

# No Man Is an Island

The Rev. Keith Stephenson, director of the Baptist-Christian Fellowship, is author of today's religious column—a regular reminder of the role religion should play in every student's life.

Someone has said that if this earth one day did have a "visitor from a small planet" he would doubtless be confused by the actions of religious men. In strange buildings he would watch people rise and sing or bow their heads and mutter with obviously no one there to hear them. He might witness a strange meal of bread and wine or some sort of water baptism or perhaps even a rite that, by a few words and actions, establishes a marriage. "What", our extra-terrestrial visitor might cry, "is this all about? What are these people doing?"

In the most general terms, the purpose of religion can be stated as this: Religion seeks to address itself to the ultimate, the final, the most meaningful question that

man can ask. For example, Who am I? Whence came I? Where am I going? Why am I here? Or as Dr. Paul Tillich has phrased them: The anxieties over 1) fate and death, 2) the nightmare of meaninglessness, 3) the fear of sin and condemnation. Religion seeks to speak relevantly to these problems. This is its purpose.

But why then do religious men go through all the mysterious, symbolic acts that are called worship? Why don't they simply address themselves to these great questions and start talking? They do not because they cannot; for the answers to these great questions are never adequately expressed in human language. As Goethe has said, "The highest cannot be spoken; it must be acted." Thus do religious men have their rites and their services: they are speaking to the ultimate concerns of man in the only language that is possible.

# Individual Staff Views

By Marilyn Coffey

My great-uncle, when he was a kid, accidentally had his left foot cut off with a scythe.

The accident left him, surprisingly, the life of the party. He was the only boy in school who could twirl his shoe round and round on the end of his leg.

My grandfather's popularity with his schoolmates originated from a totally different art, the ability to weaken a willow switch by slicing it with a pocket-knife so skillfully that teachers were unable to detect it.

That was the era of the hard and practical individualist who fought the world and his elders with amazing tenacity and skill.

But in spite of their rough exterior, these men must have dreamed secretly of a Fourier's existence.

Why else would they have built for their

children these universities, Utopian institutions as carefully isolated from the world of Madison Avenue as the undergarments of a Puritan?

Here, for days on end, their offspring can bask in the fluorescent light of cafes, soaking in steam from cups of coffee.

Here, in moments of seriousness, they can ponder the skeletal patterns of an extinct wolf.

Young men, without so much as cracking a book, achieve a distinguished squint-eyed facade merely by enrolling in a surveying lab.

The daughters sired by these Utopianists can learn in home ec. how to care for babies the easy way—without bearing them first.

And who dares intimate that college education is to no avail? After four years of study, any graduate can spot another university man, if not by his intimate knowledge of the ancient Greek alphabet, certainly by his specialized vocabulary. Mention Pavlov and what graduate's ears will fail to prick up?



Marilyn

# From the Editor

## A Few Words of a Kind

... e. e. hines

My outside world day after day is a patch of blue sky and Historical Society building wall seen through 30 steel-gripped glass panes. An iron grate looms over the window well, a large brick enclosure with cracked earth covering the cement bottom. A September 29 issue of the Rag lays casually curved and folded near the center where a large, black drain juts its many openings out into the well to soak up rain water and melting snow. Lumps of dirt and stone, yellow and brown leaves find their graves among the dry, peeling dust.

Window wells have a place in the life of every city grown person. They were and are worlds to explore: papers, gum wrappers, discarded letters, bits of broken glass, leaves, stocks, dead bugs, spider webs, and here and there a fallen penny or nickel or dime. And if only you had a long stick with gum on it, you used to think, you could get that nickel. Or better yet, you thought, if you owned that building you would open the window and reach right out and the nickel would be yours.

Fall and spring have power to prompt reverie. So here I sit, rubbing my ear with the world of reality lurking outside my door, waiting to re-enter.

The same event isn't seen the same through all eyes. A freshman football player asks, "Why isn't there more spirit at pep rallies? A cheer leader and close

friend says "That was a great rally before the first game. Best we've ever been to." "Not much cheering competition between fraternities," another freshman footballer says. "At Georgia Tech and Oklahoma they have students by the thousands at rallies," another comments.

"Modern generation can't spell," cries every other adult in the country. Campus cops, I understand, are having the same trouble. A law school student with a Volkswagen checked the parking ticket he had received. Under make of car was printed "forin."

An instructor has reportedly announced he will give an examination over material in a ponderous book. One catch. There is but one copy of the fat bit of information in the library. The book may be checked out only for 30 minutes at a time and everyone in the class is fighting to get it, defying fines and deportation from the campus to hold on to it. Maybe the instructor needs some instruction.

Nation magazine is among my favorites. The fact that it is a liberal magazine has much to do with my finding it enjoyable reading. Cleverness, however, is what really sells it to me.

It has, for example, the shortest editorial I've ever read. The magazine says, "We suggest that our current belligerent stance toward the Red Chinese constitutes a strong argument for admitting them to the United Nations. If they're old enough to fight, they're old enough to vote!"

The same issue carries a letter from C. H. Richardson of Altadena, Calif. Mr. Richardson writes:

Dear Sirs: The question bothering me these evenings: does Arkansas have the H-bomb?

Then a critic reviewing a book sums up the author's writing in this fashion: "What is a possibility to him on one page becomes a probability on the next and a fact before the end of the chapter."



e. e.



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# Bungling

By Dick Shugrue

Because of the interesting (and laughable) events in recent days regarding ROTC, some aroused young student asked me, "Well, why do we have to have the course at a University in the first place?"

It has been claimed by certain self-appointed interpreters of the Morrill Act of 1862, which gave a land and a perpetual income from the sale of other lands to the state agricultural and mechanics colleges, that the act also stipulated compulsory ROTC courses must be offered at the college.

If this seems unclear, let's ask the question, "If we are a land-grant college do we have to have compulsory ROTC courses?"

The answer, supplied by U.S. Attorney General William D. Mitchell, as long ago as June 20, 1930, is a distinct "No."

Mitchell had been asked for an opinion as to whether the ROTC courses at a land grant school had to be compulsory by the Secretary of the Interior. In his opinion he writes, "The statutes nowhere specifically require that the offered course in military tactics must be compulsory." The opinion states further, "There was no intention to require instruction in military tactics to be compulsory upon the students any more than those branches of learning related to agriculture and mechanic arts."

Even more interesting is a letter the Attorney General cites written from the Acting Secretary of the Interior to a Secretary of War, July 19, 1923, reading, "The policy of the Department of the Interior has been that a state fulfills its obligation under the law when it offers instruction and provides facilities for instruction in the branches of

learning specified in the land-grant college legislation."

Well, why, then, does the University of Nebraska continue to make compulsory the ROTC courses for all freshmen and sophomores?



Shugrue



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