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A table of contents for *Theological Students Fellowship (TSF) Bulletin (US)* can be found here:

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by TSF NEWS & REVIEWS
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CONTENTS

INTERSECTION (*The integration of theological studies with ethics, academic disciplines, and ecclesiastical institutions.*)

| | |
|--|---|
| Wagner and Costas on Cowe | |
| Lausanne's Consultation on World Evangelization: A Personal Assessment by C. Peter Wagner | 2 |
| Report on Thailand 80 by Orlando E. Costas | 4 |
| A Report From Europe on the Third Biennial Conference of F.E.E.T. by Donald Dean Smeeton | 7 |

INQUIRY (*Questions, proposals, discussions, research reports on theological and biblical issues.*)

| | |
|--|---|
| A Report on Paul Vitz's Lecture "From a Secular to a Christian Psychology" by Mark Lau Branson | 7 |
|--|---|

ACADEME (*Reports from seminary classrooms, special events and TSF chapters.*)

| | |
|---|---|
| A Sample Constitution of the Evangelical Students Union | 8 |
|---|---|

SPIRITUAL FORMATION (*Probing questions, suggestions, encouragement in areas of personal/spiritual growth.*)

| | |
|--|---|
| Seasons of Prayer by Gregory A. Youngchild | 9 |
|--|---|

REVIEWS (*Notes and critiques on recent books and periodicals.*)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Noteworthy Articles | 11 |
| Book Reviews (itemized on back cover) | 13 |

obedience to God. (Vitz's main examples were Dyer's *Your Erroneous Zones* and Transcendental Analysis.) "The curious thing about the selfish goal of autonomy is that it is almost unanimously made throughout popular psychology and yet I have not found one writer who has attempted to defend the goal as morally worthwhile or even to demonstrate that this 'autonomy' is possible." Vitz continues, "Today's individualistic psychology repetitively implies that the enemy is the past erected by natural groupings, but not the past and present, dominated by modernist isolated egos separated from all that is natural, with each ego being told that it is free." Vitz sees modern consumerism and propaganda as the winners with self "separated" from other influences.

- (5) Relativism is norm in values. Secularists are absolutist only in regard to holding this position of relativism. Values clarification theory, when devoid of moral norms, falls in here.
- (6) Subjectivism holds spiritual truth as non-objective, non-rational, while the physical sciences are most prized. Closely related is a value on a human's immediate feelings and their expression. Reality beyond the physical world and valuing of self-control and obedience to God do not belong.
- (7) Gnosticism, or "knowledgism," holds that "salvation" comes from knowledge. Self-knowledge and self-realization are the highest aims. Moral issues are swallowed up in self-activation devoid of spiritual or community values.

II (1) The existence of God is the first assumption of a Christian psychology, specifically the Trinitarian God. Religious life is surely relevant and interpretable. The human's relationship to God is a topic of discussion. This does not limit psychology, but rather makes it deeper, better, truer.

(2) A morality and value system would be affirmed. Secular psychology has a value system, yet it is not expounded or explicit. Vitz borrows from Professor Allen Bergin to clarify:

Table 1

Theistic vs. Clinical and Humanistic Values
(after Bergin)

| Theistic |
|---|
| 1. God is supreme. Humility, acceptance of (divine) authority and obedience (to the will of God) are virtues. |
| 2. Personal identity is eternal and derived from the divine. Relationship with God defines self-worth. |
| 3. Self control, in terms of absolute values. Strict morality. Universal ethics. |
| 4. Love of God and of others, affection and self-transcendence primary. Service and self-sacrifice central to personal growth. |
| 5. Committed marriage, fidelity and loyalty. Emphasis on procreation and family life as integrative factors. |
| 6. Personal responsibility for own harmful actions and changes in them. Accept guilt, suffering and contrition as keys to change. Restitution for harmful effects. |
| 7. Forgiveness of others who cause distress (including parents) completes the therapeutic restoration of self. |
| 8. Knowledge by faith and self-effort. Meaning and purpose derived from spiritual insight. Intellectual knowledge inseparable from the emotional and spiritual. Ecology of knowledge. |

Clinical and Humanistic

1. Man is supreme. The self is aggrandized. Autonomy and rejection of external authority & virtues.
2. Identity is ephemeral and mortal. Relationships with self and others define self-worth.
3. Self expression, in terms of relative value. Flexible morality. Situation ethics.
4. Personal needs and self-actualization primary. Self-satisfaction central to personal growth.
5. Open marriage or no marriage. Emphasis on self-gratification or recreational sex without long-term responsibilities.
6. Others responsible for our problems and changes. Minimize guilt and relieve suffering before experiencing its meaning. Apology for harmful effects.
7. Acceptance and expression of accusatory feelings is sufficient.
8. Knowledge by self-effort alone. Meaning & purpose derived from reason and intellect. Intellectual knowledge for itself. Isolation of the mind from the rest of life.

- (3) New concepts and practices are introduced into counselling. Prayer and fasting are valuable, crucial pilgrimage. A broader theory of anthropology, with help from missiologists, should be integrated into this ongoing work. The power of "charismatic" experiences (as well as damage of particular practices) must be explored. Finally, a deeper understanding of the incarnation (paralleling Jesus) with the marginalized world will help us find new sources of God's grace and mercy.
- (4) A Christ-centered psychology sees Jesus as incarnate God and the perfect expression of humanity.

Vitz along with others is stepping out on a valuable, crucial pilgrimage. A broader theory of anthropology, with help from missiologists, should be integrated into this ongoing work. The power of "charismatic" experiences (as well as damage of particular practices) must be explored. Finally, a deeper understanding of the incarnation (paralleling Jesus) with the marginalized world will help us find new sources of God's grace and mercy.

[Note: As part of the Colloquy on Christianity Confronts Modernity sponsored by Pastoral Rene The Word of God Community and The Christian Student Center, this lecture was given in Ann Arbor, October, 1980.]

ACADEME (Reports from seminary classrooms, special events and TS chapters.)

A SAMPLE CONSTITUTION OF THE EVANGELICAL STUDENTS UNION

A newly affiliated chapter of the Evangelical Students Union at the American Baptist Seminary of the West has drawn up a constitution which we present here as an example of constitution for chapters. This new chapter is a direct affiliate of the Theological Students Fellowship (a division of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship)

The constitution follows:

In addition to the aims and doctrinal basis of the Theological Students Fellowship (TSF) propose the Evangelical Students Union (ESU) of the

American Baptist Seminary of the West in direct affiliation with TSF adopt in one accord the following statements of purpose:

1. We shall continually seek to encourage and build one another up in our lives of Christian discipleship. This fellowship is therefore specifically directed at providing a Christian community conducive to the authentic Christian spiritual formation of its individual members. We are thus seeking to provide an environment in which the theological word will become flesh. In this sense, ours is a pastoral task and fellowship intended that we might individually and corporately "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)
2. We are devoted to accepting and learning from the witness of kindred brothers and sisters learned in the evangelical theological disposition. However, we seek not only to gather from the insights of fellow evangelicals, but likewise to "witness of what we have seen of Christ, and what He will show us." (Acts 26:16) It is our motivation to glorify God with our works and thus proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, He who is the fullness and only complete manifestation of the mystery of God. In that we are committed to the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ in both word and deed, the "social dimensions" of the gospel stand firmly, though not uniquely, within this fellowship's concern.
3. The ESU/TSF is committed to maintaining the well-minded, level-headed, and warm-hearted evangelical theological commitment of the American Baptist Seminary of the West. It shall be ours to use our God-given gifts and talents to work for the betterment and unity of ABSW. In this light, we express our conformity with the evangelical Christian doctrinal confession of the trustees, administration and faculty of ABSW. We shall endeavor to cooperate with the ABSW community's devotion to this confession and commitment. It shall be ours to be instruments for the furtherance of the unity of the whole body of Christ.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION (*Probing questions, suggestions, encouragement in areas of personal/spiritual growth.*)

SEASONS OF PRAYER

By Gregory A. Youngchild

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven..." (Eccl. 3:1) In the spiritual life, not less than in nature, there are patterns and rhythms; prayer is a process, and therefore change is an intrinsic part of it. Yet change is somehow always a surprise for us when it occurs, as if contrary to observation we expected things to remain constant--especially in our spiritual life. And many times the changes we experience in prayer are not altogether pleasant, and may even be quite confusing.

I have in mind here particularly those readers who have undergone a deep conversion, be it dramatic or gradual, and who find--in the months and years following--that their prayer life has grown cool, and find themselves disoriented and uneasy at heart about the change. One's prayer was usually exciting, perhaps in tongues and filled with

bubbling praise in the days right after conversion. One could hardly wait until the next time the group met for its prayer meeting; one's sense of joy was so abundant and lively that prayer was always spontaneous and effortless. Now, though, things feel different. The inner fire seems to be dying down. There are lots of reasons why one cannot get to the prayer meeting this week, and praying is becoming a little more like a chore than a chance to feel God's tangible presence.

Not everyone experiences this shift from enthusiasm to subtlety, as I call it. There are rare individuals who seem never to lose the initial fire of joy first felt in their moment of conversion, and we can easily recall having met such people. But we can easily recall them because they are rare, as if God has bestowed on them a special grace for a mysterious and wonderful purpose. I am convinced personally that we cannot choose to become this kind of person, though indeed we may covet their gift of grace; the choice is God's alone.

Most people do experience a change in the character of their prayer life as time passes, however, and many of them feel uneasy about the shift. In the course of my work with theology students and young ministers on their personal prayer life, I frequently find that the uneasiness is at bottom a kind of fear about the unknownness of this new spiritual place. It is difficult to articulate the feelings that accompany this change, but usually what is verbalized is a vague, gnawing doubt about whether one is really on the right path, whether one has begun drifting away from the Lord. It isn't a crisis of faith as such, but rather a confusion about where faith is leading and a worry about how to discern the prompting. In many instances this seems in turn to lead to a kind of amorphous guilt that generates a frenzied attempt to return to the old way of praying, trying to recapture and rekindle the fires of enthusiasm as if just maybe one could--with enough will power--become that rare kind of person whose initial joy seems never to fade. One begins feeling that perhaps he or she doesn't have faith enough anymore, and begins wondering about the validity of the earlier conversion experience, especially when one discovers that the showers of spring cannot be forced to rain down on the summer's parched land.

What is this shift from enthusiasm to subtlety all about? Provided that there is no evidence of actual, cultivated spiritual laziness, and provided that one indeed has desired, intended and tried to be vigilant and faithful to prayer and to the Lord in the rest of one's daily life, we can assume that what is taking place is of God. We can assume it is guided by the Counselor whom Christ promised us. The movement within us is of the one who would come to teach us all truth and would give us what we need to know in the proper hour, in due season.

It is divinely providential that our early experience of God's love should be strong and palpable, to create in us a desire for the goodness of the Lord. Eventually, however, we must learn to walk by faith, not by feelings, as the Spirit teaches us to stand on our spiritual feet without the props of satisfying sensations. As St. Paul wrote, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways." (1 Cor. 13:11) When we are spiritually children, the Lord gives us sweets and cookies in our prayer because these bring us delight and convince us of God's love for us. But, in due season, we must become spiritual adults and learn to feast on the more subtle manna which the Lord provides in the desert so that we may find our delight not in the favors of the Lord, but in the Lord himself.