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The Oxen

By Gary Wondergem

Yesterday, the planes had come. Bombing the village, dropping their fiery glue on the small thatched huts, burning the fearful inhabitants crouching inside. Le Duoc Tho had escaped. Twenty years of war made a man wise. He had seen the French come and go. He knew the new strangers would come and go. He did not worry. He had found a safe hiding place for his oxen. Yes, for his oxen.

He remembered when the man from the government had come and had told the villagers they were to receive a tractor. A machine stronger than all the oxen in the village. A machine that could plow all the rice paddies in the village in a week. The machine, the tractor, never came. Now, there was no village, and no villagers. Only Le Duoc Tho and his oxen. Yes, his oxen.

He was a rich man, an important man, because of his oxen. He was able to produce more rice than others because his oxen were the best, the strongest in the village. He used to help the other villagers with their fields, but now there were no other villagers.

A week ago, people from the north had come, saying they were brothers, and they would free them from their oppressors. Their actions spoke otherwise. They took their rice, and when they resisted them, they took their elders hostage and then killed them. The brothers from the north had left. Before they left, one dark night, the northerners had attacked the government camp and had killed several soldiers. The next morning their village had been levelled by the silver birds that dropped their fiery glue on the small villagers.

Le Duoc Tho harnessed his oxen, and started.

The making of the President, 1972, has been completed. It would be difficult to comment objectively on the outcome until more time has elapsed. Instead, the Christian community faces the task which God places before it for the next four years.

The election of 1972 does furnish several concepts which become apparent to concerned citizens, and Christian citizens in particular.

1. Pragmatic politics is treacherous to America, because it results in a watering down of principles, a weakening of commitments to beliefs, and an “end justifies the means” type of reasoning.

2. Progress through peace and peace through progress will continue to be a lie until the military draft is eliminated, and the industrial complex is bluntly introduced to fiscal and environmental responsibility.

3. The voice of the body of American Christians has come alive, the seed of Christian political awareness has been sown, and the blessing of God is now essential to providing a change of mind, an alternative direction, and courage to continue the task begun.

The Soft Revolution, a book that introduces a humanistic approach to change in schools, (by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner) contains a short statement concerning obstacles which occur along the way to improvement. Although its particular application was not political, it does lead to an awareness of the position from which Christians must institute change. The statement is a short explanation of the origin and meaning of the speaker’s headache, antidisestablishmentarianism. Summarized, the authors state that the term establishmentarianism refers to the belief that all the particular and general woes of the world were created by the establishment. The term disestablishmentarianism is the belief that all the particular and general woes of the world would disappear if we could just destroy the Establishment. Antidisestablishmentarianism, says Postman and Weingartner, is the perspective which includes the belief that: “the Establishment is only a metaphor for organized power. It is individual people who wield that power; individual people are changeable and accessible to reason, especially when reason and change can be shown to be in their self-interest. Among people of influence there are many untapped sensitivities and repositories of good will. Everybody is somebody else’s Establishment, which means that more often than we think, when we denounce the Establishment, we are denouncing ourselves.”

While the Christian must reject the statement’s incorrect view of man and the appeal to Reason as mediator, he realizes that the author’s description has summarized the role of the body of Christians across America throughout the last century or more; bewailing its minority status, critically hesitant at a time when belief-directed action was vital, denouncing individual efforts to confront problems, when they occurred. And in condemning the noise of the American political scene, the body of Christ has condemned its own silence.

Yet what is left to do when it seems that our political system is falling apart? There are three possibilities:
1. Silence, the product of despair.
2. Separation (“the personal Christian life”) the result of ignorance.
3. Cooperation, a united response, the product of faith.

Christians must reject silence, first, because it is not obedient to the mandate from God, and second, because it has produced misunderstanding, apathy, and division among the members of Christ’s body. Separation of politics from the Christian’s experience of life, or separation of the community of Christians from the political battleground is likewise disobedient to God, and results in the type of “personal Christian life, period” mentality which divorces itself from the world and turns inward with the Good News of salvation. The modern political absurdities are the result of the withdrawal of Christ’s name from the political sphere.

The only obedient response is for Christians to enter the arena of politics. For even though their voice is considerably small, it holds the answer to the broken, fragmented mess that is 20th Century American politics. That answer is obedience to Jesus Christ, a willingness to surrender will for the nations of the world from His Inscriptured Word. And this is not restricted to a conglomerate of individual Christians. The change that is necessary calls for such magnitude of force that it is alone through a united response of American Christians, catching the flame of obedience, that the task will be accomplished, the vision come true.

Rather than an appeal to reason, America needs a return to obedience. When change resulting from obedience to the God of politics can be shown as not only in people’s best interest, but also as a cause for blessing (Psalm 1), then we will observe a regeneration of politics, influencing all of life. The task is difficult, there is opposition and criticism from Christians and non-Christians alike. That criticism exists cannot be a serious obstacle in the faces of those who believe “the earth is the (Continued on back page)
invites you to come in and see how quickly and easily you can improve your writing efficiency with a new Smith-Corona Powerline portable!

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Young
Young walks through
Chirp-pleated
Dawn skirt swish
As
Gray night memories
Fold quiet under
Gold-rayed morning frock.
Solar ecstasy denies
All but peace-glow
Warmth triumphant
On
Shadow-yield streets
Telling dark, cat-kept
Secrets now but gone.
Strength-striving steeples
Pointedly confess
First blue pure
As
Young walks through
Chirp-pleated
Dawn skirt swish.
—Tina LaBrenz

Winter
No one came by me today,
Kids must lead exciting lives.
Could'a rung up; it's tiresome though
Hearing me sigh of so much pain.
Ja, well, almost dark out now.
Pa'd be coming in, shaking snow
Off his green coat and battered boots.
Ach, Pa, look to that dirty barn,
Field of rotting corn. Can Neal
Think of Pa, instead of his dev'lish League?
God, don't let it snow. It's cold,
I can't move to the fire, so much pain.
—Sue Meyer

Avenue
A child's imagination
like the sea
on the verge of overflowing
at times exploding,
eager—
to penetrate worlds unknown.
Opening as a spring flower
a child's mind
reveals — ideals and longings
long forgotten by those said mature.
Yet, their youthful fancies
embrace
glimpses of the truth.
That most have put away
as immature dreams
or irresponsibilities.
Would we listen to their craving
we would find
a simplest
of hope — of love — of faith
that most have lost
in fear of themselves
but most ....
in fear of him.
—Wally van de Kleut

Retreat
to a windmill
powerfully strong tall
sitting its fingers
in a breezy blue
or moved
by something stronger
My white vapor clouds
arrive
so vague
laughing in slow motion
at the corn
—Becky Maatman

Lamentation
(by and for the living-dead)
I
My veins distend
with Acheron's tepid waters
crawling amongst an assemblage
of gleaned, salt-coroded, bleached bones;
a keeling framework;
Keeling
under the steal weight
of waste winds
stuffed with heat
and death seeds
from red land.

II
Wet weeds'
and brown kelps'
stink
cuts the fusty air
while waiting for Charon.
While waiting,
black moths flutter
a round
and death seeds slowly
open-
abarren valley.

III
Dust-choked, yellowed crackles
echo
in the hollow
gorge,
off walls of bone-water.
Cold stones
crumble.

IV
How long must I wait
on these festering shores!?
Where is my ferryman!?
Where is my hope!?

V
Your hope is drowned,
...not to be found.
And you are ground
on these festering shores.
—Mark Okkema

To A Friend
You have come an
gone.
Elusive,
shy as a fawn
later opening to playfulness
and then sincerity.
—jeanie zinkand
Dumb-founded isthe Blood, Peigan, Sarcee...
in this world of redsand whites
alllet one forget.

"I am a gentleman—"
with that red man’s nose
and white man’s rags
and white man’s red wine.

"an’, an’ I love my kids, yeah."
a sugar-beet house, not fit for an immigrant
a rusty car surrounded by children,
wild, long-haired, filthy children
that run through weeds and wait in dark alleys.

"I got a boy as old like you"
dark figures in the night
young daughters looking for comfort
with white men and red wine
and sons lie in gutters; scared by living.

"Yup, an’ now I go to the rodeo."
with swaying feet curved by horses
that plod over the dry dirt in endless beet-fields
worn, torn cowboy boots shuffling over the sizzling pavement.

We see you
standing on the highway in the open spaces
being cheated by bars and bartenders.
What will become of the children that still
run through the weeds and crouch in corners?
You may have read in our previous issue that we hoped to publish music and you may have wondered what kind of music would be produced on a Christian campus. Now that we have published a song celebrating sleep you may be wondering even more. Haven't we Christians been asleep too long as it is? Shouldn't we use our music to win "souls" for Christ. I don't think so. I believe the arts were created to be much more than a tool for evangelists. Through the arts one expresses his religious commitment, his vision. A few centuries back Frau Bach complained to her husband Johann Sebastian, "Do you have to sit here and compose all day just to prove you're a Christian believer?" (Saturday Review of the Arts, November 1972). We can sense in his music the joy of his Christian confession, though it may have brought his wife grief, poverty and 22 children.

In the same way we can celebrate sleep. Sleep is a beautiful part of our creation without which we would all probably go insane. Though it may be a terribly simple song, it is perhaps through the little things that we can recover the sense of joy Bach displayed. This is our creation given to us by God, let's celebrate all of it.

"Ach," said Bach. His wife had interrupted him just as the great chords and grand sonorities of the opening of the B-Minor Mass had thundered through his head.

Princess Sioux SAYS....

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Lord's and the fullness thereof." Opposition calls forth renewed dedication.

But where does antidisestablishmentarianism fit in? To begin, it rejects a violent overthrow of Establishment Institutions. It calls for intelligent, capable citizens, followers of Christ, to begin to work with the tools given, and to return government to the obedience demanded by its Creator.

Second, antidisestablishmentarianism operates by entering the territory of the (political) enemy, and calling to the attention of the nation its mistakes, shabbiness, and futility, while boldly suggesting an alternative. Christians, through their efforts allow the Establishment to work against itself, and publicize its failures.

Third, antidisestablishmentarianism rejects individualism, especially in its application to the activity of Christians. Rather, it pleads for the support of the Christian community in prayer, academic research and compiling of records, and communication of ideas.

The seed of Christian political awareness has germinated. The next four years will be decisive as to the growth of the young plant. Yet, rooted in God's Word, fed by the light of His blessing, and watered by the prayers and sacrifices of God's people, it must grow, leaving the greenhouse of uncertainty and spreading its branches in witness to the will of its God. Karl Neerhof

Fools Remain Necessary
Even fools play a vital role in our lives. Without them, how could the rest of us succeed?

CANNON POLL
In an effort to make the Cannon fit your needs, we would like you to answer these questions. Please fill it in and drop it in the box near the bulletin board in the classroom building.

Which articles do you like to read in the Cannon?

Do you think the Cannon is aimed toward you and your friends?

Put these in order of preference:
Short Stories
Poems
Essays
Cartoons
Reviews
Music
Art
Photos

What other types of creative literature should be included in the Cannon?

What should be excluded?

How could the Cannon best be improved?

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