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In the light of dwindling subscriptions, we have regretfully (indeed, sadly), decided to phase out TIPS. Subscribers will receive one or a few more issues, but no new subscriptions will be accepted. However, back issues will continue to be available for sale.

This will be our annual issue devoted to the usual December topics of the family, children, poverty and the poor, homelessness and the homeless, crime and criminals, war and its perpetrators and victims, human nature, philosophy, religion and morality in society and in human services, etc.

This will bring us up-to-date with our calendar, and as long-time readers of TIPS know, that is important since we always poke fun at the disregard of time evidenced by our society’s celebration of Christmas, now starting as early as September, as well as of other holidays at peculiar times. This too will be reported on in this issue.

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War & the Military

As noted in earlier TIPS, war is relevant to human services because it creates so many people who end up needing service (widows, orphans, poor, homeless, maimed and crippled) both during the fighting and after it is over. Also, both people and money resources that are devoted to war are not available to help people in need.

*According to some historians, there were major armed conflicts going on somewhere in the world for all of the 20th century, with the arguable exception of only about one month (CP, 2001, No. 1).

*In the 20th century, the US military built many bases abroad, but never ever designated any of them as permanent, even when they were used ever since they got established. For instance, for 55 years, American troops in Korea have been sheltered in “temporary” accommodations (Newsweek, 1 May 2006).
During and after the atrocities of the Serbs in Kosovo in the 1990s, the American media never related that in 1912, in one of several Balkan wars where the Albanians were off fighting against the Greeks on one side and the Bulgarians on the other, the Serbs took the opportunity to fall onto the defenseless land and ravished it and its women, much like they did to the Bosnians in the 1990s. They slaughtered the remaining men, and the women and children fled to what is now Albania, and that is why and how Serbia got Kosovo. So when World War I broke out in 1914, Albanians joined the Axis and began to slaughter Serbs. And so it has gone back and forth ever since. One wonders whether the Serbians had learned mass rape from the Turks earlier. If so, it would once again show how violence ripples on and on.

*Indicted war criminals in Serbia are entitled to their full salary plus “compensation” to their families and for legal expenses; in some locales, this can amount to triple the indictee’s regular salary, plus several all-expense paid trips across Europe for families to visit an imprisoned indictee—all while ordinary Serbs earn only about 200 euros per month. One irony is that the war crimes tribunals were supposed to show that atrocities would be punished, not rewarded (Newsweek, 7/25/2005).

*The mainstream media are not telling the real story about the violence in East Timor. For decades after the Portuguese pulled out, Indonesia “owned” East Timor, and its Muslims bloodily oppressed and slaughtered the mostly (Catholic) Christian East Timorese. Under international pressure, Indonesia finally granted East Timor its independence in 1999. In 2006, the Christian East Timorese started falling upon each other, but now have no one to declare themselves independent from, or to blame other than themselves, and had to call in foreign troops to try to prevent even greater slaughter. Some countries are simply unsuitable for democracy, and may never acquire the civic virtues for it.

*Taking into account all costs—present and future, human and economic—it is estimated that the first war, and then the continuing ongoing conflict, in Iraq could cost the US two trillion dollars (Time, 16 Jan. 2006). These sums are so unimaginable as to be unreal to most people. Of course, the American public is being deceived about all this.

*Wars have always been a source of medical advances, as military physicians and medics try new procedures to save the lives and restore the functionality of wounded soldiers. The US Army may now spend over one million dollars just to keep one single wounded soldier alive until he can be flown home for lengthy rehabilitation (CBS “60 Minutes,” 11/2006). At the Tampa Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (polytrauma is a newly-coined medical term, since the onset of the Iraq war), the patients require the most intricate medical treatments, though the soldiers do have the advantage that, at least for now, their role as wounded war hero is a valued one that brings them many benefits. One wife said about her gravely wounded husband, “he’s my hero,” “I love that man to death,” and “I’ll take him (even) as a vegetable” (source item from Joe Osburn). We salute her, but wounded veterans tend to lose some of their “glamour” as the war recedes in memory, so their future may not be so bright.

*On the one hand, more than a third of US soldiers seek mental “counseling” upon returning from Iraq, not to mention how many more may do so in future. On the other hand, the Army allowed an 18-year-old autistic man to enlist for the most dangerous Army job (we thought that this was scraping the bottom of the barrel), until the story became known and the Army backed down in response to public outrage (SPS, 1 March & 10 May 2006).

*The way for a person in the US military to avoid overseas service is to get into debt: Indebted service personnel are considered to be security risks, and a large percentage of the US
military is indebted. E.g., to send one sailor overseas, 2 candidates have to be screened! (SPS, 20/10/2006.)

*The more the ice cap melts beyond the North Pole, the more nations will feel themselves compelled to greatly increase their naval budgets, because there will be more ocean to patrol.

*One of the biggest, but most unrecognized, facts about the US military is that its main purpose has now become the protection of US oil sources around the world. Even outside of going to war over oil, tanker routes are routinely patrolled by the military, troops are sent to protect pipelines in global “hot spots,” and military bases get established near oil supplies (e.g., Newsweek, 4/24/2006). As noted in earlier issues of TIPS, the US gluttony for world oil cannot be sustained over time, and it will probably end cataclysmically, rather than in a planned, logical, and bloodless fashion.

*We predict that an Islamic group or country will eventually acquire nuclear weapons, and will use them against the US or Israel, or both. Some nuclear weapons experts believe the same things. The consequences could be cataclysmic.

*Many serpents have been suckled on America’s breast. A great deal of IRA money for warfare and terrorism in northern Ireland has come from American citizens and residents, and the unreliability of the Moslem population in the US is evidenced by the large amounts of money it has donated to terrorist causes. Even yet more such money has been raised by the even yet more unreliable immigrant Muslim population in Europe (Claremont Review, Fall 2006)!

*The US and the USSR channeled billions of dollars into Somalia. When the USSR collapsed, the money flow ended, but ever since, the Somalis have been awash in arms and have been using them on each other.

*Now everyone is crying about North Korea having nuclear weapons, but 14 countries helped it to make them, including France, Canada, Germany, China, and Japan, which is crying the loudest (Newsweek, 23/10/2006).

Torture

Most Americans, plus a majority of people in many other countries (including Britain and France), believe that torture is justified under at least some conditions (AP in SPS, 7 Dec. 2005). A few hundred years ago, authorities sometimes arranged for small orchestras to play beautiful music while someone was being tortured, so as to drown out the cries of pain. We doubt that modern torturers will observe such niceties. Their model is the medical one, as we have reported on before.

Slavery

Slavery is an institution that is prehistoric in origin and will probably always exist in some form or other.

*In European society, a big boost was given to the practice of slavery in 1363 when it was given explicit permission in Florence, Italy, with the proviso that slaves could only be imported if they were not Christians. Thence, the practice rapidly spread to other Italian cities. Obviously, in order to be non-Christian then, they had to come either from Eastern Europe or Africa. Slaves were cut on the face and hands so that they would be recognized by their scars if they tried to escape. However, oddly enough, once the slaves arrived from their foreign origins, they were promptly baptized (Tietze-Conrat, 1957). This doesn’t look good, does it?

*The major suppliers of cocoa to the US chocolate industry have been accused of supporting child slavery on West African cocoa farms (Time, 13/2/2006).
*Was life better or worse under Saddam Hussein? Since the fall of Saddam, but not when he was in power, sex trafficking has become a serious issue, with even young girls being kidnapped and sold either into harems or brothels. Many of these girls are orphaned or otherwise have no family to protect them (Time, 1 May 2006).

*The so-called “demand” for prostitutes in New York City is greater than the “supply,” so coercion of women, even young girls--often from abroad--into the sex trade is flourishing there (2006 clippings.)

Violence in Society, Especially Among the Young

As we have reported in earlier TIPS issues, and as other commentators have also noted, our society has made a commitment to Death with a capital D--such commitments can be very real even if they are not conscious or explicit, and even if everyone vehemently denies that such a commitment has been made. Among other things, we should not then be surprised that a society that has embraced Death reaps Death, including among its children, and especially when that society does not value children, and is even outright hostile to them and their needs, as we will cover in another section of this issue of TIPS.

*The authorities launch one “intervention” program after another aimed at reducing violence among urban (mostly African-American and Hispanic) youths. Not much really changes on the streets, but what does keep changing is the parade of programs with their various names. Whenever a new one is launched, one hears nothing more about all the previous ones that had been launched with much fanfare and at humongous expense.

Also, the authorities in American cities are constantly sending delegations to various other cities that have a reputation of having done something successfully along these lines, in order to study what was done. It is a bit amusing considering that it has the flavor of “salvation is in Boston,” “salvation is in Philadelphia,” etc., etc.

Also, whenever a new technological gadget appears that police officers and others are equipped with, there is a big hype about how this is going to help the situation. For instance, there was one such big hype in Syracuse when probation officers were issued Palm Pilots loaded with information about the probationers under their supervision.

The money that these programs commonly receive is phenomenal.

*At one street shooting in Syracuse at about 3:30 a.m., there may have been several hundred witnesses, none of whom came forward to identify themselves and tell what they observed (SPS, 20/1/03). In another such shooting incident at about 5 a.m., the witnesses only put themselves out enough to transport a victim to a hospital emergency room in his own car, and then abandoned it and ran off.

Over and over, even the victims of shootings who know exactly who had shot them are totally uncooperative with the police.

Even worse, some witnesses, including victims themselves, have been actively trying to mislead investigators of street violence events. Obviously, this is infinitely worse than uncooperatively refusing to give out any information (SPS, 12 May 03).

One juror in a drug case reported that his life had been threatened for sitting on the jury. He left court during the trial without permission, swore an obscenity against the judge, and falsely testified in jury selection about previous involvement with the police.

*We reported in earlier TIPS about the increase of violence among girls in our society. The “average” rate of violence among girls in all countries is reported to be 23%, with as few as 13% in Finland and as many as 32% in Hungary. In England and Scotland, over 29% of adolescent girls reported having been in a fight in the past year (Sydney Morning Herald, 25/7/2006; source item from John Armstrong). Perhaps surprisingly, girls also are reported to be more savage, with ambulances having to be called when they fight, unlike with boys (Time, 1 May 2006).

*Even those groups that have “always been” violent are becoming ever more violent. For instance, gangs are becoming ever more bloodthirsty and violent, including “girl gangs” (e.g., Newsweek, 8 Dec. 2003).
One sign of our times is that US basketball play has become vastly more violent than it used to be. It used to be considered a clean sport with fair play, but those days are reportedly over (Newsweek, 24/3/2003).

When the Amish schoolchildren were murdered and maimed in September 2006, the imperial authorities fell all over themselves to reassure everyone that school shootings are rare occurrences, that there was no need for people to be “nervous,” and that they should assure their children that schools are safe places (SPS, 3 Oct. 2006).

**Crime & Criminality**

Most of the people who commit the high-class and white collar types of crimes have lots of things going for them—status, power, education, wealth, connections, and many valued roles—and therefore they usually endure much less severe punishment than offenders who commit the baser kinds of crimes.

Especially the lower-class type of criminal often has a long record of involvement with human services of some type, but both types are likely to have some future contact with either shrink-type services, and/or rehabilitation and parole-type services.

**The Validity of Evidence in Criminal Cases**

*Here is the problem with confessions: a whole series of people will “confess” to a crime who did not commit it. The more glamorous the victim or the victim’s family, the more people will confess. It is largely what we call a desperate externalistic “please look at me” phenomenon.*

When the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped and murdered in 1932, more than 200 people rushed up to confess to the crime; 500 confessed to Hollywood’s 1947 “Black Dahlia” slaying (Time, 28/8/2006).

Many people have confessed to having killed Jon Benet Ramsey, the child beauty queen-in-training murdered in Colorado in 1996. John Mark Karr, who also sort-of confessed to it in 8/2006, is only the latest.

In 1997, a woman in Virginia was raped and murdered, and of the 8 men who were charged, 5 at one time or another confessed, but apparently only one had been involved, which once again underlines the fragility of certain confessions. Some of those who ended up confessing apparently also ended up believing that they had been involved, in consequence of prosecutorial brainwashing (Time, 12/12/2005).

*DNA tests have shown that a number of people convicted of crimes (especially rapes) did not commit the crimes for which they had been convicted. However, that does not mean that they were innocent victims, since many of them had come under suspicion in the first place because they had criminal records, sometimes serious ones. This was underlined by a case that became public in 11/05 of a man who had spent 18 years in prison for a rape of which he was exonerated because of DNA evidence; but within two years after he was freed, he did in fact murder a woman in Wisconsin (SPS, 12 & 16 Nov. 2005).

At the same time, now even DNA evidence has been shown to be far from infallible, just like lie detector tests and fingerprints before it (e.g., Discover, 7/2006).

**Some Ideological Issues Around Crime**

*We have commented before how stupid it is to utter what could be interpreted as racial epithets while committing a crime, because doing so might double, triple, or even more, the penalty once it has been defined as a hate crime. A young man in our area cracked a bat over the head of a “black” man and shouted “that is what you get when you try to rob white boys,” which could give him as much as 25 years in prison, in contrast to perhaps a few months for ordinary battery (SPS, 28/10/2005).

*From news clippings, Susanne Hartfiel noticed that when Arab immigrants in Germany beat up on an Israeli Jew, it is called xenophobia, but when a Caucasian German does it, it is called anti-Semitism or neo-Nazism. As we said, hate crime concepts are absurd, largely because one must
impute motives (which is hard to do), while establishing the occurrence of assaults, etc., is objectively verifiable.

Here is yet another absurdity of so-called “hate crimes.” When a Latino gang gunned down an African-American in Los Angeles because they wanted “to kill a nigger,” their defense attorney later argued that it was not racially motivated (after all, many Latinos have African blood and are quite dark), but “only part of gang life” (Newsweek, 17/7/2006).

*Canada is trying to replace the word “tolerance” for homosexuality and same-sex “marriage” with the word “acceptance.” People who speak against this are increasingly persecuted, as for instance being denied jobs, or being fired. Their opposition is called a hate crime, and is equated with “incitement to genocide” (NCR, 20/8/2006).

*In a sort of reversal of the hate crime ideology, people who do or may have HIV or AIDS have more rights than their victims. For instance, AIDS advocates are much more concerned with the image of people with AIDS than they are with containing the epidemic, and therefore all sorts of public health measures that are routinely applied to contain other diseases are not done to contain the spread of AIDS. In May 2006, a newlywed man was having pizza at a bar--believe it or not, on his wedding night--when a drunken patron bit him on the nose. The biter was permitted to refuse to take a blood test (which might reveal the HIV virus), and as a result, the bitten groom had to endure a course of nausea-inducing drugs just in case he might have contracted HIV or hepatitis (SPS, 23/5/2006).

*On 1 March 2006, the Syracuse Post-Standard carried a very PC article about “blacks” being very disproportionately stopped and/or arrested by police, the write-up stridently attributing it to racism. The message was that people should be stopped and arrested in proportion to their prevalence in society. Only one day later, the same paper carried an article on the 10 most wanted criminals in the county--of whom 7 (70%) were “black”! No comment was made in that article about the PC one the day previous! And despite this incongruence and dishonesty, an 8 March 2006 editorial no less reiterated that racism was behind the stop/arrest phenomenon. We recommend ameliorating this injustice by stopping/arresting more Asians, who would otherwise hardly show up in the crime statistics.

Sex Offenses

*In the US, 65,000 arrests were made in 2000 for sexual assaults on minors alone (Time, 3 July 2006).

*In 1985, a California man was sentenced to 20 years in prison for molesting children. By 2004, most of the former children said that the assaults had never really happened, and the judge threw out the conviction (SPS, 1 May 2004).

*Nebraskans were up in arms when a (probably PC) judge freed a 50-year-old man on probation after he had sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl. His rationale was that the perpetrator was only 5’1” high, and would have a hard time in prison (SPS, 1 June 2006).

*A decadent teenage girl in Syracuse was hospitalized for some reason on a children’s ward, and when she was visited by a man almost twice her age, somehow a deal was quickly cut under which she left the room while he had consensual sex with her 15-year-old roommate. When the man was caught, he was charged with rape, but became vehement before the judge. He said that the victim had assured him that she was 18, and that “all I do is kidnap, shoot, and sell drugs, I’m not a rapist, man.” A check of his police record revealed that indeed he had spoken the truth: he had done robberies, gas station stick-ups, held women and children at gunpoint, dealt with and stolen drugs, and had only recently gotten out of prison after 7 years for robbery charges—but had never raped anyone (various late-2005 clippings).
Patterns Among the Poor Related to Crime

*The underclass that has become a crime-based economy (of mostly drugs and related criminal offenses) is notoriously uncooperative with police and prosecutors, in part because of fear of being victimized for cooperating ("snitching"), and in part because so many of them are also involved in criminal activity. The gangsters stop at nothing to intimidate potential witnesses, no matter how young they may be, and almost everything the police and other officials try to do is ruled a violation of some party's rights. Yet at the same time, the gangsters and their families want their wounds to be taken care of by publicly-paid-for medical services, and want police protection against crime committed by anyone other than themselves (multiple sources).

*On a certain corner in one of our racial ghettos in Syracuse, unsavory people gather almost every night, and almost every night fire guns, sometimes at people and sometimes just for fun. We have a friend in that neighborhood who said that he regularly reports this to police, but they generally simply drive by, and do nothing.

Something peculiar is going on when we are told that serious crime has been declining even as gun battles in our streets are steeply increasing. One possibility is that the politically correct have gained control over crime reporting, or that crimes other than street shootings have gone down so much as to offset the number of street shootings. For instance, in New York City, the number of people hit by bullets in 2005 was higher than in 2004 even as the total "serious crime" rate reportedly declined (SPS, 1 Nov. 2005). Maybe shootings are not counted as crimes when victims do not cooperate in reporting and prosecuting.

*An interesting phenomenon in Syracuse (and we bet elsewhere) is that when bars catering to African-Americans close about 2 a.m., patrons refuse to leave, and also start congregating by the hundreds outside the bar. Commonly, fights then break out, sometimes engulfing hundreds of people, often also with stabblings and shootings, until the police arrive.

*Small public libraries in rural areas usually do not have a big problem with theft of materials by customers, but the urban libraries do, and the losses can be quite substantial. Also, thefts are not random. Very popular are Bibles and Korans, works on witchcraft and astrology, divorce manuals, and items with African-American themes (SPS, 1 Feb. 2004).

Some Unusual--Perhaps One of a Kind?--Crimes

*Now here is one kind of crime we like: two construction workers got into a fight over the proper way to lay and water a building foundation, with one ending up charged with assault for punching the other and breaking his nose (SPS, 25/4/2006). We are so glad that some people take their work seriously, and want to see things done right!

*Here is another kind of crime story we like: a Syracuse man was sneaking around town with a shotgun hidden under his overcoat. Obviously, he was up to no good. At one point, he was also trying to make a cell phone call, probably also to no good, and dropped the phone. Bending over to pick it up, he discharged the shotgun into his foot (SPS, 1 Feb. 2004). A very satisfying instance of natural consequences.

*Here is a new crime we had never heard of before: "stealing lap dances," as one man did to the tune of $300. How does one steal lap dances? By ordering them up, and then not paying for them. Apparently, lap dances "sell" for about $20 a piece (SPS, 3 July 2006).

Computer-Based or -Facilitated Crime

*It is amazing to consider that within North America alone, on any given day in 2006, 59 million attacks are made on somebody's computer system. The number of people who must be sitting in front of their idiot box, spending untold hours trying to penetrate somebody else's computer system either as a lark, to spy, or to steal money, is obviously staggering (CR, 9/2006).

More than 3 million Americans are victims of "identity theft." Even more (3.4 million) had fraudulent accounts opened in their names in 2005. It costs the average victim 77 hours of work and
$834 to deal with such a theft, but it costs businesses $56.6 billion! (Time, 20/3/2006). Again, the number of people (apparently many in countries like Nigeria) who are bent on such crimes must be staggering.

*More than 2.8 million people in the US fell for a something-for-nothing scam, including the now long running “Nigerian scam” that offers people huge amounts if they will only fork over a smaller sum up-front. West Africans are leaders in scamming, and many victims are elderly or immigrants (AP, in SPS, 24/5/2006).

*Increasingly, domestic stalking (usually by a male upon a female) has included electronic forms, and physical stalking is accompanied by electronic stalking (CR, 9/2006).

Illegalities by Illegals

*This doesn’t make illegal immigrants to the US look good: one in 12 has a criminal record (for something other than illegal immigration) (SPS, 26/8/2006).

Here we see the problem with illegal immigration that the PC never mention: the first illegal act of sneaking across the border is commonly followed by others: lying, fake papers, stealing identities, and sometimes worse. And if one is willing to forge papers, or buy forged papers, one is probably capable of all sorts of other offenses, which probably explains why some illegal immigrant classes have a high crime rate. The majority of the 7 million illegally immigrated employees in the US use fake Social Security and other documents (SPS, 21/5/2006).

In the US federal prison system alone, 35,000 people, or 19% (!), are illegal immigrants, and 270,000 (!) spent time in local or state prisons in 2005. Almost all are not there because they are charged with illegal immigration, but because of criminal offenses. One rarely hears the truth about these staggering figures (Time, 3 July 2006).

We can only conclude, on the empirical facts alone, that illegal immigrants are less likeable people than legal ones.

*Gang rape. A California woman’s Social Security number was used by at least 81 people in 17 states, most of them apparently illegal immigrants. Some were buying faked copies of her card at flea markets! The government ended up giving her a new number, which is done extremely rarely. One immigrant who was caught using her number was let go scot-free--another example of victims having fewer rights than perpetrators (AP in SPS, 17/6/2006).

*In Germany, 80% (!) of habitual juvenile perpetrators of major offenses are foreigners; the biggest group are Arabs, followed by Turks. Unfortunately, a third of all these have already acquired German citizenship (2006 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel). So much for being grateful to have been given asylum, or economic opportunities. This is also not good news for diversity, multi-culti-ness, or how wonderful Islam is.

*Well, here is the answer to why we have so many aliens in the US illegally: many employers of illegal aliens are illegal aliens themselves (AP in SPS, 22/7/2006).

Or, perhaps this is the answer to why there are so many illegal immigrants in the US: some federal border agents are illegal immigrants themselves (SPS, 24/9/2006).

*People who want tighter immigration laws for the US may not know that such a law was actually passed in 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). It was hailed as finally the solution. It gave a “one-time only” amnesty to 3 million illegal aliens, promised better border security, enacted criminal penalties for employers who hired illegals, etc. But 2 things happened: the amnesty was an incentive for yet more illegal immigration, and the rest of the law was not really enforced. Now, the prospect of possibly yet another amnesty itself produced a new wave of illegal immigration (Claremont RB, Summer 2006).

*El Salvador is a very small Central American country, but it has furnished the US with one of the most vicious urban gangs of all, the Mara Salvatrucha, aka MS 13. Who let all these people from a small country into the US so that they can form such deadly gangs all over the country? And why are they not being deported back where they came from?
*Now get this: Mexico gets furious when efforts are made to contain the illegal migration of Mexicans to the US, but Mexico itself has one of the toughest laws against illegal migration to it (e.g., SPS, 7 May 2006).

Miscellaneous Crime News

*From our newspaper, we learned something new (SPS, 30/2/2005). A college freshman girl with a Chinese name, and her dormitory peers at Bryn Mawr college for women, joined in a “dorm project” for “stress relief” by filling condoms with flour (1st mistake), and then using them in ways we can only imagine (2nd mistake). Then the stupid student made the 3rd mistake by packing 3 of these “stress relievers” into her luggage when flying home to Los Angeles over the Christmas holidays. Airport security found them, confiscated them, and tested them for drugs. (Disgustingly, they undoubtedly had to touch them to do this.) Initial tests found cocaine and opium, and she was arrested. Follow-up tests found only flour, and she was released after 3 weeks. The girl thought this over for 2 years—and then made the 4th mistake of suing for much money for being “emotionally devastated” and “losing significant face,” rather than suing Bryn Mawr or her dormitory peers for the first and second mistakes they made. And of course, it was only the 4th mistake that got her worldwide “fame” in the news. Surely, few non-PC men, or Chinese ones, would want to marry her now, but perhaps some of her female dorm mates might.

All in all, this stress relief project seems to have generated much stress.

*As a sort of continuation of a theme in our previous issue’s coverage on schooling, it has come to light that at least two teachers in different states have faked having cancer in order to collect sick benefit payments, and cash donations. One of them was a special education teacher (SPS, 16 June & 2 December 2006). We suspect that teachers are not the only ones pulling this scam, and that its receiving news coverage will “inspire” others to imitate it.

*Paint-ball guns have become an increasing menace, with people shot with them being badly hurt, including losing eyes. Some youths like to go on paint-ball shooting sprees, driving around in their cars and shooting at anybody if they think they can get away with it. Some people get shot 10 or more times. Because paint-ball guns look like the real thing, police may shoot somebody with such a gun in their hand when they feel that they themselves are in danger—and one can hardly blame them for doing so.

A van drove down a street in Syracuse, and out of one of its windows someone fired a paintball pellet at a 17-year-old girl that hit her in the eye, as a result of which she may lose her vision. Strangely enough, her high school sports coach called it “a freak, random thing,” as if it were equivalent to being hit by lightning or struck by a meteor. Apparently this interpretation was meant to downplay the realities of violence on the streets (SPS, 11 May 2003).

*A remarkable thing happened in a Syracuse school in 11/2006. There was a fight in the school involving a lot of diversity girls. A policeman arrived at the school and tried to break up the fight. A 15-year-old girl hit him twice in the face (in the school!), whereupon a profanity escaped his lips. When the school system and the police “saw what she had done”—they suspended the police officer!

*In at least many US locales, it is illegal to have darkened tinted windows on cars because it endangers police, e.g., when they approach a car, they are not able to see inside it, and therefore may not be aware that the driver or passenger is ready to shoot the cop. And yet, there are many cars that have thusly darkened windows in states where it is illegal. In many cases, it is the criminal types that have such cars. Since the cars do not come with tinted windows, their owners must be obtaining them somewhere (e.g., at a custom auto body shop)—and why are the operators of such auto shops not charged, fined, etc., for providing illegal tinted windows? Presumably if they were, they might cease doing so, and such tinted windows would no longer be an available option.

*In Holyoke, Massachusetts, a Catholic Church and 17 adjacent buildings were destroyed by a fire on a Sunday afternoon. It turned out that the fire had been set by a pair of juveniles “who wanted to try their hand at church-burning” (NCR, 21/5/2006). One can be grateful that they did not want to “try their hand at nuclear bombing.”
*In 12/1998, we reported on a new crime all over Germany: cutting and stabbing horses grazing in the meadows. In 4/1999, we reported that the crime had spread to Arkansas. In the 6/2000 issue, we reported that according to an early 1900s book, mutilation of horses and cattle had been going on for years, plus attempts to derail trains, just like in recent years. Now we learn that already in 1998, parties unknown had shot to death 30 wild horses in Nevada, and some had been mutilated as well, and tortured after having been brought down (AP in SHJ, 30/12/1998). Even a reward of $20,000 seems to have failed to flush out the malefactors. Then for months, there was a string of apparently random sniper shootings and killings of people on the streets of Phoenix, Arizona, until 2 men were arrested in 8/2005. The suspects are believed to have also shot dogs and horses. Maybe the animal cutters and shooters are really serial killers to whom all big living things are prey. There is much mystery here.

*This is low-level “endpoint” address of urban decadence. Every time that there is a string of illegal activities (drug-dealing, fights, etc.) near a slum variety store, the city of Syracuse simply closes down the store. These stores are almost the only businesses that are left in the slums, except for bars, and they are almost all run by Arabs. The store owners are largely helpless; if slum scum gather near their store, and they call the police, the police will rarely come unless there has been a “cutting” or shooting. And of course, the impact on crime of closing a store is zero; the malefactors simply gather elsewhere. Thus, store-closing is simply ineffective flailing out of frustration. As we keep saying: whatever happens as a pattern in Syracuse is probably a nationwide pattern.

*We have noticed a persistent trend in the media. When Muslims are arrested on suspicion of plotting “terror” attacks (or in the very act), the media will postpone as long as possible revealing the Arabic or Islamic names of the suspects, or the fact that they are Muslims. Sometimes, 3 or more days will go by before the truth is revealed. Also, the suspects (or criminals) are often at first referred to by the nationality of the Western country in which they settled. E.g., they may be called “Britons” for days before their names and Islamic identity are mentioned. This is a PC game, intended to protect the image of “multiculturalism” and “diversity.”

*A good part of airport passenger screening is phony, meant to give the imperial powers the image of being in control. The single most effective measure would be to screen Muslims, most of them identifiable by their names and appearance. Instead, shoes now get x-rayed, even though Homeland Security admitted that x-rays cannot detect explosives in shoes. Even in other items, x-rays do not detect explosives, only at best metal triggering mechanisms. Thus, yet more ineffective--but very expensive--flailing.

**“Ill Will” Williams went to a nightclub in Buffalo, New York, and when someone stepped on his toe while he was dancing, he got his gun and shot him in the back of the head. The man’s nickname should have been a warning not to mess with him (source clipping from Marc Tumeinski).

Similarly, a man with the nickname of “Murder” was convicted of exactly that, as was another man with the nickname “D Murder.” The lawyer for “Murder” argued that his real nickname was actually “Murda,” which stood for “Most Unique Rap Dude Alive” (SPS, 21/5/2005).

...And Its Punishment

*A “restorative justice” program has been instituted in New Zealand, under which the offender has to make restoration or restitution of some kind (e.g., money, or the performance of certain acts) for an offense, rather than spend time in prison. A 4-year study on the program found that both offenders and crime victims were overwhelmingly satisfied with the process, including victims of violent offenses, though victims were less satisfied if the offender did not pay the full monetary amount of reparation or did not complete all the agreed-upon tasks; that recidivism was lower for people sentenced to make restoration; and that both victims and offenders believed their positions and feelings had been understood by the other party (The Common Good, No. 34, p. 9). Some form of restoration or restitution by the offender comes much closer to doing justice than simply confining people (at great cost to society), and typically in ways which make them more likely to commit crimes again in future.
In the preceding issue of TIPS on schools, we reported on what was called “the largest, most remarkable, most extraordinary theft” from a school system in American history: 6 people in a New York school district stole over $11 million over a period of years. One of the thieves, the son of an assistant superintendent, was sentenced to only 5 years’ probation and 100 hours of “community service,” but no jail time (SPS, 22/6/2006). He was not required to restore any of what he stole.

In contrast, one school superintendent in Georgia who embezzled more than a half-million dollars was sentenced to 8 years in prison (SPS, 11 May 2006); and a lowly school district mechanic who stole almost $300,000 has been sentenced to repay it all and spend from 2 to 6 years in prison (SPS, 7 Jan 2006).

In late 2005, we learned for the first time that there are such things as metal boxes which guards and police personnel put on top of wrist shackles, as an additional precaution. In other words, the already shackled hands are placed additionally inside a metal box.

In late 2005, it became public that in violation of state regulations, NY State agencies in charge of juvenile delinquents had been severely shackling delinquent teenagers even when there was no indication they would be violent, and even during entire day-long trips between facilities, and sometimes using the above-mentioned metal braces.

Here is our take on what happened with capital punishment in the US. For decades, starting in the 1960s, opponents of capital punishment tried to turn the public to their position with the argument that hanging and electrocution were very cruel. The media were full of horror stories about “botched executions,” the gruesome scenarios of hangings, electrocutions where witnesses could smell burning flesh, etc. All of this had one unanticipated effect on the public: it did not turn against capital punishment, but it did turn against hanging and electrocution which were the major methods in the US. So all over the country, the laws were changed to administer death through lethal injection, which was interpreted as being about as humane and painless as killing could be. Apparently, no one had anticipated that there would be people (e.g., former needle drug addicts) whom it was almost impossible to inject, and whose limbs had to be virtually butchered—sometimes for hours—to insert a needle, and that the needle-inserters were sometimes amateurs. A worst-case scenario was the execution of a murderer in Ohio in 5/06. While being carved up, the victim was screaming in pain and terror, exclaiming “It don’t work,” and was begging for a quick way to be killed. All of this underlines what happens when one is incoherent and dishonest in one’s arguments, i.e., opponents of capital punishment should have opposed it on moral grounds rather than based on whether it was botched or skilled, painful or painless, bloody or neat. We now have a form of execution that without any doubt whatever is “unusual,” “cruel,” as well as contrary to the clear constitutional provision against cruel and unusual punishment.

One response of pro-death penalty advocates to all this has been to say that it is just as well, that criminals do not deserve to die easily, and that even non-cruel and usual ways of executing people are not guaranteed by the Constitution to be painless.

It was disclosed in 7/2006 that in Missouri, a dyslexic surgeon who often mixes up numbers had presided over about 50 executions over 10 years, often “improvising” the dosages of the 3 lethal drugs. As he said, “it is not unusual for me to make mistakes.” Apparently, his surgical mistakes have so far escaped notice. All competent anesthesiologists approached by the state—298 of them—refused to take on the job (NY Times, 15/7/2006; source item from Joe Osburn). This also illustrates a potential unintended consequence of “affirmative action” or “non-discrimination” in education.


Hardly anybody today knows that the word “gala” derives from gallows, specifically from the ceremonious way capital punishment was carried out for several hundreds of years in Europe, complete with a meal for the dignitaries. This eventually morphed into the expression “a gala affair.”

Sometimes, both the executioners and the condemned were drunk, and on one occasion, a drunken executioner made determined attempts to hang a clergyman who had accompanied the condemned man to the scaffold.
In London in the 18th century, and perhaps even later, public hangings were often followed by a grim battle for the corpse between the victim’s loved ones and the hired hands of the anatomists who wanted the bodies for medical research.

In at least American executions in the 20th century, the process was so broken down and objectified that after the condemned was dead, one could almost say that “nobody had done it.” One prison warden actually put it that way: “We can honestly say that we didn’t do it.” The author characterizes all of that as a mutual dehumanization between the executioners and the victims.

On the other hand, the abolishment of the death penalty has brought with it certain other absurdities, such as in some states, criminals being sentenced to hundreds of thousands of years in prison (p. 157).

According to some studies, once a person has been sentenced to life imprisonment, they tend to become “good prisoners,” and actually a stabilizing influence on other prisoners.

*A very disturbing fact about Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, was not widely reported in the media, namely that while in prison, he threw feces at a Catholic priest who visited him. And yet before being put to death in 2001, he repented, made confession to that same priest, and cried tears of remorse (NCR, 27/8/2006).

*At the intersection between crime, punishment, and religion in society, is this story: In 1963, the British secretary of state for war, John Profumo, resigned in disgrace over an affair with a young call girl, Christine Keeler, who also worked as an agent for the Soviet KGB. Unlike so many politicians and other prominent people of our day who get caught doing something wrong, he did not dismiss or excuse his transgression, nor try to stay in the public eye. Instead, though he was a baron, he spent the next 40 years doing menial work at a charitable mission in the poor East End of London until his death in 2006 (Atlantic Monthly, 6/06; source item from Raymond Lemay)—a good example of repentance to us all.

Prison Issues

* At the start of 2006, 7 million adults in the US—about 3% of the population—were either imprisoned or on probation or parole. Of these, more than 4 million were on probation and more than 784,000 on parole. The total number of prison inmates rose 35% from 1995-2005, and the number of women sent to prison increased 2.6% over the previous year, versus an increase of less than 2% for males. Drug offenses accounted for the largest increase in federal prison inmates (SPS, 1 Dec. 2006).

* In most states, women prisoners who are having babies are shackled to their beds (often by their legs) during labor, delivery and recovery—an incredibly unnecessary and cruel practice (Thursday’s Obligation, Spring 2006).

* What in SRV is called the “congregation and assimilation potential” for sex offenders is probably as low as for any class of deviant people. One of the last things that most communities want in their midst is a large number of sex offenders, and in fact, communities are increasingly making it almost impossible through their ordinances for sex offenders who come out of prison or off probation to live anywhere. However, a New York State plan to establish a detentive facility resembling a minimum security prison specifically for 500 (!) sex offenders was “greeted with guarded optimism” by officials of a south-central county of the state. The plan was to use the facility for so-called “civil confinement” of sex predators who have completed their sentences but are deemed too dangerous to be released. The reason the local community thought this might be a good idea was because the facility would bring jobs for 1000 people (various clippings, Syracuse Post-Standard, 1&2 Jan. 2006). What remains to be seen is whether this kind of arrangement will withstand all sorts of court tests.

By the way, the sex offender prison is supposed to be run by the State Office of Mental Health, which is apt to be very confusing to the public, and image-degrading to other people with mental problems. Also, the term “civil confinement” seems to be on its way toward becoming a euphemism for “imprisonment by shrinkery.” One thing that supposedly makes civil confinement legal is if it is “for treatment,” rather than for punishment. Thus, as long as a pill gets popped, or a shrink talks to you a few minutes a month, you can be locked up!
*In Pittsburgh, PA, there is a residential facility to which people convicted of minor drug and drunk-driving charges are sent in lieu of imprisonment. One of the rules of the house is that residents may not gamble. However, after some years of operation, the residence began to operate games of chance for the public, including bingo and raffles, to augment its income. Critics correctly perceived this as an incoherency, as a temptation for the residents, and as a bad image, but the residence tried to get out of all of this by claiming that some games of chance, like bingo, were not really gambling (SPS, 24/2/04). After all, churches run bingo games.

*We keep returning to the strange phenomenon of large numbers of women strangers volunteering to marry men who are in prison (including wife-killers) who have acquired some kind of notoriety. For instance, the more notorious a murderer is, the more marriage proposals he gets. Criminologists have been speculating that these kinds of women are of the same kind that are attracted to celebrities in general, and who might initiate correspondences with rock stars, rap artists, etc., but then usually get no reply, or at best a computerized signature on a photograph, whereas when they announce that they would marry a notorious criminal in prison, they get all sorts of responses, including sometimes the very man. In California, prison weddings between inmates and such women are actually quite common. We hypothesize that one of the motives of at least a certain proportion of these women is the belief that they can reform the criminal, and that they may think that the criminal has been a victim because of bad childhood, etc., and can be reclaimed by a “good woman.” Of course, the worst thing that could happen for such marriages is for the prisoner to get out (SPS, 5 April 05).

### Homelessness

In addition to the victims of war, there are also many poor with no roof over their head.

*One psychological principle that is well-established, but hardly attended to in its implications, is that when people are confronted with a bad situation (such as a tale of oppression, e.g., of the ongoing genocide in Darfur), but where there is nothing they can do about it, then they tend to develop negative, or more negative, attitudes toward the victims in that bad situation. Presumably, there is some kind of blaming going on, e.g., blaming the people who make one feel bad by their being in a bad situation that one can do nothing about.

In many Western societies, and certainly in the US, homelessness is an example of such a problem: people have been confronted with it for decades now, and despite unimaginable sums of money having been thrown at it, there are still lots of homeless people--visible on the streets of cities of any size--and many of them the same ones who have been around for a long while. One new idea about how to address the problem seems to have much merit, though it may not be very widely accepted, namely, to identify the “chronically” homeless--i.e., the people with the most problems who cost citizens, states, and the service system the most money, who cycle endlessly through shelters and soup kitchens and other services, with alcohol, drug, and medical problems, and who never get better--and to spend money to solve their problems. They should be provided permanent housing, detoxification, perhaps visiting nurses and home aides, round the clock if need be, etc., etc. In both the short run and long run, it turns out that doing so costs less than spending money broadly on just providing meals and temporary shelter to a much larger number of homeless people. The reason is that the bulk of the homeless are only temporarily homeless, and the vast majority of them get out of homelessness and more-or-less back into the mainstream of society, and do so with relatively little help.

The people who have studied the problem, and proposed, designed, and helped to implement this type of approach, point out that homelessness--like reported police brutality, car-caused air pollution, and some other social problems--is not normally distributed as most people assume, but instead is concentrated in a small number of people. If this small number can be addressed, this is more effective than applying broad measures that entail all sorts of expenditures on parties that do not require these measures. This underlines what we teach about formalized responses to human service problems: they work on the “lowest common denominator” approach, often because this is purportedly fairer, but they entail tremendous costs, and can even worsen problem situations over the long run (source item: The New Yorker, 13 & 20/2/2006).

However, among the reasons that such an approach of problem address probably will not be widely accepted--as evidenced already in the various North American cities where it has been
implemented—is that it strikes people as “unfair” to spend mostly, or even only, on people with the worst problems, rather than to spend evenly on everyone; and that spending heavily on the “worst cases” means spending on people who often have little motivation to change, and who require constant monitoring and supervision for the rest of their lives in order to keep them out of trouble. But most programs—and most people’s mindsets—are to help people stand on their own two feet, and then remove the supports. But when this is done to people who can only stay out of trouble as long as they have intensive support, they immediately fall back into trouble.

Also, the approach seems to “reward” those who have shown the least effort to improve their own lot.

*Many men have been styled, or styled themselves, as “king of the hobos.” We reported before on the sadness of the passing of the “last king of the hobos,” but now, we report the even sadder news of the passing of what surely must be the “final king of the hobos,” Maurice Graham, 89, aka “Steam Train Maury.” He had been a co-founder of the National Hobo Foundation and of the Hobo Museum in Britt, Iowa (SPS, 22/11/2006).

*In Rochester, a foot clinic was opened in 2005, staffed by “volunteers from all walks of life” (RCW, Fall 2005; source item from Peter King).

*Also related to the section in this issue of TIPS on morality is the fact that the director of a shelter for the homeless in central Massachusetts stole almost a half-million dollars meant for renovations to the shelter, and instead used it to buy materials for his own second home at the beach, and to pay for no-show jobs for two friends (SPS, 14/1/2006). Perhaps he should be sentenced to being actually homeless for a year or two.

*A cartoon shows a well-dressed man handing what looks like a Starbucks cup to a poor beggar on the sidewalk, with the caption “Take my coffee, it’s worth five dollars.”

Hobo & Homeless Songs & Poetry

This is one of our favorite sections of TIPS, and we hope readers enjoy and learn from it as well.

Some Reflections on “Street People” & Their Favorite Hymns

Who are the “street people?” This question is not as easy to answer as it might seem. One reason is that some homeless people do not live on the street, or even roam the streets more-or-less purposelessly: they may live with friends, or live in shelters and actually go to work every day. On the other hand, there are people who live one step away from homelessness in single-room occupancy “hotels” or the lowest class of rental properties, who do spend a good part of their days (or even nights) roaming the streets, and partaking of the “street culture.”

Most members of the street culture have had a very sorry past. Many grew up without families, or in terribly disfunctional families; many are mentally disturbed and/or of low intelligence; alcohol and drug use are epidemic on the street, and many street people have lost mentality because of it; a large proportion have been in trouble with the law, at the very least because they “loiter,” eliminate in public places, and commit other petty offenses, but some have done serious crimes (often involving violence), and been not only in jail but in prison. Many have psychopathic tendencies, in at least being opportunistic and self-centered.

But here is the surprising part: as vice-ridden as so many street people are, not many would say that they do not believe that there is a God. Also, a lot of them have strong—even conservative—notions of right and wrong, even if they themselves fall short. Many have a sense of having been failures in life, of being weak, and of being outright sinful. A surprisingly large proportion feel that they have failed God by their weakness and bad behaviors.

This helps explain why certain Christian songs have deep appeal to—and are “popular” with street people, wherever Christian song is cultivated with and for street people, such as in street missions, soup kitchens, houses of hospitality, etc.
One of these is “Just a Closer Walk With Thee.”

Refrain: Just a closer walk with Thee, grant it Jesus, if you please.
Daily walking close with thee, let it be, Dear Lord, let it be.

1. I am weak but Thou art strong, Jesus keeps me from all wrong.
   I’ll be satisfied as long as I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

2. Through this world of toils and snares, if I falter, Lord, who cares;
   Who with me my burden shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.

3. When my feeble life is o’er, times for me won’t be no more.
   Guide me gently, safely o’er to thy kingdom’s shore, to thy shore.

One of the appeals of this song is the reality of street people “walking” a lot, often being driven to get up and keep walking by police. Another is the realization of “I am weak,” and of course, for the weak people of the streets, there are lots of “snares,” i.e., temptations. This is followed by the often true plaint that “no one cares” what happens to me except the Lord, and “none my burden share,” except He. Finally, street people are very conscious of the marginality of their health, and that when they die, no one may mourn them, and they may end up in a pauper’s grave, so the last big hope is to be “gently, safely guided to thy kingdom’s shore.”

Another of the favorite hymns is “Rock of Ages.”

1. Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.
   Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed
   Be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.

2. Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no languor know,
   These for sin could not atone. Thou must save, and Thou alone.
   In my hands no price I bring. Simply to Thy cross I cling.

3. While I draw this fleeting breath, when my eyes shall close in death,
   When I rise to worlds unknown, and behold Thee on Thy throne,
   Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.

The song expresses one’s sadness (“tears”) because of one’s sinfulness, and that there seems no way out of this street life and its sin except cleaving desperately and with nothing to offer but faith to The Rock--nothing else helps or works. The street person especially is aware of “bringing no price in my hands” other than faith, and an awareness that Christ suffered the cross to which “I cling.” Again, there is also the awareness that especially in the street life, one draws one’s breath “fleetingly,” and death is always close.

Another popular hymn is “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear.
   What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.
   O, what peace we often forfeit! O, what needless pain we bear!
   All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
   We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer.
   Can we find a friend so faithful? Who will all our sorrows share?
   Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
   Precious Saviour, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in Prayer.
   Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
   In his arms He’ll take and shield thee. Thou wilt find a solace there.
This song expresses the reality that life on the street is indeed one of “sins and grief,” being “weak and heavy laden,” and of “trials and temptations,” “cumbered with a load of care” and “trouble everywhere,” but somewhat similar to the previous song, this one also brings the consolation that God will not spurn a praying soul. Jesus “knows and loves our every weakness,” and when one is “forsaken” and “despised by friends” (as is often the case on the street, where even one’s buddies might beat or rob one), the image of being taken “in his arms” and “shielded” can be profoundly comforting.

Another favorite is “The Old Rugged Cross.”

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame.  
And I love that old cross, where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain: So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down.  
I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it someday for a crown.

2. O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
Has a wondrous attraction for me.  
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above  
To bear it to dark Calvary.

3. In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,  
A wondrous beauty I see.  
For ‘twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died  
To pardon and sanctify me.

4. To the old rugged cross, I will ever be true,  
Its shame and reproach gladly bear.  
Then He’ll call me some day, to my home far away,  
Where His glory forever I’ll share.

Of the song, one phrase all by itself speaks to the lowly people of the streets: “The emblem of suffering and shame”!! Even when there is culpability for one’s lowly existence on the street, it is still a life of suffering and shame, and through the song, the lowly person can identify with the person who first carried the cross, and then is raised upon it for all to look at, and for many to mock and revile.

But there is more: the allusion that Christ died for “lost sinners” like “us,” the disordered and chaotic lowly, “to pardon and sanctify” “us”; and that the cross is as “despised by the world” as “we” are, which gives it its “wondrous attraction for me.”

The songs above are commonly sung by the down-and-out with deep emotion--almost tearfulness. When one witnesses this, one cannot help but draw unfavorable comparisons to privileged Christians who do awful things out of strength rather than weakness, such as destroy the environment, make war, cheat in business and politics, try to control the world through science and technology, etc. But on the street, we have the stripped-down soul who can only “cling priceless” in desperate hope in, and to, a loving and forgiving God. One is reminded of the vision in one of Flannery O’Connor’s (1946) short stories, “Revelation,” in which the Southern lady sees the stinky scum of the earth (“white trash, black niggers, freaks, lunatics”) processing up into heaven on the last day while shouting “Hallelujah,” in contrast to the riotous procession of the condemned kings, bishops, knights, and other mighty into the mouth of hell in Hieronymus Bosch’s ca. 1500 painting, “The Hay Wain.”

There are probably additional hymns that have strong appeal to the down-and-out, perhaps even depending on locality, and where such hymns are sung.

One noteworthy thing is that the most beloved hymns “on the street” are Protestant in origin, probably in good part (a) because of the long involvement of groups such as the Salvation Army and the Rescue Mission with street people, and especially alcoholics, and (b) because Protestant hymns
emphasize an uncomplicated “salvation by faith.” This can be very comforting for someone who does have faith, but habitually engages in vices such as alcoholism and everything that goes with it.

All these songs can also be very appealing to other Christians, but it is a fact that songs (as also poems and stories) that speak to one’s situation in life—especially if one is in distress—usually have much more impact, and can stir one’s innermost being. And that is what songs such as the above often do to street people.

What is a bit surprising is that another song, by Charles Wesley (1707-1788), brother of John Wesley (1703-1791), has not achieved a similar popularity among the down-and-out. It goes like this:

Outcasts of men, to you I call, harlots, and publicans, and thieves!  
He spreads his arms to embrace you all: sinners alone his grace receive.

Of course, the melodies of a song, and/or its good match to the lyrics, may also have something to do with the popularity of a hymn. The first three songs above all have a somewhat mournful melody.

Other Relevant Songs

*More on “The Old Jawbone on the Almshouse Wall.” We had mentioned this song in the 4/2004 issue of TIPS, and followed up with further discoveries on it in the December 2005 issue. Here is yet more.

At one of the charity institutions that once crowded Blackwell’s Island in New York City’s East River, there was an asylum for “lunatics.” In the 1860s, it had a minstrel band, and apparently all minstrel bands had tambourines and “bones” among their instruments. So between performances, a “bone” hung on the wall in this almshouse asylum (Anonymous, 1866).

Furthermore, the “medicine shows” (at which patent medicines were promoted and sold) in the late 1800s and early 1900s sometimes presented short plays to attract an audience. One of these was a ghost play, “The Three O’Clock Train,” in which “The Old Jawbone on the Almshouse Wall” was sung by one of the characters “in a dismal wail” (The Medicine Show, 1976).

*Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! By George Root, this song is not about hobo tramping, but is by a hungry Union soldier in a Confederate prison awaiting liberation by his peers coming marching (“tramping”) in.

1. In the prison cell I sit, thinking, Mother dear, of you,  
   And our bright and happy home so far away;  
   And the tears they fill my eyes, ’spite of all that I can do,  
   Though I try to cheer my comrades and be gay.

   Chorus: Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The boys are marching.  
   Cheer up, comrades, they will come,  
   And beneath the starry flag, We shall breathe the air again,  
   Of the free-land in our own beloved home.

2. In the battle front we stood, when their fiercest charge was made,  
   And they swept us off, a hundred men or more;  
   But before we reached their lines, they were beaten back, dismayed,  
   And we heard the cry of vict’ry o’er and o’er.

3. So, within the prison cell, we are waiting for the day  
   That shall come to open wide the iron door;  
   And the hollow eye grows bright, and the poor heart almost gay,  
   As we think of seeing home and friends once more.
Poverty

As we keep pointing out, what is the most harmful to poor people today (at least in the developed world), and what is so intractable about the problem, is not lack of money, but the culture of poverty and all the bad things that go with it: loss of a work ethic, a mind-set of dependency on government benefits, a denigration of education, and a culture of sexual irresponsibility and family instability, especially fatherless children and husbandless women. The culture of outright criminality that seeps in when one of responsibility and family stability disappears adds to these problems.

*An essay in First Things (3/06) explicated certain things that we had observed and struggled with. Namely, it made a sharp distinction between the poor, and what it calls the underclass, in the US. The underclass are people who virtually as a class have dropped out of civilization, society, any kind of social contract, and largely also out of any kind of morality. They are people who, to begin with, do not want to stay in school, do not value anything that schools teach, will not hold a job, often do not want to hold a job, and are widely involved in all sorts of crime. Underclass men do not want to make commitments to women, but they want to have promiscuous sex, and will not provide for the babies that they have with multiple women. Unfortunately, a large proportion of this underclass consists of African-Americans. As of 2003, 68% of their children were born out-of-wedlock, and there are large African-American churches in our cities that have not had a wedding in years. African-American boys may hardly know any men who have accepted open-ended responsibility for their children, they themselves do not expect to become fathers to their children, nor does anybody else expect it.

America was warned of all of this by Daniel Moynihan in the 1960s when the African-American illegitimacy rate was a mere 24%, and when African-American unemployment was only 9%, versus 30% by 1999, which was an economic boom year. Moynihan earned mostly vituperation for his warning.

While crime has dropped, criminality itself has continued to rise, and the relationship between criminality and crime would become dramatically clear if all 1.6 million prisoners in the US were released.

In contrast to all of this, a person who is “merely” poor in the US can still be part of society, can still make it, and has opportunities to rise higher. The ordinary poor seldom need help to get out of poverty, and if they will only stay in the job market, they will seldom remain poor unless they do something self-destructive, whereas behaving self-destructively is the hallmark of the underclass.

One way in which society seems to have collaborated with the self-destructiveness of the underclass is by keeping their children captive in totally bankrupt public schools.

Most “black” leaders, with very few exceptions, have not faced up to these realities, and are engaging in a continuous process of pretense, misinterpretation, and deception, typically hiding behind the race card, and yet they are commonly acclaimed as “civil rights leaders.” When “black” public figures tell the truth, such as comedian Bill Cosby tried to do, they are branded as “Uncle Toms,” “Oreos,” or even sneeringly as “conservatives.”

*The underclass is poorly socialized, and does not play by the most elementary of rules that could make a community and society viable. The ghettos are already profoundly dysfunctional living areas, and are only kept from sliding into the darkest imaginable anarchy and non-functionality by the larger society that supplies utilities, keeps up streets, puts service centers into virtually every city block, investigates at least the outright killings, and tries to make drug-dealing a little more difficult. Without massive de facto supports of the larger society that is so widely despised and mocked by the ghetto, people in it would quickly die—in part by killing each other.

Any measures that are more of the same of what has been tried to remedy the problem will not work, but will merely swallow unimaginably large sums of money—throwing worse money after bad money. Indeed, such measures will probably even make things worse by permitting yet another underclass generation to learn its self-defeating patterns.

*A whole industry has developed that lends people money at high rates on the prospect that they will get an income tax refund. Many people who take out these kinds of expensive loans are already in the low income brackets, and their expected refund is (in the US) from the so-called “earned income tax credit,” which is not really a tax refund at all but a federal subsidy of low earners.
This undermines the entire intent of that tax provision, but once again underlines the many maladaptive and self-defeating practices of so many members of the culture of poverty.

*With all the many problems of the poor (and to some degree even the underclass), both those they create for themselves and those that get imposed on them, one thing that at least many of them still retain is a sense of community and communality. For instance, many still live with or very near to extended families (though often with no males present); at least the women tend to personally take care of their elderly and weak family members; at least the women often take in the children of relatives or friends, especially when the parents are jailed; etc. In fact, given their other social pathologies, it is often this practice of communality on a small scale that enables them to do as well as they do, and that keeps them from even worse decadence.

*In October 2005, C. Delores Tucker died. Who was she? The founder of the National Congress of Black Women who made headlines in the 1990s by strongly opposing the violent and misogynistic lyrics of popular “gangsta rap” music. She even took to task the NAACP—and deservedly so—for having honored one of the most infamous gangster “recording artists” (Time, 24/10/2005).

*As we keep pointing out, poverty in an affluent modernistic consumer culture is not what it used to be, what it is elsewhere, or what a lot of people think it is. For instance, on the days when welfare checks arrive in the mail at the beginning of the month, there is a dramatic surge of (expensive) pizza deliveries in US slums (Newsweek, 22/5/2006). Also, poverty ghettos have one of the highest concentrations of Cadillacs. Sometimes, one sees several Cadillacs in the same driveway.

In New York City, 12% of households with an income of over $75,000 claim they have difficulty meeting all their expenses and even buying food (SPS, 22/11/2005).

Today, 77% of the poorest one-tenth of Americans own microwave ovens; 56% of them own VCRs; and 21% own computers (Newsweek, 2 Oct. 2006).

*The US Department of Agriculture has banned the word “hunger,” and replaced it with “very low food security” (AP in SPS, 16/11/2006). There is some truth to the rationale--at least in an affluent country such as the US, where even the hungry hardly know what real hunger is--but still, the change has an amusing air of bureaucratese and imperial word play to it.

*An African-American newspaper man in Syracuse made what looks like a valid observation: a lot of money gets put into new housing or housing rehabilitation in ghetto areas, but no efforts are made to make the lives of the residents there pleasant.

*The US government started the Job Corps in the 1960s as part of its Great Society War on Poverty. The Job Corps was planned to take youths out of the slums, put them into camps to get them away from the ghetto culture, and train them. One reason it failed was that too many youths preferred the ghetto culture without jobs. WIN was launched to enroll 120,000 “welfare mothers” a year in a 6-month program to learn marketable job skills, but 70% dropped out because of instability or drug problems (already then!). JOBS subsidized businesses to hire and train the hard-core unemployed, but it too faltered because of some hard realities, including firms not hiring non-eager unemployed, but instead hiring eager foreign laborers for dead-end jobs.

*We update our previous coverage to the effect that the US federal welfare reform law of 1996 is one of the few major federal legislations in recent decades that has been a major success. “Black” poverty fell by about a third, after 30 years of not having changed before 1996. People on welfare dropped 67%, though we doubt that the employment of welfare workers dropped any at all. The teen birth rate dropped by a third. Poor people still get other benefits, such as food stamps and Medicaid health coverage. What made this a success was honesty in admitting the problem, and bipartisan action (Newsweek, 7 Aug. 2006). When will we ever see either again? The big reason overall poverty has not decreased is because of a vast inflow of poor (mostly illegal) immigrants, most of these “Hispanic” (which often means African-Americans from outside the US who speak Spanish.) This is all contrary to liberal predictions.
However, one way to make welfare figures look even better than they are is to classify bed rest as work, as some welfare agencies had done until the US government cracked down on it (Time, 10 July 2006).

*Here is good news. For the first time ever (as of 2005), the suburban poor outnumbered the urban poor. This is in part because the suburbs have become racially more “diverse.” However, the rates of poverty are still higher (by double) in the urban areas (AP in SPS, 7 Dec. 2006).

*In 1906, the president of the University of Florida was paid $2500 p.a. (Black, 2003).

The Gap, Growing Into a Gulf, Between Rich & Poor

The discrepancy between the wealthy and the rest of the world, and especially the poor, continues to grow, which means that the wealthy continue to enjoy what rightfully belongs to those who are going without. This does not mean that the wealthy are all thieves, but it does mean that they are keeping and using what, in justice, belongs to others. If this is not corrected, things will go very ill with the wealthy, sooner or later.

Some pieces of evidence of this growing gulf follow.

For the bottom 99% of US taxpayers, income rose by less than 2% in 2003, while for the top 1%, income grew by almost 10%. And the rate of increase of income is twice as fast for the top 20% of wage-earners as for all others.

In 1979, the poorest third of Americans altogether had 2.5 times the income of the top .1% of Americans—but by 2003, the top .1% had more income than the poorest third of the population, even though that poorest one-third has 330 times more people than the top .1%

*In 2005, the richest 5% of the US population had 22.2% of total income, whereas in 1980 it took the top 16.5% of the population to account for that much total income. In 1979, the richest 1% had 10 times the income of middle-income households; in 2005, they had 20 times the income (Newsweek, 2 Oct. 2006).

Since the year 2000, poverty has been on the rise in the US.

*There is one issue on which the eugenicists were absolutely right: the people near the socio-economic bottom do greatly outbreed those of the higher socio-economic strata. In fact, the discrepancy is even bigger today than it was in the eugenic era (ca. 1875-1925). While the genetic impact of this discrepancy may only be a fraction of what the eugenicists thought it was, the social impact is huge. Surely it must account at least in part for the recently-noted pulling apart of the higher and the lower socio-economic levels.

*As we keep saying, there is a huge difference between a country being poor, and its citizens being poor. Nigeria is probably one of the world’s naturally richer countries (because of its oil), but its citizens have gotten poorer and poorer. Between 1980-2005, its economy collapsed, and it now is one of the poorest countries in the world, below Bangladesh and Haiti (Newsweek, 29/5/2006)! It also fell into endless civil wars (who even remembers the desperate Ibo rebellion of a generation ago?) and religious war. 70% of Nigerians live on less than $1 a day. Yet one thing it has is a space satellite program! (Time, 29/5/2006 & 7/2006).

*The Congo is yet another country that is enormously wealthy, but its people are poor and miserable from a generation of inability to govern themselves.

*Colombia is yet another poor country that is rich in natural resources, and has many rich people. In addition to its own wealth, it has been getting huge sums of money, material and military aid from the US. What for? To keep the poor people poor and the rich rich (CW, 6/2006).

*A travel ad in Newsweek (26/12/2005) invited readers to sign up for a tour of one of the world’s most primitive areas, in Papua, New Guinea. Visit “a friendly colorful people whose ancient cultures have little changed...Indulge in the 5-star wilderness lodges, deluxe cruises....”
*It is amazing how people's memories have gotten junked. After World War II, the Philippines was one of the richest nations in Asia; now it is one of the poorest (Smithsonian, Dec. 2006, p. 89).

Transfer of Wealth From the Bottom to the Top in Society

The empires of the world will not permit those on the bottom to keep any wealth they are able to accumulate, but will always somehow manage to take it away from them and give it to those at the top. This is one of the contributors to the growing gulf between rich and poor discussed earlier.

*One of the biggest thefts of wealth from the bottom and middle strata of society by those at the top has been via promised pension schemes that have either gone bust or been outright stolen. Vast numbers of people who had counted on a pension for their retirement are, and will continue to be, unable to retire because they will not be able to afford not to work. (Of itself, that is not necessarily a bad thing.) Public pension funds in many locales have been so badly run that taxpayers specifically will end up paying for them far into the future. Pension scandals have occurred in numerous companies and locales in the US, Canada, Italy, and France (numerous sources, 2003, 04, 05, & 06). The big lesson is that most so-called guaranteed pensions are not guaranteed at all.

One big way in which a lot of this could have been avoided would have been to pass laws that when a firm goes bankrupt, its pension fund has first claim on the remaining assets, but instead in the US, Congress took away all or some of the pensions of what seems to be now the majority of the population.

Pension assets can also be stolen without the future pensioners being aware of it. For instance, foolish investments or churning of a fund can lose some of its assets, so that pensioners still get a pension, but it will not be as big, and they will never know the difference.

Some firms stiff their employees twice. For instance, manufacturing firms a few decades ago told their employees that the only way the firms could continue to compete was by containing wage hikes, but that they would make up for it by increasing pension contributions. As it turned out, the employees received neither the wage hikes nor some or all of their pensions.

It can also be almost impossible to determine to what extent a pension fund is actually funded. For instance, the US Airways pilots' pension plan was said to be 94% funded, but when the firm declared bankruptcy, it turned out to be only 35% funded (Newsweek, 13/9/04).

*One of the saddest aspects of this transfer--often, outright theft--is that there seems to be little shame by those who engage in it. For instance, the median pay for chief executive officers tripled from 1993-2006, while the median pay for all workers increased by only 33% (Newsweek, 5/5/2003). And not only retiring executives, but even ones who get fired, leave with multiple tens of millions of dollars in compensation--even as these same executives may have driven their firms into the ground (e.g., Newsweek, 7/25/2005).

*A very common corporate welfare trick is for commercial firms to pressure local governments for all sorts of tax breaks, or even outright incentive payments, to stay in the locale--and then to fold shop anyway and set up business elsewhere. De facto, this is a transfer of taxpayer money to business without any taxpayer benefit.

*Increasingly, the concept of "eminent domain"--that the state could take private property for public use, supposedly in exchange for fair compensation for that property--has been perverted so that private property is now being seized by the state to be used by, or given to, yet other private interests who thereby benefit. Again, these private interests that have persuaded the state to bully the little guy then turn out to renege on their promises, but by then, the offense against the original private owners is already long done, and the public is left once again to pay for it (e.g., Newsweek, 24/5/2006).

Philanthropy

*The US was founded on a basis of volunteerism by its citizens, and the way it was structured as a nation and a polity would not have been possible without an assumption that there would be vigorous voluntary citizen involvement in civic and social affairs. Exactly the opposite kind of
assumptions underlay a number of Communist and socialist welfare states, and to many members of such welfare states in Europe, American citizen volunteerism is an alien concept and practice. The State and its paid functionaries are supposed to do everything that is worth doing. One of several reasons why democracy as we have known it in the US may no longer be viable in the future is that we are gradually running out of, or driving out, such volunteerism.

*At this time of year, there is usually much publication about who gives, to what, how much, etc. One recent study (Brooks, 2006) has more credibility than most, because its author published his results even though they went against his own previously-held beliefs; namely, he found that more conservative people actually gave more than the liberals who he thought were more concerned with human welfare. But liberals have always advocated that government, rather than they themselves, and ordinary people, should take care of people’s problems.

*Social scientists have discovered a supposedly new wave of “engaged philanthropists” who get directly involved in charitable work rather than just giving money. At least one of the motives for such engagement is actually seeing what one’s donation accomplishes (e.g., Newsweek, 23/12/2003). And, as we have long taught, personal engagement with the lowly can be life-changing, which writing a check, no matter how large, hardly ever is.

*The founder of American psychology, William James, once said that “the whole modern scientific organization of charity is a consequence of the failure of simply giving alms” (Goldin, 1994, p. 157). While this is not entirely true, there is more truth to it than most people realize.

*An “exemplary example” of civic virtue and volunteerism. During World War II, there were vast transports of troops via train back and forth across the US. Smack-dab in the middle of the country and the Great Plains was the town of North Platte, Nebraska, and every Union-Pacific train heading east or west stopped there. The town mounted one of the largest voluntary efforts ever, putting together a volunteer “canteen” that served food and beverages, all free of charge, to over 6 million soldiers passing through on trains over a period of 4½ years. The town itself only had a population of 13,000 people, but eventually over 55,000 volunteers were involved, from 125 different surrounding communities in 3 states, sometimes hundreds of miles away. Up to 23 trains, and between 3,000 and 5,000 military personnel, stopped at the canteen between 5 am and midnight each day, and were invariably met during a brief (about 10-minute) stop with coffee, farm-fresh milk, home-baked cakes, cookies, donuts, pies, and home-made candies and sandwiches. It must be remembered that this was shortly after the Great Depression and during the war, when eggs, sugar, coffee, gasoline, and tires were all rationed, so people had to sacrifice much of these scarce things to run this project. They never once ran out of food. As many as 20 cakes a day were baked and served.

After the surrender of Japan, between 10,000 and 12,000 returning soldiers each day continued to be served until April 1, 1946.

No worker was ever paid, and no one was ever charged; no state or federal government funds were involved, and the operation was run totally on voluntary donations, which were usually small, such as one dollar at a time. It cost only $137,000, which would be around $1.3 million today.

The whole project started “by mistake”: it had been reported that on December 17, 1941, Company D of the Nebraska National Guard would be on the train coming through, so a big reception of 500 people waited at the station to see their relatives, even if only briefly, when they stopped. However, it turned out that the train carried soldiers from Kansas instead, but one of the local waiting women, Rae Wilson, decided on the spur of the moment to give her homemade goodies to them, and then so did the rest of the waiting people. The next day, Miss Wilson wrote to the local newspaper suggesting a canteen, and by Christmas Day 1941, they had baskets of fruit and home-made candy ready to give to any troop train that came through North Platte. The president of the Union-Pacific railroad was a native of North Platte, so he donated a room at the rail station to be used free of charge for the purpose. Eventually, a volunteer board formed, composed entirely of local women.

All the military personnel on the trains, both men and women, including of various racial identities, were treated with unfailing courtesy, kindness and enthusiasm, and waved off on departure until they were out-of-sight as if they were from the town itself. For a huge number of the military personnel, these few minutes of hospitality became an unforgettable experience.
At the end, the volunteer board gave the leftover money to the Veterans’ Administration to use for the benefit of soldiers; the VA bought a stencil machine with it.

Today, such an effort would not even be permitted, because of innumerable formalizations (e.g., home-made foods could not be served because of supposed “health risks,” nor could they be served by ordinary people who were not wearing hair nets, plastic gloves, uniform aprons, etc.).

(Source: PBS 1/06 documentary “The Canteen Spirit.”)

Tragically, the Union-Pacific tore down the railway station in 1973.

*Churches across the US are terminating the old custom of holding potluck suppers either because of bureaucratic state health regulations or the fear of legal liability. Similarly, a member of a Catholic lay group driving her own car, on her way to deliver a religious object to an invalid, ran a red light, caused an accident, and her archdiocese was sued and ordered to pay $17 million to the victim (FT, 12/2005). This could sour churches on any kind of involvement in anything by members of the church or its auxiliary volunteer organizations, plus make a church member think twice about doing anything as part of one’s church membership other than attending church services.

Thus, once again, the spirit of volunteerism is replaced by distrust and defensiveness. The lawyers are killing us!

*Many long-time charitable organizations are dying because insufficient, or no, new members are signing up. Examples are the Odd Fellows, the Rotary, and the Kiwanis.

*US philanthropy hit the jackpot in late 2005-early 2006, when oodles of people in government gave away large sums of money to charities—money they had gotten unethically from lobbyist Jack Abramoff. One Republican Senator gave away $150,000! (Time, 16/1/2006).

*Interestingly, financial mismanagement seems to have been much less of a problem in smaller non-profit organizations than in the bigger ones with very large budgets. That sector particularly has increasingly become more akin to for-profit business, and has even begun to hire more personnel from the business world, or graduates of the academic non-governmental organization programs at the larger elite universities, which are usually associated with business and management schools. These organizations also are beginning to think of their domain of work as “markets.” The same or other such organizations are beginning to take the world of media, entertainment and celebrities as their model, which courts disaster because of all the decadences that are associated with celebrity figures (Newsweek, 31/10/2005).

*The Cardiovascular Research Foundation, founded in 1990, quickly became one of the world’s largest private research foundations in medicine. In 2005, it was discovered that its executive director had embezzled $237,000 from it, and of this, he had paid $11,000 to a dominatrix, Lady Sage, for periodic “beat me” sessions, at $250 an hour, or $1500 for an 8-hour session, plus travel expenses (AP, in SPS, 2 Dec. 2005). We would gladly have beaten him for less, or even for free.

*There are 8 adventure camps--5 in the US--for “critically ill” children sponsored by film actor Paul Newman with profits from his food lines. They accommodate 1200 children each year. They are called “Hole-in-the-Wall Camps” after the bandit hang-out in one of his movies (AP in SPS, 4 Aug. 2006).

Social Advocacies

Those who are lowly and reduced in society definitely do need advocacy on their behalf, to protect them against harm and to extricate them from bad situations. Unfortunately, as we have covered in earlier issues of TIPS, advocacy today is often conceived as consisting only of (a) advocacy by one party for itself (so-called “self-advocacy”), which really means one party demanding something for itself (not advocating), rather than one party seeking what is best for another; (b) the claim that whatever a party desires is its “right,” and attempts to make everything into a right; and (c) the insistence that every party should be “self-determining” and “empowered,” largely regardless whether this is realistic or would be good for the party or harmful to others.
Self-Determination

*To our amusement, we learned that the Français word for self-determination is autodétermination.

Also, instead of saying that a person is mentally retarded or has mental retardation, it is becoming chic to say that the person “presents” with déficience intellectuelle (2006 AAMR Congress catalogue). The word déficience will probably soon be politically incorrect.

*Many kinds of human services (and schools) have long helped clients (pupils) with homemaking skills, including budgeting. Nowadays, when budgeting is taught it may be called “self-determination budgeting.”

*Here is yet another self-determination horror story. A mentally retarded man in Alaska, living in a walk-in supervision apartment in an assisted-living apartment building, had to be put on oxygen because of a health problem. While on oxygen, he decided to smoke--and blew up the 20-unit building (Anchorage Daily News, 24/12/2003).

*One of the major teaching traditions about love in philosophy is that true love wants for the loved person—or the neighbor generally—that which is truly good for him or her. One corollary of this teaching is that giving people what they want, or say they want, is very unloving—maybe even mean, cruel and hateful—if what they want is not good for them.

*Here is one of the most underhanded but also funny compliments the TIPS editor ever received. In 2002, the TIPS editor published a critique of the empowerment, self-determination, choice and self-advocacy constructs (see reference below). Michael Wehmeyer, a major proponent of a nebulous construct of self-determination, wrote an article on “Self-determination and Individuals With Severe Disabilities: Re-examining Meanings and Misinterpretations” (see reference below). In it, he said, “One of the reasons I chose not to write a rebuttal to Dr. Wolfensberger’s essay when it appeared in the summer of 2002 was the simple fact that I agree with most of the points he raises.”

*One despicable element of the decadent self-determination craze is that when “futures” and aspirations are discussed with, or on behalf of, handicapped people, no one is allowed to comment on the fact that certain aspirations or roles desired by a handicapped person may not be very adaptive ones. An example of what this would mean is that if a handicapped girl or woman said that she wanted to become a prostitute, she could not be told that this is immoral, is likely to make her sick and dead, is not good for society, is apt to get her beaten up a lot, and things like that, but one must talk around these issues in a presumably nonjudgmental fashion.

*One most peculiar irrationality on the human service scene is that many human service workers (and others) are materialists who are committed by their ideology of materialism to believe in determinism. Yet these self-same people are in the forefront of those who preach self-determination as the dominant religion of human services and advocacy. How can one be self-determining if one is determined? Don’t expect an answer!

*The political correctness objections to having guardianship over mentally incompetent people were once again put into sharp focus when a severely retarded 22-year-old woman in Florida who had been abandoned at age 3, who was very tiny, and was residing in a state-supervised residential facility, was raped there by an unknown party and got pregnant. No guardian had been appointed for her when she turned 18, and when efforts were made to appoint a guardian for her and her unborn baby after the crime had been discovered, all hell broke loose on the liberal side, including by abortion advocates who do not want any unborn humans to be recognized as such, which having a guardian would do—all this even though there was no debate about the fact that she was unable to make decisions for herself, and could not even speak (NCR, 1 June 2003).


“Choice”

*Now here is a real dilemma for politically correct inclusion fanatics. There are mentally retarded pupils in segregated schools who actually like it there, and would rather be there than anywhere else, for the very simple reason that there, they have lots of friends. Are PC inclusion fanatics willing to grant them their “choice” and “self-determination?”

*Some people have said that the so-called “paradox of choice,” or what some people also call “over-choice,” is paralyzing, overloading, crazy-making, makes one less satisfied with what one has or gets, seems to dominate one’s life, and no longer liberates but tyrannizes (B&C, 11/05).

*78 Flavors by Daniel Waters:

“Next in line, we get the blues from
Having too much choice to choose from
Later on, will we atone

Rellying on Law to Solve Everything

*A police dog in Ohio started barking at a passerby, who promptly barked back, which is the kind of thing the TIPS editor might do as well. (We also meow at cats.) The police however were not amused and pressed charges, but a judge ruled that barking was protected as free speech. (We hope meowing is too.) Rather than laughing and quitting, parasitic lawyers threatened to carry it further up the ladder of appeal, even though one appeal court had already confirmed the ruling (SPS, 7 April 2003).

*Senator Dianne Feinstein (of California) said not long ago that if the US Constitution were followed, then women would not have equal protection, interracial marriages would be forbidden, schools would be segregated, etc. Instead of relying on constitutional amendments democratically passed, people like her want the 9 unelected justices of the Supreme Court to constantly rewrite the Constitution, sometimes to say the very opposite of what is in the original (and amended) version. As one writer put it, the left openly disdains and disclaims the Constitution when it frustrates even the most transient of their preferences.

*Isn’t it amazing that it takes a law (passed in the US in 5/2006) to assert that no one has a blanket right to have federal documents or federal services rendered in any language other than the one of the host country—in this case, English? If the PC had not pushed on this issue so shamelessly, it would never have come to this.

*When one goes to a US health service these days, the very first procedures one is run through are those that are intended to reduce the likelihood that one will be able to successfully sue the health care providers. Only after all that is out of the way will one’s health be attended to, even if one is in an emergency situation. This reflects a certain reality, symbolizes it, and sends the messages that “we start off on the assumption of mutual adversariality. Every patient is a potential litigant who can put us out of business.”

*When the TIPS editor came to the US in 1950, he labored around some very earthy low-class Southern men in Memphis, and learned many things he had not known, or even heard before. One of these was that certain women (even though they were not prostitutes) were described by these men as “high-priced pussy.” He had to have this explained to him. (One of the “p-words” above is now considered very derogatory and offensive by many people, but that is the kind of idiom that was used at least by a certain class at least in those days.) In 2004, the TIPS editor read (SPS, 25/1/2004) that a woman sued the mayor of Newburgh, NY, for having “groped” her once in his tailor shop, presumably while fitting her with a garment, and 4 years later she was awarded $750,000. This brought back to the TIPS editor memories of his Memphis education, except this episode can be called, without being politically incorrect, high-priced groping indeed!

It seems to us that an apology was all that a casual grope or pinch on the butt warrants, but not close to a million dollars. The TIPS editor is willing to be more than casually groped, or to have his
butt pinched by eager women of any age for the cost of $750,000--or maybe even half-price if paid immediately instead of 4 years later--to be donated to the Citizen Advocacy Foundation of America. The money may have a slight image taint, but at least it carries no conflicts of interest.

More ADA-Related Horror Stories

We have pointed out before that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been vastly hyped, and its problems have rarely been acknowledged. Here is an extremely delicious ADA horror story. A 35-year-old woman who had lodged 5 different claims for damages and lawsuits for noncompliance with ADA--claiming among other things that she had 3 broken arms in 8 weeks because a bus had dropped her off in her wheelchair in a “non-ADA compliant roadway or curb”--was taken by Las Vegas police to a hospital for treatment. When she realized that the tests would disclose that she was in perfect health, she leapt from her wheelchair and ran away. Shortly before, a California city had paid her $6700 for one of her phony claims (SPS, 17/5/06).

An illegal “alien” in New York City has been suing everyone in sight for decades, and winning just enough cases to keep him in money. One time, he lived in a lean-to under a highway, tapping electricity from a near-by traffic light. When the shack was destroyed by fire, he sued an insurance company for $20,000 on the grounds (without any proof) that he had intended to apply for insurance on it--and won. (On that ground, we can all be rich as long as there are still insurance companies and US courts around.) He also sued the power company furnishing electricity to the traffic light. He also applied to work at Burger King, but was turned down because of very poor hygiene. He sued Burger King, and the court ruled that it discriminated against him. The suing goes on and on, one incredible decision in his favor after another. So he issued a statement expressing his gratitude to “this country for the many opportunities it has given me. Now I can say, ‘only in America’” (Center for the Study of Popular Culture, mid-2006).

A deaf couple living in an apartment building in Buffalo, NY, were overrun by rats in their apartment, but were oblivious to them because they could not hear them rustling around. The landlord apparently felt compassion for the couple and refused to do anything about it, despite the protest of all the other tenants, with the attitude that if deaf people have rats, they are entitled to them, and other tenants in the building would be violating their rights if he bore down on the couple. It took the tenants recruiting a building inspector, a town board member, and the media to get the couple relocated so that the rats could be gotten rid of (SPS, 26/7/2006).

This is also delicious: a “disability rights” group got some of its own medicine. The former director of human resources and training at the Rochester (NY) Center for Disability Rights sued his former agency for the usual zillions of dollars for having allegedly “violated his rights” by not accommodating to his “disability,” a stroke (SPS, 3 Aug. 2006).

ADA access.

“A giddy young trollop at Yale
Had verses tattooed on her tail;
And below her behind,
For the sake of the blind
A duplicate version in Braille” (from The World’s Best Limericks).

Which brings us to South Korea, where dozens of blind people have been protesting daily because a court ruled that massage licenses must also be made available to sighted people who want them, not only the blind who have historically held this role. They chanted about restoring their “right to massage” (meaning to give massages) (SPS, 10 June 2006).

Miscellaneous

Here is a good example of the problematic nature of thought crimes. Burning a cross is legal if it is intended as a symbolic expression, but illegal if it is intended as a threat. So ruled the US Supreme Court its very self (SPS, 8 April 2003). But who, other than The Shadow, knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?
*This is a delicious "civil rights" scandal. Caucasian do-gooders have been going to Africa and practically forcing some natives to come to the US, so that the do-gooders could demonstrate how open, all-inclusive, diverse and multi-cultural they are. Syracuse do-gooders made sure their African captives were Islamic, in order to increase diversity in Syracuse. Then the do-gooders stuffed large numbers of the new arrivals where? Into a segregated low-income racial ghetto housing project, together with all the dysfunctional and criminal people there! The "black" project children did not like the new children, perhaps because they were not degenerate yet, and began to bully and assault them, called them "Africans," and threw bleach at them. It was also startling to learn that there were 32 African children on a single school bus! In the project, the Africans were so harassed that they dared not sit outside on sunny days (SPS, 4 March 2006). And, when one African man wanted to go back home again, none of the do-gooders would help him. Their motto might have been, "We only do one-way."

*We can just see the 2050 headline: "Holocaust victims seek justice." Even now, 60 years after World War II, Nazi victims are still receiving compensations in many sorts of ways, despite repeated huge earlier settlements. Some of these compensations are going to heirs of Nazi victims, since most victims are dead by now. Some of these heirs are not actually needy--in fact, they may be wealthy. Perhaps much of this money would be better spent helping poor Jews to settle in Israel, if they want to.

*An 18-year-old girl gratefully accepted her employer's gifts of a car, jewelry and money, and willingly had sex with him--and then a few years later, turned around, claimed that the gifts were sexual harassment, and sued (SPS, 26/7/2006). This takes chutzpah.

*This is really funny: the leader of one of Syracuse's violent street gangs that had been shooting at and killing people left and right for years organized a march to "stop police brutality," and a hundred people and his mother actually marched, though probably a good number were gang members (SPS, 7 Sept. 2003).

*We were told the story of a homeowner who answered the doorbell and found a retarded person standing there trying to sell something. When the homeowner said that she was not interested, the retarded person did something he must have learned in self-advocacy assertiveness empowerment training: he put his foot in the door so it could not be closed and shouted, "I talk and you listen." This naturally eroded a great deal of good will toward the person, what the person was trying to sell, assertiveness training for retarded people, and other people like that person.

*The Netherlands is no longer able to protect those of its citizens--or even politicians--who criticize Islam or Islamic governments or cultures, from its own Islamic immigrant population. This means that politicians are too afraid to speak up on these, and immigrant, issues. This is what things come to with an indiscriminate open-door policy.

*Whether it is wise for scores or hundreds of crippled people--the majority in wheelchairs of many different kinds--to hold a disruptive public demonstration, and whether this is a way of getting good results, or the best way to get good results, is one issue; but then having police officers manhandle and handcuff or tether these people (some spastic or clonic), and cart them off to jail, is unconscionable (e.g., see 1/2005 Mouth for such pictures). We hope that many officers would refuse to obey such orders. But that is how "non-discrimination" can come home to roost.

*In an all-girl Catholic school in California, the mother of a 15-year-old sophomore exposed the school's drama teacher as a volunteer at an abortion clinic. On the bishop's directive, the school reluctantly fired the teacher, and shortly after, the vengeful nuns expelled the 15-year-old sophomore without any forewarning, meeting, or discussion (NCR, 20/11/05). This is comparable to the typical fate of whistleblowers, except that in this instance, the whistleblower was punished by punishing the whistleblower's child.

*In the US government, there are now 57 inspector generals, with sizable staff. These are supposed to be relatively independent investigative arms of different governmental departments, and
prevent or uncover all sorts of malfeasance. However, the fact is that too often, the head appointees have profound conflicts of interest or too many political debts to pay (Time, 3 Oct. 2005).

*Thomas, W. I., & Thomas, D. S. (1928). The child in America: Behavior problems and programs. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. This research study was based in part on visits to cities and institutions in both the US and Canada where important or typical programs were thought to be in operation.

Parts of the book are of interest to the history of human services. For instance, who would have thought that in the mid-1920s, there were already Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Big Brother and Big Sister associations, and that Big Sister relationships had sometimes been disastrous, and worse than none at all.

*Hardman, M. L., & Clark, C. (2006). Promoting friendship through Best Buddies: A national survey of college program participants. Mental Retardation, 44(1), 56-63. This article claims that “Best Buddies is the only organization within the United States and around the world focused exclusively on enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through one-to-one friendships with people who do not have disabilities” (p. 62). Obviously, the authors had never heard of Citizen Advocacy, or certain other similar programs.

*Hussein, S., Rapaport, J., Manthorpe, J., Moriarty, J., & Collins, J. (2006). Paying the piper and calling the tune?: Commissioners’ evaluation of advocacy services for people with learning disabilities. Journal of Intellectual Disabilities, 10(1), 75-91. This article is about the evaluation of advocacy services for mentally retarded people in the United Kingdom by means of questionnaires that provided information on 97 advocacy schemes, of which 50% were interpreted to be “self-advocacy” schemes, and 30% Citizen Advocacy schemes. Unfortunately, the article is a horrible example of how not to evaluate advocacy schemes, and might better have been interpreted as no more than a mail survey of advocacy schemes, rather than as an “evaluation” of them. For example, the survey asked the local authorities that sponsored (funded) supposed advocacy schemes how they monitored or evaluated the effectiveness of these schemes, and the answers were all over the place, nor would one be able to conclude that the answers that were given were the real ones.

There are no references to any publications outside the UK concerned with the evaluation of advocacy schemes generally, and Citizen Advocacy specifically, though there has been a substantial such literature.

**Human Nature**

The ancient Romans had a saying, “You may throw nature out with a pitchfork, but she will keep coming back” (Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret). This is another way of saying that any schema based on false assumptions about human nature is bound to fail.

*This is one of the most deliciously PC stories we ever ran across. In the 1960s and 1970s, anthropologists desperately looked for cultures that were “good” and not violent. This led to some hilariously phony “research” studies and writings, e.g., about the peaceful Bushmen, Tasaday, pueblo dwellers, etc., etc.—this despite earlier evidence of violence, and perhaps even cannibalism, among “ancestral pueblo dwellers.” At around 1980, a symposium on violence and cannibalism was canceled at the last minute because of ideological objections (“humans—especially Pueblo Indians—are by nature good, and don’t eat each other”). No one can recall anything like that to have ever happened before. Running short of mild people, apes then began to be interpreted as peaceful, especially chimpanzees—all phony as well (American Scientist, 5/2006, p. 260).

*A fact very embarrassing to the materialists and evolutionists is that not only is the huge difference between chimpanzees and humans accounted for by a mere 2% of genetic material, but also that the brains of the two species differ hardly at all in their genetic underpinnings. It is extremely unlikely that this is something that would have been predicted by the Darwinists before it became known. However, the neurons of rats, frogs and sea slugs also all look the same under the microscope as neurons from humans and chimpanzees.

It is also rather inconsistent to claim, as the scientists do, that the difference in intelligence between humans and chimpanzees is accounted for by the sheer number of brain cells, in that the
chimpanzees have only about one-third as many as humans (Discover, May 2006)—when at the same time, we are being told over-and-over that there is no correlation between intelligence and brain size in humans. One of the major works of biologist Stephen Gould, The Mismeasure of Man (1981), was in essence an attack on the thesis that brain size correlates positively with intelligence. Women generally have smaller brains than men, not to mention other people with smaller brains short of microcephaly, so what does this say about brain size and intelligence?

*Pinker, S. (2002). The blank slate: The modern denial of human nature. New York: Viking Press. This book makes a very compelling point that the recent craze of attributing almost any human aberration or abnormality to genetics is entirely ideologically based, and that when it invokes research, in part it is de facto junk science. The human brain is believed to have not evolved in over 100,000 years, and yet permits an incredible range of behaviors to be learned for which the evolving brain had not been specifically selected by the evolutionary process. In turn, all of this means that invoking inheritance violates Occam’s razor in being a vastly less economical and elegant explanation for all sorts of behaviors.

The book also underlines the predominant role played by imitation in the learning of young children.

*A needed dash of cold water. Contrary to the hype we get, the science on the sequencing of the human genome is riddled with errors. At a minimum, between 60 and 70% of published studies of such sequences contain significant errors, anything from a single letter being wrong (each letter represents a gene), to entire columns of letters being transposed (Discover, 1/2004).

*As part of the post-World War II rise of geneticism, a scientific consensus is emerging that human (un)happiness is genetic, and not readily raised by better life circumstances (Scientific American, 6/2006). Tell that to a lonely widow or widower!

*Kilborne, B. (2002). Disappearing persons: Shame and appearance. Albany, NY: University of New York Press. According to this author, shaming experiences are integral to the development of a personal identity, one component of which is a sense of who we should be. When we live up to that ideal, we feel competent, but when we are shamed for having fallen short, we feel incompetent. Once a prominent part of society, shame has now lost its authority, as a result of both cultural changes and erroneous science (e.g., the claim that Western peoples are inner-directed and guilt-prone whereas shame involves being outer-directed). On the one hand, shame can lead to a sense of isolation, but on the other, it can also enable us to try to become who we want to be.

*At least a few thinkers (e.g., FT, 3/2006) have come to the conclusion that the way people immerse themselves in the media and the Internet is undermining their sense of reality. Among other things, this way of life provides ethereal substitutes for the human body—one’s own and other people’s. One no longer touches a person’s body, but cyberspace.

*Some thinkers (e.g., Albert Borgman) have pointed out that in a highly technologized society, more and more things become less and less transparent; in other words, they become opaque. For instance, what is this: water, hydrogenated coconut and palm kernel oils, corn syrup, sugar, sodium caseinate, dextrose, polysorbate 60, natural and artificial flavors, sorbitan monostearate, xanthan gum, guar gum, and artificial color? Would you have guessed that it is Cool Whip, a “nondairy whipped topping”? Relatedly, technological devices can only be purchased, but hardly ever “tended,” the way the hearth fire once was.

Borgman also points out that technology subordinates nearly all cultural practices to its controlling assumptions. But paradigms are the most difficult to see when one is dominated by them, and much of the technological paradigm is invisible to most people. Further, the more advanced a technological device is these days, the more invisible is the commodity it supplies, be it heat from a furnace, music from a music box, mobility from an airplane, food from freezers, etc. It seems to people that these commodities “disburden” them (e.g., from toil), but they do so at the price of disengagement (e.g., from nature and reality).

While “technology disburdens us, it also effectively erases the sense of creaturely contingency that compelled earlier generations to seek salvation. Indeed, technology not only promises to do away with our vestigial sense of creatureliness, it promises to bestow on us divinity itself. The head
of Philips Design, part of the massive consumer electronics firm, recently informed the Economist that ‘consumers want to be omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, with the maximum comfort and freedom and with the minimum effort’--and said the firm was developing products accordingly. Note that this formula encompasses several of the classical attributes of divinity with none of that nasty Christian business of suffering on behalf of one’s creatures. Why would an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, maximally comfortable, minimally encumbered being need a savior?” (B&C, 1/2004).

Along similar lines, another writer (in Discover, Fall 2006) noted that work performed by certain computer features is not to make the user’s life easier, but to express a new philosophy, namely the demonstration of the computer as superior to the human, and to demystify human life, along the lines of Max Weber’s “disenchantment of the world” (Entzauberung).

A new judicial development in politically correct nations is to no longer require people to undergo a sex change operation before changing their “gender.” All they have to do is register themselves under their new sex designation, and change their first name--and in Spain, that makes a male female, or vice versa. This certainly could go a long way to solving sex discrimination complaints, e.g., a woman who registers as a male could hardly claim being discriminated against for being a woman. (More on this development in the “Marriage & the Family” section of TIPS).

Philosophy

Readers will remember that, as part of the emphasis of this annual issue on topics of morality and religion in society and in human services, we have begun to include a section on philosophy.

According to some authorities, when St. Augustine published his Confessions in 401 AD, he was the first human being to use the first person singular throughout the text in the same way that we do today, and this made his book the first known genuine autobiography in human history.

The federal court in Pennsylvania ruled (2005) in Kitzmiller vs. Dover not only that so-called intelligent design could not be taught in the schools, but that (a) there was not a shred of evidence in science for any kind of design anywhere in creation, and that (b) design cannot even be mentioned or discussed in public schools in connection with the Big Bang or the fine-tuning of the laws of physics. One big problem with this is that intelligent design has been taught even by the ancient Greeks and their philosophers, and now that cannot be mentioned either. This implies that philosophy cannot be mentioned in public science courses, and it comes close to making any ideas or speculation of intelligent design a thought crime (CRB, Summer 2006). Intelligent design is more philosophy than science, but while the elite is spending a vastly disproportionate amount of time, energy and emotion on it, the world is getting stupider and stupider, and humans design it less and less intelligently, and not much is being done about that.

In many scientific and evolution debates these days, the concept of randomness plays a crucial role. For many people, the idea of randomness or chance equals “uncaused” and therefore also unplanned, even though those scientists who believe that every effect has a cause should know better. Thus, the word “random” is often invoked when one is unable to predict an event, or ascribe it to a particular cause, even when such a cause exists. This should not have been so difficult to understand considering that when unknown causes are operative that deviate from randomness, scientists quite often also invoke correlations or probabilities.

The peculiar schizophrenia of modernism, as well as the fact that the human is by nature religious, were captured by one philosopher who wrote “...Philosophers today, unlike their counterparts in earlier periods, no longer believe in God, immortal souls, or metaphysical freedom, and they have long tired of proving the non-existence of these....Pressed on these matters most professional philosophers, speaking qua philosophers, would be more likely to express agnosticism...about such possibilities.” And yet at the same time, “No small number live, qua persons, as if they believe in them” (FT, 11/2005).

It has been pointed out (FT, 3/2006) that the American polity was founded on the principle that there were self-evident truths. If one denies this proposition, one pulls the rug out from under
the American polity, and thereby from whatever civil order, justice and freedom it is potentially capable of providing.

*Philosophy has sometimes been described as “reason’s drive to attain goals which render people’s lives more worthy.” However, modernism has undermined people’s “confidence in truth,” and made subjective opinion the criterion and judge of everything. Some gurus even call for a weakening of the idea of truth so that people will live in “tolerant harmony” with others. In other words, as long as no one believes in truth, there will be no arguments about it, and this will make for harmony. This is the “final triumph of charity” (FT, 4/2006). This is quite a perversion of a perversion, namely of the Renaissance’s motto of “man as the measure of all things.”

These modernists interpret appeals to reason as deceptive attempts to ruthlessly seize power, and claims to universals as disguises for the suppression of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. So the only way to defend humanity is by denying truth!

*At one time, Westerners agreed that there was such a thing as “barbarism,” as in “barbarians.” And what characterized it? Things such as these.
  a. Being ruled by passion and impulse.
  b. Thinking in extremely prejudiced ways.
  c. Avarice.
  d. A turning-in on the self or one’s group, marked by hostility toward, or mistrust of, anything from outside, from outsiders, or new and different.

Attempts to live by reason were hard to come by in history, and took millennia to build up. However, they can be destroyed very quickly. For instance, if a cohort of children had to grow up without parents, they would grow up as barbarians, since the bond to millennia of socialization would be broken. Today, we are faced with the paradox of the educated elite making war against truth and reason, which by its very nature unleashes passion from rational control.

*According to an analysis by Paul Hollander, extremist political ideologies tend to share a number of characteristics.
  a. Extreme hostility to some outgroup. The world is divided between them and us.
  b. Eschewal of civil conversation with “enemies.”
  c. Complete submissiveness to the in-group ideology and its leaders. Breaking ranks is treason.
  d. What will presumably advance the cause is superordinate to all human relationships.
  e. Human sentiments are signs of weakness.
  f. Even purely theoretical ideas and speculations are to be repressed if they do not serve the cause.
  g. The cause is defended or advanced by manipulating others.
  h. The triumph of the cause will result in an ideal world, probably even a harmonious and peaceful one. This justifies the other things above (FT, 6/2006).

It is remarkable how many of these criteria are met by political correctnessism.

One of many amazing things about all this is that these kinds of PC people believe that they can either convert Islam to these beliefs, or can create a co-existence between these beliefs and Islam in the same culture--though they certainly understand that there can be no such co-existence or peace with Christianity. (Judaism seems to be never mentioned in this discourse.)

*What is the “mother text of philosophy, psychology, politics and pedagogy”? You probably know this, but just to be safe, we put what at least many scholars consider to be the answer on the bottom of the page.

*Who has been “the greatest woman philosopher of modern history”? We were surprised too that it is said to be G. E. M. Anscombe, Fellow of Sommerville College, Oxford, England, and later successor of Wittgenstein in the chair of philosophy at Cambridge. Remarkably, among other things, she said that “each nation that has ‘liberal’ abortion laws has rapidly become, if it was not already, a nation of murderers” (FT, 1/2006).

There are 7 “viewpoint” chapters, and 2 on “critical thinking”: constructing moral rules, and making moral decisions. There are selections from professed Christians, professed atheists, materialistic Christians, pagan Christians, what we call “freeloaders,” strict materialist worshippers of money, and one more. Each selection is short, and edited from the original. The booklet is useful in comparing the various bases and positions of different parties, and especially the underlying assumptions or first premises to which they look for resolving moral questions.

This is the sort of compilation that can actually be quite useful in helping people to understand the positions of others, and very importantly, how they arrive at those positions. However, this compilation can be criticized for giving only these ethicists’ opinions of how people who hold a certain position do, or should, formulate their position, but not necessarily how people do in actual fact. For instance, a professed atheist may come to a certain moral position on the basis of some atheist premises, but also by “free-loading” on nice-sounding philosophical premises that cannot be derived from or justified by atheism, but which the atheist just likes (source item from Ann O’Connor & Peter King).

Religion & Values in Society

As we have explained repeatedly in TIPS, the nature of a society will deeply shape both its human services and the lives of its devalued people. One of the most powerful influences on individuals, and entire societies, is the values they profess and enact. For this reason, we examine religion and values in our contemporary society.

Hostility Towards Certain Religions

*As we pointed out in a previous issue of TIPS, there is nothing about the separation of church and state in the US Constitution. This is a phrase Thomas Jefferson once used in a private correspondence. However, the Constitution forbids the establishment of a particular church as a national (federal) church. This clause was not seen as preventing states from establishing state churches, as Virginia actually once did, even as it also established religious freedom.

What we now have is a liberal elite insisting on a separation of religion from society, which is contrary to what almost all framers of the US Constitution believed, and which probably none intended, not even the deists among them.

*For millennia, people have put religious symbols on the graves of their ancestors and relatives, but the kind of people who simply cannot leave other people’s practice of religious faith alone once again went to court to prevent people from doing so in city-owned cemeteries in Florida, claiming that it constituted a state establishment of religion, which of course is absurd (FT, 12/2005, p. 63).

*At one time, being religious was deemed by most people to be a good thing. Now, even many religionists no longer think so, because being “interreligious” has taken its place. It comes close to declaring all religions equally right and good. There are even entire departments and schools on interreligion. Georgetown University (that once used to be Jesuit) in Washington, DC even has a “president of interreligious initiatives” (CS, 31/8/2006).

*In 2004, a scientist, Daniel Dennett, among other things author on issues of consciousness, wrote in the NY Times (and elsewhere since) that atheists should be called “The Brights” because they are so much smarter than theists (FT, 1/2006, p. 51).

*The editor of Harper’s (established in 1850, and with a circulation of 200,000), Lewis Lapham, opined in 2005 that “we err on the side of folly if we continue to grant the boon of tolerance to people who mean to do us harm….” Was he talking about Muslims and Arabs, and perhaps keeping them out of the country, or about certain criminals? No, he was talking of conservative
Christians (FT, 1/2006, pp. 75-76). Wouldn't he be surprised if such Christians said that liberals “mean to do us harm,” or that publications such as Harper’s should be banned?

*Salt is mentioned several times in the Christian gospels, as in “you are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Many modernists have grown up completely alienated from Scriptural references. So when Protestant guru Jerry Falwell talked about a “salt ministry,” Newsweek gleefully reported (6 Feb. 2006) that he was advocating an “assault ministry,” and put it under the heading “Cut, Thrust and Christ.” It later published a correction, but no apology. We thought the gaffe was hilarious.

*Students from Christian high schools were increasingly less likely to be accepted at the Univ. of California at Riverside. Their previous courses on religion or ethics are only considered acceptable “as long as they do not include among its (sic) primary goals the personal religious growth of the student” (FT, 1/2006).

*In the liberal mind, there is a syllogism that goes like this: The Islamic terrorists are religious fanatics; Christians who take their faith seriously are religious fanatics; ergo, Christians who take their faith seriously are no better than Islamic terrorists. One encounters versions of this reasoning expressed all the time, everywhere one turns, in the liberal media.

*The PC keep telling us how wonderful Islam is, and that the only problem is with those Muslims who take their faith seriously, but there are two Islamic practices that turn the politically correct apoplectic. One is treating females differently from males, and the other one is the interdiction or destruction of sexually provocative or obscene materials in the media.

**“There is nothing inherently wrong with the cupcake. Just like there is nothing inherently wrong in the Koran.” So wrote another PC liberal in Time (28/8/2006), which is part of a persistent PC lie in order to protect “multiculturalism,” because there are plenty of verses in the Koran about warring, oppressing, and slaying the infidel. Note that the PC liberal did not say, “Just like there is nothing inherently wrong in the Bible.”

*The US Commission on International Freedom reported that anti-Christian discrimination, persecution and violence are growing throughout the Islamic world, and especially in Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Muslim parts of the Philippines (NCR, 1/1/2006).

*The Coptic Christian church in Egypt is one of the oldest in Christendom, and after almost 1400 years of at least minimal toleration of it in dhimmitude, the Muslim population has begun to turn against the Copts, and has begun to attack their churches, shops and homes, and even killed and wounded Copts. One problem is that under their state of dhimmitude, Christians are not allowed to repair churches, build new ones, or expand old ones (VOM, 5/06).

*Islamic radicals have stirred up Islamic populations about the Danish cartoons of Mohammed in places that had never heard of Denmark. For instance, in the countryside in northern Nigeria, radicals egged on the population into an anti-Christian rampage that killed at least 50 Christians and destroyed more than 50 churches, and many shops and homes. Even worse, in some of the Nigerian states, the government itself participated in these campaigns. One such state reclassified Christians together with lepers, the blind, lame, deaf and mute as an inferior population group that may not be employed in public service (VOM, 5/06).

*The PC artists of the award-winning “South Park” TV cartoon series were prevented by their bosses at Comedy Central “in the light of recent world events” from showing an image of the Prophet Mohammed. In a fury, they instead showed a picture of Christ defecating on President Bush and the American flag--and this was played during Holy Week 2006 (AP in SPS, 14/4/2006), because, after all, Christians have not yet emitted “events” in response to being offended.

*The Chief Executive Officer of the Field Museum in Chicago, which is one of America’s premier science research and exhibition centers, said in an interview (Discover, May 2006) that, “we respect the traditions” of American Indians who claim that, “We have always been here...we came
from the sky...we came from the ground.” When the interviewer said, “But you don’t respect Western religious traditions in the same way,” he replied, “No, we don’t, and maybe that is inconsistent.” However, the diversity crowd has never been known to be consistent about tolerating politically incorrect diversities. At least this interviewee was honest about his incoherence, and disdain for Christianity.

*In the US and elsewhere, the liberals and multiculturalists have been making war with vehemence toward any kind of religious presence in public, including even personal religious jewelry, and trying to outlaw any skepticism toward Darwinian evolution. In Australia, the same kind of people have done similar things, but have also campaigned for the inclusion in school science courses of native aboriginal creation myths (B&C, 11/2006). Obviously, making war on Western religions takes precedence over making war on religion.

*The PC always say that they want to outlaw all sorts of practices that might “offend” this or that minority or “victim” class, but they are very big at offending certain majorities. So they scheduled the World Gay Pride parade of 2006 to take place in Jerusalem, one of the holiest cities to three world religions that consider homosexual behavior to be a sin. Grand Slam, we would say! Israel’s top Sephardic rabbi begged the Pope to help stop this event as an insult to the honor of Jerusalem (NCR, 16/7/2006), as if the Pope had been behind it.

*The Canadian Supreme Court ruled that schools could use books extolling homosexuality and homosexual families, starting in kindergarten. Not only that, but this pits “homosexual rights” against religious freedom, and people who object on religious grounds have to prove their innocence in court, as for instance by documenting that any statements they make about homosexuality have a scientific basis (NCR, 16/3/2003).

Incoherencies About Religion

*Here is another example of American craziness about religion. Only 80% of American Christians believe in an afterlife, but a large percentage of atheists and agnostics do. Jews have the lowest rate of belief, with 46%, but that is more than double what it was in the 1970s (FT, 6/2006).

*Yet another aging cosmologist has, with his wife, written a book The View From the Center of the Universe, 2006 (Joel Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams), which asserts that reflecting on the nature and origin of the universe is the “deepest source of meaning for humans,” but they are not sure what that meaning is. They reject nihilism, but think that God consists of “nothing less than the process of opening our personal lines of contact with the unknown potential of the universe.” But on Friday nights, they light Sabbath candles and say the ancient Jewish prayers, even though they do not believe anyone is listening--except “I’m listening” (Smithsonian, 7/2006). All this underlines that one can be confused and incoherent the way most Americans are who--as we keep quoting--“don’t know what they believe, or why”; or that one cannot know what one believes, or why, in a very sophisticated, educated, cosmological way.

*The media give us a very mixed message (maybe because of PC deception?) of the public’s attitudes toward Islam. After 9/11, we were told that polls showed an increase in positive attitudes; now we are told that fewer than 20% of Americans have a positive view of it (Time, 28/8/2006).

*A US Undersecretary of State thinks that “the single most successful thing” we can do is bring Muslims to the US “to see for themselves” (Time, 20/3/2006). It seems to us that the worst thing we could do to at least devout Muslims is show them our decadence. Then they will fully understand that there can be no reconciliation.

*There are authorities who believe that the number of European converts to Islam is on the rise, and many such converts are very radical (as converts to any religion often are). Soon, one will no longer have to argue whether to “discriminate” against people with Arabic names or appearance and Islamic origins when boarding airplanes or admitting people into a country, because Jihadists may look “like everyone else.”
However, many of these converts have good reason to convert: they are troubled by Western decadence (hence also by the PC kind of “diversity”); 20-30 years ago, they would have become Communists or Buddhists. Also, converting to Islam is easy: one only has to say a 2-line formula, and one is accepted (Time, 28/8/2006).

*One thing that is very remarkable is how quickly so many people can change major positions or even worldviews, including switching to some that are diametrically opposed to those they held previously. For instance, once Hitler came to power, huge numbers of Germans abandoned their earlier religions and political positions and applied for membership in the Nazi party. This included many Christians, among them many clergy members. Immediately after the war, a large number of Nazis almost overnight became Communists. A leading intellectual of Mussolini’s Italian Fascism had a student-follower who eventually became a professor, who first was an “actual idealist,” then after World War II a Marxist, and a bit later an existentialist nihilist (CRB, Spring 2006). When the Soviet Union fell, almost the entire Marxist-leaning academic intelligentsia of the US turned overnight to constructionism and political correctness, even though these two worldviews are totally incompatible with Marxism.

To this day, there seems to have been no analysis of this phenomenon, either from the converts or even from their critics.

*“Best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral, winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most joyous traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, but with respect for the religious persuasion of others who choose to practice their own religion as well as those who choose not to practice a religion at all. And a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the generally accepted calendar year 2006, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions have helped make Australia, North & South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe great, without regard to the race, creed, color, computer operating system, religious, or sexual preferences of the wishers” (source item from John Massarelli).

*Hip-hop is corrupting much of the African-American youth culture, so what is the answer? Hold hip-hop church services, a trend that is “popping up all over” (Newsweek, 31/7/2006).

Youths these days like violent music, “death metal,” Black Sabbath, filthy or angry rap, etc., so some confused Christians have decided to offer them Christian versions of such (B&C, 11/2006). Anyone for Christian Black Sabbaths or death metal?

*The United Methodist Church in the US decided that it would never again hold events in cities that have sports teams with “Native American” names and symbols. So in 2006, it decided to move its 2012 leadership conference from Richmond, Virginia (“the Richmond Braves” in the minor leagues) to Tampa, Florida, despite the fact that there play the Tampa Bay Devil Rays in the major league, and the local football team is the Tampa Bay Buccaneers! (SPS, 4 March 2006).

*A serial killer has been murdering prostitutes in Daytona Beach, Florida. Many prostitutes carry concealed weapons as a defense, some only have sex with men they know, but one said she relied on her Christian faith to protect her. “I love Jesus, I’ve got a guardian angel” (Newsweek, 27/3/2006).

*Susanne Hartfiel sent us a 12/2005 news clipping of people doing yoga exercises standing on their heads before an altar in a Christian chapel, while listening to salsa music. What next?

*The churches of modernism have become so confused and seduced by the culture that they no longer even draw upon their own traditions and beliefs, but try to incorporate what is popular in modernism. Numerous previous TIPS items have documented this; here is one more: a Catholic cathedral school hired a secular institute to “teach character-building” to its students by means of skits and puppets from the Ronald McDonald cartoon characters associated with McDonald’s fast food restaurants and Ronald McDonald Houses. A gentle reminder that Catholicism has a long and rich tradition of building character--and very successfully--before Ronald McDonald came along.
Contemporary Judaism

*Few groups in American society are more likely to actually live up to their cultural stereotype than the Jews. They are more highly educated, more urban, wealthier, hold more high-status jobs, are more secular and liberal (especially on controverted social issues), have fewer children, and are less likely to be divorced, than any other identifiable ethnic/racial/religious group. Strangely enough, they are near the bottom in believing that people can get ahead by hard work, though we suspect that that is what they think mostly about others. Even though they are now largely multi-generational Americans, they have stronger allegiances to Israel than most other Americans have to ancestral countries. However, as we keep reporting, since they are increasingly less likely to marry other Jews, and since they have few children, and are older (a mean age of 47.7), their future is dim (FT, 1/2006).

*The only Jews who are reproducing themselves in the US are the orthodox ones. This means that “reform” and “conservative” Judaism are fading away, unless the offspring of the orthodox will abandon orthodoxy in favor of reform or conservative Judaism (FT, 12/2005 & 8/2006).

*Same-sex “marriage” was sanctioned by Reformed Judaism in the US in 2000, and by so-called conservative Judaism in late 1006. Judaism is not what it used to be!

The Catholic Priest Sex Scandal, Unfortunately Continued

*We told you so, as usual. We discovered that we had warned of the priest sex scandal cover-up as early as in the 8/1986 TIPS issue (on its p. 5). We said then that this could cost the Catholic church a billion dollars over the next 10 years, and largely because of Church failure to address the problem early on.

*Fifteen people were accused in 2003 of having sexually abused residents of the Boston School for the Deaf between 1944-1977, i.e., between 30-60 years earlier. At least 2 were Catholic priests. Accused priests were treated automatically as guilty even by their bishop; they had to cease ministry, vacate their rectory, and prove their innocence. One of the above priests had served at the school in the 1920s, and was himself hearing-impaired. He was exonerated in 2006. In 2003, the diocese paid off the accuser of the other priest, who was later also cleared. Eventually, all 15 claims were withdrawn or dismissed. The media, always making a huge deal of accusations, hardly covered the dismissals. Because dioceses prefer to payoff accusers rather than dispute the claims, this has become a paradise for chiselers and lawyers, and a grave injustice to the innocent accused who for the most part live with stigma the rest of their days.

*The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth decided to settle for $1.5 million a class (or mass) action suit by 45 former children of its orphanage (closed in 1983) in Louisville, Kentucky. Sex abuse had been alleged to have taken place as long ago as in the 1930s, and by people who have been dead for decades. No wrong-doing was acknowledged, but the Sisters believe that peace-making is at the core of their mission, and felt that no peace was achievable while the suit was in progress, and the plaintiffs were not allowed by their lawyers to talk to the Sisters directly (KY Standard, 27/8/2006; source item from Joe Osburn).

*This is really bizarre: some people in Indiana claimed in the early 2000s that they were sexually abused 50 years earlier by a priest who had died in 1972! They sued for damages (which makes no sense), but the judge ruled that, as was plain as day, the statute of limitations had run out decades ago (SPS, 5 June 2006). Next, there will be people suing Mongolia, because an ancestress was raped by Genghis Khan, because they have his genes, as the media told us is now provable.

*In the small Syracuse Catholic diocese alone, the new police state procedures instituted by the American bishops required criminal background checks on over 15,000 (!) people engaged in some sort of paid or unpaid church work with children. The cost (in time alone, not even counting money) is staggering. We thought that all these people should refuse their cooperation.
*In 1979, a Catholic priest was accused and tried for being the “gentleman bandit” who pulled off a string of 9 armed robberies in Pennsylvania. A whole series of witnesses testified that he was the one, then in the middle of the trial, another man stepped forward and confessed to the crimes, and went to prison for them. The priest then moved to New Jersey and became an advocate for people falsely accused. He died at age 81 in 2006 (SPS, 8 Aug. 2006). A very sobering tale about how wrong well-meaning witnesses can be, and how much worse things could be with ill-meaning witnesses.

*Of all the “health professions,” registered psychological counselors rank at the top in sexual misconduct (PHAL, 7/2006), but one rarely hears about that.

Other Religions Readers May Not Be as Familiar With

*Some people have called the great -isms of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries “political religions.” Among these, they include nationalism, the French Revolution, Marxism in all its forms, Fascism in all its forms, and now political correctnessism, to mention only a few. Political religions tend to have a messianic vision, a “catechism,” promises, their own “saints” (often “martyrs”), calendar, and festivals. A tenet of Garibaldi’s catechism was “Thou shalt not fornicate, unless it be to harm the enemies of Italy” (FT, 6/2006).

*The cult figure of the late Russian Gurdjieff continues to have a peculiar following. The president of the Gurdjieff Foundation was asked, “What is conscience?” Here is his answer. “Conscience is the manifestation of a very high energy. According to Gurdjieff, it derives from the Source. But we are not in alignment with this energy. Gurdjieff, like the traditions, speaks of a vertical causality that, at the very act of creation, initiates a fall from the primordial perfection. Similarly, traditionalists speak of a ‘relentless descending process’ in the energies, ending in entropy. And we’re more or less in a very remote place, and in a very bad inner alignment” (Parabola, Fall 2006).

*In case our readers had not known what Rastafarianism is, it is “a religious movement among black Jamaicans that teaches the eventual redemption of blacks and their return to Africa, employs the ritualistic use of marijuana, forbids the cutting of hair and venerates Haile Selassie as a god” (SPS, 15 Sept. 2006). However, there are also converts to it who are not Jamaicans.

*Many scientists have joined hands over the “intelligent design” alternative to random biological evolution with the PC left with whom they had lately been on adversarial grounds because of constructionism. Many scientists have also begun to refer to the “string theory” of cosmology as a religion, or a “faith-based initiative,” because for over 2 decades, there has never been any empirical evidence for it, and it may turn out to be untestable (Discover, 12/2005).

*There is something like a cult of people who have had “near death experiences.” They usually claim to have seen lights, beings from the other side, angels, and even God. They are called “experiencers.”

*There is a small (as yet) cult called “Metaphysics Interactive,” in which members meet weekly, much like going to church once a week.

*There is a Church of Body Modification, the members of which do things such as piercing themselves, hang themselves from hooks, etc. (SPS, 11 Aug. 2006).

Miscellaneous

*The more credentialed scientists become, the more likely is it that they are materialistic atheists. Most health practitioners in the US believe in God, but 60% of “ordinary scientists” are atheists and the number rises to 95% among biologists! Of the members of the US National Academy of Sciences, 90% are atheists (FT, 12/2005). It is hard to believe that these people will not exert influence on whom they advance (e.g., students, faculty) in their professions and academics.
*Oxford University Press (no less) has come out with a series of 7 books, one each devoted to one of the seven "cardinal" or "deadly" sins (quick: can you recite them?): pride, anger, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony and greed. The idea that there are these 7 deadly sins grew out of Catholicism, though in more recent centuries, it was recognized that certain acts of the spirit are vastly more serious than sins of the flesh (e.g., gluttony), or even of the passions (e.g., lust). At any rate, it is so PC to have picked 7 authors to write these books who either are not Christian, or do not believe in sin. Several tell readers that these sins either are sicknesses (i.e., medicalizations), or that they are actually good for us, such as pride or lust. The only one who treated his sin topic (anger) as sin was--a Buddhist! (B&C, 7/2006).

*US Army doctrine specifies 7 "core values" as essential to effective military leadership: loyalty, duty, respect, self-less service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. This is a very inspiring list that would also look good as citizen virtues. However, until 2006, there had apparently not been any research that showed that effective leaders actually possess these characteristics. Then a study came out showing that military officer cadets rate themselves higher on honesty, hope, bravery, industry, teamwork, perseverance, and forgiveness than civilians rate themselves (Monitor, 7/2006). Pretty impressive--except of course, everybody could be lying.

*It is generally not known that in addition to the Pope in Rome and the Coptic Pope in Egypt, there are all sorts of other popes who claim that they are the real ones, and that the one in Rome is an imposter or illegitimate. At one time, one might have found such people in the madhouses, as actually depicted by the English artist Hogarth, but these days, such popes launch elaborate websites, and amazingly, these are viewed by hundreds of thousands of people from around the globe (FT, 12/2005).

In addition, there appear to be millions of people who, while not claiming to be popes or even pastors, set up their own websites from which to dispense spiritual guruship.

In turn, several million people are signed up for receiving something along the line of "daily inspiration" from various religious websites.

*In 1958, sociologist Gerhard Lenski did survey research on religion in the US, and published his results in a 1961 book entitled The Religious Factor: A Sociologist’s Enquiry, which acquired the status of being a classic or near-classic in its area. It is interesting that Lenski made 12 predictions, in part reflecting his anticipation that Catholicism was in ascent in the US, and his fear thereof. Here are his predictions of what Catholics would bring about, almost all of which were wrong:

"Rising rates of church attendance in American society; strengthening of religious group communalism; strengthening of both the nuclear and extended family systems; declining emphasis on intellectual independence; increasing support for welfare state policies; increasing support for the Democratic Party; shifting focus of interest from work group to kin group; slowing rate of material progress and perhaps also of scientific advance; rising birth rates; narrowing latitude for exercise of the right of free speech; increasing restraints on Sunday business and divorce, and possibly birth control; and declining restraints on gambling and drinking."

One reason Lenski was so wrong was that the Catholics of today are not the Catholics that Lenski thought he knew. Most of the Catholics of today are as much nothing-Catholics as most Jews are nothing-Jews, and most Protestants are nothing-Protestants. Even if the nothing-Catholics had become something-Catholics, they would not have been his caricature of Catholic fundamentalists, or of Protestant fundamentalists who happen to be Catholic.

*A symphony orchestra performed Mozart’s “Requiem” to mark the 250th year of his birth. Because it is a relatively short piece (55 minutes long), the symphony performed additional music to fill up the evening--and one piece was “Ogoun Badagris,” a work for percussion based on Haitian voodoo rituals, with its emphasis on appeasement of the devils by human blood sacrifices and a "brutally sexual ceremonial dance" that ends with the shrieking of the word “reler,” which we are told “is the Voodoo equivalent of the Judeo-Christian ‘amen’.” But elsewhere in the same program, the conductor wrote that "reler"...is the Judeo-Christian equivalent of ‘amen’.” Surely, only a screwball would attend a concert featuring both these pieces.

*To our amusement, the field of economics has a construct of “duration of perpetuity.”
*Muslims are talking of a war with the West that is likely to last several hundred years—but where victory is certain.

*During their hajj to Mecca, Muslims “stone the devil” on certain occasions, throwing stones at three pillars that represent Satan. The trouble is that the devil has begun to retaliate. In 1994, 1997, 2001, 2003, and 2004, the crowd stampeded and trampled a lot of people to death—251 of them in 2004. In 1997, a fire in a pilgrim tent city killed 340. Maybe it is less worse to sup with the devil than to stone him.

*President Niyazov of Turkmenistan (who just died in 12/2006) placed his book (the Rukhnama) into mosques next to the Koran, constructed a golden statue of himself that rotates to face the sun, and named the month of April after his mother (CRB, Summer 2006). Yet another multicultural diversity to be celebrated?

*Strangely enough, in Germany, the Goth and Satanism subcultures are also citadels of Nazism and related movements (13/4/2006 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*It is amazing to learn that all over the US, animal shelters will not allow black cats to be adopted in late October, because of the risk that they will be abused for Halloween pranks, or even sacrificed in satanic rituals (AP in SPS, 29/10/2006).

*Otto von Bismarck famously said, “Wir Deutschen fürchten Gott, sonst aber nichts in der Welt,” which translates as “We Germans fear God, but nothing else in the world.” It has been subjected to a modern adaptation as “Wir Deutschen fürchten alles, ausser Gott,” or “We Germans don’t fear God, but everything else in the world” (source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*John Adams, one of the American founding fathers, once famously said that the American Constitution “was made only for a moral and religious people.” Few people seem to believe this today, and least of all the modernists and liberals, even though Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous French describer of the American scene in the 1820s, said, “despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot.”

*A Christian pageant in Muncie, Indiana was advertised as “discover how God can heal you, extend your life, and destroy your enemies” (FT, 12/05). We were sorely tempted.

Religion in Human Services

*In communist China, graduating nurses undergo a ceremony that has deeply religious imagery, such as each holding a lit candle and pledging to “humanitarianism” (SPS, 15/5/2005).  

*In the 7/2005 issue of the (American Psychological Association) Monitor appeared an ad showing one book inscribed “DSM-IV-TR” (the diagnostic bible of the American Psychiatric Association), and another book with black cover, inscribed “Holy Bible.” Above both was the text, “Read any good books lately?” This juxtaposition suggests that these are both very good books, equally deserving of being read, though de facto they are holy script for two very different audiences.

*One of the most widespread New Age cults was launched by Helen Schucman, who was no less than a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons. In 1956, she began to hear an inner voice urging her to take dictation for a “course in miracles.” Fearing for her sanity, she consulted a shrink colleague who, unfortunately, encouraged her to “simply do as instructed.” Accordingly, for several years, she wrote down the voice’s dictation, which ended up in 3 volumes as a text, course and workbook containing lessons for every day of the year, and a manual for teachers. Circulated privately for about 5 years, it was finally printed in 1975 by the Foundation for Inner Peace in—guess where—California. The material claims to be the work of Jesus Christ speaking in the first person, but not as the Son of God except to the degree that all humans are sons of God. Untold numbers of people have embraced this teaching (Parabola, Spring 2005).
*In the 1980s, someone came up with the idea that one should cut through all the crazes in human services and identify “best practices.” We had been teaching for decades that human services should apply the most universal and well-established pedagogies, but it never occurred to us to give it the catchy label of “best practices.” The slogan caught on like wildfire, even though service practices themselves have not radically changed, and are still dominated by crazes. Many people call whatever they do “best practice.” Now the phrase has even infiltrated into other fields, including some where one would not have expected it. For instance, we were flabbergasted to read that a Catholic parish had suddenly discovered—after 2000 years—that what it was doing was “best practices” (CS, 25/5/2006).

*The United Church of Christ has been running TV ads that showed African-Americans, homosexuals, and handicapped people being rocketed by ejector seats out of their pews in conservative churches—at the same time as its own membership declined by almost 50% over the last 40 years (FT, 6/2006). This church’s general synod also became the first mainline Christian church to formally reject the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman (NCR, 7&8/2005).

*There are certain Protestant dieting crazes with slogans and book titles such as God’s Answer to Fat, Pray Your Weight Away, Slim For Him, More of Jesus, Less of Me, Born Again Bodies, etc. Yet at the same time, Protestants in the US are heavier on the average than others, and Southern Baptists are the heaviest of all (B&C, 11/05).

*It turns out that God is good for something. One Christian yoga instructor tells her students that the word Yahweh “is a great breath prayer. The Jesus prayer also works” (Time, 5 Sept. 2005).

**Conclusion to the Religion Coverage**

We have come to the insight that many of the peculiar behaviors of the people of the culture of modernism are the result of a form of self-loathing, despite all of the self-esteem rhetoric that is going around, and perhaps in part even because of it. Here are some examples of the symptoms of self-loathing: maiming and cutting oneself, which is becoming epidemic among young people; amputating parts of one’s body, or wanting to have them amputated; burning oneself; chewing on one’s body parts; pulling out one’s fingernails; injecting oneself with poisons; strangling oneself; hanging oneself on hooks; engaging in other forms of self-torture; starving oneself into ugliness and even death; submitting one’s body to surgery (perhaps many times) in order to achieve or maintain a very artificial appearance of youthfulness that one no longer possesses naturally; seeking heroic surgery for so-called sex changes; wearing clothes that are hideous, and that even disfigure the body as by disabling walking (e.g., many male youths do this), resulting in a habitual abnormal gait and even skeletal problems; epidemics of so-called depression (which shrinkery used to define as being a turning of aggression and hatred inward toward the self); listening to “music” that turns one deaf; listening to “music” that is full of vulgarities and profanities, and that conveys demeaning messages about both oneself and others; a pattern of having sex with many people, sometimes all at once, even virtual strangers (as in one-night “hook-ups”), even when one doesn’t want to; not looking for noble or challenging endeavors to engage oneself in; etc.

Outside the US, one finds another interesting phenomenon that seems at least partially related to self-loathing: people no longer want to be a resident and citizen of their own country. Only 34% of the French do, and a mere 21% of Germans and Spaniards (Newsweek, 29/5/2006). We might remember that while nationalism is a vice, loving one’s country and people has been considered a virtue.

A natural question is why the people of modernism loathe themselves so much. Possible answers include the following.

a. They no longer believe in, or seek, or want, or acquire an objective morality, and therefore can no longer distinguish between good and bad, and what is good and bad both for and by them.

b. Lifestyles of mindless consumption and sexual indulgence that create anomie.

c. A lifetime of endless and ever-escalating sensual indulgences takes the novelty and pleasure out of new or yet more intense sensations, so that sensations have to be made super-strong to give pleasure. An example is that music—even beautiful music—is no longer experienced as beautiful unless it is played at hearing-impairing loudness.

d. Loss of respect for anything sexual, and for sexual virtue in others and oneself.
e. Particularly pronounced in females, loss of bodily modesty which, after all, is a form of self-protectiveness that is lost when modesty is lost.

f. Not being taught what the true value and worth of each human, including oneself, really is.

g. Materialistic worldview, which denies that there is anything intrinsically valuable about any human being.

h. A materialistic worldview also interprets humans as merely another form of animal, no better really than any other animal (and maybe even worse), and other modernistic values (such as sensualism) release the “animal within the human.” Thus, as people increasingly act more like brutes, their higher nature looks down upon this, and upon themselves for acting this way.

i. The animal rights movement has been insistently telling people that they are even less valuable than animals.

j. People no longer believe what the Jewish and Christian faiths have taught, namely that each person has absolute, intrinsic and immeasurable worth by virtue of being made in the image and likeness of God; nor do they believe what Christianity teaches and what people in the Christianized West long believed, namely that they are so valuable that God sacrificed Himself through the person of Christ to redeem them.

k. Recent human history (e.g., the 20th century) has seen more and more widespread and savage violence and warfare than all previous history. Seeing this, especially people with a materialistic worldview may despair at how low humans can act, especially collectively.

l. For the self-mutilative behaviors specifically, one can posit an additional, and probably often correlated, reason: modernistic people are so empty inside that their feelings are losing links to higher things and mental content, and have become even more materialized than they already are naturally. The first response of such people has been to increase the intensity of the material stimuli around them, such as music levels, drugs, driving at dangerous speeds, etc. And when all that gets exhausted, they escalate to pain, which after all is often no more than pleasurable stimuli vastly intensified. For instance, some people say they hurt themselves “in order to feel,” or “enjoy the day/afternoon/evening (or whatever).”

Also, in their language, these modernistic people have seemingly exhausted the intensity of foul-mouthedness, with every sentence peppered with the f-word. After that, it is difficult to think of further ways to intensify speech, except perhaps to communicate only in screams and shouts, as is in fact also happening in pop music.

**Public Morality—or, More Accurately, Immorality**

*We have always taught that researchers will always rise to the challenge of proving that whatever people want is good for them. They have now “proven” that people gain more long-term pleasure from vice than they lose in short-term guilt. “Indulgence regret” wanes in comparison to “self-control regret.” “We really do believe that in day-to-day self-control dilemmas, people are better off choosing to indulge” (SPS, 25 July 2006).

*A British fashion model we had never heard of (Kate Moss) was photographed in 2005 apparently consuming cocaine. Many fashion firms then quit using her. When the British fashion industry “saw what she had done,” it named her Model of the Year in 2006. One spokesman said, “She’s the kind of survivor we all want to be” (AP, in SPS, 6 Nov. 2006), which presupposes we all are or should be drug-addicted.

*As people have become less self-reliant in so many ways, and increasingly dependent on state (i.e., government) support, there has been a concomitant increase in the things for which people demand help and support from the government, and in the government’s willingness to give such support. For instance, before 1977, no snowstorm in the US had ever been declared a federal disaster. Then, from 1992-95 (the first years of the Clinton presidency), more than 40 winter storms were declared to be “disasters;” in 1996 alone, Clinton declared 82 federal disasters and emergencies. Even in the federal funding supposedly allocated for real disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, there was “emergency funding” for highway projects in Hawaii, and for arts projects (!) in New York City and West Virginia (Newsweek, 8 May 2006). It sounds heartless, but a good economic depression might be very good for this country.
Since 1999, the number of Americans who believe it is permissible to cheat on their taxes rose 50%, and those who believe it is each citizen's civic duty to pay his fair share of taxes fell from 81% to 68%. At the same time, Americans love to spend their money indulging themselves: half of Americans are said to live "paycheck to paycheck" and to purchase—mostly by credit card—more than they can afford. Not surprisingly, people who study this say that it began to happen with the "baby boomer" generation that had been brought up to believe they could have anything they wanted (SPS, 30 Oct. 2003 & 19 Nov. 2006).

In 1970, casino gambling in the US was confined to Nevada, and only 3 states had lotteries. Today, one or both are legal in 47 states. As of 1998, almost one-third of Americans had gambled within the past year; and more casinos have opened since then. Of course, this has led to a dramatic rise in "addictions" to gambling, and all sorts of social problems (drinking, divorce, crime, etc.) that go with it (SA, 4/2006), and shrink programs to respond to it.

More PPP. As public morality declines, more and more people are lying on their resumés—anywhere from 14% to 43%. As a result, 96% (!) of businesses now conduct some kind of background check on job applicants, and firms that will do this kind of screening have exploded into a $2 billion p.a. industry. One reason this practice is of concern is because if one lies on a resumé, one will also be more likely to cheat in school, on the job, etc. (Time, 1 May 2006).

The level of lying in society is going up everywhere, as even research has shown. Apparently, politically correct people lie more than even criminals in prison. They lie about everything that is good, moral, and important: matters of life and death; love, sex and marriage; politics; economics; law and constitutionalism; language; psychology and sociology; multiculturalism, diversity and immigration; and on and on. We do not recall even the Nazis lying as much, though the Communists may have.

The most recent new wave of PC lying is on the issue of immigration. There seem to be very few Americans who are opposed to all, or nearly all, immigration, but the majority do want control on illegal immigration, and greater discrimination on who is admitted legally. The PC persistently try to convey the impression that any restrictions on illegal immigration are a war on "immigration," and that advocates of such restrictions are bigoted, "immigrant-bashing" (SPS, 8 July 2006), anti-immigration, etc.

A reported on before, yet another death blow to the safe sex propaganda is that HPV herpes can be transmitted across the skin, even without sexual intercourse, and particularly so by any skin contact in the genital area. We suspect that the full effects of this epidemic will not be revealed until a few more years have gone by and a huge cohort of infected teens have reached mid-life.

Even the media have begun to speak of the "myriad imperfections" of condoms (e.g., Time, 7 Oct. 2002). The sex people are up in arms about this and call it a scare tactic (of course; it is meant to be) designed to keep children from becoming "sexually active" (which is also the intent), and that it is "infuriating" that even physicians are now saying the same thing, thereby giving it credibility.

A porn star by the name of Annie Sprinkle (which we assume is her stage name) turned performance artist, and would get on stage to urinate, masturbate, and discuss bestiality. She also sprinkles her performance (and thereby her audience) with references to censorship, queer issues, post-porn and "upbeat humor," though to us this sounds like rather low-down humor. As an encore, upon request, she sometimes performed a 2-minute "bosom ballet." The good news is that her "speaking" (sprinkling?) fee is a mere $2,500 (SPS, 25/9/02). This of course earned her invitations to many college campuses, including an invitation to perform at the Woyn's Center of Hamilton College in NY State. One professor with integrity asked the president of the college to cancel the performance, which of course he refused to do, whereupon the professor announced that the administration was "intellectually and morally vapid." Vapid? He should have said "all wet."

On the one hand, politicians of all stripes—not to mention citizens—are becoming increasingly concerned over the explosion of secrecy in American government, with federal departments classifying as secret 125 documents per hour. On the other hand, and at the same time, the elected leaders in at least New York State actually signed a pact among themselves agreeing to keep secret from the citizenry electorate how millions of state taxpayer dollars are wasted each year
in “pork barrel” spending, i.e., spending of public money so as to yield benefits to a particular district or its representative. Of course, such spending is detoxifyingly named “member items” (SPS, 3 July 2005; 17 & 18 April 2006).

*Here is another example of how the names of organizations can be detoxifying covers for bad things. The Capital Athletic Foundation in Washington, DC, founded to help ghetto children, became a money-laundering front for Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff, as did US Family Network, founded for moral fitness and social improvement, and Americans for Tax Reform (Time, 16/1/2006).

**Surveillance & Encroachment on Civil Liberties**

The butcher that came dressed in sheep’s clothing is beginning to show his true nature, as high technology becomes employed ever more to track the very citizens who embraced it. Unfortunately, the response of the people of modernism to this development is either to embrace it more because of its apparent benefits (e.g., enabling them to find a lost dog or a kidnapped child)—as one commentator wrote, “we grumble about prying eyes, yet we love to upload our identities onto the Web” (Discover, 9/2006, p. 71)—or to pass futile laws against it.

*Many parties are voluntarily giving their DNA to the authorities (purportedly to help in finding relatives should they ever go missing), and having microchips implanted in themselves and/or their pets. In addition, many are subscribing to demands of employers and public authorities that they be fingerprinted, have scans made of the irises of their eyes, etc. (multiple sources).

*The mobile telephones that have become something that modernistic people literally cannot live without are one of the easiest tools to use to track people, not only to locate them physically, but also to keep track of their past conversations and contacts.

Computers—another thing modernistic people cannot live without—are of course also very easy to access in order to track one’s purchases, e-mails and on-line “chats,” interests and pursuits (including shady or outright illegal ones), etc. (multiple sources).

*Freebies given away (e.g., as samples) often contain micro-computer tags that can be used to transmit information (such as location), but also to access financial and other data (Consumer Reports, 6/2006 & NCR, 7/25-8/7/2004).

*At least one Catholic diocese (Springfield, Illinois) conducts “random computer audits” of church-owned computers (meaning checking what is on them) to deter or detect efforts to use them for access to bad sexual content (NCR, 20 Aug. 2006). What next?

*Buses will soon carry surveillance cameras, but already, computer chips are embedded in many automobiles—often without the knowledge of the car owner—and/or many drivers sign up to use a satellite system that tracks their car “in case they ever have an accident.” One critic said, “We have a surveillance monster growing in our midst” (Time, 8/14/2006; SPS, 5/26/2006)—but unfortunately, he does not subscribe to TIPS

*Oops. That a run-of-the-mill staff member of the US Veterans Administration (VA) could have the personal information on 26.5 million veterans on his portable computer is staggering. So is the fact that this is a computer that can be taken outside the office, and to one’s home—where it was stolen. Why is such information not restricted to non-portable computers, and how many more functionaries are there who have it on portable ones?

By the way, when it was discovered that the man’s computer had been stolen in a burglary, the VA waited 2 weeks to call in the FBI, and the VA Inspector-General learned about it only from gossip (various 5/2006 clippings).

Laptops containing personal data of hundreds of thousands of citizens were also stolen from the US Transportation Dept., the Red Cross, an investment firm, and an insurance broker (SPS, 24 March, 2 & 25 July, & 10 August 2006)—and these are only a few mentioned in the news. There must be many more we are not told about.
*Oops again. Even where computers or computer files are not stolen, a number of organizations that have personal data in computer storage have inadvertently made it public, including the US Navy (SPS, 4 June & 8 July 2006; Time, 17/7/2006).

*Here is a new euphemism for around-the-clock surveillance of a person: ubiquitous pro-active computing (we kid you not). Making a retarded person part of a computer and computer feedback system it is hoped will achieve "social inclusion" of the person (2006 AAMR Congress catalogue).

Marriage & the Family

*Marriage is not only good for the children, but also for the spouses. There is much evidence of marriage’s stabilizing and health benefits on males, its economic and health benefits for females, and its benefits of all kinds on the children. However, evidence hardly counts with people these days, and certainly not on issues on which they have made up their mind. In this case, society has decided to make war against marriage and the family, and it is paying the price--and while it often complains about that price, it does not seem willing to admit its mistake and embrace and support marriage and the family.

*In a 6/2006 wedding announcement section of our local newspaper, we encountered something we had never encountered before: the bride was said to have 4 parents! (not stepparents, but parents).

*A senior caseworker for a county department for Children, Youth and Families in Albany, NY, was arrested for being a member of a group of 6 prostitutes. Maybe she thought that this was "family work" (SPS, 24/11/2006).

*We ran across a hilarious list of chaste Catholic pick-up overtures: “You don’t like the Culture of Death either? Wow! We have so much in common!”
  “Let’s get out of here. I know a much cozier little Catholic bookstore downtown.”
  “I bet I can guess your Confirmation name.”
  “You’ve got stunning, scapular-brown eyes.”
  “Did you feel what I felt when we reached into the holy water font at the same time?”
  “Confess here often?”

Attacks on the Family, & Collapse Thereof

*An African-American teenage girl got a lot of publicity (e.g., SPS, 20/8/2006) by declaring that she knew no one who is married, or was once married and stayed married. Any liberals want to comment on that, real quick?

*People are easily “offended” these days, especially if they are members of “victim” groups, or liberals. One thing that really offends us is when people talk about “starting a family” when they want to have children. People start a family when they get married, and by limiting the above phrase to conceiving or bearing children, they (usually unconsciously) undermine the notion of what a family is.

*In the same spirit of do-not-trust-your-spouse-and-your-commitment pre-nuptial agreements, now there are post-nuptials: they are especially popular where one spouse has what are called “complicated family structures” from previous marriages, and/or where there is a big change in financial status for one spouse (Newsweek, 5/16/2006). In the past, a change in financial status of one spouse automatically meant a similar change in the financial status of the other--that is part of what once went with marriage.

*College-educated men expect to have fewer children than those with less education but they tend to “fuss” over them more. Also, 47% of males with less than a high school education have children out of wedlock, compared to only 6% of college graduates (SPS, 5 June 2006). However, all
males may have some surprises: as many as 1 out of 25 fathers may be unknowingly raising a child who they think is theirs, but who was actually fathered by another male (Time, 2006).

*According to an early 12/2006 article in The New York Times, there is an actual “movement” afoot to “abolish anatomical criteria as the basis for gender.” One of the demands of this movement is that people should be able to change the sex listed on their birth certificates and other identity papers just because they want to, even if they have not had and do not plan to have a sex change operation (see also item in the section on “Human Nature”). Already in Spain, birth certificates do not list “Father” and “Mother,” but instead “Progenitor A” and “Progenitor B” (FT, 5/2006)—presumably to allow for Progenitors C through Z to be added as the occasion arises.

*The US Senate defeated an initiative to amend the Constitution so as to declare marriage to be between one man and one woman. Democratic senators said this initiative was “wasting the Senate’s time” when there were “far more pressing issues, such as rising gas prices…” (SPS, 8 June 2006).

*Here is the rationale of the Massachusetts Supreme Court for legalizing “homosexual marriage”: “The right to marry means little if it does not include the right to marry the person of one’s choice.” Presumably, this also invalidates all arranged marriages, including most of those in many countries.

*Very naturally and understandably, one mistake that has been made by the opponents of legalizing a form of marriage between people of the same sex is to let the proponents dictate the terms of the argument. Those in favor of such arrangements have claimed that marriage is a right, that they are being denied this right by current laws, practices, and attitudes, and that there laws, practices, and attitudes all need to be changed in order to grant people their rights. But actually marriage has never been considered a universal right either by the churches or the state. There have always been limitations on who could marry, and who could marry whom. Church law has always had a construct of “impediments” to marriage, and where there was such an impediment, a person or couple could not marry.

Furthermore, if the opponents of this movement had their wits better about them, they would see that the granting or denying of rights is not at all what is at stake here. After all, any competent persons of legal age who are not already married are—with few exceptions alluded to above—free to marry (even homosexuals are free to marry) by taking as a spouse a similarly free person of the opposite sex. What is really at issue is the claim of some party to be able to define something any way they like—in this instance, to define marriage however they like, but it could be anything they might want to redefine: prostitution, blindness, the presidency, the priesthood, the papacy, a city charter, etc., however they like. They have already redefined human personhood, and even life itself.

*In 6/2006, we first ran across a man referring to another man as “my husband” (SPS, 4 July 2006), though it must have happened many times in the current cultural climate. What next: can I call my sister “mother” or “daughter,” or Mao Tse Tung “uncle”?

*Even states that do not have homosexual “marriage” have begun to define a woman who lived in a homosexual relationship where the other woman adopted a child as being in the same situation as if she were the woman’s wife. Upon separating, she may be granted visiting rights to the child over the mother’s objection, as happened in Washington State. The real mother turned religious and opted out of lesbianism, whereupon her lesbian live-with went to court and got visiting rights—over the objections of the mother—so that the child is exposed to contact with the lesbian woman (NCR, 20/8/2006). This creates a whole new family law status, once again without any law having been passed by the people.

*So many intelligent and educated people keep denying that there are slippery slopes of PC and liberal demands, though they suspect slippery slopes everywhere on other issues. The demands of the “gay” culture have been on a slippery slope for a long time. In the 1980s homosexuals said at one of their conventions, to great applause, “all we want is to be allowed to live” (because of the AIDS outbreak). Then rapidly came one demand after another, including by the late 1990s, same-sex “marriage.” Now, the next demand (endorsed by—among others—feminist Gloria Steinem) is
recognition of a wide range of “families,” including groups of people living together (Newsweek, 7 Aug. 2006).

*We have repeatedly featured women who married themselves, and a man who married his (female) dog who was more devoted to him than any woman. If men can marry men, and women can marry women, why can’t people marry themselves, their dogs, sheep, goats, children, parents, or whomever or whatever? In Vancouver, 7 women (some still young) each married themselves, but in a group ceremony (by the way, it took us awhile to figure out whether they were all marrying each other)--and some of their boyfriends attended! Among them were Tallulah (the instigator), Celeste, Vicky, Cathee, and Melanie, the corsetière for a burlesque queen. Tallulah, officiating, announced “we have come together to celebrate our wonderful selves and commit wholeheartedly to our lives, our beings and our souls.” There was champagne on the altar!

The brides rejoiced in not having “the hassle of a groom or in-laws,” but did not mind the hassle of a gift shower (Globe & Mail, 1 July 2006; source item from Beth French). Oh what we all missed!

*In Baltimore, there were 8 marriages between humans (both male and female) and animals in 9/2006, involving dogs, cats, one tortoise and one tarantula. As one of the women put it, “This is my chance to be married at least once in my lifetime.” One of the men had had 3 wives before, and was sick of their fickleness compared to his dog (11 Sept. 2006 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

**“A certain old maid of Cohoes,
In despair, taught her bird to propose;
But the parrot, dejected
At being accepted,
Spoke some words too profane to disclose.”

*One way in which the public’s sudden enamorment of so-called homosexual marriage can be understood is as a form of family-feindlichkeit.

*The first two people to enter into a same-sex civil union in the US (in Vermont in 2000) separated in 2005, and one was sued for the equivalent of divorce, because of violence between them. One even got a restraining order against the other (NCR, 8 Jan. 2006).

No More Child-Bearing!

*The birth rate is now below replacement level in 62 countries (HLAAN, Summer 2006).

*This is a fascinating development: the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans and United Methodists are contracepting themselves out of existence. Ever since 1968 (about the year the pill became popular), they have declined in membership, mostly because of their decreased birth rates. What one could call the baby-making churches are increasing, such as the “black” churches, and the Southern Baptists. The Catholic Church is increasing more from immigration than from baby-making (NCR, 25/6/2006).

*Now who, other than feminists and the PC, could have invented the theory that motherhood makes women stupid, so that they end up with so-called “placenta brains,” “Mommy brains,” or “porridge brains”? Recent research has shown that being pregnant, delivering babies, and caring for small children actually enhances the brain and intelligence of females (SPS, 7 Nov. 2005).

The Sorry Plight of Children in Our Society

As documented in previous issues of TIPS, modernistic societies have become cultures of kinderfeindlichkeit, i.e., hostility towards children. This is manifested in an unwillingness to bear and rear children, children being viewed and treated as objects, abandonment of the hard work of child-rearing, surrender of children to—even pushing them into—the decadence of modernism, and once unimaginable sexual perversions with children now becoming almost normalized. We continue to document these and more sad phenomena in this section.
*In the US, one-third of all births are now to unmarried women (SPS, 21/10/2006). Poor children!

*Fatherless daughters have a strong tendency to end up pregnant at a young age, and before marriage. The absence of fathers has a bad impact on sons as well: they are twice as likely as boys with fathers to end up in jail, and to fail in high school, and this likelihood is not even reduced if the mother remarries so that the children have a stepfather (JFRI, 20(3)).

*What an image: row upon row of sullen dark-skinned boys sitting on backless benches at immovable tables in a large room with tiled floors and walls, and no windows. Where are we? In a high school “detention” program where all pupils who are late must “serve time”--usually an hour (see picture in Newsweek, 30/1/2006, p. 51). For many, this is training for prison. This picture was part of a discussion of fatherless upbringing of boys.

*We reported in an earlier issue of TIPS on the large number of single parents who are in the US military. Since 2002, 16,000 single mothers (not even counting single fathers) have served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and yet single parents are not supposed to be accepted into the military; they manage it by surrendering custody of their children to someone else, at least for the time of their enlistment. Not surprisingly, such arrangements are very hard on the children who are virtually abandoned by their only parent for several years and, if they are old enough to comprehend the danger of their parent’s work, may also live in chronic fear. Unfortunately, a lot of single parents, especially women, look to the military as a particularly promising career option, especially since they typically have limited education to obtain good-paying jobs (SPS, 18/22/2006).

*We have never known of a retarded couple successfully raising a child, but have known zillions of messed up--and often retarded--people who had one or two retarded parents. So it was a bit of a shock to us when our local newspaper came out editorially (!) in favor of retarded people having, and raising, children. The main argument was that they “have love to share” (Syracuse Post-Standard, 8 Aug. 2006, p. A10).

*Among children age 6-14, soda is the most heavily-consumed drink. In the 11-14 age group, soda accounts for 24% of the liquid intake (Time, 15/5/2006). This is terrible. We surmise that it is even worse in some population subgroups (including parts of the underclass) that hardly ever cook anymore.

* Newsweek (13/9/04) ran a cover story on American parents no longer able or willing to exercise parental responsibility and set limits for their children. One consequence is that many parents are raising “wanting machines” that respond like conditioned dogs to media advertising campaigns. The hapless average American child is exposed to 40,000 commercials a year, in addition to those in TV shows, movies, sport stadiums, schools, etc. Studies of grade school children have found that when they crave something new, they keep endlessly asking for it, and on the average, the parents cave in after the 9th harassment. Some parents are being harassed almost continually for either more things, or for more money to buy things with. One result has been that in a mere 6 years, families with children age 3-12 tripled their spending on unnecessary and luxury items on their children, and the money children themselves spend on themselves has also skyrocketed, most of this being money their parents had given to them. At the same time, parents are more juvenile than ever, and more and more share the same juvenile interests with their children, such as listening to the same music, and aspiring to the same kinds of clothing. A parent organization leader said, “It’s almost like parents have lost their parenting skills”; we are baffled why the word “almost” is in that sentence.

When parents give in to this, their children grow into adults who do not know how to cope with life’s hardships and disappointments because they come into adulthood and the work place with a distorted sense of entitlements. When their expectations are disappointed, then they go into mental states which the shrinks interpret as requiring drugs and services.

One result of overindulgence is said to be self-centeredness and self-absorption. A shrink organization has begun to give seminars to shrink professionals on how to deal with the disfunctionality of overindulged children being “enabled” by their parents.
*At one time, everyone taught good manners: homes, schools, and even colleges. Colleges abandoned such teaching in the heyday of the 1960s as "bourgeois trappings," and schools and parents did for other reasons. So now, if you want to learn good manners (and most people don't), you have to read books on it, such as Everyday Graces: A Child's Book of Good Manners by Karen Santorum. It teaches manners through stories. Some people have called it the perfect companion to William Bennett's Children's Book of Virtues. Santorum was one of 12 siblings, and is the mother of 7.

*Around 1950 and before, almost all children got spanked occasionally. Now, we are told that being spanked makes children violent and criminal--and yet children today, who are less commonly spanked, are more violent and criminal than ever (Time, 15/5/2006). What's wrong with this picture?

*Now that even pre-schoolers are uncontrolled, educational materials firms have begun to sell restraints for them. However, these are detoxified by giving them nice names (Cuddle Loop, Chair Hugger), making them colorful, and showing children held by them as smiling (Abilitations catalogue, Fall 2004).

*Even Newsweek (9 Jan. 2006) asked, in exasperation, "Didn't anyone in Hollywood have a happy childhood?" because all the "sitcoms" are about dysfunctional families. At the same time, Newsweek (along with almost all other contemporary media) gives glowing reviews to all such TV shows, books, and movies.

*A 7-year-old girl in New York City discovered the joys of masturbation, and wanted to know all about the penis. Her delighted enlightened mother then got for her photographs by the infamous homosexual Robert Mapplethorpe showing male genitals in different poses of sex acts and elimination. A sex expert lauded the mother (8 June 2006, Time Out New York) for her "shame-free attempts to give your daughter the information she needs to become a well-adjusted, self-empowered individual." As one commentator put it (B&C, 9/2006), private parts will no longer be private in a shame-free society.

*We are now told that there are more and more children "with gender issues"--i.e., who do "not conform to gender norms in their clothing or behavior," and who now, thanks to "advocates" for "gender-identity rights," are being "supported in their choices." Children as young as 5 years old (!) are being not only permitted, but actually helped, by parents, educators, and--of course--mental health professionals to dress in clothing not appropriate to their sex, and to be called a girl or boy, she or he, etc., regardless whether they are actually female or male. Schools are being told to "respect parents' decisions," and not to "box students in" to boy and girl categories. Parents are even resorting to drugs to delay the onset of puberty to give the child time to figure out who he or she (or it?) is (SPS, 3 Dec. 2006). What is amazing is that in regard to this issue, the purported increase in homosexuality, and every other kind of imaginable--and even unimaginable--gender line crossing, no one seems to raise the fact that a vast amount of artificial female hormones have been poured into the environment, and thereby have been affecting food and water, for several generations now, ever since women began to take the so-called birth control pill in the 1960s.

**"Once upon a time, when women, gays and blacks were powerless and exploited while white male hegemony ruled the world, and the sky was dark...." Woe to us all: the PC have taken over children's literature, exemplified by the new 2741-page Norton Anthology of Children's Literature. The ogres are no longer giants, nasty dwarves, evil stepmothers, and blood-lusting cannibals and animals, but gender stereotypes, white males, the middle class, and the traditional family. Also, since one can no longer make judgments of good and evil, "the distinction between heroes and villains is often blurred." Also, "there are today no real taboos" anymore, so don't be surprised that if you buy your child the much heralded 1984 picture book The Facts of Life, a pop-out penis pops out at you, to the pop-eyes of astonished parents. Other darling books of the editors feature child rape by the boyfriends of mothers who, however, get their come-uppance from a gun in the child's hands (CRB, Summer 2006).
The PC and pro-child-sex people have been making war in recent years against “abstinence promotion” campaigns by the US government aimed at teenagers, but the fact is that for every governmental dollar spent on it in 2002, $4.50 was spent on contraception promotion, and much of that on the condom craze (HLA, Winter 2006).

Another irony is that the pro-youth-sex people say that none of the abstinence programs has been empirically shown to be effective, which is not true, but be this as it may, they never complained about the pro-sex programs never being shown to do anything but promote promiscuity and venereal diseases.

Even we were amazed--and even a bit shocked--to learn that there are sex education programs in the public schools being taught to 13-year-old children (and possibly even younger ones) which, in the name of abstinence promotion, have giggly 13-year-olds “mix body fluids in a cup during lessons about sexually transmitted diseases.” By the way, this is interpreted as the “conveyance of medical facts,” and “what children and parents want,” and an alternative to “a one-sided moralist approach” (Time, 7 Oct. 02). This sounds to us like the old-time sex educators hijacking abstinence programs for their same old agenda. It also seems to us that an awful lot of youths want a one-sided approach that is anti-moralist rather than pro-moralist. By the way, all of this is also done under a rubric called “programs that work,” which is a phrase that declares victory up front rather than after the battle, not to mention the war, has actually been won.

In the Syracuse area, youth in their early teens have been engaging in sexual acts while riding on a school bus, unnoticed by the drivers. In one case, there was a virtual orgy of several youths engaged in sexual activities at the same time, some of which were later interpreted as being assaultive and others consensual, though the assaultive one may not have been very assaultive. As we keep saying, we assume that if this happens in Syracuse, it also happens in a lot of other places.

One response of the authorities was very typical: “we must install surveillance cameras on all school buses, then the problem will be solved” (miscellaneous 11/05 clippings).

An apparently common practice in the US these days is for a juvenile with money, or someone just barely of age, to rent a motel room somewhere and then invite a large number of other juveniles to come to it for a drinking party, usually accompanied by much noisemaking and sex, and often resulting in the juveniles departing in their vehicles in a drunken state, and sometimes having accidents.

What in the world would possess service agencies to run co-ed residences for troubled and homeless youths, as some do? PC run amok??

San Francisco is something like a world capital of homosexualism. In response to Vatican pressure, Catholic Charities in San Francisco, which has several openly homosexual staff members, decided to no longer place children into adoptive homes with homosexual parents, and instead promptly “outsourced” its adoption service to an organization that does, and that is even headed by a GLBT activist (NCR, 13/8/2006). How clever!

Reportedly, there are a half million sex offenders in the US, many of them “child molesters.” If true, that is staggering, and a real sign of the times. However, we suspect that a significant proportion are men over the age of 21 who had consensual sex with teenage girls, which is more in the line of fornication (a moral offense for both of them) than a “real” sex crime, though they would be counted as “child molesters.” Should the “child” become pregnant, political correctness miraculously converts her into a “woman” who has the right to abort at will without the knowledge or consent of her parents.

One in 5 children in the US have received “unwanted” sexual solicitations on the Internet. Maybe these were not so unwanted after all, but flattering, because 14% actually met with someone in person whom they had previously only known through the Net (Time, 3 July 2006). All this raises the question: are there millions of unsuspected predators out there on the loose? Or are many merely sex hungry teenagers themselves?

Downloading songs illegally off the Internet now carries three times the penalty for downloading pornographic images of children (AP in SPS, 28/7/2006).
What is this a sign of the times of? In recent years, there has been a small but very visible outbreak of an epidemic of adult women having sexual relationships with adolescent boys, age roughly 13-17, though sometimes even younger. (The youngest we read about was 8.) Usually, the women are 15 years or more older, and most of them are good-looking; many have been teachers of the boys they got involved with, or mothers of friends of the boys. We know that this is a sign of our times, but it is not clear to us as yet what all this means.

One thing that neither our society, nor its human services, have come to grips with--indeed, they seem very unwilling to come to grips with it--is what it means that for two generations, people have grown up thinking that women having many children by multiple different men, and men fathering multiple children by many different women, and none of them marrying, and the children being reared by a single parent (usually the mother), is normal or just a variant on “the family.” Everyone seems to take it for granted that if an unmarried female has a child, she should--or at least can--rear that child, usually with taxpayer financial support that lasts at least until the child reaches legal majority. The idea that children are not toys, or any kind of object, or chattel, that they do not exist to satisfy any adult’s desires, and that the best interests of the weakest party--the child--must not be trampled, seems to have been forgotten, at least in part in the service of selfish individualism and unrestrained sexual license. Formerly, everyone recognized that the child-rearing situation that held the best chance of turning out well-reared, competent adults was a child being raised in a stable, two-parent (one male and one female) home. People further recognized that this meant that the children born to unwed females would fare much better if they were adopted into a married couple’s home and family--and this was what normatively happened.

Now, the whole idea and child welfare policy of “the best interest of the child” has been abandoned, and that without an explicit and public debate. Today, the vast majority of unwed females keep and try to raise the children they bear. Even when the mothers are not incompetent, such children typically fare poorly--and when the mothers are incompetent on top of it, they fare very badly indeed. Even mothers as young as 13 and 14, even mothers who leave their young children to go out drinking, carousing, drugging, etc., are all permitted to keep their children--until perhaps, finally, when the children are too old to be easily adopted, and to be removed from their parental situation without lasting woundedness, they may finally be taken away after something spectacularly bad happens to them. Let us be perfectly clear: children deserve every opportunity to turn out to be reasonably competent, adjusted, adaptive, contributive adults, and they can best be given this opportunity by being raised in a stable, married family--which will often mean that adoption must be arranged at birth.

A related irony is that hundreds of thousands of Americans go shopping abroad for adoptive children, at huge expense, all because the children who should be taken at birth, or shortly after, from incompetent parents in the US are left to, in essence, rot in place.

Americans are so disgusted with child welfare policies in the US that they adopted 22,000 foreign “orphans” in 2005, up from 9000 in 1995; and they are willing to spend an average of $15,000 each! (Time, 20/3/2006). This is a wonderful generosity--but millions of children in the US are caught hopelessly in the child welfare net.

The good news is that efforts are being made to provide incentives for the adoption out of foster care of older children and teenagers. Those who are not adopted end up with much higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, and imprisonment. Unfortunately, the bad news is that many of these potential adoptees have been so badly wounded that they are almost certain to provide big trouble for their adoptive families, even when they are conscious of their problems and able to verbalize that they wish they did not act as they do (e.g., Time, 5 June 2006).

In state after state in the US, foster children--for whom the state is spending big money--cannot be located. In Florida, 652 such children were missing in mid-2006; in New Jersey, where children in state care were found to be starved, the state’s division for youth was said to be “in a complete crisis”; in New York State, the child abuse hotline has been reluctant to follow up on leads given to it (multiple sources).
*In 2004, the woman who ran Alaska’s foster care program for abused and neglected children was arrested for spouse abuse. A person with a record of domestic abuse would be ineligible to become a foster parent in Alaska (Anchorage Daily News clipping from Fred Robrecht).

*We are running across more and more stories of adult couples adopting several handicapped and/or non-handicapped children simply to qualify for subsidies or so-called “crazy money,” and then neglecting and abusing the children, keeping them locked up, starving them, etc. While we favor subsidized adoption, the child placement and welfare agencies are obviously not doing their jobs.

*As of 2003, there were 525,000 children in the US in foster care, and roughly 20,000 each year “age out,” meaning that they are precipitously thrown out on their own, often with no place to stay, no jobs, and few skills. More than ¼ of them have no high school or GED diploma, and nearly half the girls are pregnant by age 19, usually with no man. Also by the time they age out, 30% of the males have already been incarcerated and more than half have no checking or savings account. Many of these children started out in totally incompetent households or ended up being thrown away, with all the innumerable problems that that usually engenders.

One effort to help such foster care graduates was launched by the Jim Casey Foundation to teach them financial management and get them financially on their feet, even helping these young adults to buy their own houses with a 75% subsidy. However, at least one thrust of this effort seems to us to be a misplaced and poor use of money, namely funding the purchase of homes that cost several hundred thousand dollars (Courier-Journal, 11 Dec. 2005). It would seem that financing these young adults to acquire and maintain less palatial living arrangements would be a better use of the funds, and a more realistic way of getting things going.

*More and more children in Germany are being discovered to be rejected, neglected, and run-down. Some such children get locked up, perhaps in unheated rooms. They are found to live in filth, and often half-starved, often because their “family” (to the degree there is one) is dysfunctional. Sometimes, the situation is only discovered (or made public) after a child has died. When a child thusly dies, the family sometimes hides or chops up the body (Weser Kurier, 6 Nov. 2006; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

*Suffer the little children. Not only are ever more children on some kind of mind drug (usually to control their behavior and/or mood), and at ever younger ages, even before school entry, but now, children get put on multiple such drugs, in ever more powerful combinations, and may remain on such drugs for life. Some children have been on more than 25 different drugs in just a few years, even before they are teenaged. At least 6 million US children have now been “diagnosed” to have a serious mental disorder, not to mention those with less severe diagnoses; at one time, so-called bipolar disorder (manic depression) was considered by psychiatrists to be non-existent in children, but today it is the fastest growing mood diagnosis in children—an explosion that happened just after several new drugs were approved for treating mania in adults. Some families drag their children from psychiatrist to psychiatrist, and put them on one drug after another, until they decide on a diagnosis that “seems the best fit” to them. The use of multiple drugs is problematic enough in adults, because drug combinations often act in ways that neither drug would alone, but in children they are especially dangerous since hardly any studies have been done on the drugs, even singly, with children (11/2006 source items from Joe Osburn).

The voices raised against this widespread assault on children are very few, dismissed and ignored: voices crying in the wilderness. One of the things these few critical voices say is that the problematic behaviors of children—if indeed they are truly problematic and atypical—could be a normal response to the various crazinesses of the child’s world: unstable family situations, overstimulation from constant video and loud music exposure, lack of regularity in physical exercise, lack of regularity and discipline in the home and school, etc.

Collapses of Everything

In this section, we document the ongoing or impending collapse of all sorts of societal institutions, and even entire societies. A lot of people naively think that collapse of structures means liberation (mostly license) for them, not realizing that these structures are necessary for both individual and collective human functioning, and even survival.
Collapse of Western, Mostly American, Society

*The American founding fathers considered their crafting of a new nation and its political system an experiment, and many of them were very fearful whether it would succeed, including Benjamin Franklin. In the middle of the 19th century, the US was the only large functioning nation-state in the world living under anything that approached the idea of democracy (B&C, 1/06). It was this fact that inspired Lincoln to say in his 1863 Gettysburg Address that the Civil War was a testing ground to see whether the American experiment in self-government “or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.”

*At one time, liberal democracy was understood to rest on the pillars of: the rule of law; free elections; the separation of powers; free speech and other basic human rights such as to own property; and religious tolerance. This kind of liberal democracy is diminished or lost when there is rule by courts (and thereby a dramatic diminishment of the separation of powers), and when there are legal attacks on religion, and dissenting speech is stigmatized or outlawed as hate speech. More and more publications have been coming out in recent years documenting so-called “judicial usurpation” and the judiciary’s claim to “judicial supremacy” over the US Constitution. Some writers have asserted that over a period of decades, the US Supreme Court has de facto written a new Constitution (Claremont Review of Books, Summer 2006).

*Never ever in the history of the US, and maybe Canada and Britain too during the last 100 years, has it been illegal to say that a law is a bad law and should be changed, and that whatever the law mandated should not be mandated, or what a law forbade should not be forbidden. That has always been allowed as free speech. But those days are over. The PC have begun to argue that if the law allows abortion, homosexuality, homosexual marriage, etc., then verbal opposition to these should be considered crimes, or should be legally or judicially defined as such. In the 1850s, this would have meant that speaking against slavery would have been a crime! Whenever dissidence with political correctness is criminalized, democracy takes a big hit. For instance, in Britain, an elderly couple expressed concern over a public library distributing leaflets that promoted homosexuality, upon which police showed up at their home and questioned them for an hour. A British writer opined on a radio show that it was not a good idea to give homosexual couples children to adopt, and again, she was contacted by police and told that she was being put on a list. Things like this are already happening even before such behavior has been legally criminalized—just as happened in Nazi Germany where things began to be persecuted that were perfectly legal (NCR, 21/5/2006).

*A Duke University ethics professor, Noah Pickus, wrote that America is faced with the “difficult task of sustaining a civilization in the absence of a dominant culture, ethnic identity, or consensus on the meaning of constitutional values” (Claremont Review of Books, Summer 2006). We say the task is impossible, except that there is now one dominant value: modernism.

*There has been a small avalanche of books coming out hysterically warning that the “Christianists,” Christocrats, Christofascists and theocrats are taking over America and destroying democracy and liberty (e.g., FT, 8/2006). Even more amazing is that some of these writers are Jewish, and even rabbis (e.g., Rabbi James Rudin), because if there is any class that Jews should be afraid of these days, it is Muslims, not Christians. Already even lowly politicians in some European countries can only go about with bodyguards if they take any position disapproved of by Muslims. One thing some of these writers are doing is equating Christians who take their faith seriously with followers of a tiny sect we had never heard of launched by R. L. Rushdouny. Another thing they do is spin conspiracy theories that there are invisible actors behind the scene, much like Senator McCarthy’s “communists” under every rock in the 1950s.

What these writers, like most liberals today, do not acknowledge is that until the 1970s, the US had always been run by “theocrats.” They also imply that the libertarian license of today had always existed, and that the theocrats want to take it away. The truth is that today’s license is new and unique, and that the single biggest threat to democracy since the 1970s has been the judiciary and its liberal supporters, who want to rule without a popular mandate, and who routinely overrule the electorate and the legislatures, even when they have 80% of the population behind them.
At the same time there has been another avalanche of books trying to prove the point that Islam is no threat to anyone if only it were not misunderstood, or if only people were not fanatical about it. The problem is that a Muslim who is not fanatical is not a real Muslim, and does not take Islam seriously. In fact, such a Muslim is really a liberal, like so many liberal Christians who do not really believe in Christianity, and who celebrate the wonderful diversity of all other religions except serious Islam.

*Here is what various people have said it takes to have a democracy: civic engagement, a culture of mutual aid, a basis of self-governing communities below the state level, a preparedness to “put moral chains upon one’s own appetites” (Edmund Burke), lots of old-fashioned virtues by a lot of citizens, and religions that teach and uphold those virtues (several US founding fathers).

According to one analysis, a huge problem of the Western left has been that it wanted to escape the bonds of community, rather than build and uphold community. As Susan Sontag put it, the cure for America would be “rock, grass (meaning drugs), better orgasms, freaky clothes, grooving on nature—really grooving on anything” (B&C, 7/2006).

Already in the 1820s, the astute French observer of the American scene, Alexis de Tocqueville, warned that democratic countries paid for their democracy with a “heart disease” of erosion of attachment to kin, neighbors, fellow-citizens and God. Now, some people call our society of modernism a “post-religious, post-familial, post-political” one (CRB, Summer 2006).

Scholars have said that one of the contributors to the decline of citizen participation in civic and voluntary affairs has been the steadily increasing time that Americans on the average spend commuting to and from work. When one spends 2, 3 or even 4 hours every day thusly commuting, it is pretty obvious that one has hardly any time left to donate freely and generously to public causes and the common weal (Newsweek, 1 May 2006). This increase in commute time has also contributed to eating fast food breakfasts on the run. Other things also are apt to be compressed into the commuting time, such as personal grooming, making numerous phone calls (both personal and business), and even reading the newspaper.

Also, on what used to be empty country roads, even in the back country, large houses are increasingly being built next to another on large lots, so that one may no longer even feel that one is out in the country. Some of these houses are occupied by city-slickers who commute for hours sucking dry the cities during the daytime and then retiring to their safe and tranquil country estates at night.

One of the major philosophers of liberal democracy (not to be confused with today’s liberalism) was John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). One of his teachings was that a society could not be free unless its citizens had social virtues, including the habit of taking personal responsibility (CRB, Summer 2006).

*The government seems to have missed that lesson. Deficit spending combined with the graying of America will inevitably mean eventual staggering tax increases, yet larger deficits, or most painful cuts in spending. There is nothing mysterious about this, but what could make it even worse is higher energy costs.

More than 90% of the US federal deficit is being covered by foreigners investing in the US and its security papers. For instance, just between 1/2001 and 8/2003, foreigners bought $910 billion in US Treasury securities. If they ever want their money back, there will be hell to pay (Newsweek, 8 Nov. 2004).

Many citizens also seem to have missed that lesson: the year 2005 was the first since the depression year of 1933 in which the average American spent more than his/her income. The average household credit card debt was a staggering $9,312 (Time, 5 June 2006). How will they ever pay this off?

In 2005, a new record was achieved in the US in that the personal savings of Americans for the first time ever dropped to zero. Some people say that this reflects the national character. In 1984, the personal savings rate was 10.8%, and has drifted down ever since. Even as recently as 2004, it was still 1.8% (Newsweek, 22/8/2005). It is additionally amazing considering that this trend was happening at the same time as Americans learned that their pensions were systematically being vaporized.
An American financier said that things will not work until Americans give up their "short-term-itis" (what we call "here-and-now-ism") of "I want it all, I want it now, and I don't want to give up anything" (Newsweek, 12 June 2006).

Economist Robert Samuelson put it in a similar way: "We Americans want it all: endless and secure energy supplies; low prices; no pollution; less global warming; no new power plants (or oil and gas drilling, either) near people or pristine places. This is a wonderful wish list, whose only shortcoming is the minor inconvenience of massive inconsistency" (Newsweek, 15/5/2006).

*A columnist said outright that unless the US political system (mostly on the federal level) is purged of improprieties, "we'll lose the democracy" (M. Ivins, in SPS, 3 June 2006). Losing democracy seems more likely than politicians putting the country first!

This is a follow-up to our report (4-10/2005 TIPS issue) on drivers no longer yielding to emergency vehicles even when their flashing lights and sirens are on. Apparently, a related phenomenon is worldwide, namely refusing to slow down or stop for roadblocks, or for passing military convoys, and helps explain why such vehicles then get shot up in areas such as the Middle East. The Italian car that got fired on by a US roadblock in Iraq, killing one and wounding a second person in the car, was traveling at great speed, and had been warned to slow down by flashing lights, hand and arm signals, and warning shots (AP in SPS, 5 March 2005).

Another related phenomenon is not making allowances for invalid transport vehicles. In Syracuse, a man made a turn right in front of such a van with 5 handicapped people in it, causing injuries in both vehicles (SPS, 14/5/2005).

*African-American culture and its media are becoming ever more ones in which lawlessness and crime are celebrated. An African-American columnist in the Atlanta Constitution (SPS, 15/1/2006) lamented: "Is this why the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. made the ultimate sacrifice? Is this why Rosa Parks refused to yield her seat?" etc. Popularizing a thug culture, she said, is vastly more threatening to black America than racism! And, she said, "few prominent black activists raise their voices against this...."

Even the "good guy" of hip-hop rapping (a "Saigon" whom we had never heard of) had been a teen gang member, part of multiple shootings, and spent a 6-year stint in prison. What makes him lovable to the PC (e.g., Newsweek, 25/1/2006) is that he raps about the hypocrisy of churches, though they are one of the few institutions left at least somewhat standing in his culture.

*We can talk until we're blue in the face about the fact that schools are expected to deal with, and in fact make up for, every societal craziness and decadence, when they cannot do this. But sometimes, specific vignettes make the point better than broad abstract pronouncements. So here is one example: one rural US Midwestern school district planned (in early 2006) to spend $100,000 on just one information program about just one drug (methamphetamines) to just one class level of students (grade 8) (Newsweek, 10 April 2006). (Of course, the $100,000 was federal money which, because it comes down "from Washington," never seems as real to people as what comes directly out of their own pockets, even though of course the only money Washington has to dole out comes from the pockets of millions of people all across the country.) None of this addresses other drugs, or other grades, or anti-drug measures other than education. If this can be the case in a relatively rural area, imagine how much more expensive it would be in urban areas which are larger, and usually much more decadent. This also illustrates how drug programs alone could eat up the entire national wealth if PPP minds had their way.

*In professional sports, performance drugging seems to have become normative. The amazing thing is that everyone (tens of thousands of them, or more) lies. We can recall only one sports figure in recent years who admitted it.

*Here is what it has come to: a major mainstream news weekly, Time, that used to be very conservative, reviewed the film "Shortbus" (21/8/2006) as the "first middle-class porno film" in which half a dozen young folk have sex "as the mood strikes them," "hard core and up-close," and called it an "unmissable" "nice relationship comedy." Next maybe: don't miss the riveting arena show with spectacular entertainments and display of skills, rare endangered wild beasts, and the absolutely engrossing mutilation and slaughter of a band of hold-out Christians, followed by co-
copulatory bare-back and circle sex by a gorgeous band of male gays, to the accompaniment of heart-pulsing spirit-soaring music. A must-see!

*Let them eat dance groups.* Hispanic people in the US--many of whom are really Afro-Hispanics, and very recent immigrants--have been reported repeatedly to fare even worse than African-Americans on all sorts of social indicators. The Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors (foundation) decided to do something about this, and awarded the Spanish Action League of our county $100,000. To do what? Put on a Latino festival on 1 month's notice. The money will be used to bring in more bands and more dance groups. This seems to be PC people's idea of how to solve problems of social degeneracy (SPS, 14/7/2006).

*All over the US, families of soldiers abroad have been receiving phone calls or letters telling them falsely that the soldier had died in action or was missing. What has been unclear is whether this is an organized campaign, or whether there are that many independent and different mean and crazy people who go through all the trouble to do this sort of thing. If it was an organized effort, one wonders who would be behind that.*

*This should be very reassuring: A “mere” 2000 bombs get planted every year in the US (Time, 21/8/2006).*

**Collapse of Other Nations**

*The book Tower of Babel (Gold, 2005) argues that the UN was founded on a solid basis but has dramatically lost its way, and calls for a sweeping reform or the creation of an alternative. The author argues that among other things, the General Assembly fell under the control of dictators and totalitarian regimes. Instead of defending the weakest, it often joined the aggressors and abusers.*

Another book, The Future of the United Nations, says that the UN (including WHO and UNESCO), dominated by multicultural Third World nations, is hopelessly corrupt and ineffective. The UN does not even own up to mass rape of children by UN “peacekeepers” in central Africa, as reported on in an earlier TIPS. Instead of condemning the world’s most repressive regimes, the UN invites them to sit on its Human Rights Commission. As said, the author says it’s hopeless (Claremont RB, Summer 2006).

*One problem with the information explosion is that one so often gets contradictory messages on a particular topic. For instance, we get bombarded with messages about formerly wealthy African countries becoming basket cases of poverty and famine (usually of their own making), and at the same time, we are told that in Africa today, overweight and obese children outnumber the hungry 3 to one (Discover, 12/2005).*

Rhodesia in southern Africa was once a wealthy land. Then it was handed over from Britain to independence in 1980, and promptly descended into dictatorship, tyranny, poverty, famine, homelessness, and even incipient genocide, plus a quarter of its population acquired HIV, fulfilling the worst predictions of its former overlords. Some day, its remaining population may beg to be taken over again by Britain.

The Congo is a huge artificial country wracked from day 1 by political, religious, ethnic and economic strife. The newspapers tell us that its official language is French, but “African languages are also spoken”—and lots of them! Now we are told that the Congo has seen the light and has become democratic, which we suspect is a PC lie to salvage the image of multiculturalism. As noted elsewhere in this TIPS issue, the Congo is another very wealthy country in which almost everyone is poor (SPS, 23/7/2006).

The radical Islamists who took over Somalia in 2006 said we “have to choose the way our people want to go or learn.... Television, for instance, misleads the people and teaches them bad character and a culture from some other countries that we don’t share. And we know what leads our people astray” (Newsweek, 31/7/2006). Who can argue with this? And once again, they don’t want the PC kind of diversity and multiculturalism, though when Somalians come to North America, they are “celebrated” as such, as they were in Syracuse. What irony!

*The media all around us (including Time and Newsweek) have been running features telling us that India will be one of the world’s most powerful economies soon. We remember similar
predictions being made in the 1970s about Japan possibly overtaking the US, and then the Japanese bubble burst. We predict that something similar will happen to India for at least 4 reasons. (a) Few natural resources, (b) crowdedness, (c) a growing AIDS epidemic, and (d) too much diversity, hence strife, persecutions, terrorism, etc. For instance, since 1993, there have been incessant bombings in Bombay between Muslims and Hindus, with many hundreds of deaths, and there are areas where there are even greater proportions of Muslims than in Bombay.

*The Soviet Union collapsed because of false economic theories and its junking of the environment. Now Russia is threatened with collapse from the advent of post-communist modernism. First, after 1990, people started to drink insanely, and still do. Then they took to other street drugs and promiscuity, which in turn caused an HIV/AIDS explosion. While Russia's economy is booming because of its energy sources, the debilitation of its population is a major counterforce that threatens to arrest the economic upswing, and maybe do even worse. Many Russians believe that people with HIV should be isolated—and that is what it may take to keep the virus from spreading into the entire population (31/8/2006 German news report; source item from Susanne Hartfiel).

Miscellaneous Collapses

*While vehicles are being blamed for much of the energy consumption in the world, it turns out that buildings actually consume half of the energy used up in the US, and better building design could contribute as much to energy savings as vehicle design.

People are complaining about the cost of fuel, but in Paris in 1856, a family had to pay more than 50 times as much as an American family today does to cook and heat a home. The fuel to cook a dinner then cost as much as the dinner itself (Smithsonian, 6/2006).

*The US tax laws are so complicated (e.g., since 1986, there have been 15,000 changes!) that it costs taxpayers a total of about $150 billion to comply, more than all households spend on electricity in a year. Even at that, 60% now need professional help to fill out their annual tax forms (Newsweek, 17/4/2006).

*Telergy was one of those fabulous growth firms of the late 1990s-early 2000s. It "sold" communication access. When you walked into its building in Syracuse, it was a palace, a bit remindful of one of Saddam's palaces, with probably the largest one-piece luxury carpet in Syracuse in its huge atrium. The offices were furnished with heavy high-quality furniture, and yet many more of the same were still unpacked in storage areas. The functionaries got fabulous salaries. The next day, the firm was bankrupt, the workers gone. The collapse was so sudden that many of their desks were still filled with all their desk tools, and even personal mementoes and decorations.

**"A week ago, there existed a deeply entrenched and intertwined military and civilian administrative apparatus that appeared to have secured its lordship over the country far into the future. The grey automobiles of the officers hastened through the streets of Berlin, and policemen stood like pillars of might in the public places. In the offices and ministries, there was enthroned a seemingly invincible bureaucracy. All that existed in Berlin yesterday morning—but by yesterday afternoon, no more traces of it could be found." This is a report by a German journalist published in a Berlin newspaper on 10 Nov. 1918. This was the result of the largely left-wing revolution in Germany that led to the fall of the emperor and the end of World War I.

Amazingly, pretty much the same thing repeated itself in the night between the 9th and 10th of November 1989 when the Berlin wall fell, and the East German communist regime collapsed.

*There is a company with a name that very much appeals to us: Kenyon Worldwide Disaster Services. However, it turns out that it is mostly a mortician company ready to move in wherever there are a large number of corpses.

News of the Season(s)

As always in this December issue, we bemoan the sensualistic time illiteracy of our modernistic culture, which cannot bear to wait for the real dates of holidays to come around, but has
to celebrate them whenever it wants to. Of course, materialism plays a big role in this as well, as the longer a “season” can be extended, the more money can be made from selling merchandise related to it.

*In 2006, it struck us that there is apparently no holiday left except New Year’s that has not become a holiday season. Even July 4, once strictly celebrated on 4 July and 4 July only, is now a season lasting roughly 3 weeks. People start letting off fireworks around 20 June, and continue for several days after July 4.

*During the “St. Patrick’s Day season” of 2006, we noticed something entirely new, at least to us: an amazingly large number of people participating in St. Patrick’s Day observances and parades were dressed as fools, or at the very least wore fools’ headgear. We had never thought of St. Patrick’s Day being associated with foolery, and are surprised that the Irish are not putting a stop to this as it constitutes a negative image message.

*The second annual (in 2006) May Fest at Syracuse University was held in...April. Incongruously, it included “African drumming.”

*What is wrong with this picture: It is late June—yes, even July already, the temperature is in the 90s—and the sports pages regale us with pages of hockey teams playing on ice.

*One had hardly recovered from the endless Black History Month that had nothing to do with history than the “season” of Juneteenth (19 June, the anniversary of when news of the emancipation proclamation became known to the slaves in Texas in 1865) began to be celebrated, way ahead of 19 June 2006 (SPS, 5 June 2006).

*Sometimes, through the eyes and ears of a culturally and linguistically naïve person, new light is shed on a practice taken for granted by everybody else.

When the TIPS editor came to the US in 1950, he was mystified for several years about Christmas cards wishing “Season’s Greetings.” He only knew of felicitations for Christmas or New Year’s, and the only “season” of that time of year he knew of was winter, or the 12 days of Christmas. Furthermore, wasn’t wishing a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, or something like that, much clearer than a vague “greeting for the season”? It took some time before people were willing to spell out honestly that this form of greeting had been developed by Jews to be polite to Christians without acknowledging or legitimizing a Christian feast, and had been adopted by a few Christians as a precaution against offending someone who might be Jewish by wishing them Merry Christmas.

However, when Chrishanukkah arrived in 2004, even the New York Board of Rabbis had had enough and said, in effect, “Oh, let Christians have their Christmas, and Jews have their Hanukkah, and forget about an everybody-pleasing ‘happy holidays’ or ‘season’s greetings’” (FT, 12/2005).

Also when the TIPS editor came to America in 1950, workers got 5 holidays off in a year: New Years, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas day. African-American workers often took off Lincoln’s birthday on their own. By and by, ever more holidays were added, until state workers got 12 days off a year. Also, Washington’s and Lincoln’s birthdays, which had been observed but without a day off, were abolished and telescoped into President’s Day, which was at an entirely new date. Further, the celebration of almost all holidays except New Years, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, got shifted to Monday so as to yield a “long weekend.” So now, there are official days of certain holidays, and the actual days when they are being “observed.”

*In 2006, public Christmas trees and street decorations were put up the earliest ever in our locale: Nov. 10. The explanation for it was that it had always been like this, but people merely think it is earlier because it had been so unseasonably warm. This was a lie. Christmas light strings were strung on trees that still had most of their foliage. On TV, we noted a show with a Christmas theme on 19 Nov., again before Thanksgiving. Maybe all this explains why November was “Prematurity Awareness Month.” Unfortunately, as our newspaper put it, City Hall was illuminated at night “in honor of Prematurity Awareness Month.” At least it wasn’t in honor of prematurity itself.
We also saw the first Christmas decorations in a store in late August, together with Halloween season decorations. In grocery stores, Christmas decorations appeared in 2006 a few days after Halloween. Formerly, they appeared days after Thanksgiving, a month or so later.

Also, we saw Christmas trees being tossed out of homes on Boxing Day already.

In 2006, we had to conclude sadly that we, and a very small number of friends, seem to be the last people on earth who know that Advent precedes Christmas, that Christmas starts the evening of Dec. 24, and that the month before that is not Christmas. We realized that when we discovered that even Christian radio stations were playing Christmas songs in Advent. Our Christmas is a lonely one, because it starts a day or two before other people’s Christmas trees start coming down. If one waits until then, one can pick up a free Christmas tree on the curb for the rest of the 10 or 11 days of Christmas, not to mention the final-final conclusion of the Christmas season at the time of Candlemas.

*Happy Jewish Christmas! A Jewish woman in Florida got sick and tired of hearing the same secular “Christmas” songs played wherever she was, such as “Silver Bells,” “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire),” etc. So for December 2006, she launched a Hanukkah radio station that broadcast Hanukkah themes around the clock. The problem is that it turned out to be as secular as the “Christian” Christmas, featuring the “Barenaked Ladies,” the vulgar Dr. Ruth Sexheimer, and comedian Al Franken.

*Herod: “Kill All in the Womb Too.” In 2005, as in previous years, Planned Parenthood has put out “Choice on Earth” cards for the “holiday season.” These cards are for sale to be given (sent) to others with the message that the cost of the card is a “holiday gift with real meaning.”

*On December 27, 2005, the 3rd day of the real Christmas season, local stores had cleared out the Christmas merchandise from their shelves, which were fully stocked with...Valentine’s Day items!

*A Catholic Mass for Christmas day was celebrated in early December, and videotaped to be broadcast to “shut-ins” on or around Christmas day. This was still when the pre-Christmas Advent season had hardly gotten started. In addition, the newspaper referred to the Mass as a “performance,” which in a sense it was, but Catholics went up in arms at the word “performance” rather than at the fact that it was 3 weeks before Christmas (SPS, 30/12/2005).

*In India in 1997, there was a “celebration of a convergence of holidays”: the last days of the month of Ramadan, the final night of Hanukkah, the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, and Christmas (SPS, 17/11/2006).

*The Sunday Parade magazine insert to our local newspaper of Christmas day 2005 carried a 2-page article by African-American poet Maya Angelou, extolling diversity by featuring the glories of 6 “holidays” during “holiday season”: Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa (3 endlessly juxtaposed ones), plus to our surprise the Chinese New Year (starting 29 January and lasting 15 days) and the Vietnamese Tet (which we thought was a version of the Chinese New Year). But the PC author was dissatisfied because the big diversity of Islam was lacking in this farrago, so Ramadan was also included as part of the “holiday season,” even though in 2005, it fell in October! So “the holiday season” is now October through mid-February!! And nobody but we seems to notice this PC tour-de-force, or to find it pathetically ridiculous.

*When parts of New York State were part of New France, the French built a fort in what is now Syracuse. The fort has been reconstructed as a museum, and once in awhile, a Catholic Mass is said in its chapel. In 2006, for the first time, the fort featured a Kwanzaa display during December—actually, well ahead of Kwanzaa, which like Christmas is now increasingly being observed any old time. If it’s good enough for Christmas, it’s good enough for anybody else’s holidays to also be made flexible.

*Poor African-Americans! After observing the “Christmas Season” for about six weeks, they are not allowed to fall into a recuperative exhaustion like most Americans, but in 2006, they had to leap right into the 7-day Kwanzaa season starting 26 December, which is supposed to be a harvest
Thanksgiving, but was fixed to compete with Christian Christmas instead of the November Thanksgiving, or the October Thanksgiving in many other countries.

*Everybody has heard of computers, but who knows what a computus is? It is a guideline for calculating the date of Easter. This used to be crucial, because much of the liturgical year of Christianity revolved around Easter, namely the beginning of Lent until the Sunday (Trinity Sunday) after Pentecost.

In 2006, we noted that the “Easter season” began in the stores prior to the advent of the Lenten season.

*Diversity and multicultural months and seasons were not good enough in one school in Oswego, NY; it scheduled an entire multicultural school year in 2005-06 (SPS, 10 June 2006).

Miscellaneous Human Service & Other News

*This is a follow-up item to our last TIPS issue on schooling. Near Syracuse, the Onondaga tribe of the Iroquois has a semi-autonomous territory called the Onondaga Nation. It has a school for its children that, despite very small class sizes (5-13) and expenditures of well above $37,000 per child per year (!), has very low achievement scores. The discrepancy between what gets spent at that school, and what the children learn, is phenomenal, and tells many stories (Syracuse Post-Standard, 12/2006).

*People who get repeatedly, systematically, and deeply wounded tend to get “crazified” by this, and not to think and act rationally in response. We have commented before in TIPS about the irrationality of that sector (dare we say vocal sector?) of the deaf that would deny children operations and equipment that could give them hearing, preferring instead to have them--indeed, to have as many children as possible--grow up deaf. Another expression of this craziness was the recent eviction of the incoming president of Gallaudet University (the US national university for the deaf) because of student and faculty protests that she was “not deaf enough” to be president. What made her “not deaf enough” was that she had learned, and relied on, lip-reading for much of her education and did not learn to use sign language until she was in her 20s (SPS, 30 Oct. 2006).

*The Americans With Disabilities Act was passed in 1990. It was hailed as a sort of salvation, the answer for impaired people, but by 2004, just as big a percentage of “disabled” people (65%) were unemployed as in 1990. If anything, employers are more leery of hiring “disabled” people because the chances are high that they get more trouble from them with constant lawsuits, or threats thereof, then benefits or gratitude (yes, many ordinary people are grateful to have jobs).

*How doing things on a large scale, in a formalized and objectified fashion, and from a distance, can become very problematic was once again illustrated in the fact that it is now forbidden (by US federal government agencies) to prepare certain foods the old-fashioned way that gave them their flavor and distinctiveness. In fact, it is illegal to make certain foods even privately, because they would have to be made in a way that violates government regulations. For instance, for centuries, meats were cured by a combination of salting and exposure to air over time, and in warmer temperatures. But once meat processing began to be done in huge plants, with unskilled labor and with an emphasis on speed and economy, safety declined; and the government stepped in with rules and regulations requiring refrigeration. Thus, ancient, long-proven ways of meat curing, learned and perfected by artisans over the centuries, are gone (NYT, 22/11/2006), and soon, so will be the foods they made.

*Tyberg, T., & Rothaus, K. (1995). Hospital smarts: the insider’s survival guide to your hospital, your doctor, the nursing staff--and your bill! New York: Hearst Books. This book was written by 2 physicians as physicians (rather than patients), and reflects their roles. Thus, it spends much space explaining medical terms and forms to a reader, how to tell one level of physician from another, etc. It does not emphasize at all the dangers of contemporary hospital medicine, e.g., from its complexity, from devaluation of very ill handicapped people, from hospital-acquired infections, etc. Unlike some other such books, it does explain many common procedures, and it gives samples of various forms (medical history form, hospital intake form, hospital bill, etc.) as it explains them. It
also advises that one keep a notebook and pen by one’s hospital bed to keep track of all sorts of things one wants to ask questions about, and to make sure that surgeons are going to operate on the correct limb, etc. The book encourages readers to fill out both a “living will” and a health care proxy, but it says there are no right or wrong positions on these, and that everyone’s individual wish should be respected. One noteworthy remark the authors make is that “every aspect of hospital care costs more money because of liability issues” (p. 52).

*An update on the Medicare Prescription Drug so-called “benefit.” As reported on in an earlier TIPS, the new Part D of the US Medicare medical plan for the elderly is not working. In one US state alone, beneficiaries had to choose among 40 drug plans and 49 managed health care plans; one resident said “I don’t think I’m stupid, but there’s too many options” (Newsweek, 5 Dec. 2005). Furthermore, those people who had been receiving additional coverage from Medicaid (the government medical plan for the poor) will no longer be covered, because the new Plan D of Medicare that was supposed to cover them has such a low coverage limit (Mouth, 1-4/2006).

*Torrey, E. F., & Miller, J. (2001). The invisible plague: The rise of mental illness from 1750 to the present. New Brunswick, NJ & London: Rutgers University Press. The contemporary shrink culture insists vehemently that schizophrenia and “depression” are genetically transmitted brain diseases—despite (this book tells us) a large body of studies to the contrary. So once more, we are dealing with ideology overriding science, or ideology even masquerading as science.

*In 2004, the New York State Office of Mental Health put out a series of substantial pamphlets on different kinds of mental disorders and related topics. On the cover of the one on Schizophrenia, it said that “schizophrenia is a chronic, severe and disabling brain disease.” On the cover of the one on Bipolar Disorder, it said that it is “a brain disorder.” Apparently, distinctions were meant to be made between brain diseases and brain disorders. The one on Depression calls it an “illness.” All the pamphlets are heavily within the idiom of the medical model, and make great promises about mind drugs.

*Nathan, P. E., & Gorman, J. M. (Eds.). (1998). A guide to treatments that work. New York: Oxford University Press. The very misleadingness of the title of this book is instructive. It focuses on what presumably works with particular American Psychiatric Association diagnoses, rather than on what works with anybody because it is intrinsically valid and powerful. Thus, it is yet another de facto non-universalist—or even anti-universalistic—work in human services. However, one interesting thing we do learn from this book is that little controlled research has been done on what might work for people who have so-called “dissociative disorders” (marked by much unconsciousness, multiply personalities, hysterical manifestations, etc.). This is particularly remarkable considering that modern psychiatry largely grew up on such disorders in the time of Charcot and Freud, more than 100 years ago!

Furthermore, the book notes that those treatments that have the greatest amount of empirical evidence behind them are often not the ones that are used by shrinks. For instance, the behavioral treatments tend to have the greatest amount of research behind them, but shrinks are more likely to use rationalistic and cognitive approaches. Furthermore, the bulk of the relevant research has been conducted in structured clinical settings with little evidence that the same results would be obtained in typical applied settings.

*Shapiro, A. K., & Shapiro, E. (1997). The powerful placebo: From ancient priest to modern physician. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. The Shapiros are considered to be the leading experts on the placebo effect. It is therefore remarkable that to them, just about all of psychiatry and psychotherapy is placebo, but that the shrink world is impervious to any and all evidence to that effect. Further, they say that any psychotherapeutic (or even drug) effect would have to be even more effective than one in which “patients” place high expectancy, such as pleasant and prestigious office settings, friendly staff, being dealt with quickly and punctually, being given extensive “evaluations,” etc. (source review from Raymond Lemay).

In the 1980s, a great many parents of handicapped children in Germany arranged to have them sterilized, especially if they were female. In some cases, the operation did not stop at sterilization but went as far as hysterectomy. Much like with abortions in the US, sterilizations did not have to be reported, and therefore exact data do not exist. Often, parents did this in response to pressure from service agencies. One rationale, particularly in residential settings, was that then the agencies would not have to exercise a great deal of oversight over these girls and young women, and could let them engage in any sex that they wanted to. In some special education programs and sheltered workshops, as many as 50% of the girls are believed to have been sterilized, and the vast majority without their knowledge. Parents themselves sometimes said that this enabled mentally retarded people to exercise their right to love and companionate sexuality.

*In 3/2005, Marc Tumeinski brought to our attention that there is a “Project Prevention or Crack,” an American organization founded in 1999 that pays drug addicts and alcoholics to be sterilized. As an alternative to sterilization, the Project also offers long-lasting (mostly abortifacient) contraceptive drugs and implants. Some 1050 persons have taken up the offer in the program’s first 5 years. Almost all of these have been women. This is somewhat surprising because the payment is a mere $200 which would appeal to hardly anyone other than someone who is very poor, but it may look very attractive to somebody desperate for the next fix. The Project uses some of the language of “choice,” but there has also been a lot of traditional eugenic language (2004 source material from “BBC News”).

*Malarek, V. (2003). The Natashas: The new global sex trade. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Viking. We are told that since the 1970s, there have been 4 global waves of trafficking of women for the sex trade. The first wave in the 1970s consisted of South East Asian women, particularly from Thailand and the Philippines. The second wave in the early 1980s was made up mostly of African women from Nigeria and Ghana. The third wave in the 1990s came from Latin America, and apparently especially so from Colombia, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. The most recent wave shortly thereafter came from countries of the former Soviet Union and adjacent former communist ones. Recruitment is aimed especially at vulnerable young women, and typically under false pretenses of good job opportunities in foreign lands. Among the vulnerable are huge numbers of graduates or run-aways from orphanages in Eastern Europe, or abandoned youths. The number of such youths in Eastern European countries is enormous. However, a certain percentage are aware that they are being recruited for sexual servitude.

However, even the ones who sign up voluntarily with that understanding are usually unprepared for the extent of servitude that is forced upon them, such as servicing up to 20 men a day. The sex trade is very consumptive in that many prostitutes, including children as young as 12, soon end up sick or dead, and eventually all become too old. What happens with the sick and older ones is a huge question. Countries where there are a lot of men with some extra money are the major “consumers” of these women, and this has been largely Europe, Japan, the US, Canada, Israel, some of the Arab countries, South Korea, even China, and sometimes Thailand itself, so that the land of recruitment can also be the land of consumption. However, it is not necessarily the native men in these latter countries who are the consumers, but tourists to them. Not all the women recruited are exported. According to some estimates, 150,000 prostitutes from the former Soviet Republics work in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the highways around them. Hardly anything is being done to curb this sex trade, except to some degree by the US. The United Nations has actually colluded in it, some of its nations are participants in the trade, some are consumers, and there is much cover-up. In some countries, there is a certain amount of tolerance for importing sex workers in order to keep local girls out of the trade. Some Catholic clergy have done heroic services to save young women, some at threat to their lives (source material from Ray Lemay).