

# RELIGION

Journal of the KSR



## Theological Issues and Christian-Jewish Dialogue

By S. Daniel Breslauer

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During the 1960s Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel explored the possibilities and limitations in interfaith dialogue. He considered "what we all have in common" and "what we can do together." He also drew a boundary which he would not cross. Fearful of the long conversionist orientation of Christian dialogue with Jews he suggested that questions of theology, of doctrine, and of commitment to religious ideology should be avoided. In the context of the renewed relationship between Jews and Christians of which Heschel's warm reception in the Christian community was one example his caution can be understood. As the years have passed, however, that caution becomes more and more suspect. It is impossible to believe in or be inspired by "religion in general." Heschel's "depth-theology" which sought to isolate the universal often overlooked the inherent particularism of religious forms. We experience religious life as individuals following specific programs of action and belief.

When those particular beliefs and deeds are deemphasized the spirit, vitality, and attractiveness of religious life suffers. It is time to renew Jewish-Christian dialogue in a more serious manner. Precisely those ideas and commitments which lie at the heart of the religious life must be discussed.

There are three areas of theological concern that should form the basis for dialogue: the religious experience and its basic elements, the conception of deity and its implications, and the hope for salvation and redemption offered by the religious tradition. In this essay each of these areas will be represented by a specific example: holiness, the concept "son of God," and the belief in resurrection. In each case I will state a Jewish and Christian approach to the issue. While there are clearly differences among both Jews and Christians on these concerns my purpose here will not be to offer a definitive statement of the theological idea involved but to show how dialogue can proceed. The point of each example will be that through confronting opposing views both partners in dialogue emerge more conscious of their own limitations and more able to look creatively at their own tradition.

### *The Experience of the Holy*

A central religious experience is that of the holy. Normal existence is often experienced as too limited, too predictable, to exhaust the nature of the universe. Human beings sometimes encounter an intrusion into nature, an awesome, shattering experience that precipitates a revised view of reality. That experience of the transcendent, of that which exceeds the boundaries of the natural order is "the holy." Religious traditions usually seek to contain the holy within their definitions of the real, to provide a means of withstanding the onslaught of the holy and of obtaining a glimpse of that which lies beyond normal experience.

The modern world is particularly deprived of its

sense of the holy. The world has become "disenchanted" through science and social science. Neither the social sphere nor the natural sphere seem to hold the mystery and excitement associated with the experience of the holy. Is there a source of holiness upon which human beings can draw? Are there means for establishing a relationship with the holy even in the midst of secular society? What is the nature of such transcendent experience—can it permeate our daily lives or does it lift us beyond our ordinary expectations and considerations? Who can attain this holiness—is it reserved only for a selected few or can anyone who desires experience it? These questions are urgent ones in a world which obscures the experience of the holy and sometimes even seeks to deny its existence. They also indicate the four elements involved in any religious understanding of holiness. These are: the source of holiness, the means of achieving it, the realm in which holiness is experienced, and the community contended to have access to it. A religion seeks to explain the origins of this intrusion into the natural order, to describe how to cope with it, to define it in relationship to natural experience, and to identify those with a specialized talent for it.

**J**ews and Christians share a common sense of the source of holiness: the divine person, God. In answering the fourth question both reject a theocratic elitism that limits access to the holy to a select priesthood. Both Jews and Christians see themselves as part of a holy people, a priestly community. Holiness is not restricted to a leadership group within society; it is the common gift of all members within the community. This shared perspective is important in the modern setting. From both Jews and Christians it is possible to learn that holiness is a real human possibility. By looking beyond natural causation to a divine source of creativity all human beings can transcend the limitations of nature. From the dialogue among Jews and Christians modern men and women can learn to experience the broader significance and meaning of human existence.

Beyond this commonality, however, there are important differences. For the Jew holiness is achieved through deeds, through fulfilling commandments. As the rabbinic sources declared, "He who fulfills the words of the sages is holy." Action and concrete deeds are the path a Jew follows to holiness. The Christian, however, enters a holy state of being; holiness is a condition of existence rather than the result of specific actions. By association with the source of holiness the Christian obtains a share in holiness.

This difference can be illustrated by the way in which Jews and Christians have looked at the promises of a restored Jerusalem. The New Testament book of Hebrews has caught an essential difference between Judaism and Christianity when it contrasts the very concrete realism of the Jewish emphasis upon the place of Jerusalem and the temple cult with the symbolic and abstract understanding of the Holy City in Christianity. The difference between a spiritual cult and a physical

one cannot be reduced to that between an advanced religion and a primitive one. Judaism emphasizes the physical as the appropriate realm of human action. Holiness is to be experienced here and now as a result of the human transformation of the world. Through action the Jew sanctifies the world. For the Christian a person is sanctified through grace. The task is not that of changing the physical or political environment but of accepting the loving gift provided by the spiritual. Holiness transcends rather than permeates ordinary existence. What is involved in this distinction is a difference of viewpoint, not mature and immature thinking. For the Jew holiness that is not part of ordinary reality is unacceptable; for the Christian holiness within ordinary reality is an impossibility. This crucial and unbridgeable difference must be affirmed as part of interfaith dialogue.

**B**oth the Jewish vision of holiness and the Christian view have contributions to make in the modern world. Different people have different needs and experience the frustrations of modernity differently. For some the Jewish response to social and political possibilities is a clear and helpful means of transcending their mundane lives. For others modernity has trapped them so decisively that only the Christian promise can provide a means of escape. While there is, thus, a general advantage that both Christians and Jews possess, there is also a necessity for dialogue. Both Jews and Christians are often tempted to claim absolute truth for their positions; they often succumb to self-confidence and a pride in their own knowledge which belies the ignorance of the human condition. Dialogue is essential so that both Jews and Christians are reminded that they each see only part of the total picture, that only God knows the totality of existence and that modesty and humility are the appropriate human attitudes when seeking to explain and understand religious concepts.

This humility is an important part of the religious perspective that both Jews and Christians share. If they expect to demonstrate that there is more to experience than human beings guess religious men and women must regard their own knowledge as limited and suspect. The sense of wonder and mystery that underlies the concept of the holy is obscured when dogmatic assertions about the nature of the holy are made. Religious claims that life is more extensive and its meaning more complex than we can imagine must be supported by religious living. These claims can be taken seriously only when religious thinkers are brave enough to declare that their views are but frail beliefs, that they rest on faith not on absolute truth, and that their very sense of the holy inspires a tolerance for those who see the sacred in different ways.

### *The 'Son of God' as a Theological Challenge*

One temptation to absolute religious claims comes from the possession of a holy scripture. Jews and Christians have often been locked in debate about the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures, a canonical body of literature which they both share.

If the holy is as mysterious and transcendent as both groups claim, then it should not be surprising that the scriptures emanating from that source should be multivalent. The different meanings and ideas associated with and claimed to derive from the Holy Scripture must be taken seriously. The many voices with which the Bible speaks need to be heard in all their differences.

**A**n intriguing use of biblical quotations occurs in the Gospel of Matthew 1:18-2:15. The genealogy that begins the gospel asserts that Jesus is the expected Messiah of the Davidic kingship. The tracing of Jesus' descent back to King David is fully in accord with much Jewish thinking. The next section, however, offers a radically new idea: messiahship entails being the "Son of God"—not metaphorically but literally. Jesus is none other than "Immanuel"—God immanent among the people. Jesus' early life is interpreted as following the pattern predicted for the Son of God. Various verses from the Hebrew Scripture are quoted out of context and are given what contemporary scholarship agrees to have been tendentious meanings not found in the original sources from which they were taken. One such verse is that of Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a lad I loved him and I called my son out of Egypt." In context the verse clearly refers to the people of Israel; in Matthew 2:15 it is applied to Jesus.

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This difference is an important one which must be taken seriously. At the outset it must be acknowledged that both Judaism and Christianity consider all human beings to be children of God. In both traditions a basic human task is *imitatio dei*, the imitation of the divine. In the sense of being an image of divinity, every person must be considered a child of God. In a more specific and limited sense, however, both Jews and Christians interpret the phrase "Son of God" as a reference to the specific task assigned to a divine favorite. For the Jew the term is understood as Hosea meant it—the Jewish people as a whole is to be considered God's chosen son. Thus the second century Rabbi Akiva said, "Blessed are human beings since they are created in the divine image . . . blessed are Jews since they are called the Son of God." The meaning of this remark must be understood in the context of rabbinic thought. Jews have a special place in the divine scheme; thus they are the sons of God. This relationship to God means that they are entrusted with

a sacred task, a task which is both a source of favor and of obligation. From the rabbinic standpoint divine sonship entails two elements: favor and responsibility. On the one hand even if Israel is disobedient it is considered God's son; a disobedient child is a beloved heir just the same. As the son of God, however, Israel has certain obligations. It must act in accordance with this sonship; its history is the history of a son who acts as messenger for the father in a recalcitrant world. God punishes those who mistreat the son. In sum the idea of Israel's as God's son is an interpretation of Jewish history. It places both Israel's tribulations and obligations within the framework of an overall divine design. The Jewish people represents Isaiah's suffering servant and the idea of being God's chosen son reinforces a sense of significance, purpose, and importance in being a suffering nation which refuses to reject the task for which it has been chosen.

**T**he figure of Israel as divine servant who suffers but then is justified becomes in the New Testament the figure of Jesus. The image of Israel as God's vineyard is combined with the sonship theme in the famous parable found in the synoptic gospels. For the Christian the idea of Jesus as God's Son explains the fate of the world; it reinterprets human history and suggests a radical change in that history when the divine son entered it. The suffering and justification of the Son become for the Christian a paradigm of human life. The human being must suffer and will then be justified. The ideal of "carrying one's own cross" takes the symbolism of Jesus' sonship and makes it the model for Christian living. As with the Jewish view so in Christianity divine sonship implies both favor and task, both suffering and justification but it is transformed from an explanation of a nation and its history to the sphere of the individual.

As in the concept of holiness so too here the different perspectives of Jew and Christian act as a check on one another. Their balance is needed because contemporary society tends to secularize both national history and personal experience. We need to learn that both nations as a whole and individuals in their uniqueness can fulfill the double function of God's son. Contemporary humanity—both male and female—can exemplify the "sonship" that is either social responsibility or personal willingness to suffer for the sake of ideals. Both the Jewish vision and the Christian are needed in the modern world.

### *Resurrection in Two Traditions*

Perhaps the most pervasive disease corroding the human spirit today is that of pessimism. In the face of a nuclear holocaust, of rampant political abuse of power, of callous disregard for human dignity, let alone human rights, modern people have succumbed to despair. There is so much to do if the world is even to survive and so little time to do it. The powers standing against life, against humanity, against reason seem overwhelming. One life span

seems too short and too ineffectual to accomplish what must be achieved. Jewish and Christian thought has met the challenge of such pessimism in earlier ages; the idea of resurrection, of life after death, has been an important response to the reality of human limitations.

**D**espite the importance of this idea it has a strange and rather dubious lineage. The Hebrew Bible offers but scant evidence of belief in life after death and resurrection. There are some obscure references to the half-life enjoyed by departed souls (I Samuel 28), denials of any meaningful life after death (Job 14; Psalm 88), and a late reference to resurrection for some but not all of the departed (Daniel 12). A careful reading of these various sources can only lead to ambiguous conclusions. In early post-biblical times this ambiguity already led to controversy. The contention between the Pharisees who supported the idea of resurrection and the Sadducees who opposed it is well known from rabbinic literature, the New Testament, and independent sources like the Jewish historian Josephus. The idea is a crucial one in religious life because human experience is often filled with failure and disappointment. If all we can hope for is this present life, then many of our dreams, efforts, and commitments are vain and futile. Both Jews and Christians affirm that the human individual can expect to continue in existence beyond this life and accomplish in the future what is left undone in the present. Despite this agreement, important as it is, there are vital differences in understanding what resurrection means, how it continues this life, and its place in religious life.

In Judaism the idea of resurrection, as the idea of holiness and the concept of divine sonship, is rooted in practical reality. Resurrection is presented as an opportunity to continue the tasks of this earthly life, most specifically as an opportunity to continue performing the commandments, the mitzvot. The highest human pleasure according to Judaism is fulfilling the divine commandments. These commandments, however, require a body for their performance. Wearing certain garments, eating certain foods, acting in certain ways all demand a physical body. If the afterlife is to be meaningful the Jew must be able to perform these physical functions. In the Jewish scheme of cosmic history there are four stages—this world, the world to come, the messianic age, and resurrection. Resurrection is the final triumph in which humanity is finally able to perform its true task, to act as God has commanded. Resurrection is not so much a concept which justifies God as one which justifies human deeds. These deeds are so important that it is impossible to conceive of a perfected world in which they cannot be carried out.

The Christian has a different perspective. As Paul explains the concept in I Corinthians 15 the hope for resurrection is rooted in the Christ event and in the experience of Jesus. It represents a triumph of spirit over matter, of the new order over the old. Those who associated resurrection only with the past or only with Jesus are mistaken, Paul claims. It remains a common Christian expectation

when the final transformation of reality occurs. Then all who have become like Jesus will be resurrected as he was, in a mysterious way that Paul insists is incomprehensible in its details. This mysteriousness is essential in the Christian message. Resurrection is a scandal and an absurdity as is the central claim of Christianity that the Messiah must be crucified. It transcends nature and lifts the Christian to a new sphere of existence. While the Jew sees in resurrection confirmation of the value of mundane physical life, the Christian sees it as affirmation that this physical world will one day be transcended and overcome.

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**T**he profound differences involved here are essential ones. For the Jew resurrection is continuous with normal experience; for the Christian it represents a break with normality, a break which is already anticipated by the Christian while in the midst of life. It would be easy to polemicize from either position. The Jew might argue that the Christian is avoiding the real tasks of daily living. The Christian might be portrayed as an escapist who is consoled by "pie in the sky" and neglects everyday necessities. The Jew on the other hand might be charged with being a materialist, with confusing spiritual promises with mundane experience. The Christian could suggest that the Jew has perverted the idea of resurrection from an ideal, spiritual concept and corrupted it to correspond with Jewish practices.

Such polemics suffer from the problem of focusing on an opponent's weakness without regarding one's own failings. In true dialogue Jew and Christian can heed the warning that the partner is giving. The Jew can become sensitive to the wonder of resurrection, to its mystery and incomprehensibility. Resurrection need not be restricted to those

who obey the commandments, it need not be exclusively an opportunity to pursue Jewish practices. The mysterious nature of the event precludes any precise definition of what is involved. The Christian, however, can find in the Jewish concept a reminder that resurrection must be linked directly to present human experience. It is not merely an answer to or escape from present problems. It also reinforces the value and significance of what we now accomplish. Resurrection, despite its mystery, must be compatible with the seriousness and importance of everyday actions. Jews learn to take mystery seriously and Christians temper their eschatology with an affirmation of daily living through a dialogue concerning the meaning of resurrection.

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#### *Jews and Christians in Dialogue: The Challenge*

The three central concepts discussed here—holiness, Son of God, and Resurrection—are ones held passionately by both Jews and Christians. It is because of the passion they evoke that dialogue is both essential and useful.

Each of the three areas investigated has a special importance in the modern situation. Holiness is a general category; a sense of the holy is common not only to Jews and Christians but to all who take religion seriously. The dialogue between Jew and Christian can serve as an example for an ecumenical sharing of religious ideas. The ways in which diverse religious traditions conceive the supernal realm can illuminate the varied reality within which human beings live. Dialogue among different religious communities can cultivate humility and a sense of the unexpected dimensions that hover beneath normal experience. Jews and Christians can be pioneers in demonstrating how an openness to divergent views enriches religion.

It is an important truism that we fear most those who are most nearly like us. The relationship of Jew and Christian to the Hebrew Bible reveals the tension that can develop out of a shared tradition differently perceived. In the modern world the commonalities linking groups together are often the very spurs to competition and hostility. Economic, political, and intellectual struggles seem rooted as much in shared dreams and hopes as in diversity. A productive dialogue concerning the multiplicity of meanings possible in a shared scripture such as that concerning the term "Son of God" can relax some of the tension. Commonality need not mean that

only one way of understanding that common ground is possible. The openness to see that even what is common can be a source of diversity can be transferred from the religious realm to other aspects of modern life.

The difference between Jew and Christian on the question of resurrection reveals the basic commitments each holds, the basic orientation that separates one from the other. No other issue makes as clear the radical otherness that keeps Judaism and Christianity apart. The Jewish concern with community, the concrete world of experience, and orientation to deed is here strikingly contrasted with Christianity's emphasis on the eternal, the spiritual, and the eschatological. This polar difference in approach forces each partner in the dialogue to think out the issues once again, to take a fresh look at presuppositions and conclusions. That is both the difficulty and opportunity of dialogue. Both partners must be willing to reevaluate their views, but both will gain a freshness of perspective and self-understanding. The difficulties involved are formidable, Abraham Heschel knew that and chose to avoid them. The suggestions offered here, however, are presented with the hope that in the present situation, however, what was once impossible is now a possibility.

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## Religion Essay Contest in 1985 for Kansas High School Students

Essays on the theme "Religion and Government" are solicited by the Kansas School of Religion from students in any Kansas high school in statewide competition for the best essay.

The contest is designed in two levels:

- 1) County level, first round—essays to be judged by the local cooperating clergy association. The winning paper will receive a prize of \$25, and will be sent by the sponsoring clergy group to the KSR in Lawrence for the state competition with other first round winners.
- 2) State level, second round—winning essays from the first round will be judged by the Fellowship of Moses of the KSR. The first prize winner will receive \$500 and be invited to the annual KSR banquet April 24. Second and third cash prizes will also be awarded.

The first round schedules will be set by the local ministerial associations. Papers for the second round competition are due in Lawrence March 15.

Details for writing will be furnished upon request. Procedural information is available from a clergy person in your county, or write the Kansas School of Religion.



## Reflections of Nicaragua

By Eldon Epp

*Eldon Epp, Mennonite pastor in Salina, visited Nicaragua last summer with the Witness For Peace delegation. The following are excerpts from his letter.*

How do I report on a week in Nicaragua? With facts and figures, of feelings and stories? Which convey truth most adequately—the truths we need in the United States?

Surely we must listen with our hearts, as well as our heads, if we will "hear" what's happening in Nicaragua. We must go beyond the stance of "not getting emotionally involved." Life and truth are more than objective analysis (if indeed there is such a thing) and facts.

An immediate impression was the warmth and studiousness of the campesinos who lived with us. These Nicaraguan farmers were being trained to repair Yugoslavian tractors and farm implements by the government. They received us warmly and affectionately, and sat up late at night studying and visiting. No hostility, harrassment, or ill will to be

found. And they favored us with a program of chants, cheers, song and dance when we parted.

More of the same among hundreds of Nicaraguan children and youth at a school graduation rally in downtown Managua. Nicaraguan kids find ways of having fun without gadgets—like climbing three tiers high on one another's shoulders, perching a daring boy or girl on top. Or throwing someone ten feet in the air and offering amble hands and bodies to catch the flier on the way down. Or throwing candies all over the crowd. A Witness For Peace camera, reported lost, was returned to its owner within minutes by Nicaraguan youth.

I also sat trying to fathom how these gentle, religious, and peace-loving peasants, with their thatched huts, donkeys and children, posed a threat to the most militarily powerful nation on earth.

I am impressed by the relative richness of the Nicaraguan people—rich because they seem freer to love people and enjoy the genuinely good things of life.

I leave perplexed at the opposite kinds of conclusions and interpretations which are given to the same situations by different perspectives and interests. Disagreement and confusion about Nicaraguan life exist in the middle of that and neighboring societies, as well as far off in the United States.

I pray that we may hear the cries of the people of Nicaragua with our hearts, our ears, and our will.

# Religious Studies Outreach

The Department of Religious Studies of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, in cooperation with the Kansas School of Religion, offers a "Traveling Faculty" program designed to share recent important studies about religion with groups of people in the surrounding areas. Several types of presentations are available. Arrangements may be made with an individual faculty member to present a program within her or his special competence. Two or three professors may also work together on a single event or in a series. Each professor already has a significant teaching load at K.U., and arrangements are thus subject to the availability of the presenters. Inquiries are welcomed from any groups about topics of special interest.

The travel costs for a program are subsidized, when necessary, by the Kansas School of Religion.

The following individual faculty members are available:

**S. Daniel Breslauer**, Ph.D. (Brandeis University)

Teaching and Research Areas: Judaic studies, Islam, Biblical studies, religion and moral decisions.

Suggested Topics: 1. Jews and Christians: Their Common Heritage and Theological Differences. 2. What We Can Do Together: Jews and Christians Face the Secular World. 3. Ethics and Religion in Contemporary Life. 4. Jews and Muslims in the Middle East: Conflict of Interest or Conflict of Religion?

**John Hanson**, Ph.D. (Harvard University)

Teaching and Research Areas: New Testament, Hebrew Scriptures, and early Christian movements.

Suggested Topics: 1. Biblical Archeology. 2. Early Christian Writings. 3. Social Movements in First Century Palestine.

**John Macauley**, Ph.D. (Cambridge University)

Teaching and Research Areas: the Life and Teachings of Jesus, the U.S. Supreme Court and Religious Issues in the U.S., and church history.

Suggested Topics: 1. Wall of Separation or Benevolent Neutrality: The Supreme Court Tackles Religion in the 80's. 2. Topics in English and Continental Church History Since the Reformation. 3. The First Episcopal Bishop: Samuel Seabury (1984 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Anglican Episcopate in the U.S.).

**Timothy Miller**, Ph.D. (University of Kansas)

Teaching and Research Areas: religion in America with specific emphasis in modern religious movements.

Suggested Topics: 1. Contemporary Religious

Movements in the U.S. 2. Topics in American Religious History. 3. Cooperation and Conflict among American Religious Bodies. 4. Cults in American Religion.

**Robert N. Minor**, Ph.D. (University of Iowa)

Teaching and Research Areas: religion in Asia, especially in modern India

Suggested Topics: (some presented with slides)

1. Religion and Contemporary Asian Tensions. 2. Modern Developments in Asian Religions. 3. The Scriptures of Asia. 4. A World Religions Series (several lectures).

**Robert Shelton**, Ph.D. (Boston University)

Teaching and Research Areas: Christian ethics (especially in health care), and interpersonal relationships.

Suggested Topics: 1. Ethical Issues in Health Care: Can We Afford to Do What We Should? 2. Loving Relationships: Self, Family, Community, Helping Professions. 3. Loving the Enemy: The Involuntarily Institutionalized. 4. Religious Faith and Homosexuality.

**Lynn Taylor**, Ph.D. (University of Nebraska)

Teaching and Research Areas: religion and public education, and biblical studies.

Suggested Topics: 1. The American Religious Experience in History. 2. Learning Patterns in the Religion Classroom. 3. Religion and American Culture. 4. Religion, the State, and the School.

**James W. Woelfel**, Ph.D. (University of St. Andrews)

Teaching and Research Areas: modern Christian thought, philosophy of religion, religion and modern literature.

Suggested Topics: 1. Language and the Problem of God. 2. Twentieth-Century Western Religious Thought. 3. Existentialism: Kierkegaard and Camus. 4. Children's Fantasy Literature. 5. Post-World War I American Fiction.

**Sandra Zimdars-Swartz**, Ph.D. (Claremont Graduate School)

Teaching and Research Areas: history of Christian thought, women's studies, devotion to Mary, and goddess traditions.

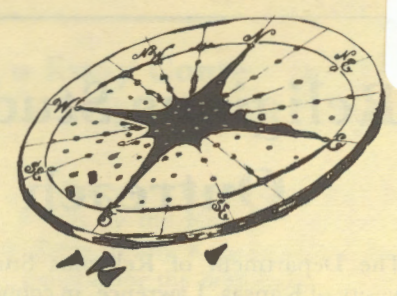
Suggested Topics: 1. Theological Perspective on Christian Symbolism. 2. Saints and Their Symbols. 3. Attitudes toward the Body: An Overview. 4. God and Sexuality: The Relationship between Divinity and Experience.

To make arrangements for a program or presentation, contact:

Director of Outreach  
Department of Religious Studies  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66045

1087

# Traverse Log



Americans need a national election once in a while, if for no other reason than to keep from getting sleepy. Quadrennial noise is always a good excuse for a barbecue. Of course a political garage sale every fourth year also carries other advantages of introspection and analysis that are salutary. And it is good to give a public forum to the variety of groups who come out of their corners only periodically to try the political greased poll with their nostrils quivering.

That is another index of national greatness, even if the contest gets bitter.

Not being competent in the art of campaign minuet, I have no profundity to lay on the subject of elections. What impresses me is the good spirit in which two opposing parties recover from the heat of a struggle after the election is over. They go on together; that is national stature!

After the shouting and the tumult cease and the captains and the kings depart, we do not stage assassinations nor cry over political Purple Hearts. We go on together. The Hyde Park Democratic President even got a couple of Republicans in his cabinet. After some campaigner might put a whole shoe store in his mouth and another might predict sure and terminal hell from the opponent's deplored policies, after the voting we do not get exactly a lullaby under a kumquat tree, but we do get companionship.

The greatest phrase in the American repertoire gets on the record after the election, "I'll go along with it!" Whatever the contest—caucus, primary, convention, or national vote—then the American genius is, "I don't see it that way but I'll go along with it."

It would be great if we could do that in religious disagreements. Between religious societies it seems that fuses are shorter and tolerance is weaker. Religious manifestations in values are characteristically exclusive because "truth" is intolerant.

Right, wrong, or sideways is not mine to say, but burning the witches and excluding the people of another persuasion have not really helped the human cause. Welfare and happiness do not come from intolerance.

There are two "parties" in religious sociometry: the changers and the copers (Forell). The changers understand religion as a necessary agent in the changes they advocate. Equally sincere, the copers see religion as helping people handle what is here—the threats to the meaning of life now. But each needs a little of the other to serve the over-arching purpose of practice.

If I was awake in history class that day, I think I recall hearing that in the first congress, which produced the constitution that brought forth upon this continent a new nation, were 56 delegates. Only 39 could bring themselves to sign that new document; and all of them were not satisfied with it. But all of them were dedicated to the great concept that became America's United States—they went along.

In religious practice perhaps those who disagree could go along under a mutually recognized ideal. For as Robert Kennedy (who might have died too young because he dreamed of a better America) stated, "The sharpest criticism often goes hand in hand with the deepest idealism."

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