the 20th
century and even the 21st. Burke was in favor of giving more rights to the rebellious Americans,
because this is how England had earlier achieved peace with Scotland and Wales.

An even more recent Burkian philosopher is the German Hans-Georg Gadamer. He has made
the point that tradition is a very valuable way of knowing. This idea certainly would appeal to
anybody who sees the problems of the here-and-now-ism of the culture of modernism.

One point that Gadamer makes is that self-understanding cannot take place in an individualistic
culture, but can only occur by understanding other than the self, i.e., one's context, past and history
(B&C, 3/04). In contrast, the Enlightenment thinkers had a prejudice in favor of method as a truth
machine, exemplified by the Enlightenment attitude toward science.

*A government-funded study by the US National Institute of Mental Health and the National
Science Foundation concluded that people who adhere to conventional moral principles and the idea
that government should be limited are mentally disordered. The study attributed such ideas to
"uncertainty avoidance," dogmatism, and mental rigidity, and further concluded that having such
tendencies is probably hard-wired and associated with "decreased cognitive function, lowered self-
esteeem, fear, anger, pessimism, disgust and discontent." Generally, all this was interpreted to
characterize social conservatives (synopsis from PHAL, 3/04).

(Eds.), Handbook of evolutionary psychology (pp. 265-273). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. "In natural
selection, babies are the only currency that counts. Primate actions and cognitions should be those
that reliably produced primate babies. Hominid actions and cognitions should have been those that
reliably produced hominid babies. And H. sapiens' actions and cognitions should be those that
reliably produce H. sapiens' babies. Until very recently, they seem to have been. And, more than
most of us suspect, they may still be" (p. 271). But modernists are teaching that babies no longer
"count."

*We have reported before that chimpanzees and humans share 99% of their genes, but now
we are told that mice and humans also share 99% of their genes, including the genes that cause mice
to have tails, except that the genes are arranged in a different order (SPS, 5 Dec. 02). At least in
respect to the gene for tails, this is rather regrettable because the TIPS editor, at least, would be
extremely proud to brandish a stately tail that could be flicked at appropriate moments.

*Tens of thousands of patent applications have been filed on all sorts of human genes--more
applications than there are believed to be genes in the human genome (Discover, 10/04). A person
who believes they have identified a gene for something is deemed to own it as "intellectual property,"
even if every human being on earth carries that gene.

*In April 1996, Science, the premier scientific journal in the world, announced the discovery
of "the premature aging gene," even though it turned out to be only the discovery of a gene for
Werner Syndrome, in which premature aging is one of many adverse results. It is now believe that
there are only about 125 people in the US with that syndrome. Yet further, people with this syndrome
show only some but not all of the signs of aging. So the publicity was yet another of the innumerable
and never-ending string of scientific hypes.

*Almost everybody will have the experience of occasionally getting a song or tune in their
minds, and then not easily getting it out again. This is called having "earworms." But while we all
get earworms, some people get them very badly and begin to suffer from them rather than to just
enjoy them. Sometimes, the earworm is not just a song but a commercial jingle. Some people are
haunted by a particular earworm for years. Neurotic persons and women seem to be particularly
susceptible (AP in SPS, 19/10/03).

*People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has been engaged in a PR campaign
aimed at children, trying to influence them so that they will pressure their parents to accept the PETA
agenda. For instance, PETA puts out comics that show a blood-thirsty smiling woman knifing to
death a bunny rabbit with blood spurting everywhere, with the caption, "Your mommy kills animals!"
It also tells the child how many animals the mother killed to make her fur coat.

*A lot of people have said some very pithy and humorous things about human nature. We provide a selection below. Try to match the quote with the author (see below for answers).

1. "It is human nature to think wisely and act foolishly."
2. "Man is a rational animal who always loses his temper when called upon to act according with the dictates of reason."
3. "The human race has improved everything, but the human race."
4. "The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization."
5. "I hate mankind, for I think of myself as one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am."
6. "No doubt Jack the Ripper excused himself on the grounds that it was human nature."
7. "The goddamn human race deserves itself, and as far as I'm concerned, it can have it."
8. "For once you must try not to shirk the facts: Mankind is kept alive by bestial acts."
9. "There is a great deal of human nature in people."

(a) Samuel Johnson; (b) Oscar Wilde; (c) Mark Twain; (d) Elizabeth Janeway; (e) Anatole France; (f) Bertolt Brecht; (g) Ralph Waldo Emerson; (h) Adlai E. Stevenson; (i) A. A. Milne

Contemporary Judaism

*The dying-out of world Jewry is not a post-WW II phenomenon, but was already documented before WW I. E.g., one of the lowest reproduction rates ever recorded in an ethnic or national count occurred among the Jews of Bohemia at that time, namely a mere 1.29% replacement births a year, whereas 20% is required to maintain a population level. In Berlin, 50% of Jewish marriages were childless. This all got even worse between the world wars (Eckart, 1934). So the failure of the survivors of the Holocaust to make up for the loss of their own by breeding double-overtime, and giving the world many new Jews--as one might have thought they would--had its roots in earlier social trends, and was not a reaction to their bitter experience.

*Jews in America have traditionally suffered from a bit of schizophrenia. On the one hand, they have enjoyed more freedom than almost anywhere else, but on the other hand, they have lived with a sense of enduring perpetual insecurity. They have been particularly afraid that the more authentically Christian the country is or becomes, the more dangerous would be their situation. Many are grateful that American Christians do not take their Christianity seriously, and sometimes when they encounter devout Christians who do not have negative attitudes toward Jews, they doubt the genuineness of the Christianities of such persons. The greatest irony in all of this is that the very Christians of whom they are the most afraid are the ones who generously admitted large numbers of Jews to make their home in the US, first during the persecutions of Jews in Eastern Europe in the 19th century, and then later under Nazism. Despite the fact that not all Jews who sought asylum in the US were admitted, a huge number were, exemplified by the fact that there are Holocaust survivors in the US in surprisingly large numbers, and even outright concentration camp survivors who had lived and are still living in the US (e.g., FT, 3/04).

*It is our impression that whatever--if any--anti-Jewish sentiment Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ" may have nourished, a thousand times more negative feelings were engendered by the Jewish response to the film. We believe that this is a dramatic case of the Jewish culture in the US having overreacted to its own detriment. If the media had left the film alone, and the Jewish culture had remained silent at least in public, there is a distinct possibility that the film would have come and gone with little notice except among some Christians.

Furthermore, it seems that far from stirring anti-Jewish sentiments, the film may have had the opposite effect.

What is further noteworthy is that the real threat to Jewry in the world currently does not come from either Catholicism narrowly or Christians widely, but from Islam, and amazingly little has been
heard in Jewish quarters about the Islamic terrorism threat to Judaism outside of Palestine, undoubtedly in part because political correctness is probably now vastly more common among liberal Jews than Jewish faith is among diaspora Jews.

*One of the slogans of the animal rights people is "To animals, all humans are Nazis." The unrelenting efforts of these people to equate the treatment of animals with the Holocaust has put a great many Jews into a huge bind since so many of them are politically liberal, and this now pits the free speech so dearly cherished by them against the exaltation of the Holocaust into a religion by many Jews (e.g., SPS, 18/10/03).

*A lot of young people who have a lot of Jewish friends have become envious of their Bar or Bat Mitzvahs, and are deciding to have their own, or at least what looks like one, but without the religion (FT, 4/04). This is a bit like the Japanese adopting Christian holidays without the Christianity.

*There has been quite a bit of writing and debate in recent years about one deep difference between Judaism and Christianity, namely radically different orientations toward forgiveness. Christianity calls malefactors to repent, and for others to then forgive them—and sometimes to forgive them even if they do not repent. In contrast, it is part of Jewish theology to call vengeance down on enemies of Judaism. For instance, Elie Wiesel went to Auschwitz in 1995 and offered a public prayer that God would show no forgiveness or mercy to those who created the concentration camp there and killed Jews (FT, 2/04, p. 45). There are also stock Jewish prayers that call for divine vengeance.

Contemporary Christianity

*More and more, Christian worship services are importing elements from the entertainment and hedonism world, so as to make the worship occasion "interesting" to their modernistic congregations. One gimmick is to start the worship with a period of physical exercises. Things like these happen even at Catholic Masses, and another related phenomenon is that the real part of the Mass usually gets transacted very swiftly while the entertainment or exercise part is given ample time.

*More Christian Evangelicals prefer to watch movies than members of any other Christian denomination (Time, 16/8/04). Therefore, and apparently in response to the success of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," the public relations people of the movie firms have begun to write blurbs about how virtually any film might be seen to contain some religious or spiritual message, and have sent these blurbs to ministers all over the US, hoping that they will use them in their sermons. For instance, ministers are told that one lesson in "Spiderman" is that we are looking for radioactivity to change us, but it is really God who does. "The Notebook" teaches that "God can step in where science cannot." "Anchorman" teaches us about what love is. "I Robot" teaches that God sometimes needs human help. "The Bourne Supremacy" in which a man has suffered amnesia is about "atonning for sins one cannot remember." If churchgoers have heard their ministers talk about recent films in their lessons, they are probably drawing on these PR blurbs. What makes church audiences so receptive to this is that they have moved to a post-modern mentality where it is no longer a rational understanding or truth that matters to them but feelings and storytelling. For its part, Hollywood is not particularly interested in making Christian movies, but wants to make movies that Christians can imagine to be Christian so that they will come and see them (Time, 16/8/04). The way some goody-goody Christians interpret all this is that God's truth simply will pop out even in stories told by people (meaning moviemakers) who don't believe in God.

*A Canadian Anglican priest started his own church and built his entire ministry upon an Elvis Presley impersonation, and he calls himself Elvis Priestley. For instance, he adapted a famous Presley song, known as "Blue Suede Shoes," into "one for the Father, two for the Son, three for the Holy Spirit and your life has just begun" (3/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*In 2004, an Episcopal church in Connecticut launched a new program of giving Holy Communion to pets in its efforts to bring fallen-away church members back. Parishioners brought their various pets forward to the altar rail, where they received a host and a special benediction. Other Episcopalian parishes have instituted pet-friendly worship services, or house calls for sick
animals. Some ministers accompany pet owners to the vet when a pet has to be euthanized, and clergy also sometimes officiate at pet funerals and group "bark mitzvahs." A Florida Episcopal church doubled its attendance since it has invited pet participation. These things are not unique to this congregation or denomination. At a Jewish temple in California, animal prayers are sung to the tune of the Sabbath prayer. Some churches have altered their readings so as to include readings tailored to animal lovers. All of this is sometimes interpreted as making the Church a temple "more relevant to people's lives." The pet products industry is very happily boosting this development, as by introducing pet memorial burial stones, kosher dog food, and special Hanukkah dog treats. Hallmark cards which already sells about ½ million pet sympathy cards introduced several with spiritual imagery (Wall Street Journal, 10 March 2004; source item from Patricia Powell).

*We heard of an ecumenical prayer group in the Taizé tradition in which one of the members complained that when it came time to pray for different people's problems and concerns, this "interrupted" their meditation and they did not want to be bothered with other people's problems. One member also complained that the "Our Father" prayer was old-fashioned, and a compromise was worked out whereby the group decided to only say it in 1 meeting out of 4 (source information from Susanne Hartfiel).

*In Germany, a VW bus was converted into a prominently marked "Confessionmobile" which drives around so that people in the streets can step in and confess their sins to a priest (2/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel). We would prefer a drive-by confessional, especially if it offered snacks and a few drinks before or afterward.

*In giving a speech or sermon, it has always been common for speakers to borrow heavily from what others have said before them, but when they then publish what they have said, they are said to plagiarize if they don't cite chapter and verse of their sources. This is what happened to a prominent Protestant minister who made the mistake of publishing one of his sermons which was then found to contain unattributed passages from a book by another theologian (SPS, 22/11/03). We can be so grateful that the copyright on Christ's sermons has expired.

*All over Europe, a brand of trousers is sold under the name "Jesus Jeans." Elsewhere, after pondering the question, "What would Jesus drive?" people arrived at the answer: "That would be a Toyota Prius hybrid car" (BR, 4/04).

*We reported before that many members of the lowest caste in India have been converting to Christianity in protest against their lot, but this is not always working because Christians of the higher castes often do not accept them as equals, but continue to discriminate against them (3/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel). Nobody is perfect.

*Many African countries have gone from nearly zero Christianity to Christian majorities, and some even to overwhelming majorities of between 77-95%, but this has not kept them from wars within and between themselves. It is estimated that 2 million Africans have been martyred in the 20th century for being or having become Christian (CH, 2003, No. 79). There are now close to 50 million Anglicans alone in Africa, in England, less than 1 million still go to church.

*In 1949, China had about 4 million Christians; now there may be as many as 100 million. Furthermore, they tend to be religiously very orthodox, as Christianity historically has tended to be under persecution (B&C, 5/04).

New Religions

*Much of the arguments about Darwinism and evolution have nothing to do with scientific evidence and evolutionary biology, but with the nature of reality and the place of the human in it. There is simply no way in the world in which negative scientific evidence related to the issue, were it to be produced, could falsify Darwinism in the eyes of those of its adherents who treat it as a religion. Very interesting is the language of this religion, which constantly uses expressions such as that "nature selects," "chooses," or "targets" this-and-that, and so forth. This nature is a kind of deity that is constantly invoked as having agency, and yet is always denied (FT, 5/04).
The North Korean government invented a new religion, called Juche, which is the only one allowed—indeed, it is the state religion. It consists of the deification of the late dictator Kim Il Sung, who launched the religion, and in part of his son, the current dictator Kim Jong Il. At least 4% of the government's budget is spent on Juche, especially on erecting Juche monuments (VOM, 10/04).

When the TIPS editor was young and the US was also much younger than it is now, he knew innumerable discontented, disoriented, or lost people who one day suddenly announced that they were going to California, though they were not quite sure why. At one time, such people "went West," but since the West ended in California, they had no place further west to go except perhaps Australia, and some actually went there. That is one reason why there is so much craziness in California, including of a religious nature.

One of the newly popular religions in the US, at least in California, is kirtan, which is a composite of various Eastern religious practices, and above all, has very few requirements other than getting together to chant short and easy phrases over and over that invoke the names of Hindu deities, usually to music, live or pre-recorded. This is done in mood-setting environments with things such as an altar, candles, pictures, fruit, people, etc. Its practitioners call this "empowering," and one of them even said that it gives him a "grounding," even though the western chanters do not understand what they are chanting. One even said that she benefitted from not understanding the words so that they can "become the sounds" (Time, 6 Oct. 03).

Contemporary Idolatries

*Computers have acquired such magical and iconic meanings in the minds of modernistic people that many seem to believe firmly that even merely placing a computer in a children's classroom in a school will help them learn better, even if the computer is never used.

*A German news item encaptured the idolatry of the computer system: "Come to the Net, you who are burdened and laden, and it will refresh you. Take up the search program and learn from it, because the Net is humble and gentle, especially on the website 'blessed-band-width.net'," which dispenses spiritual strength to users, often by putting them through exercises where they have to bow to the screen and touch it with their foreheads (11/03 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*A 5/03 TV ad for an automobile called the Lancer announced, "We didn't just build a car, we started a religion."

*One idolatry that is often not recognized by people is their enslavement to certain sensualisms and vices. For instance, some people make idols out of their own eating and food, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and addiction to drugs, even if perhaps only to tobacco and coffee; some people will only drink high-quality coffee, and spare no expense on that; etc. In other words, one's own personal vices may not be recognized as possibly being idols that have gotten control of one.

The Incoherency of Modernistic People's Beliefs

*In all of the German states, religion—including Bible lessons—is taught in the public schools by state employees who could be of any religion whatever, or none, and they can even be Muslims, but so far, no Koran lessons are being taught by Christians (4/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*US courts have declared that Christmas trees, the menorah, and the Islamic star and crescent are secular symbols and may be displayed in public forums such as public schools, but nativity scenes are not and may not be thusly displayed. One would have thought that observant Jews and Muslims would be up in arms about the secularization of their sacred symbols, but we have seen no such evidence.

*Here is what the marriage of the chaplaincy with and to the military, and vice versa, leads to. A Christian battalion chaplain in Iraq reportedly (Newsweek, 10 Nov. 03) offered the following prayer to the US soldiers going off into battle: "Lord, there are bad guys out there, just help us kill 'em."
*One of the things that still surprises us is that so many people come forward in church on Ash Wednesday to receive a cross of ashes on their forehead--and will smile while the ashes are being applied, even though they are applied with a reminder that "dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." This smile is probably a carry-over from the media culture, and the compulsion to smile when one is "on stage" or "being looked at."

*Richard Rorty is one of the American fathers of constructionism, and had declared himself to be a "militant secularist" (meaning secular fundamentalist). However, in the early 2000s, he underwent a conversion of sorts to what he calls "romantic polytheism," and hopes that this will become the new religion of America. He came to the conclusion that all worldviews require faith and hope, that he has a religious belief in democracy, that it can speak to people who have different kinds of higher worldviews, that great poetry and literature might serve as something like a sacred text for this religion, and that poets should fill the vacancy left by priests. However, he has his own idiosyncratic ideas of what constitutes great literature. He also proposed that the university, the American democratic system, and those churches that are committed to the so-called social gospel should be considered three worthy "denominations" of romantic polytheism. However, his religion makes war on parents by trying to take their children away from them: apparently without any awareness of how he sounds, Rorty said, "students are lucky to find themselves under the benevolent Herrschaft of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents." Parents are forewarned that "we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable" (First Things, 5/04, p. 29).

Rorty is one of many contemporary intellectual leaders who have begun to teach that when orthodox theism conflicts with the PC notions of an American civil religion of democracy, traditional religion must be subjected to opprobrium, or even the force of the state.

Some of all of this seems to us to be a form of undergraduate sophomorism, though to the PC and the academicians, this is high-priesthood.

*Though actually young and good-looking, Ji Kwang Dae Poep Sa Nim is "the Supreme Matriarch" of the Yun Hwa Denomination/Lotus Sangha of World Social Buddhism, and resides at the Lotus Buddhist Monastery in Hawaii. Like several other recent religious gurus, she has been dispensing enlightenment to desperate modernists, combining meditation with "concerns with social issues."

Religious Persecution in Our Day

*Even only 50 years ago, scholars pointed out that religion was a glue in the US that held Americans together, but these days, it has increasingly been interpreted as a force that divides Americans and sets them against each other.

*Contrary to what most people believe, it was a US Supreme Court case as late as 1947 that was the very first one to ever use the First Amendment (which prohibits the establishment of a religion by the federal government) to declare local (non-federal) laws unconstitutional. This was followed by more than 30 cases along similar lines, and innumerable cases in lower courts that, far from preventing the establishment of any religion, virtually prevented free exercise of religion in public.

*There can simply be no more doubt that we have entered an era of religious persecution in the US aimed at Christians generally, and Catholics in particular. This persecution is still of the "soft" type that does not yet involve the shedding of blood, but soft persecutions typically precede the hard ones. The current soft persecution is roughly equivalent to the kinds of persecutions of the Jews that existed in Central Europe just before the first anti-Jewish laws were passed in 1933, and perhaps even a bit after that, except that these days, these persecutory laws are usually not made by legislatures but by the courts.

Just what is ahead for Christians who take their religion seriously was underlined by what former President Clinton's Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, said in the 7/04 issue of American Prospect: Christian "fundamentalists" pose a greater danger to America than people flying jetliners into skyscrapers (FT, 10/04). Ironically, as mentioned above, it was the ancestors of these
"fundamentalists" who gave admission and asylum to the ancestors of Reich only a few generations ago.

*The federal 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, in US v. DeJesus, recently rendered an amazing decision, namely that one could not be disqualified from jury duty merely because one belonged to a certain religious denomination; but one could be excluded on the basis of having a "heightened religious involvement." In other words, as long as one does not take very seriously one's membership in this or that church, one has citizenship privileges and duties; but if one takes religion seriously and becomes involved in religious issues and affairs, that renders one unsuitable to function as a citizen in a liberal democracy, and disqualifies one from jury service (FT, 6/04) -- and all this despite the US Constitution Article VI, Clause 3, that specifies that "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

In recent years, and perhaps even much longer, almost all the cases brought before the US Supreme Court involving issues of religion were brought by unbelievers who asserted that some governmental action favored a religion, which they thought violated the so-called establishment clause of the First Amendment that the federal government "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Seldom has a case been brought by believers asserting that some governmental action violated the clause "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion.

*When Mel Gibson pointed out that Jews were not the only people victimized by the Nazis, he was promptly accused of being in "Holocaust denial." Some Jewish groups even called for him to be prosecuted for hate crimes (FT, 6/04).

Parties that have been vehemently in favor of sexual license and access to pornography (including in the media) suddenly came out accusing Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ" of being pornographic, sadistic, and masochistic.

*When there is great evil in the world--at least when there is right-wing evil--liberals attack the churches if they do not speak and act against it. For instance, Pope Pius XII has been widely accused of not having done enough against Nazism. However, when churches do speak out, or oppose left-wing evils (e.g., legalized abortion on demand), then they are said to be "interfering in politics," or "being divisive."

*More and more, the officialdom of the European Union has been interpreting parties opposed to abortion as dangerous radicals that need to be suppressed. One of the ultimate goals of these "radicals" is said to be "no contraceptive use at all and sex within marriage only," which is interpreted as "undermining the work of the European Commission in addressing reproductive health." This development goes hand-in-hand with a growing animosity within Europe to any kind of religious manifestation (NCR, 13/7/03).

*People who attend Sunday religious services in France report that they are constantly being harrassed and asked to justify this practice (Weser Kurier, 28/1/04; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*A national Evangelical student group in the US is the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. Rutgers University stripped it of its recognition as a legitimate campus group because of its requirement that leaders of the group must be Christians. The University of North Carolina had made a similar ruling earlier, but reversed itself (NCR, 19/1/03). What would happen if an organization of Holocaust survivors required that all members be Holocaust survivors? Would that be unconstitutional discrimination?

*While there has been much attention in recent years to so-called "Islamic extremism," one has heard very little about "Hindu extremism," which has been on the rise and has resulted in many incidents of Hindus persecuting not only Muslims (which has been going on for several generations), but also Christians and others. In parts of India, their goal is to drive out, or at least subjugate, all Muslims and Christians even where these constitute a very sizeable minority.

Recently, there has even been some documentation that Hindu extremism had once welcomed with "jubilant hope" Nazi notions of the nobility of Aryanism and of the Indo-Germanic civilization, and the promotion of Vedic learning. It was this kind of Hindu extremism and its political
organization, the RSS Party, that spawned the assassin of Gandhi. The RSS now also has or is a major paramilitary organization of millions of members and 20,000 schools, and visions of a greater Indian holy land that includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Tibet, and the countries between Tibet and India. This kind of Hinduism has been so successful that now a majority of Hindus support a legal ban on Hindus changing their religion. The party which until 2004 was in power in India had strong ties to the RSS and similar movements, and has been collaborating with Hindu terrorist gangs and massacres. Because of all this, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom proposed in 2004 that India be included on the US State Department's short list of the worst persecutors of religion (FT, 6/04).

*Canada is slipping ever more into both so-called judicial usurpation, and into anti-religious totalitarianism. We expect almost any day now the first trial of, or even extra-judicial aggression toward, people of some kind of religion who express opposition to some dogma of political correctness there (among others, CFT, 4/04).

The Priestly Sex Scandal, Continued

*It is very difficult to be virtuous in a modernistic society where sex screams at you from all angles. Some 40% of Christian clergy in one survey admitted that they had viewed sexually explicit pornography websites. However, Newsweek (12 April 2004) quickly put a less worse face on it by pointing out that Net sex was much less worse than Catholic priests preying on minors.

*Child abuse, as defined by the US Catholic bishops at the famous (or infamous) meeting in Dallax, TX, in 2002 when they acted in panic and confusion, does not require physical contact, sexual intention, or even the perception of sexual intention, and could make almost any adult an abuser, and any child or adolescent a victim (FT, 5/04).

*There is such a thing as a National Catholic Risk Retention Group which tells Catholic dioceses how to keep from being sued, or how to keep damage awards low if sued (NCR, 16/11/03). The very deceptiveness of the name should put one on alert.

*There have been legislative efforts all over the US to force priests to reveal what they have heard in the confessional. One of the supporters of this move has been Voice of the Faithful, a Catholic group formed after the recent priest sex scandals.

*We strongly suspect that former priest John Geoghan was set up by some of the staff in his prison to be at the very least assaulted, if not murdered (as he was). There were reports that for weeks, he had sent letters saying that he was afraid of assault. A similar event took place in Florida when a child molester who had been sentenced 11 years earlier for raping 4 boys was put in the same cell as one of his victims, who promptly beat him unconscious (SPS, 11 Oct. 2003).

*We have come to the conclusion that in the current climate, if we wait long enough, every single priest is likely to be accused of being a sexual abuser of minors, or of having sexual relations with one or more women.

*There was hardly any publicity about the fact that in 2002, the international Hare Krishna Society--surprisingly headquartered in the US--filed for bankruptcy because of $400 million in lawsuits for sexual and other abuse, including child abuse. Five hundred members have been charged by roughly an equal number of plaintiffs around the globe (SPS, 10 April 2004).

Miscellaneous News About Religion in Society

*An anthropologist has come up with a new theory that religions that "waste people's time" with long hours of ritual and worship, and that make very high behavioral demands on their adherents, do so in order to increase communal bonds and to differentiate the group from outsiders. In turn, this supposedly has a great deal of survival value for the group as a whole, as well as its members. One consequence is heightened cooperation within the membership group, and sometimes also with the larger society; and less selfish behavior. Empirically, it has been shown that religious communities
that impose severe constraints on the behavior of their members tend to be longer-lived despite the
great amount of time that members "waste" in religious transactions. One example is the extensive
sacrifice of economic productivity required by Orthodox Judaism, which nonetheless excels in higher
biological adaptivity. The name given to this has been "costly signaling theory of ritual." The theory
claims to also explain why in Western culture, the churches that make very few demands on their
members are declining in memberships, while those that make high demands are increasing.

*There is such a thing as the Celebrant USA Foundation & International College of Celebrancy
that trains people to become "professional celebrants certified to officiate at secular,
nondenominational and interfaith weddings, funerals, baby namings, and other ceremonies marking
life's milestones" (Parabola, Winter 03).

*Some people have credited their spiritual awakening to Capuchin (Franciscan) monks, but the
author of Spiritual Midwifery (2002) credited it to a Capuchin monkey who turned her into a Zen devotee.

*In Scotland, 14 hotels and guest houses joined the Haunted Hotels of Scotland organization,
believing that being known to be haunted would attract guests. While this neither attracted nor
repelled the German tourists (of which there are many in Scotland), it totally drove away Asiatic ones
who--if they can afford to come to Scotland--have lots of money. In 2004, the haunted guest houses
abandoned their appeal and their organization (2004 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*How many people have ever been told, or knew, that Francis Crick explicitly chose a career
in the life sciences in order to discredit religion and theism? While James Watson, his co-discoverer
of the DNA helix, has not made a similar overt observation, Watson has long been an avid proponent
of eugenics, abortion, and cloning. Also, Watson has been explicit that he wanted to liberate the
mysteries of life from the "myths of the pasts," and transfer ownership thereof from "the gods" to
humans. Also, he did admit that he was always an atheist, and did not have "religious hang-ups"
(NCR, 13/7/03).

*It is sad to learn that the Amish culture may be going down the drain. Many of the Amish
no longer farm, and that tends to be devastating to their lifestyle. For instance, more of them are
reported to be smoking, drinking, and engaging in crime, as well as displaying mental problems
(Discover, 10/03). Many Amish women reportedly have even taken up secret smoking, which surely
portends the end.

*In France, 63% of young adults describe themselves as holding to no particular religion
(Weser Kurier, 28/1/04; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*In 1960, 95% of young Spaniards believed in God; in 2004, it was down to about a third,
which is one of those enormous changes in modernistic society that never used to occur so quickly.

*Trying to capitalize on the pseudo-religiosity of so many Americans, Hollywood decided to
make a TV series called "Joan of Arcadia." Its script is governed by 10 "commandments" which
include that "God cannot directly intervene," and that "God can never identify one religion as being
right." In its closing credits, there is a juxtaposition of the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, and Bob
Dylan. Thus, rather suitably, this is a show about religion without a God or a religion (Time, 3 Nov.
03).

*Many societies have a custom, usually associated with their religious beliefs, of washing
bodies before burial. In Iraq, professional body washers are the equivalent of undertakers in the West.
However, unlike Western body-handling practices, these body washers are deeply imbued
with religious motives and take great care with their task. And of course, it is only men who wash men's
bodies and women who wash women's. Typically, the washing also is accompanied by perfuming
of the body. According to a NY Times story (4 March 04), many Iraqi body washers have started
getting burned out because of the large numbers of bodies lately that arrive, particularly after a
terrorist bombing.
*The Chinese still hold great rituals for the dead, including the burning of sacrifices. Most recently, these sacrifices have included Viagra, condoms, and pictures of glamorous prostitutes, apparently so that the dead will be able to have a lot of safe sex with the prostitutes in the afterlife.

*Treating all religions equally could on the one hand mean that everybody could wear whatever religious dress or symbols they want, or on the other hand that nobody can wear any of them. Several Western countries (such as France) are edging towards the latter solution. The next problem then will be to decide what is a religious dress or symbol.

*Austria is debating a new constitution, and so far has rejected any mention of human dignity in it, on the grounds that the term in essence has lost its meaning, as people have totally opposed positions when invoking it.

*British scientist Stephen Udwin declared that his mathematical calculations reveal that there is a 67% likelihood that God exists, though Udwin himself is 90% certain that He does (4/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*French culinary leaders have petitioned the Vatican to remove gluttony (gourmandise in French) from the list of vices in the Catechism, and instead to substitute gloutonnerie, which in English would presumably be rendered as gluttonery. We could live with that.

### Religion in Human Services

*The way private religious and religious service organizations in the US have ever-increasingly allowed themselves to be publicly funded, and then regulated by government, has been called by some people a "fatal embrace."

*In our teaching, we have characterized as "theo-technology" many kinds of approaches to human problems that combine (primarily Christian) religious thinking with material or purely psychological mind-change technologies. Much of so-called Christian counseling is of this nature. Among these crazes is also something that one could call ego-theology, which distorts Christian teaching into an exaltation of the individual along self-esteem lines, and that tries to convince everybody how wonderful they are.

*The innumerable forms of shrinkery have begotten innumerable forms of psycho-theo-babble shrinkeries. One of these, TheoPhostic Counseling, invented by one Ed Smith, morphed into TheoPhostic Ministry, hence into TheoPhostic Prayer Ministry, which becomes doubly problematic when it is done for money. Further, it heavily deals with "memories," which have been shown to be very tricky.

*At one time, modernists, including Christian modernists, ridiculed people for believing that Christ could work miracles. Now, some of them, including Christians, say that the miracles were not such a big deal after all, considering that paramedics routinely bring people back to life, artificial insemination enables virgin births, and Prozac and other mind drugs cast out demons. So considering that Jesus violated the religious rules by healing on the Sabbath, surely today he would support stem cell research (FT, 6/04).

*It took a long time in North America to get rid of religious services just for retarded people alone, but one German minister has begun to give religious services just for demented people (3/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

### News of the Season, & Other Seasons as Well, & People's Relationship to Time

The idea of "seasons" of the year that are tied to weather, time, recurring cycles in nature, and specific dates seems to have gone out the window. All this has much to do with modernistic people's dissociation from time. However, we still do believe that there is a proper Christmas season (not just a "light up" season or a "sparkle season," as it is called in some US locales), just as there are other
specific holidays and seasons of the year. The items in this section relate either to a specific season, or to people's alienation from the reality of specific seasons. (Yes, we are aware that the dates of this issue of TIPS do not exactly correspond to the season in which it is being sent!)

*In Syracuse, there has been an annual winter solstice festival for years--except that in 2004 it did not take place at the solstice (Dec. 21), but in the first week of December, so as not to suffer from competition with Christmas. How about Easter in August, July 4th in May, etc.?

*Christmas has begun to be celebrated earlier by more people than ever, even by Christians and by Catholics who, on a detached intellectual level, know that four weeks of penitential Advent precede Christmas, that Christmas starts on Christmas Eve, and that it lasts until Epiphany--formerly 12 days, now give or take a few. In the Syracuse area, a house of Franciscan nuns not only put up Christmas trees in November (!), but also all sorts of secular decorations, such as snowmen and Santa Clauses. Protestant churches started singing Christmas carols in early December. No wonder modernists do not know what time it is.

*In 12/04, we ran across an old record that was a recording of a Christmas concert in Illinois on 27 December 1957. Another record was that of a Christmas concert in London in early January 1982. It occurred to us that this never happens anymore in North America, in that all Christmas celebrations, concerts, plays, etc., are now held during Advent, not during the 12 days of Christmas.

*In PC circles, the word "Christmas" is becoming less and less acceptable, particularly in reference to the "Christmas season," which is of course a misnomer almost universally adopted even by Christians for what is really the Advent season of 4 weeks prior to Christmas. At any rate, a new euphemism that we heard for the first time recently was to refer to the "giving season."

*We are beginning to wonder how early the Christmas season can start. We noted Christmas displays in early September 2004 in some stores; and in one store, the Christmas displays and Halloween displays faced each other.

*In Germany, just like in many other western countries, Christmas trees and nativity scenes start to appear in public around the middle of November, or even earlier, and are gone by December 26. At the beginning of Advent in 2003, somebody cut down the Christmas tree that was placed at the Berlin Christmas market, and stole Jesus from his crib, while leaving the rest of the nativity scene intact. The press branded him as an anonymous Christmas-hater, but maybe he was just a Christian who loved Advent (source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*Why fool around? One man went ahead and for Easter put up a Christmas tree decorated with Easter eggs (source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*At a "Christmas party" (actually held several weeks before Christmas) for so-called Foster Grandparents of handicapped youths, the party-goers were serenaded with the song "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer"--and by the way, most foster grandparents are women. Not very sensitive, we would say.

*Hardly were Hannukah and Kwanzaa over in 2003, as well as the Feast of the Epiphany (traditionally January 6) that officially ends the Catholic Christmas season, than the Chinese Lunar New Year came which is celebrated not just in China but in much of Asia, and typically lasts 15 days. As the PC local newspaper in Syracuse put it, "People of all ethnicities are invited to celebrate with local Chinese, and Vietnamese," but most people were prostrate with exhaustion from having celebrated all the other previous events.

*Black History Month (February) is followed by Women's History Month, which is a terrible juxtaposition to somebody who is not PC. However, Black History Month starts in January (at least in our area), and never really ends. After multiple items with a "black" theme in our local newspaper every single day for all of February 2004, the coverage went right on without interruption into March which is supposed to be Women's History Month. There was some accommodation to this by featuring "black" women.
*In Wisconsin, one group decided to observe Black History Month by bringing to light what was considered to be mistreatment of employees by corporations.

*The sad thing about Black History Month is that it contains much blackness and very little history, at least in Syracuse. The "black" persons who are very prominently featured in the news and at public events are not historical figures of the past but people prominent on the current scene. Also, many "black history" events involve things such as talent contests that have zero connection to history. All this once again bespeaks the "time illiteracy" that we talk about under the rubric of here-and-now-ism as being one of the features of modernism. Furthermore, many of the events are entirely post-modernist in their disregard for facts and reality. For instance, during Black History Month observances at Syracuse University in 2004, a book was featured, written by a professor of "black studies" at the University of San Francisco, entitled Return to the African Mother Principle of Male and Female Equality. Who would ever have thought of African culture as being one of equality between males and females?

*In 2003, we discovered to our astonishment that what had once been St. Patrick's Day, which we distinctly remember to have been a single day of observance and celebration by, and sometimes for, the Irish, had become a St. Patrick's Day season. St. Patrick's Day is on March 17, but green beer began to be served in bars in Irish neighborhoods starting March 1. Already on March 2, St. Patrick's Day parades began to be held in all sorts of places. One was in Syracuse, and there was a "gay" St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City in protest of the non-gay St. Patrick's Day parade which took place on March 15, which of course was also not St. Patrick's Day. Furthermore, a Catholic Mass in honor of St. Patrick was held at one of the Syracuse parishes on March 14, celebrated by one of the local bishops.

*In Syracuse, an Easter egg hunt for children was scheduled in a public park 8 days before Easter. While there is indeed such a thing as an Easter season, it does not start until midnight of the day before Easter, and continues for 50 days after, but now the modernists have extended the Easter season back into Lent, which is the period of 6 penitential weeks of preparation for, and before, Easter.

*Apparently, National Coming Out Week in 2004 was scheduled deliberately to coincide with Respect Life Week in early October.

**Militarism, War, & Their Toll**

*In the year 2003, there were 19 major armed conflicts in 18 locations in the world, only 2 of these conflicts being fought between nation-states. World spending on the military and armaments in 2003 rose by 11% over 2002; for the years 2002-2003 together, it rose by 18%, to reach the incredible total of $956 billion. Countries with high incomes accounted for 75% of this expenditure, though having only 16% of the world's population. The increase in US military spending accounts for almost half of the world total (source material from Marc Tumeinski).

*According to some analysts, the single biggest export of the US economy is weaponry. This creates a vested interest to create world conditions that make rival parties or countries "need" the weaponry, as because of war, civil unrest, civil war, etc. Also, once a country makes major purchases of US weaponry, it becomes dependent on the US for repairs, spare parts, replacements, etc. (NSCWR, NC, Fall 2002).

*It is also alleged that there are many advantages to the US in high oil prices, because many countries--especially in Europe--are much more dependent on oil imports, and if they have to pay more for oil, they are less able to compete with the US in other economic domains.

*Reportedly, every single county in California is economically dependent for its affluence on defense contracts (Time, 27/10/03).

*It is agonizing to contemplate that individuals living in the US are financially subsidizing violence in the Mideast by giving money for arms to the various adversarial groups there. But of
course the same has also been true in regard to Northern Ireland. If such subsidizers are non-citizens, they should be deported.

*Russia and Germany have been feverishly helping Iran to build a nuclear reactor that--aside from producing power--would also produce fuel for nuclear weapons (AP in SPS, 12 March 2003).

*The second (current) US war against Iraq illustrates the fallacy of the "just war" theory. Had weapons of mass destruction been discovered through the war, it would have been declared just; but when no such weapons could be found, then the war was deemed by many people to be unjust. In either case, the determination would have been made after the war, showing how one cannot foresee all the things that just war theorists claim to be foreseeable.

*Probably not since the 16th and 17th centuries has it been possible to hire as many private armies as it is now. There are about 20 private firms around the world that recruit hundreds of thousands of men (many former military or police personnel) at fabulously high wages to fight other people's wars. When the US Pentagon does this, as it has done big time since the Afghanistan war, it is called "out-sourcing of security work." One advantage to the US government is that the American public is not as concerned when these mercenaries suffer casualties as when the official military does (Time, 12 April 2004).

*Uranium was discovered as an element in 1789, and at first was used mostly in pottery and glass for coloring. In 1896, it was discovered to be radioactive. It is also an extremely toxic metal, much as we know lead and mercury to be. There is more uranium in the earth's crust than there is silver and gold. There are 3 isotopes of uranium, and when U-235 is bombarded with neutrons, it will break apart and create energy. Hiroshima was destroyed by thusly splitting less than a quart of uranium. When U-238 is bombarded with neutrons, it becomes plutonium. In 1938, there was virtually no plutonium on the earth, but now there are thousands of tons of it, all human-made. When U-235 is separated out from uranium ore, it leaves behind at least 7 times as much so-called depleted uranium (DU), for which there are extremely few uses--except the military loves it because it is so hard, and when worked into a projectile, it pierces almost everything and ignites at the same time. Now, anybody who wants to can buy DU ammunition. DU has very low radioactivity, but when it is used intensely on a battlefield, then not only does the quantity become dangerous but also after vaporizing, DU creeps into everything: air, water, soil, etc. Also, even if the radioactivity is still not harmful, the toxicity of DU is. Furthermore, uranium binds readily to DNA and leads to genetic mutations.

*Another theory of what has caused Gulf War Syndrome that has afflicted US military personnel who fought there in the early 1980s is that it resulted from exposure to low doses of DEET, and anti-nerve gas agents (Discover, 5/04).

Islam, & Its War Against the Rest of the World

More on the History of Radical Islam's War on Everyone Else Before WW II

*At one time, a sizeable Jewish population lived in Arabia, but it eventually virtually disappeared after the advent of Islam, except for remnants in Yemen (CH, 2002, No. 74).

*In the 10th century, the Provencal noble Berengar had himself declared king of Italy, but was made war against by King Rudolf II of Burgundy, who also wanted to be king of Italy. Berengar then made an alliance with the wild and pagan Hungarians, who immediately began to devastate southern Germany and what is now Switzerland. In response, Rudolf made an alliance with the Muslim Saracens who then sat in Spain and south France. These invaded Switzerland too, and plundered whatever the Hungarians had not already plundered, and Rudolf lost a major battle. The Hungarians and Saracens continued their oppression for decades, but eventually made the mistake of fighting a
battle with each other, and when both were exhausted, the German king finally managed to drive the Hungarians out via the mighty battle of Lechfeld in 955, while a Burgundian-Italian army managed to defeat the Saracens in south France. However, the Saracens kept raiding the Mediterranean area and Italy for some centuries, and were not driven back out of Spain until 1492.

There are many lessons in all this, including that there were multiple Saracen-Islamic invasions of Europe before the Crusades, to say nothing of (a) the warfare of the Islamic Turks against Christian Europe that began soon after the Crusades and lasted until the last so-called Balkan war just before WWI, and (b) the sea war carried out by the so-called Barbary Pirates of North Africa against Western lands and shipping into the early 1800s.

Important to remember for countries like Spain, France and Italy is that parts of them had once been conquered by the Muslims, and according to Islamic doctrine, any land they conquer is always theirs, forever. Spain is especially vulnerable to this dogma because almost all of it had once been Saracen, and that for centuries.

The Current World War Between Islam & Everyone Else

*In the mid-1990s, the Serbs were committing genocide left and right on the Balkans, and finally turned their attention to the Albanian population of Kosovo. The Muslims of the world largely sat by as onlookers without doing anything until the United States intervened to protect the mostly Muslim Kosovars from the Serbs. There has never been a significant expression of gratitude in the Muslim world. In fact, some Balkan Muslims are now international jihadists.

*The world's largest worldwide propaganda campaign is believed to have been staged by the Saudi regime during the 1990s when it channeled an estimated $70 billion to thousands of Islamic enterprises throughout the world, in an effort to directly or indirectly promote the Islamic Sect of Wahhabism. Wherever big money was spent this way, radical Islam made great inroads. For instance, while almost 600 mosques in Indonesia were being funded, about 700 Christian churches were destroyed by Islamic radicals (VOM, 3/04).

*After 9/01, everybody assumed that when there was an Islamic terrorist attack, al-Qaeda was behind it; but it has since turned out that al-Qaeda has become a relatively minor player, with more and more other Muslims joining the fight, and that many terrorist groups have had no connection with it--and yet al-Qaeda often gets stereotypically blamed nonetheless.

*The more radical Islamic elements in Iraq are engaged in a cleansing of Iraq of infidels, and especially Christians, though these have been in what is now Iraq since the earliest Christian era.

*A whole new scenario opened up in mid-2003 when Muslim radicals across the world began to slaughter other Muslims either as collateral damage of attacks on Westerners, or because they were seen as traitors to radical Islam. This development may eventually prove to be the single biggest strategic mistake of the jihadists, because it turns many Muslims against them.

The Confusion of the "Politically Correct" About the Current Conflict Between Islam & Modernism

*One reality that the PC will have to face (though they won't) is that all over the Western world (to say nothing about the non-Western one), it is in mosques that radicalism is being promoted (Time, 26/1/04). This means that the presence of mosques that do this is not a diversity or multiculturalism to be celebrated.

*The PC want the Muslims to become "moderate" (meaning "like us"), but Muslims see the separation of Church and State as being a very unnatural division of reality, and often point out how this has led to a breakdown in morality in Western society. This, they believe, happens when one takes religion out of almost all arenas of life.

*What happened to the Pakistan president should be an object lesson to the liberals in the West: he aided and abetted Islamic terrorism--until the terrorists turned on him and tried to assassinate him, and surely, the religion-hating liberals and PC would be among the earliest and most urgent targets of an Islam come to power in any Western country.
PC Efforts to Sanitize Islam, & Conceal the Invalidity of Their Political Correctness

*In order to sanitize Islam, a new PC translation of the Koran (naturally spelled Qu'ran as in Arabic) has been published by the Oxford University Press. It tones down the passages the PC find hard to defend, but still leaves plenty to make even the PC shudder (FT, 12/04).

*The Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was given great press by some quarters as virtually a poster-boy for Muslim moderation, and yet we learn (Time, 3 Nov. 03) that his anti-Jewish rhetoric never stops.

*The Sufi whirling dervishes are an Islamic sect in which the men glorify God by beautiful ecstatic dances. In Syracuse, such a Sufi dance was arranged to be performed at a local public high school by a Turkish group of 15. The event was advertised on the religion page of the local newspaper. A reader soon pointed out correctly that no Christian religion would be allowed to perform a similar ceremony in the local public schools, and probably not in the public schools of the rest of the country.

*The efforts of the media to be PC often cross into the very hilarious. E.g., in 11/03, we were told that "ethnic militants" hijacked 2 oil drilling platforms off Nigeria, without revealing who these ethnic militants were (SPS, 21/11/03).

*A writer by the name of Stephen Emerson was pillorized by the PC throughout the 1990s for warning that Islamic extremists were gaining a strong foothold in the US, and that they had the capacity to carry off multiple major attacks--and yet some PC writers continued to interpret his warnings as slander even after they came true in 9/01 (B&C, 5/04).

*The PC elite hastened to give an Islamic woman the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. Not surprisingly, her position on Islam is not orthodox, distorts traditional Islamic teaching, and mouths the kind of Islam the modernists want it to be, much like they celebrate Christians who teach a Christianity that is nonChristian and concordant with PC.

Other Erroneous Lessons Drawn by the PC From the Current World War

*Many people from the liberal left have drawn very wrong lessons from 9/11. As we teach in our workshops, when one builds a scheme on false assumptions, everything one builds on them is likely to be faulty, and the bigger the scheme is, the bigger will its failures be, and the same is true if one builds one false assumption on top of another.

One scholar noted that one of the lessons many of these people drew was that monotheism was at fault because it supposedly has a tendency to generate fanaticism, and the perceived answer then is to spread polytheism, because people who have an allegiance to multiple gods supposedly do not do such things as crash planes into buildings for religious reasons (Newsweek, 15/3/04).

*A British Canadian philosopher by the name of Ted Honderich has come out in defense of Islamic terrorism as being consistent with his principle of humanism (Weserkurier, 27/3/04; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

The Social Advocacies

In connection with remembering those in bonds, we always like to cover social advocacy on their behalf.

The Need for Advocacy

*A study found that 15% of older residents in Boston had no one they could call on in the event of an emergency, and that 10% never even left their homes (AARP Bulletin, 6/04).

*The AARP magazine (1/04) carried an alarming exposé of people trying to gain some form of guardianship over elderly people's possessions. The elderly people at issue typically are those who
have some appreciable assets, and the people who try to gain access to these assets via guardianship are sometimes total strangers, or very distant relatives who had previously had no contact with the elderly people at issue. It is amazing how courts so often go along in awarding these guardianships to such people. Some guardians will bill the estates of their wards exorbitant fees for allegedly administering their properties. For instance, one guardian visited a client on her birthday, and then billed $850 for the social call. Often, attorneys are involved, who egg people into these schemes, then function on behalf of the guardian and get paid out of the ward's estate while the ward is still alive. Some shrinks also get in on the game by testifying that the persons at issue are mentally impaired. Reportedly, these are not occasional but rampant abuses. One review of 250 such guardianships in Idaho uncovered 50 with "egregious" problems--that is 20%. Perhaps the courts are so apt to side with the exploiters because so many lawyers are in collusion with the exploiting rather than with the defense of the exploited. One defensive measure is to designate by means of health care proxies and durable powers-of-attorney a trustworthy party while one is still clearly of competent mind, and the AARP will help.

*There has been quite a bit of publicity about the young deaf and retarded woman who had lived in a Florida group home since she was 3 years old, was found to be pregnant, and who gave birth to a child in 8/03. Police suspected a fellow inmate or staff member, but it turned out that the 75-year old husband of the home's owner was the culprit. The mother of the young woman had abandoned her when she put her into the home 19 years earlier, but when there were grounds for suing somebody and getting some money, she suddenly re-surfaced, claiming custody of her daughter and grandchild (Mouth, 11/03). We have found that so often, long-lost relatives only re-surface at a person's funeral.

*Nancy Sullivan told us of a profoundly retarded teenager who had no one to stand up for him, so his 103-year old aunt applied to have herself appointed as his guardian. Unfortunately, the very day she was appointed, she died.

*A mentally retarded man who kept getting into very serious trouble, including sexual predation on children, said, "Someone needs to be around to stop me from doing these things. I've tried lots of things myself, but they don't work." Indeed, it was when he was let out of sight of responsible persons that he got into mischief, sometimes within seconds.

The Contemporary Idea That Everyone Should be "Empowered" & Should "Self-Determine"

*One mentally retarded man we know lives alone in his own apartment, but with much help from his family. He was not taking care of his teeth, and his mother told him that if he did not start brushing his teeth, she would take away his cable TV (she controls most of his money). He replied that it was his own business, and he could do whatever he wanted--another instance of self-destructive self-determination that he had probably been talked into by progressive service workers.

*We were struck by the fact that the very same parties who had taken an extreme--almost fanatical--self-determination position on behalf of retarded persons and other people of severely impaired mentality are also equally strident in asserting that it is a crime for human service people to make sexual advances towards retarded persons, even if the retarded individual consents, and is deemed capable of consenting.

*In 5/04, a new toothpaste came out on the market that advertised itself as being "empowermint."

*Here is one definition of what so-called support brokers do: "They get people what they want" (MR, 8/03). It is very obvious--at least to the TIPS editor--that what he needs desperately in life is a support broker, because then, "all these other things will be given unto him."

*A physically handicapped mentally retarded man, age 42, said, "My life is all about self-advocacy" (The Voice, 7/04). We are not aware that any non-devalued person--even with an impairment--would ever say that about themselves. Even to the degree that the statement might be true, it would be a very sad fact if all one did in life was promote one's own interests.
*Here is one more thing that is beginning to give self-advocacy a bad image: some of the more radical animal rights people are beginning to talk not only about "animals speaking out," but even "plants and animals speaking out."

(Other) Perversions & Corruptions of Advocacy

*According to the *NY Times* (22/1/04), there has been a disproportionate advocacy emphasis on handicapped people being able to get into buildings that have stairs, but very little advocacy on behalf of people who have lived in such buildings all along, then became impaired, and then became virtual prisoners in their dwellings and had to rely on people to carry them up and down, out, and back in. One man in a so-called walk-up building in New York City relies on friends to carry him down, and then asks strangers on the street to carry him back up when he wants to get back in. This seems to be a problem particularly in cities where it is difficult to find vacant accessible dwellings.

*Some people believe that the Protection and Advocacy offices in every state in the US sometimes are not living up to their mission, and sometimes even engage in corrupt practices. The chairman of the board of directors of the Kansas P&A was given $300,000 in "consulting fees" from his own agency, which is a terrible no-no (Mouth, 3/04).

*The history of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving organization is a good example of peculiar drifts and shifts that can occur in organizations. It started with a volunteer staff, but in just a few years it not only converted itself into a mostly-paid staff organization, but also one that was run mostly by males who gave themselves huge salaries, who called their fund-raising campaigns "public education," and engaged in all sorts of deceptions. In 1991 they had an annual inflow of $32 million, and had ensconced themselves in a huge building (TV news exposé, 24/3/91).

*There are some pretty big things going on in the world of which we ordinary people have no awareness. For instance, who even within our social advocacy culture would have known that the Inspector General of the US Defense Dept. alone has a staff of 1,240 employees and a budget of $160 million? And to think that there are such inspector-generalships all over the federal government! Unfortunately, their performance tends to be extremely disappointing as they fail in their advocacy mission, and often are just simply part of the whitewash of whatever bad is going on.

*One peculiar phenomenon in our society is that if one party voluntarily gives a gratis boon to another party, and later tries to withdraw it, the second party goes to court and claims that the boon is now a legal entitlement. An example occurred in a school district near Syracuse which tried to cut back on its sports program because it was simply out of money. This precipitated a lawsuit by some parents, and at least to our amazement, the court held that the school district was obliged to provide that part of the sports program that it had tried to cut (SPS, 28/8/04).

*On the one hand, college students and their parents do not really want colleges to act in loco parentis, and yet on the other hand, when something goes wrong for a student, the college gets blamed for not having so acted. For instance, when a freshman committed suicide in 2000, his family promptly sued the college for allegedly ignoring signs that he was likely to inflict self-harm. And amazingly, the college admitted partial responsibility and paid up. This also illustrates the phenomenon of a lot of people suing for money damages even when they did not suffer any economic loss, trying to benefit financially from a family tragedy, or, for that matter, from anything at all. Another family sued MIT for allegedly being "overly concerned" with a student's privacy by not alerting the student's parents to mental problems that resulted in suicide (Newsweek, 3 Nov. 03).

*Bork, R. H. (2003). *Coercing virtue: The worldwide rule of judges*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research Press. Not only in America but in other nations of the West, judges have seized the political authority that properly belongs to the people and their elected representatives. This judiciary has no compunction about decreeing new laws that coerce society into conformity with their own minority understanding of virtue. In essence, what these judges have wrought is a coup d'état which is not widely noticed because it took place over the course of several decades, and in a peaceful fashion.
According to some scholars, the situation is even worse in Canada because the Canadian courts have interpreted the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms as meaning that any legislation whatever can be challenged by the courts and taken out of the hands of the people.

Behind all this is the disdain of our cultural elite for consensual government, which has been such a precious rarity in the history of civilization, but of which they apparently are not aware because they have ceased studying history.

* A very serious turn of events in the US in recent years has been that laws and the courts have been deciding on a defendant's guilt not so much on the basis of whether somebody's rights were violated, but on what the motives for an alleged violation were. For instance, assaulting someone because of their race or "sexual orientation" is a vastly more serious crime than just simply assaulting them. This entire trend is extremely dangerous because it asks juries and judges to play mind games with the accused, fathom their mentality, and possibly convict and sentence them as guilty even when the accused deny--or even lack--the motives that have been attributed to them. In the past, this kind of thinking led to political persecutions, and people were punished on suspicion of not being ideologically fully aligned with a government or the party running it. The US founding fathers were extremely suspicious of criminalizing ideas, which is also why they put so much emphasis on free speech. What was to be punished was what people did, and not what they thought or said. Therefore, the recent trend back to punishing thoughts is extremely dangerous. However, this trend is not surprising considering the growing judicial legitimization of persecution of religion in society, mentioned earlier in this issue.

* The litigiousness so often associated with advocacy has led to the following absurdities: A sleeping pill comes with the caution "This product...will cause drowsiness." A garment cleaning product warns "Do not treat garment while wearing." Arm & Hammer cat litter says "Safe to use around pets." An electric hair dryer warns "Never use while sleeping." Windex glass and surface cleaner says "Do not spray directly into eyes of humans and pets." A toilet cleaner comes with the admonition "It is not recommended that children or pets regularly drink water from the toilet" (Consumer Reports, 5/04).

* One of the many signs of how low the judiciary in the US can sink is that it took a congressional act to protect manufacturers from being sued by obese people blaming the manufacturers for getting obese (Time, 22/3/04).

* Germany has also become a lawyer-overrun country. Amazingly, there is one judge for every 1000 inhabitants, and an army of lawyers and public prosecutors. People may go to court and dispute over as little as $5 (2/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel). This litigiousness probably has a different source than in the US, and may come from the traditional German obsession with being right, versus with getting one's rights.

* According to economy columnist Robert Samuelson (Newsweek, 22/3/04), there is now such a thing as "choice congestion," exemplified by people being confronted by 250 breakfast cereals, 400 types of VCRs, 500 health insurance policies, 220 new car models, and on and on. People report that they are overwhelmed by the time it takes to make a "choice." One big irony in all of this is that most of what people really want in life is not marketable, such as love, friendship, respect, family, standing, and fun.

* When a woman was recorded by a surveillance camera severely beating her 4-year old daughter in an Indiana shopping center, her lawyer called it a "bad choice" for her to do that (Newsweek, 30/9/02).

* Police powers have traditionally been conceptualized to be protective of citizens against people who might do them harm. In contrast, all sorts of other kinds of protective powers have historically been devised to keep people from harming themselves. Big problems arise when the two kinds of powers get confused or mixed up, as they often have been when applied to mentally disordered people, or at least to people diagnosed under some kind of shrink category. One area where this has often happened is with sexual predators whom the shrinks classify as mentally
disordered, and who then have protective measures applied to them, rather than the police powers meant to safeguard others from them.

*During the terrible cold wave in New York City in 1985, the mayor ordered the police to pick up people laying on the streets and take them to shelters. The New York Civil Liberties Union formed a "freeze patrol" handing out leaflets telling homeless people that they had the right to freeze (Madness in the Streets, 1990).

*One is taken aback to learn that an organization that is involved mostly in sex education and opposition to abstinence is named Advocates for Youth (SPS, 17/8/03).

Miscellaneous Advocacy News

*In 1989, the chairperson of the US Civil Rights Commission was forced to resign after entitling a speech "Blacks? Animals? Homosexuals? What is a Minority?" He must have forgotten to add "women."

*There is a citizen advocate in England whose family name happens to be Death (CAIT Newsletter, 3/04), and we can only hope that her protégé's name is not Disaster, Pestilence, Famine, or War.

*Every once in a while, we hear of advocacy efforts on behalf of the already dead. An example is an effort in California where the state Protection & Advocacy Office, and two other organizations, tried to identify the ca. 43,000 people buried at various state institutions, and to get a memorial for them. Some of the cemeteries have been lost, and buildings have been erected on several of them. There have even been families who had the headstones of relatives removed in order to hide the fact that they had a relative in one of these institutions. In one institution, officials used the pretense of mowing the lawn to remove grave markers (18/9/04 clipping from Lotte Moise).

*There is a periodical entitled "The Right of Aesthetic Realism to be Known," published by the Aesthetic Realism Foundation that was founded in 1931 by one Eli Siegel.

Miscellaneous News

We feel very tortured by the quandary of wanting to report human service news, but being overwhelmed with the signs of the times that make reporting human service news out of context almost trivial or even frivolous. So we will first present some contextual news.

The 2004 Olympics

*According to one telling of history, the contemporary Greeks are hardly Greek at all, but mostly Slavs. According to this history, the Greeks quit having a lot of children after their era of greatness, and experienced a population collapse by ca. 250 BC. This caused the Slavs from the north to move in, so that by the Middle Ages, Greece was commonly called Slavia. However, this happened so slowly that the Slavs filtering into Greece got Hellenized as they intermingled with the small remaining Greek stock.

*One record that the 2004 Summer Olympics may have set is in the number of fornications by, and among, competitors; 130,000 free condoms were made available to them (Newsweek, 9 Aug. 04) and of course, in addition, some athletes undoubtedly spurned these in favor of natural but unsafe fornication. We estimate that this means that organizers expected about 100 acts of fornication per competitor. One would think that this would leave them too exhausted for other sports.

The 2004 US Elections, & Politicking Generally

*Both sides during the 2004 US presidential elections had put thousands of lawyers on alert, ready to descend in multiple planeloads on any state where the outcome might be contested. In order
to disguise their identity, the lawyers often went around in very plain clothes rather than suits so that they would not be conspicuous if the media got pictures of them.

*After the 2004 US presidential election, one saw a lot of maps of how people voted, and 2 things struck us strongly. (a) Bush was elected by what the liberal coastal elites disdainfully call the "fly-over people." (b) In a large proportion of states that went to Kerry, the state was carried by an astonishingly small number of counties—obviously, the more populated urban ones. E.g., many of these states were carried by about 25% of their counties, and often these were the geographically smaller ones. Illinois was almost entirely "red," but was carried for Kerry by a tiny number of "blue" counties.

*One amazing thing about the 11/04 US elections is that there were popular referenda held in 11 states about homosexual "marriages and/or civil unions," but the major TV news channels failed to report any of these results until 11:00 pm eastern time, and even then only mentioned them sparingly, the reason being that every one of the referenda turned out strongly in favor of traditional marriage. Apparently, the liberal media thought that reporting these results might influence illiberal voting in the states where the polls were still open.

Furthermore, the news media on election night also did not mention until late at night the fact that moral values played a big role in the decisions of voters, and that it was even the No. 1 issue nationwide, because this would obviously have been interpreted as damaging to candidate John Kerry.

*The amount of money spent on elections in the US is beyond all comprehension. Scores of millions might be spent on just a single Senate seat. We have seen no figures that add up all the campaign funds for all candidates during a 4-year election cycle, but it is probably more than the budgets of most countries.

*Early in his life, Adolf Schickelhuber changed his name to Adolf Hitler, and furthermore succeeded in almost totally obscuring his pre-WW I past.

In recent decades, we have seen a similar phenomenon of people emerging into politics without the public really knowing who they were. Former US presidential candidate and Senator Gary Hart was one of them. No one seemed to know who he was or where he really came from. The media (not he) disclosed after some research that Hart was not his real name. After a sexual scandal, he dropped out of sight.

Then we learned that the former US Secretary of State and UN ambassador, Madeleine Albright, had totally obscured her past, including that she was Jewish and had Holocaust survivor cousins in Czechoslovakia.

Now the same thing happened with John Kerry. If it had not been for the media digging, he would apparently never have disclosed that he had Czech Jewish great-grandparents, that his grandfather converted from Judaism to Catholicism and changed the family name from Kohn to Kerry, and that 2 siblings of his grandmother from Vienna were murdered in the Holocaust. Even Time (12 July 04) admitted that "he is not really from anywhere," even though he kept talking about having deep roots in New England. In 1972, when he first ran for public office, he had to shop for a Congressional district because he did not have a home town.

These are the kinds of things that are well-known by the TIPS editor about his own family, e.g., who the grandparents and great-grandparents were, where they were from, what language they spoke, and that 3 of his mother's first cousins perished at Auschwitz. Politicians about whom one does not know who they are and where they came from are potentially very dangerous.

*Things surely have gotten very bad when the candidacy of a politician for public office can be ruined by one single media faux pas, or one unfortunate image juxtaposition. For instance, it is widely said that Governor Dukakis lost the 1988 presidential election against Bush the Elder because of one single photograph of him riding in a tank which some people thought made him look ridiculous. One can also imagine what these realities do to a candidate who must live on the assumption that every single public act or appearance must be carefully staged, and yet that any number of private ones might also become public.

*In early 2004, the media declared that Howard Dean lost much support for his US presidential bid, and even committed political hari-kiri, when he let out a scream at one of his public
appearances. We suppose this means that the TIPS editor will never get elected for public office because he emits screams and other strange noises all the time.

*Things are also sad when the health and mental problems of one single radio commentator (such as Rush Limbaugh) might affect the outcome of an election (Newsweek, 20/10/03).

*The Syracuse Post-Standard (8 Feb. 04) published a description of the religions of the US presidential candidates at that time. The candidates reflected the incoherency of Americans generally on matters philosophical, religious and moral (see earlier sections in this TIPS issue). When they campaigned in states where a lot of people are religious and go to church, they went to church more frequently as well. Every single one of the democratic candidates who was Catholic supported abortion, but one of these Catholics (Dennis Kucinich) also dabbled in New Age concepts. General Wesley Clark had grown up Baptist and Methodist, converted to Catholicism, but worshipped in a Presbyterian church. The Reverend Al Sharpton, who had been involved in some pretty bad deceptions and scandals in the past, and has been a big self-aggrandizer, went to preach in black churches in South Carolina before the primary, but spoke mostly about social rather than religious issues.

*Dennis Kucinich left the Cleveland, Ohio, political scene in disgrace in 1979 and went to...California, where he fell in with Shirley MacLaine and her New Age stuff. Then he went to New Mexico where he became the disciple of a spiritual healer and turned vegan. He then returned to Ohio politics. His presidential campaign manager has been a "transformational kinesiologist" who has never worked in politics before.

*The pundits are telling us that while Americans may be concerned about all sorts of issues when elections come up, they are ultimately most likely to vote on the basis of economic considerations. Another way of saying this is that American voters (and perhaps modernistic ones generally) vote materialistically, and with a here-and-now mentality.

*An amazing fact is that a lot of people running for public office in the US have themselves not voted for years (SPS, 1 Nov. 03).

*Our society is lurching back and forth between funny and unfunny calamities. In an effort to prevent the ambiguities of the vote-counting of the US Presidential election of 2000, some states have gone to high-tech voting machines which--to everybody's consternation--have proven to have even bigger faults than what they tried to fix. For instance, some of these machines make fraud (as, for instance, by hacking, or programming fraud) impossible to detect, while the electronics of other machines are so complicated that people can no longer understand them. In Florida, one could at least go back and examine the punchcards, while there will be no going back to examine the results spit out by some of these high-tech machines. We have also not learned as yet what options voters will have in the future for write-in votes, which is one of the few things that has kept us going back to the polls in heroic efforts to get our cat, Felix von Krischer, elected for any office whatever, which will now be even doubly difficult since his passing away in 2003. Of course, on the other hand, dead candidates may be much to be preferred over live ones: they not only can do no harm anymore, but can no longer even manage to lie.

*US presidential candidate General Wesley Clark came up with a new definition on when human life began. He said, "life begins with the mother's decision" (FT, 3/04). Very deep!

*At its 9/04 national convention, the US Republican Party adopted an anti-abortion platform, but in order not to seem "extreme," it featured many prominent pro-abortion speakers (NCR, 12 Sept. 04). At least the Democratic party is coherent: thoroughly pro-abortion, and anti-abortion speakers were banned.

*There are about 500,000 eunuchs in India. Even though they are men, and many of them are of large proportion, they are generally referred to as females. Recently, they have begun to stand for elected offices, saying that the electorate had tried men, and then women, but that both had failed,
and so it was now time for eunuchs to get a crack at power (SMH, 21/4/04; source item from John Armstrong). After eunuchs, what?

Health News

*In connection with cancer, there certainly is an awful lot of snake oil medicine being practiced even in the most sacred temples of American medicine (Time, 26/4/99). Newsweek (20/4/98) wrote an almost euphoric article about the beneficial effects of tamoxifen (marketed under the trade name Nolvadex) on women's breast cancer--despite the fact that several placebo-controlled studies had found hardly any advantage of an experimental over a placebo group, plus the fact that the drug has some serious side effects. Among other things, it is a carcinogen itself, and thus another example of trying to drive the devil out through Beelzebul. In one study, a slight reduction in breast cancer was exactly offset by the side effects of growing other cancers, and having blood clots and strokes (Health Letter, 6/99). Nonetheless, women in vast numbers have been clamoring for the drug, and drug manufacturers have cynically appealed to women through ads and the popular media to beseech their doctors for the drug (SHJ, 26/5/99).

*The scarcity of flu vaccines in late 2004 precipitated all sorts of peculiar practices. People who ordinarily would never had thought of getting a flu shot suddenly stood in lines for days to get it. In Catholic churches, people would give each other a handshake of peace during Mass--and then whisk out little bottles of antiseptic hand-rub from their pockets and purses and wash their hands at their seats. Eucharistic ministers were advised to discreetly do the same before handing out Communion. In many churches and dioceses, the administration of the cup at Communion was suspended. The faithful were also advised to cease shaking hands, and instead wish each other peace orally instead, so that "a sign of unity does not become a sign of division."

*As is always the case--and as we keep pointing out as relentlessly as it is the case--when the flu pandemic of 1918 broke out, authorities issued false reassurances until it was too late to contain it. One scientist said that the 1918 epidemic came frighteningly close to devastating civilization. All it needed was either a little more time or a little more virulence (The Great Influenza). Now the problem is that we are also being told by the scientists that other such epidemics are inevitable, and there is no reason to expect them to be either less virulent or better contained.

*Scientists have been telling US government officials for a long time that "mad cow disease" and similar animal pests were certain to break out in the US, but they were ignored until this is what happened in 1/04. On paper at least, the practice of feeding animal products to herbivores was banned in 1997, but the ban has been full of loopholes and has been poorly enforced. Also, animal products continue to be fed to poultry, and sometimes the leftovers of dead chickens are fed back to cattle. Further, critics said that the policies of the US Department of Agriculture seemed to be virtually designed not to find mad cow disease if it broke out. Despite the outbreak of this disease in Alberta, Canada, a year earlier, lax policies of processing diseased cattle, and cattle that died from disease, continued.

We are now at the point were close examination of every head of cattle for potential transmission of disease to humans is adding as much as 20 cents to the cost of a pound of beef (Newsweek, 12 Jan. 04).

*Given contemporary mobility, it is almost impossible to contain epidemics, or resistance to antibiotics, geographically. In Eastern Europe, antibiotic-resistant TB is rapidly increasing, and must be expected to spread across the world (17/3/04 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*Responding to the high rate of medication errors in health care, which hits elderly people particularly hard because they take more medications than most other people, the US Food and Drug Administration issued new regulations that require that in hospitals at least, both each patient as well as each drug dose will get bar-coded, and then a scanner will compare the drug code against the patient ID code for every drug that gets administered each time. This system is supposed to be implemented by 2006. On the one hand, this sounds very promising, but on the other hand, new complexities are introduced to handle old complexities, which is always a scenario for new kinds of malfunctions.
*We reported before that there had been claims that the antidepressants developed in recent years precipitated suicidal impulses in a lot of people who took them. As it always does, the drug industry responded to these reports with lies, fury, and calumny against those who made these claims. Finally, the results became official in early 2004 when many of these drugs began to be banned by Britain for precipitating suicides among youths. A similar but less sweeping ban finally was then imposed in the US. Unresolved as yet is why such drugs would precipitate suicidal impulses. One possibility is this: a great many drugs make people have very vivid and sometimes frightening dreams, and perhaps some people of weak mentality--who are the ones who are most likely to end up on these drugs anyway--may have difficulty sorting out dreams and reality, and even in a wake state, they may be unable to cope with the problematic dream content.

*Some authorities now claim that autism can already be diagnosed in the womb, and that there are prenatal tests for it. This is probably a craze claim. And of course, a great many people would abort a child if they were told it will be autistic (NCR, 9 May 04).

*The widely read German magazine Stern (comparable to Newsweek or Time) reported in early 2004 on a research project conducted by well-respected University of Essen scientists about how to improve the immune system. One of the experiments made men masturbate while they watched pornographic movies. Then they compared this group to a control group that did not go through this "treatment." The scientists claimed that the masturbators ended up with a better immune system. So their recommendation was: watch porno films, masturbate, and engage in sex as much as you can to stay healthy and combat colds (news item from Susanne Hartfiel). Beats a rub-down in snake oil.

*When one of our associates was hospitalized for cancer surgery, he asked during his recovery if he could receive any physical therapy. The answer was no--but the hospital did offer him some "alternative" "therapies." They sent to his room someone to do what we call "massage at a distance," where the "therapist" runs their hands around one's body but without ever touching the body, which supposedly affects the "energy fields" of the body. They also sent someone who appeared in his room with an armful of feathers--but he dismissed her before ever finding out what she was offering to do! When these two people came to his room, they said they were from the "energy department," which a visitor thought had something to do with the electricity and hot water of the building! So this is the kind of thing that now goes on in our supposedly rational, science-based, health care and hospital system!

Human Service-Related News

*There are many peculiarities and outright perversions associated with the contemporary US privacy laws, including some of the recent ones. One of these is that now, it may be only total strangers who have access to information about a person, but those who have some relationship with the person--as family, close friends, or advocates--may be officially excluded. This is very decommunitizing, and can happen when a person is most vulnerable and most in need of advocates and protectors, such as when a person is very sick.

In the past, family, friends, and other members of one's community may have known too much about a person. For instance, in small towns and villages, it was difficult to keep secrets, and people often complained that "everyone knows everyone else's business." But now, the law may make it impossible for the members of one's community to even know where one is, e.g., a hospital is not allowed to reveal whether someone is a patient there. So someone might have an accident, be brought by emergency vehicle to a hospital and be in serious condition there, but family and friends calling around trying to locate the person may not be able to find the person. Similarly, a priest, minister, or rabbi may no longer be told which members of the congregation are in the hospital. They may only be informed if a patient specifically requests it, but many people will be too sick either to understand this, or to make such a request. So if they are visited by a chaplain at all, it will be a stranger. One of the many things that all this implies is that a means ("privacy") has become an end.

This film was nominated in the best documentary category for the 2003 Academy Awards, and won 12 other awards. It tells the story of Larry Selman, a mentally retarded Jewish man, then 59 years old, who has lived in the same small basement apartment on Bedford Street in New York City's Greenwich Village for 30 years. It is apparently a very stable neighborhood, as he has been friends with one neighbor, Alice Elliott (the producer of this film), for 25 years. The film title comes from the fact that Selman spends much of his time collecting for various charities, raising about $3000 each year through his efforts. (This is a valued unpaid work role). His 81-year old uncle Murray cooks and brings him meals several times a week, comes over to check on him daily, and makes his bed. (Both his parents have been deceased for more than 30 years; the uncle says that his father was also retarded.) Upon his parents' death, he first lived with this uncle for about 2 years, but the uncle said that was too hard, so he eventually found Larry his own place.

Larry's appearance is not positive: he wears suspenders over T-shirts, he looks somewhat sloppy, and is overweight. He lives alone but has 2 cats and one dog. He has gotten in trouble with the tenants' association for having taken in homeless people and given them the keys to his apartment and the building so that they could take showers there. He says he did this because he was lonely.

The neighbors are concerned about what will happen to him if/when his uncle dies, so they call a meeting to set up a trust fund through the UJA (United Jewish Appeal) federation. Usually this is done by parents; this is the first neighborhood association that does so. The trust fund requires a minimum of $25,000, which the neighbors somehow manage to raise, though the film does not reveal how. Larry must have his IQ tested to see if he qualifies for such a trust fund (the funds are restricted to those with an IQ below 70), and he is shown being very anxious about the testing and its results, on the one hand glad that he qualifies for the trust with an IQ of 62 but on the other hand unhappy that he scored so low.

Larry says he goes to synagogue and has a deep faith, but the one time he is shown there, he is the only one in the building, and is still dressed very inappropriately.

At a "deviancy dance" in late December, Larry meets a handicapped woman, Ellie, whom he befriends. He eventually proposes to her but she says she will decide in a few years whether to accept him; at the end of the film, they continue their friendship.

In the film credits, Selman is given the valued role of "consulting producer."

The film could be useful for discussion, but there is much information one would want to know that the film does not give, e.g.: who are all the people in Larry's support group; what is the UJA; who actually manages his money; who are the two service workers shown in one segment with him, and what responsibility do they have for him; how is money supposed to be the answer to his uncle's death, e.g., are there plans to buy the help he will need?

The film also brings out much of the sadness of a life such as this man's, having lost his parents at a young age, being so lonely that he takes in homeless men, managing on his own but just barely and only with the informal help of a relative and some committed neighbors, his shame at his lack of intelligence, etc. All this could be overlooked while contemplating the positive elements.

*In 2002, there were 708,000 persons "with mental retardation and developmental disabilities" in the US who were living with caretakers who were 60 or more years old (MR, 10/04). This means that in very short order, a very large number of very impaired people will need radical rearrangements in their living situations, for which apparently no jurisdiction is prepared.

Some Signs of the Times

*With more and more computer interactions being "wireless," meaning in essence via radio signals, ever more people are becoming addicted to their computers, and some people have called this "EverCrack." There is also discourse of some youths having "become one with their computers" (Time, 3 Nov. 03).

*About half of all Internet mail sent in 2003 consisted (to our amusement) of unwanted advertisements and commercial promotions (including pornographic ones) called "spam." These pile up sometimes by the dozens every day on people's e-mail. Individuals have to wade through all of this material to get at meaningful or possibly even important messages, and often lose these when they delete the e-mail messages because they get perceptually lost in them. US corporations alone suffered about $10 billion in 2003 in lost productivity and extra expenses dealing with spam. People who try to install anti-spam blockers often lose legitimate e-mails, because these programs also filter out about
17% of them. Worst hit are blind people who are incapacitated by the spam on their e-mail (SPS, 6 Aug. 03).

*In change agentry, we teach that one should make something work on a small scale before one tries it out on a big scale. In 5/04, the European Union expanded by adding almost as many nations as it had before, with 74 million more people, including a slew of problematic Eastern European ones. But already 2 of its nations had broken their covenants by not holding down their deficits. Can this work??

*The first time the new men's sex drug Cialis was advertised in Newsweek on 9 Feb. 04, the ad stretched over 2 pages, and one of the slogans on it was, "Don't miss another moment." We think the ad probably converted zillions of men to buy it because it warned that one possible effect was an erection that lasts for more than 4 hours, in which case they should seek immediate medical attention.

*Apparently, some TIPS readers once again thought that we had gone overboard with our claim that the Calvin Klein colognes that go under the name of ck were deliberately designed to be read as the word ..ck, as the equivalent of the media (e.g., Time and Newsweek) spelling a certain word f.... However, the long eyes at TIPS triumph once again.

A British firm called "French Connection Group" came out with a line of men's and women's fragrances which are named "FCUK Her," and "FCUK Him." The firm, innocently batting its eyes, claimed that FCUK stands for "French Connection United Kingdom"—but then came out with an ad campaign in teen magazines featuring scantily clad teenage couples in bed with the slogan "scent to bed." Further, it launched these fragrances at a party, invitations to which were printed on something that resembled the "do not disturb" notices that one hangs on a motel room door, but with the message "FCUK in progress."

*One very remarkable feature of people of modernistic mentality is that they are phenomenally incoherent not merely in their internal personal organization, but in terms of the positions that they take in, and vis-à-vis, the world. Actually, the reasons for this are relatively easy to understand. In modernism, will replaces intellect as the idealized governing regulator; and furthermore, will is heavily dominated by sensualistic desires, i.e., by what feels good. In consequence, positions are taken on the basis of what feels good or what one wants, and they are no longer as carefully examined by intellect so as to remove inconsistencies, resolve contradictions, etc. Nor are people of modernistic mentality particularly concerned about their inconsistencies since the concordance between the different positions with their sensualism and their will is really all that matters.

*As we teach in our workshops on language about devalued conditions, one should refuse to have one's tongue controlled by what other people demand. Therefore, we refuse to refer to the poor, decadent musician who demands to be called by a succession of names, most recently "The Artist Formerly Known as the Artist Formerly Known as Prince," by that name, and will merely call him Prince. Having once had his 15 or so minutes of fame in the 1980s, he is back on the contemporary music scene, unfortunately as confused and as misleading of others as ever. Though he claims to have had a religious conversion to Christianity, his music and public performances are far from coherently Christian, and instead continue to exalt illicit sexual pleasure. As one reviewer in Time (12 April 04) wrote, "Prince's place is in the bedroom. Everybody's bedroom."

One thing we are not clear on is why Prince has suddenly been so prominently featured in so many news magazines and newspapers. Other once-famous people also try for come-backs, but do not necessarily receive such wide coverage (at least 3 major stories the week of April 12 alone). Are the media looking for a new replacement for androgynous Michael Jackson, now that his days as a modernistic idol seem to be numbered?

*Many people who dupe others into modernistic lifestyles sometimes repent of the beliefs that they had held and the lives that they have led, and change—but leave high and dry all the people whom they have earlier duped. For instance, a woman wrote to an advice column that her best friend had for years been "a lefty feminist" who used to distrust all men—but one day found "the only good man," married him, and became a stay-at-home mother who would do nothing without consulting her husband first. The writer felt very "betrayed" when she really should have felt stupid (SPS, 21/6/01).
*The series of major storms that ravaged the southeastern US states in 2004 might have occurred even despite global warming, but the economic losses were so huge that it is easy to see how a confluence of several natural and human-made disasters (such as 9/11/01) could wipe out the prosperity people had gotten used to.

*Here we were feeling terribly sorry for the people in Florida battered by a series of hurricanes in 2004--until we saw a picture in our newspaper of a long row of buildings that had been built about 12 feet from the water line. And we are supposed to pay in all sorts of direct and indirect ways for storm damage to them?

*Only after Islamic terrorists blew-up the nightclub in Bali in 2002 with huge loss of life did we become aware of a certain class of young people, who should actually still be under parental supervision, who have more money than sense or morality, and who go to exotic places in Third World countries to live high off the hog there, prance around in revealing clothes, and indulge in booze, drugs, and sex in contrast to the sparse life led by the natives. It seems that most of the young people in that nightclub had no business being either in that country or in that nightclub. This underlines a basic maxim of ours that people so often get hurt when they are in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong company doing the wrong thing.

*In recent years, there have been full-page ads by a petroleum company that showed a good-looking young woman saying, "I'd rather have a cleaner environment, but I can't imagine me without my car," and an unspoken implication is that the discourse is about a gigantic car.

*As in previous studies, a new one found that the acquisition of time-saving gadgetry has not reduced the number of hours people spend on their housework. Dishwasher owners spend the same amount of time cleaning up after meals as non-owners, and those with vacuums spend no less time cleaning floors than those who have none (I&T, Spring 1999).

*Mackay, C. (1841/1980). Extraordinary popular delusions and the madness of crowds. New York: Harmony Books. In England, there was an insane stock market craze between 1711-1720, with people investing madly in so-called "bubbles," such as the South Sea Bubble, with some fortunes being made but more of them lost when the bubbles burst. The author had this to say about the craze:

"During the progress of this famous bubble, England presented a singular spectacle. The public mind was in a state of unwholesome fermentation. Men were no longer satisfied with the slow but sure profits of cautious industry. The hope of boundless wealth for the morrow made them heedless and extravagant for to-day. A luxury, till then unheard of, was introduced, bringing in its train a corresponding laxity of morals. The overbearing insolence of ignorant men, who had arisen to sudden wealth by successful gambling, made men of true gentility of mind and manners blush that gold should have power to raise the unworthy in the scale of society. The haughtiness of some of these 'cyphering cits,' as they were termed by Sir Richard Steele, was remembered against them in the day of their adversity. In the (later) parliamentary inquiry, many of the directors suffered more for their insolence than for their peculation. One of them, who, in the full-blown pride of an ignorant rich man, had said that he would feed his horse upon gold, was reduced almost to bread and water for himself.... Is it a dull or uninstructive picture to see a whole people shaking suddenly off the trammels of reason, and running wild after a golden vision, refusing obstinately to believe that it is not real, till, like a deluded hind running after an ignis fatuus, they are plunged into a quagmire? But in this false spirit has history too often been written. The intrigues of unworthy courtiers...or the records of murderous battles and sieges, have been dilated on, and told over and over again, with all the eloquence of style and all the charms of fancy; while the circumstances which have most deeply affected the morals and welfare of the people have been passed over with but slight notice, as dry and dull, and capable of neither warmth nor colouring."  

Alexander Pope rhymed about the craze as follows:

"At length corruption, like a general flood,  
    Did deluge all; and avarice creeping on,  
    Spread, like a low-born mist, and hid the sun.  
Statesmen and patriots plied alike the stocks,
Peeress and butler shared alike the box;  
And judges jobbed, and bishops bit the town,  
And mighty dukes packed cards for half-a-crown:  
Britain was sunk in lucre's sordid charms."

Having learned nothing from this, something similar took place in France in the 1720s. Everybody in the country thought they could make huge profits, and some people initially did, until the pyramid of stock values brought about a crash that not only almost bankrupted the country but came close to causing the government's collapse, and even a revolution.

An anonymous poem of about that time went as follows:

"On Monday I bought papers, by Tuesday I gained millions, on Wednesday I set up my mistress, on Thursday I acquired a coach, on Friday I went to a ball, on Saturday, to a hospital," probably meaning a madhouse.

After everybody had participated in these schemes, and they had fallen apart, then everybody turned prosecutor looking for someone to blame, and among the blamers were some of the biggest earlier promoters of the schemes.

These crazes had remarkable similarities with what happened in the financial paper markets in the US in the 1990s, insofar as there was no real productivity behind the companies whose stocks were sold at ever higher prices.

*For decades, Nigerians and ethnic Albanians have ranked near the top in criminal activities, at least when they have been abroad. (Come on, PCers, if we all had the same crime rates, we wouldn't be diverse.) However, the Chechens (who are Muslims) have been near the top not only in crime, but also in terrorism, at least on a per capita basis. Now we learn with amazement that for some unfathomable reason, small Greece has admitted 10,000 Chechens, and that is one of several reasons why there was so much fear of Muslim terrorism during the 2004 Olympics there (Newsweek, 22/3/04). The total Olympic security budget was $800 million, which is triple that of the pre-9/11/01 one 4 years earlier in Australia (AP in SPS, 1 April 04).

*Garrett James Hardin, born in 1915, was crippled from polio at age 4, leaving one leg much shorter than the other, and was later in life confined to a wheelchair. Nonetheless, his entire life was marked by a eugenic mentality and a utilitarian morality. He was a founding member of Planned Parenthood, and occupied most of his time between 1963-73 on the promotion of contraception and abortion while he and his wife themselves had four children. Among other things, he did not think that low infant mortality rates were such a good thing for society. In 1968 he published a bombshell of an article in Science entitled "The Tragedy of the Commons," and in 1974, he published "Living on a Life Boat." He had also been a member of the Hemlock Society, and in 9/03, he and his wife committed suicide together in California where they had last lived.

*George Mandler was one of the foremost psychologist experts on memory for decades. In 2002, he published an autobiography in which he said that he did not really care whether or not the memories he was reporting were accurate. It seems that toward the end of his career, he fell victim to constructionism and post-modernism. That much for the fragility of what presents itself to us as rigorous science.

*As a professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was required to give lectures to often empty halls, even after publishing one of the most important works in science ever, the Principia in 1687. We feel the same way when we give lectures in Syracuse to which people travel from far and wide--but no students from Syracuse University attend.

*We have written before about the "decommunitization" in our society, and about the toll it takes on vulnerable people, even contributing to their ending up dead because they are alone, without helpers and protectors. One effort at recommunitization is a movement called "co-housing," which is similar to but not the same as either condominium living or cooperative housing. In co-housing, members buy property in a locale, and work together to develop the community: setting rules, deciding what and where to build, etc. Some of these communities are reserved only for people over 50, others are multi-generational (and therefore more communitizing). In all of them, the residents share duties for maintenance, grounds upkeep, and other chores, and typically eat together one or more times a week, and possibly share automobiles. Attention is commonly paid to people's desire
for some privacy and private space, as well as to shared spaces and activities. One major drawback is that only the well-off can afford to purchase membership, even though obviously many of the poor could benefit from such housing arrangements.

*It is surprising how many Americans thought that the answer to the prison scandals in Iraq was to raze the prison. However, this is a very common American response to things. If something bad happens at a certain place, the facility is often obliterated, or at least that part of it in which the bad thing occurred.

*We have discovered an extremely positive characteristic of President Bush: what one of his biographers called an "appalling lack of knowledge of pop culture." From many previous TIPS issues, it is obvious that we share this characteristic, and believe that everybody else should also acquire it.

Resources

ANNOUNCING: The availability of a new/old resource, dirt cheap!

From the 1960s into well into the 1970s, just about the only work option for mentally retarded adults was the sheltered workshop, and often such places did not provide much real work, or work that was challenging, or a work schedule that approximated that of typical adults, etc. However, with the advent of normalization, that began--very slowly--to change. One of the work options that was conceptualized was something variously referred to as integrated industry or affirmative industry. The idea was that what had previously been sheltered work enterprises only for handicapped people could become real places of work and industry, could operate like real businesses and industries (competing for work contracts, having shares, being oriented to profits, providing various benefits to their employees, etc.), and could include, among their employees, not only handicapped people but non-handicapped ones as well, who would act in part as workers, and in part as work-models for the handicapped employees.

However, this idea never really took off. When some positive changes finally began to be made in the vocational sector starting in the late 1980s, there was a virtual wholesale rejection of sheltered workshops as having any merit whatever, and wholesale embrace of so-called "supported employment" as being the only meritorious work arrangement for handicapped adults. ("Supported employment" means a handicapped person is enabled to work in a typical business, often with the assistance of a "job coach" who teaches the person how to do the job, performs the job with the person, and who may eventually withdraw most or all support and presence, so that the handicapped person is working on his/her own at an ordinary job without any special support.) However, supported work has often turned out to be isolating (e.g., cleaning late at night in an office building when all the other employees have gone home), low-paid, only part-time, and often also make-believe and negatively-imaging.

In contrast, the affirmative industry idea emphasized not only social integration of the handicapped person into ordinary work, but also as much as possible, work that would be reasonably well-paid; that would offer handicapped people the valued roles of stockholder/part-owner of the company (via employee stock options); health, insurance, and vacation benefits that typical employees enjoy; and full-time challenging work.

The first, and model, such affirmative industry was Minnesota Diversified Industries in St. Paul, Minnesota, created and run by John DuRand. We have come into possession of a large quantity of DuRand's 1990 book The Affirmative Enterprise that describes this approach, which we are making available to interested parties at no cost other than a shipping and handling charge of $2.00 per copy. People can save even this cost if they will pick up their copies in our office, so that we do not have to ship them. This offer lasts as long as supplies last. The book includes sections on: underlying principles and values; the role of work and careers; business, profit and social responsibility; profit vs. not-for-profit enterprises; entrepreneurial leadership and management; social change; the affirmative enterprise as a model for social change; affirmative enterprise leadership and management; financing; sales and marketing; human resources; operations; production support services; communications and community resources; and creating an affirmative enterprise.

We recommend this book for people interested in vocational services, in their history, and in imagining other ways of providing work for impaired adults besides so-called "supported employment."
TIPS Editorial Policy. TIPS was begun in 1981, & comes out in six, or fewer but combined, issues per year. Combined issues of TIPS, such as a double or triple issue, contain two or three times the usual amount of copy. This allows some topics to be treated in depth, & saves on postage costs. TIPS contains articles, news, insights, reviews & viewpoints that relate to the interests & mission of the Training Institute. At the present, this mission has to do with reading "the signs of the times," & interpreting their meaning for human services. This necessitates that TIPS address some of the larger issues which affect our society & the ways in which decisions are made in it, because these higher-order phenomena will eventually express themselves in human services in various ways, including in human service values, funding & practices. Usually, each TIPS issue focuses primarily on one major theme. Examples from the past have been Crazeology; Deathmaking; Human Service News; Poverty & the Poor; Social Advocacy; Social Role Valorization; War & Peace; Crime, Punishment & Prisons; & Homelessness. TIPS addresses relevant developments whenever & wherever they occur, so disclosures of adaptive or horrific developments promoted by a particular political party or government should not be taken as partisan political statements. We assume that subscribers are people who lead hard lives struggling against great odds, & are aware of many shortcomings in human services. Thus, we try to inject levity into TIPS so as to make subscribers' lives more bearable (or less unbearable, as the case may be), even if not deliriously joyful. In fact, the "signs of the times" tend to be depressing, & thus much TIPS content is in need of levitation. TIPS tries to report developments truthfully, but since it gets many items from other sources, it cannot be responsible for errors contained in original sources. In order to save space, published sources for items are abbreviated when cited--just enough to help us recover the full citation if a reader requests it. Items that are not attributed to other sources or writers are to be considered authored by the publisher/editor of this newsletter. Anyone wishing to reproduce items from TIPS should contact the TI Training Coordinator for permission & terms.

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