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The Path of Rightousness

"... BY THE SOUL ONLY,
THE NATIONS SHALL BE GREAT AND FREE."
Wordsworth.

HOLGER J. KOCH.

In the realm of human affairs we are rapidly approaching the point where it will be necessary to shift our attention from matters preeminently bearing on man's physical existence and the satisfaction of his endless material wants, and concentrate on the development of the righteous personality and the righteous society before the dry-rot of enlightened or unenlightened self-interest eats away the very foundation for the good life, man is forever dreaming of, but hasn't the moral probity to make real.

So far we have done remarkably little in matters of economic, international and inter-racial relationships other than to strike such bargains as most nearly satisfy the egotism of the parties concerned, although we know well enough that the delicate balance of conflicting interests so painstakingly contrived for the moment, might very well be upset before the ink dries on the contract or the treaty. It should be obvious by this time, that any agreement arrived at by two parties, neither of whom is morally bound to observe letter and spirit of his own promises, is a waste of time and effort.

Only when at least one of the parties finds it necessary to back his word to the hilt—or even to do more than required—do we begin to lay the foundation for a real co-operative society and lasting human relationships. Such agreements as are currently entered into by labor and capital, nation and nation etc., dictated by expediency and honored only when profitable, are a farce and a tragedy, and serve only to postpone the day when we can begin to live together in trust and build a social life with confidence.

Short of personal and national righteousness there is no security and no peace. A clear-cut line of demarkation divides all human motives and actions. On one side march the motives, aims and purposes conceived in self-interest and activated by the hope of gain. The fruits of these are as bitter as the roots and the ultimate gain is

nil. Figs just do not grow on thorns, nor do moral victories crown ignoble efforts. Whatever the apparent gains, they are transitory, and the level of the relationship has not been raised by a hair's breadth. Human history testifies to the fact that only on those occasions when some individual or group has been able to disregard personal gain in favor of some principle of righteousness has a definite advance been made.

The object of this inquiry is to determine whether there is that element of righteousness in the conception and development of the American nation to command our moral support and loyalty, and to afford us and the world a body of principles and practices with which we may merge our lives and in which we may find the fellowship for moral and spiritual progress which we crave. Let us look at the record briefly.

The signers of the Declaration of Independence took their stand firmly on the principle that all men are created equal. Searching their hearts, they could not truthfully hold the conviction that their nation or race constituted an exception which gave them certain rights and prerogatives over and beyond those of other men. The simple fact of being born into the human family gives every last member of the race the basic status of equality with all other members. That truth is "self-evident", that is, they recognized it as existing independently of any man's opinion about it. They did not establish the truth, they accepted it as an eternal moral law. So while they refused to bow before the claim of the British crown to special prerogatives, they also refused to delegate such prerogatives to themselves. The sword of righteousness is double-edged!

Accepting the principle of this basic equality, a firm cornerstone had been laid for a social and political structure that may rise to some height without the danger of toppling. Before long it was reinforced with more "self-evident" truths.

The question of whether to continue the practice of a state-supported religion with the concomitant compulsory observance of its rites and the suppression or persecution of divergent beliefs, soon presented itself in a new land, whither many sincere dissenters had fled for refuge from persecution in European countries, where religious freedom was anything but "self-evident". Thos. Jefferson knew the answer. Said he, "The rights of conscience we never submitted" (to the government.) We could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God." As for the person en-

tertaining "heretical" beliefs, "Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will never make him a truer man. It may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will not cure them." And anyway, "It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself." — The church could learn gospel truth from a theist! — No, there would be no double standards in the new republic,—one for "us" and one for "them".

For booty-crazy European monarchs we fashioned the Monroe Doctrine. We closed the continent to crowned pirates and high-jackers. But we did more than that. We proclaimed the right of a continent to order its life without interference from others. To the American mind with its penchant for "self-evident" truths, it implied the right of ANY continent to that privilege. Never knowing when to stop, we finally had to proclaim the right of self-determination for all nations. The weak nations and the have-nots reach the same conclusion by the simple process of wishful thinking, but never before in history had a powerful nation voluntarily renounced a bright imperialistic career to become the champion of the oppressed and the disfranchised, because it was the righteous thing to do. Consequently we now ESTABLISH independence in the Philippine Islands, for that has become the temper of our people. So when our political leaders find it expedient to remain silent in the face of oppression and rapine, perpetrated by other powerful but "friendly" nations, they do so without the moral approbation of the people.

One last solemn step is before us: a governmental waiver of its power over the conscience of the individual. Having established the principle of self-determination of nations, there is no valid stopping place before we accept the conscience of the individual as the final court of decision. This "self-evident" principle might properly constitute the final amendment to the Constitution!

The War Between the States obviously had a variety of contributory causes, economic and political, but there can be no doubt that a people, which had already accepted the double-edged sword of righteousness, could not indefinitely tolerate human slavery within its borders. Nor could the war have been lost. The South may have fought for its "honor" and its economy, but the dead left no spirit to go marching on. The hands of the North may have been unclean, but no army singing, "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free" can ever be conclusively beaten. It wasn't just John Brown's soul that had gone marching on, it was the souls of Washington, Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Tom Paine and many many more. The South had no "souls" fighting with it, because the soul of the man who fights for his own rights alone dies with the body. America had adjudged slavery unrighteous, therefore, slavery had to go.

It may be that the military campaign against the South was wrong and unprofitable. The South remained unconvinced and unrepentant. Perhaps we made it infinitely more difficult for it to change its mind about slavery. The important thing isn't really that we emancipated the slaves, but that America overcame the will to slavery in its own heart. It was still a moral victory—though not over our adversaries—or we could never in victory have spoken the words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all"—such words were never given to those who have suffered a

moral defeat.

Abraham Lincoln spoke the words at the end of the Civil War, but in a larger sense they were not his. They are American words. John Quincy Adams said, "In charity to all mankind, bearing no malice or ill-will to any human being . . ." Through the years they have echoed and re-echoed from American hearts in a swelling hymn of faith and self-consecration. American righteousness is not a document duly signed, sealed and filed in the Library of Congress. It is a need and a compulsion, it is a sense of harmony and order, it is the vital drive and marrow-strength in the growth of a new people spearheading the march out of the jungle.

We are, of course, not unmindful of the shallow boastfulness and unrestrained egotism on the surface of American national life. We have shocked the world with our childish statesmanship, unprincipled racketeering, religious and racial intolerance, our snarling rapaciousness around our abundant table etc.; we have tolerated this in the name of freedom, but we have not made it a national policy. The continent was so recently the happy hunting ground for every soldier of fortune in the world that it will take some time before we learn to think of it as home and not as a public grab bag.

In order to find the America which is more than a geographical or political concept it is necessary to penetrate some distance beneath the surface froth. Outwardly there seems to be no American people in any qualitative sense. A mass of individuals seeking personal comfort and well-being—frequently at a high moral cost—add nothing to the spiritual structure of a people which has permanence and direction. Any activity, any energy expended, not identifiable with enduring moral principles must be discounted as having no more real substance than a great battle fought with blank shells. For all the tumult and shouting, for all the quantitative "greatness" of accomplishment it is devoid of historical essence. The person, the cause, the achievement not fundamentally and essentially of the stuff which is truth, justice and righteousness will vanish like the windblown chaff from the threshing floor. No greater mistake could be made than to attach importance to that which vanishes with the day which brought it.

Unfortunately this self-destructive surface unrighteousness claims and receives an unwarranted share of our attention. Completely engrossed with its own importance, its shouts, like those of the circus barker, tend to draw the attention of every one. As the social structure becomes more complex, the number and obstinacy of its "problems" increase. The problems finally become so entangled that civilizations have chosen suicide as the easiest way out. This is not as foolish as it may seem. The problems actually have no solution on the level where they are engendered and attacked. There just is no way in which CONFLICTING interests can be reconciled. It is a contradiction in terms and in spirit. Where all parties concerned define "justice" in terms of their own welfare, there can be no agreement. Where amelioration of symptoms is sought without treatment of the disease, there can be no cure.

Actually the "problems" do not exist independently as such. They are simply projections upon the environment of the inner attitudes and conflicts of the people. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that the moment sincere cooperation and mutual concern replaces greed and competition

within a group of people, possessions and distribution immediately cease to be "problems" and become further means of expressing concern for the common welfare. Interracial frictions are not indicative of a real disparity between races, but of an essential lack of humility and charity in whichever element engenders the friction. The fact that some people have "race problems" and others have not, is sufficient proof of their purely subjective nature. As we change, conditions change and problems disappear; never before.

The real America has no problems. It has a life to live; a life of justice and righteousness and brotherhood; it has principles and ideals and dreams to make real. It has a task and a mission and a "concern" for the world. The future for us, for America, for mankind lies along this projected line of righteousness, personal and national, as established historically on this continent. American in spirit and in principle; universal in scope. "With malice toward none, with charity for all . . . it is for us to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they . . . have thus far so nobly advanced."

* * * * *

"They will not know the truth who cannot bear
The pain of love, nor will their deeds persist,
Nor will their standard, lifted anywhere,
Protect the earth from bloody dreams of hate:
But only those with courage to prepare
The chamber of the heart will celebrate
The wedding-day of truth and liberty."

* * * * *

"And if there is some magic in our land,
As on Darien surmised;
Some distant purpose hidden in the hand,
Some ultimate fulfillment of the free
Beyond collision and rapacity—
It is that there incarnates in the beast
A Spirit native to the universe,
Which by our signatures we have released,
Beyond recall from human custody:
That we endure no bondage to rehearse
The mummery of autocrat or priest,
And so have liberated from the curse
Of servitude, as from the thrall of sin,
The glowing seed of God that lives within.
Strong men these are, whose hearts can never rest;
Forever ending, only to begin;
Forever moving on the trackless quest
Of what forever is, yet cannot be:
Forever turned to face the arduous West—
The dream of progress to infinity—
The eternal destination of the free."

Russell W. Davenport.

The Young People and Their Community

HAROLD PETERSEN.

I grew up in a Danish community. I call it Danish because the people spoke Danish. We went to the Danish Lutheran Church, we sang Danish songs, young men married Danish girls. Otherwise my community was typically mid-western. Today the mid-western spirit is predominant. I, belonging to the third generation, would have quite a time trying to draw a line between what is Danish and what is mid-western American. All I can say is that I grew up to be one with the people who had come there before me. Kr. Ostergaard's song, "Højt at stile," was popular and was sung over and over again in its original Danish. But the song is certainly expressing the American dream at its best. The translated version of the first stanza reads:

"Full of dreams of high ambitions
For a future rich and fair;
To pursue the noblest visions,
And to win through work and prayer,
This is the very soul of youth
Which has in deathless annals
Written its name in truth.

As a boy we could easily point to several other communities nearby and we always had something to say for each—usually something or other which did not make them good associates for the good Danes. The Danes admitted one fault, a strong temptation for whist. But most argued that whist wasn't really a sin as long as it was not played for money so the game went on. But to the south were the Irish. They were Catholics and some even accused them of drinking whisky. To the north were the Germans and loyal Danes were supposed to show anything but affection for Germans. It was also whispered that they drank too much beer. Grandfather, like a good Dane, said, "De forbistrede tyskere." A few miles west of was a nest of Methodists who neither played whist nor drank beer but they were strong for revival meetings. So while we knew one another when we met we did, however, seldom cross boundaries in those days. We met in town or we met at farm sales, or occasionally at some school program but these loose associations do not shape people into a community. We must live together to become a community.

The community center in those days was the church. It was the church which kept the various communities together,—and it was also largely the church which tended to keep them isolated from each other. The earliest recollection that I have of the meaning of "My people" centered in our Danish Church. I have never sensed the real meaning of that phrase as strongly anywhere as I did at that time.

The church as center of the community did not by any means indicate that all were strong church people. I do believe that the average Sunday attendance was greater than it is now but I also have a strong suspicion that some came more with the thought of closing a prospective cattle deal than to worship the Lord. But the church was the center, not only for Sunday worship but for the commun-

ity life. Here old and young gathered as one unit. Here we children were nourished in the life and the faith of our fathers. Here our most cherished friendships developed. Here our social activities were discussed and planned. Here a healthy program for both body and soul was provided. We cherished the thought of keeping our little community on a high plane. Through the church I received the glimpse of community living which I would now like to see developed in that larger community to which we now belong.

However, in spite of the care and the precaution of the old communities the day came when the old boundaries began to disappear. The German boy married one of the Danish girls, another married an Irishman and turned Catholic, old neighbors moved out and "foreigners" moved in. I shall not take time to discuss the numerous factors which united to break down the old community walls. It cannot be denied that the material progress of the twenties did its share. The automobile and the big city arose in our consciousness at about the same time. Suffice it to be said that the amalgamation of different American folk groups has taken place. It was hardly to be expected that peoples of different tongues and languages could forever live in America side by side without crossing boundaries. Whether we like it or not the old community is gone and a larger one, still in its infancy, has taken its place. It is this latter community to which the youth of today belong. They may still belong to the church of their fathers but they are no longer strangers to young people of other church groups.

You cannot go twelve years to public school and remain isolated from other folk groups. The public school has become the center of the community instead of the church. I regret this for several reasons. My greatest regret is that youth through the school is not receiving that strong, living contact with the older members in the community as it did in the church. The school as center does not provide a living faith and as yet certainly very little of a live culture. Instead of children and youth listening to the voice of the mature, they who would be mature listen to the "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" of their infants and think them cute.

While I was a boy there were not many farm boys of my age going to high school. Nor did the larger percent of the girls finish high school although many of them did go for a year or two. This meant that at the age of 13 or 14 they found their social contacts in the old church group. But with the increased high school enrollment and the ever increasing school activities the social center for the young people up to 18 or 19 years of age has become the school. Often one's best friends belong to some other church or to no church at all.

Big business has not been slow in finding the new community. The road houses, taverns, amusement parks, public dance halls, etc., sprang up and solicited the young people. They cost money but many young people grabbed what they had to offer. Here, at least, was one place where they could gather with their school pals. Here was one place where the comradeship begun in high school could be continued even after the night of graduation. Here was their community. Little did they care that these money grabbing joints cared only for their money. They have no

interest in their souls or what eventually becomes of them.

All too late the churches began to realize, and many do not yet realize it,—the change that was taking place. Churches still slave away on their little isolated programs lamenting the fact that so few of the young people come to them. More would come but the excuse is that there is something else going on. I can understand it. That something else is merely that larger community to which they are attached. That something else going on may not be nearly as good for the young folks as the program in their church but it includes all of those who belong to the community of young people in our day and their church does not. We must frankly admit that not all activities of this larger community are bad. The work of the boy scouts, 4-H, and rural youth are certainly all commendable. It is worth noting that the program of Rural Youth is not too strange to the emphasis on education, folk games, and good recreation earlier emphasized in our Danish Lutheran groups.

What are we going to do? First of all we must recognize that the young people of today belong to a wider American community than the one to which we belonged twenty or thirty years ago. Personally, I do not believe that the young people of today sense the real depth of American religious and folk life as we did or as our forefathers did. That has to come from those who have lived and cherished it before them. As long as the young people belong to a community to the left and the older members of present day society stick staunchly to one to the right there is not much hope for a strong connecting link. I see no reason why we who are older should not accept that wider community known to youth of today and then use all our influence wherever we go to make them feel the real soul of the community life which we valued so highly.

Next the churches of a community if they wish to hold their influence will have to go outside of their pales. It is to be hoped that they will recognize the change that has taken place and work accordingly. Churches in a community will have to agree upon a youth program which can supplement that of the high school and continue it after graduation. To many that will be painful but it is necessary. If the churches are unable to agree on various forms of recreation for the young people there are, at least, some things on which they could agree which could at least serve as a beginning. Young people love music and much good work is done in music in many of our high schools. Let us not get the idea that the craving for music is satisfied by singing with the church choir. The desire to share something with their wider community still seeks satisfaction. There are community programs to work for. Why should rural youth get ahead of the churches? Just as soon as the church recognizes that its work concerns all of man and not just a little religious element in man it can do this. It did this in the days when it was the center of the community. And why should not the churches unite to provide wholesome recreation? Recreation is a very important thing in life, and most of all to the young people. Why should we fight to keep dancing out of our community so that the young people have to go places where no one cares what becomes of them? Why shouldn't the churches in a community help promote good recreational centers in that community? In our old Danish community the church's young people had good dances. It was a pride of the community to keep them lively and decent. Why then now

leave this to business interests whose sole object is to get the crowd regardless of what kind of a crowd it is? Nearly every community has a community pride. With the churches behind a decent recreational program that pride should grow ten fold.

A program so launched with the interest and the backing of the whole community has great possibilities. The new community is here—there is no going back. Our task now is to develop what we have. Let those parties of high school continue with real leadership. Let the young people feel that we, who belonged to the old communities, care. Quit condemning them because they have visited a tavern. Often they get started to go there only because there is no other place in the community where they can get together with those friends who do not happen to belong to their church. If we show them the interest they will show the interest. If we unite with them, they will unite with us.

I know that some within my old Danish community will try out with alarm, "Yes, but what about our Danish Church? Is there not a danger that our young people will be lost to us?" I maintain that there is far greater danger that all our churches will lose their young people if they insist on a stubborn policy of upholding walls no longer seen by the youth of today. I, for my part, am not very much concerned about preserving the Danish Church as an institution by itself over a definite number of years. But I am very anxious that the Christian faith and the Christian life as it has been lived in the Danish Church be passed on to the youth of today. I am anxious that I might give to those who are younger than I some of the life and the culture which has meant so much to me in the same manner as I once received it from others. What if youth in its new contacts should find new expressions and new forms to the faith of their fathers? Would it not be great if they could think of "My people" as the whole American people instead of a group of mid-western Danes? And what healthier way could there be for that unity of churches of which we speak so loosely in our time than to have it grow out of a community's need for Christ? That possibility is also there. The beginning is here, let us go on with the task which lies open to us. If we do not we must be pitted.

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A G. I.'s Journey

HELGE STØTTRUP

I have been asked to write an article dealing with my personal experiences encountered during the last phase of the "Battle For Africa." By the last phase, I mean the period beginning with the American Invasion in November, 1942, and ending in the defeat of all Axis forces in Africa by May, 1943.

To the writer it seems hopeless to dream of meeting your request of awakening the people of the home front to the realism of modern conflict. First of all, I feel that most people are not quite receptive to anything that will shed further grief on already over-burdened minds.

I may be mistaken, but I dare say that we, as a people, have become a little soft. Perhaps we have become somewhat drugged by our many years of wealth and security.

Too often we fail to take cognizance of our abundant blessings. Could it be we persist in taking our good fortune for granted? Does it not seem typical of us to magnify our petty grievances till they overshadow that which should give us inspiration to rejoice in our manifold blessings? Is this the reason the sparks of iniquity have been permitted to grow into a raging inferno enveloping the entire globe? For many years now, one or another part of our world has been the stage for a drama of death and despair. Perhaps we are not entirely without some guilt for that. Yes, man is a fool—he forgot in a turn all he could and should have learned by the last war. So here we are, roaring through another on account of it. No one is placing blame on you for past or present shortcomings, however, it will be up to you and me with combined effort to demand that the vanquished people be dealt with after this war such that they may share equal benefits of life as those we covet for ourselves. The questions to arise should not center around nationalities or sects. Primary concern should be to revitalize the tradition that we are all created equal and in the image of that which signifies humanity's singular hope to attain equality, peace and justice for everyone.

I see I have deviated somewhat from that which I intended but I felt bound to prefix this writing with an indication as to my thoughts in relation to yours and also to furnish a small bit of philosophy upon which we both can ponder. And lastly, it helps to explain why an illiterate person as myself can scarcely hope to succeed in startling a peaceful little community all wrapped up in taxes, butter prices, crops, etc. I dare say even the most vivid stories or dramas concocted by experts will fail to depict war sufficiently to produce the results I have been asked to produce because only actual experience can bridge the gap between you and the cataclysm of war.

My diary begins February 3, 1943, but I go farther back than that for a background of the African episode. It shall bear no hardship for me to recall the incidents prior to February 3. After all, how could I forget?

I found myself leaning from the vestibule of a modern train, thanking friends and relatives for a pleasant furlough. I'll be around again, perhaps — Keep your noses clean! So long. — I had seen Gene's mother wipe away a tear with her apron before. Neither of us said anything as we felt the train tug and then gently whisk us from familiar scenes into the dark spaces of night. Through the corner of my eye I saw Gene repeatedly readjust his glasses and I knew they fit him well, so I deducted he must be suffering the pangs of departure from things we all long most to return to and was therefore in no mood for conversation. I was glad I found departing easy. Tears are so pityfully small yet such an immense weight both to hold and to behold. My people knew this so for my sake they behaved as they knew I wanted them to. I occupied the silence by scanning the coach for whatever attractive cargo it might be carrying.

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No one may leave the Barracks!
OK so we don't, that's all.

Everything is in readiness. I wondered where and how my Jeep is? It should be safe and sound for I personally drove enough 99 penny spikes into the flat car to hold down a locomotive.

Trucks line up in front as one by one we move out into the drizzle of the night, carrying enough luggage and equipment to make Superman grunt. The Chaplain shakes our hand at the door step as he bids us good luck and "God bless you." These trucks are taking us to the bus station. By bus we are taken to a small town in Missouri where we are to board our train. We have not occupied our pullman cars long before we are all fast asleep.

Where are we?! In bed.

You aren't too humorous McGee! We're moving and all I'm wondering is where to!

What's the difference? We're going east and that speaks for itself as far as I'm concerned.

We had twelve hour passes to visit New York City and spent our time well. Two other boys and myself toured through impressive Radio City. From its roof, 75 stories up, we could see a veritable jungle forest of concrete and steel in which millions thronged daily and in the bay we could see the Normandie lying on her side. A week later we went in again, this time focusing our attention mostly toward Wall Street, Statue of Liberty and traveling in the fast subways. Of course we had to crawl up and peer out of Miss Liberty's enormous headpiece thus getting a splendid view of lower Manhattan and the famous bay. I can't say if she was scared or not but her bones creaked and groaned as we ascended by the winding stairs inside the statue. Kirk said it was her feminine emotions reacting to his manly presence.

Yes, New York City is truly great, but so cold and inhospitable. We still prefer our small hick towns of the middlewest for in them are people with glad, open faces and a pervading air of hospitality.

No one may leave the barracks!

O. K. So we stay in, I guess.

We're somewhat eager to leave here anyway to find out just where the heck we're going. Trucks line up in front, it's cold December. You can certainly see who's who in this procession. The most numerous bundles are a guarantee that a private is somewhere underneath.

At the docks we are all hoping our ship will be a good one, most of all that it will remain a good one throughout the journey. As I now look back at these times, I find some indication as to the feeling of a lowly burro as I stumble along the lengthy structure that constitutes a pier.

So this is our boat lying outside? Who would have thought we were to be put into that banana skow!!? Our commanding officer is appointed ships overseer of all armed personnel on board, so there is hope he will secure us good quarters if such a thing exists.

At last! The big shot is calling off our names from the highest personage to the lowest. Squire's name is being called off and I am next in line. I can't say if it's the burden on my back or the excitement of the moment but I feel my heart do a flip-flop as I answered to my own name and humbly pushed two heavy feet down the gang-plank.

You cannot fully realize what possesses a person's mind at such a time. Your name seems to echo and re-echo in the cold commanding tone of the user as if it were a haunt trying to torture you in a dream while your muscles seem helplessly paralyzed. What is a name anyway? Yes, just so many syllables to be sure, yet to some of us there are none quite like them either in pronunciation or in combi-

nation. Like a shadow, equally intangible but ever present.

It identified us at the family table during youthhood. It was symbolic of our achievements and abilities on the top line of our schoolwork during adolescence. It found its way as well to our time card and paycheck at our place of employment as the key to economic and social stations in life. Perhaps most of all it stands as a precedence or standard demanding respect and proper usage that it should not endure shame or disgrace. Perhaps, I should say it represents a tradition worth following. This name is valid only to those who bear it and here I responded to its mention and walked the slab of wood representing the link between two worlds. One we resent; the other, we long back to. Yes our desired world has its evils and shortcomings, but because it is our cradleland we still long to walk its familiar paths.

* * * * *

Come on, move along, we ain't got all night; get the hell down the hatch and sort out your bunk. This we did. Descending down steep narrow stairs through the pungent odor of the ship's belly to where we were to spend the next two weeks. Instead of the best place, as we had hoped, we seemed to have gotten the worst corner of the boat. Our quarters were in the second hold to one side and forward in the ship which is a combination of the less agreeable portions of a ship. Bunks were canvas affairs suspended by chains on either side of a main vertical pipe and tiered five high, thus reminding of a telegraph pole with five cross arms. Aisles were narrow and crowded at all times. My bunk was at the very bottom, about five inches off the floor. When I took a deep breath my stomach collided with the rump belonging to the guy sleeping just above me. The element of steel, three-fourths of an inch thick, which kept us afloat lay a handlength from me. The pounding sea could be heard drumming on its outer surface; a constant reminder that during days like these, it must indeed be solely by God's grace if those thin sides remained whole. I thought of the fairytale of the three pigs; suppose I was one of them and the sea played the role of the wolf saying, "I'll push and I'll push and I'll crush your wall in." (Perhaps with an occasional torpedo) and thus I fell asleep, half amused.

We arose next morning some distance out at sea. I was glad embarking was over and that none except other soldiers had witnessed the procedure, for it would not have been easy this time to say "so long" to anyone within the circle of closer friends.

* * * * *

Hm! So we're headed for Africa? Well, might as well be there as any other place I suppose.

The evening of December 24th we became aware that we were approaching the straits of Gibraltar. As we slid through the narrows with Gibraltar looming dark on one side and the glittering city of Tangiers on the opposite bank, we could do nothing but stand and gaze. Our bodies were here but our thoughts were divided between the treacherous, foreboding Mediterranean ahead and pleasant thoughts of the past. Each minute a panorama of favorite memories pierced the mind. Just about now they are going to church at home and then at once we visualized the serene atmosphere of a candle-lit church filled with music and an air of festivity as the familiar age-old gospel was once more proclaimed to a peaceful gathering in a war

torn world. Now in the home around a familiar table those left in the family are about to carve the customary goose. I can hear them as they sing the old Christmas hymns and I feel as though I were there, unseen and unobserved, yet here I am, one among a million others torn apart from the scenes just mentioned. Thus the mind roams from one familiar scene to another; each richly associated with the better days of youth and peace. But reality was decisively present and so was the sand man so we once more retired to our bunks with reluctance.

This was Christmas day. We were all receiving with awe the huge snow-capped mountains on the coast of Spain. For dinner we had turkey and a handful of assorted nuts. Aside from that to all outward appearances it was just another day at sea. To be sure Christmas signifies more than outward expressions reveal. Too often they overshadow that which Christmas really means. Perhaps I was able to have a better Christmas under these circumstances with all the red-tape omitted.

The 26th of December Africa's coast hove into view. It may be black old Africa but be doggone if it didn't look pretty good to most of us and solid too. We entered the port of Oran and by noon were off the boat marching down the long pier. Boy, it sure was good to get off that cast iron tea pot.

Oran is a handsome city nestled snugly at the foot of palm crested hills. Outwardly it is modern with five and six storied buildings, all of light colored plaster. As we later were to learn, the French are artistic and modern in architecture almost surpassing American achievements, but I dare say the exterior of what we saw was nicer than the interior. Many beautiful estates or villas with flowering gardens and lovely trees were a delight to behold. At this point we were to be initiated to the thing most of us will automatically recall when we think of Africa. Not so much the Arab people as their habits and characteristics. Half dressed children stood along the side of the road as we marched. They were howling for cigarettes, candy, chewing gum, or souvenirs. We indulged in a few hand-outs, but soon learned that their little desires were insatiable, so we deafened our ears to their cries and regarded them as a nuisance, for that is exactly what they make of themselves. Not the Arabs alone, but the European populace of Africa as well, can be accused of running this mooching business into the ground as far as Americans are concerned. It is customary, we are told, but I dare say it is one hindering factor to the amity that could be desired between us and these people into whose surroundings we have been plunged. Be that as it may we were soon fed up with it.

(To be continued.)

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For Meditation

Dr. HOWARD THURMAN.

Freedom means the possession of a sense of alternatives. It does not mean the absence of responsibility but it does mean a sense of alternatives with reference to the experiences of life. If it be true, as we have pointed out, that

to be alive is to be under active obligation to many other units of life, then the measure of my freedom is the measure of my responsibility. If I can do as I please without any sense of responsibility then, my alternatives are zero. I MUST select, MUST choose the option which will make possible the largest fulfillment of my own life plus the other lives of which I am the shared expression. One option is always available to me—I can choose the things for which I shall stand and work and live and the things AGAINST which I shall stand and work and live. To yield this right, is to fail utterly my own self and all the others without which and/or whom I would not be. The highest role of freedom is the choice of the kind of option that will make of my life not only a benediction breathing peace but also a vital force of redemption to all I touch.

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Greetings from C. Arild Olsen

Berlin, 2 June 1946.

To Friends of Grand View College Assembled to Commemorate Its Fiftieth Anniversary.

Dear Friends:

It would have been a source of great pleasure to me if I could have had the privilege of being with you today and of sharing with you the commemoration of Grand View College's 50th anniversary. As I could not do so, I take this opportunity to send a word of greeting.

There is much I would like to say and to share with you, many thoughts and feelings arising from the problems we face throughout the world today: of people starving, of great hunger for spiritual fellowship, of homes and communities to be rehabilitated, of churches and schools in dire need, of plain men and women, as well as truly great leaders from all parts of the world, who are fighting for the great cause of justice and peace, or of our own manifold struggles here in the midst of ruined cities and defeated people. I regret that because of the work in which I am currently engaged I can not write fully and freely, critically and constructively, on many of these matters at this time. I know, however, that my friends back home are significantly aware of and actively participating in the constructive efforts of heart and mind and hand which are so desperately needed. It is out of our fellowship in this common task that I greet you.

I am mindful in so many, many ways of the years I spent at Grand View College, the four years as student, the five years as teacher, and the six years as president. I am ever deeply indebted to my former teachers and fellow students, to my former colleagues on the faculty, as well as to every member of the national church board serving during my incumbency, for the innumerable contributions they have made to the enrichment of my life. It is out of this appreciation for what Grand View College has meant to me, and for the opportunity I had to serve our church and its young people, that I extend my congratulations and offer my prayers on this the 50th anniversary of Grand View College. It is in the spirit of this fellowship of under-

standing which we share, and from my sensing of what we as a people and as one world face today, that I humbly express my hopes for the future of Grand View College.

As we move into the fateful years ahead, may Grand View College gain a new sense of oneness with the American people, with the common people of all nations, and out of this new awareness share significantly in the efforts of our common tasks. At the heart of these common tasks lies, as never before, the need of proclaiming and preparing the way for the Kingdom of God. Our great task is the salvation of men, the rebuilding of Christendom, the liberation of the souls of people and nations, the establishment of a just and peaceful world order.

To accomplish this task, education is not enough. It will take "more than you can expect of human nature". I write from the capital of a shattered and forlorn nation, once the proud possessor of an impressive system of education. Only a new way of SCHOOL LIVING will serve the future here as elsewhere and contribute effectively to the accomplishment of this task. Education for the new life will fail unless it stems from and draws upon the sources of Life itself. Laboratories and libraries are secondary. The youth of the world must grow in love for people and, through this growth, in understanding of people and their varied, intricate relations. We know how barren mere knowledge can be and too often is. To provide school experiences which lead to faith in people and to the development of mutual confidence is the fundamental educational task of the school that would serve the new day.

SCHOOL LIVING which seeks to be functionally effective must establish experientially the worth and vitality of spiritual truth; such truth can not be dictated doctrinally. New affirmation to old truths is essential; but the inculcation of moral principles does not suffice. More than "religious motivation" is required. Living education must inspire personal dedication, to God and to vocational calling. Lives so dedicated will neither produce nor use means of destruction, either on the field of battle or in the development of a new social order. To stimulate and nurture such consecration is of the purpose of schools of education for life. May Grand View College help the youth of America to seek and find personal significance in religion, so that love of God and of fellow man becomes central in their hearts and minds. We must come to realize that love can live and function in the practical everyday life of personal, social and economic ways of being.

It is my hope for Grand View College that the school-community which it has always been may inspire young men and women with a new and profound sense of "community." May that which creates community become the core of their school curriculum and of their school experience. Among the greatest casualties of the war are the life-forces and -factors which create community. They must be given new opportunity, new spirit. The brotherhood of all people is an easy phrase to use; it is a difficult fellowship to build. The United Nations will not be built by coalition of cabinets; it must be built at the "level of human living", where common people live and gather in homes and in communities. The problems which become so critically acute between peoples at the international level have their significant counterpart in every community. Unless they are solved at this community level, they will not be solved at the international. It is at this point of community

living that individuals personally become active members of the United Nations. Unless one becomes an integrated, participating member of his neighborhood and community, at what point does he become a part of the nation. The school which leads young people to group experience in creative community living is building the new world and building it at the basic point of its construction. To do so the life-needs of youth and the life-needs of communities, rather than the administrative and pedagogical requirements of school boards and academic institutions, must become the all-important factors in determining the nature of the school's educational philosophy and administrative organization. May Grand View College, as it grows into the years ahead, dedicate itself anew in its educational philosophy, administrative organization, curriculum pattern, and teaching practices to the fundamental life-needs of young people and communities.

Ideas and ideals must have hands and feet. An urgent, vital task which confronts us is to find and use practical ways and means of building faith and philosophy into the everyday life of our social and economic patterns, as well as into our personal behavior patterns. The communion of saints must have social and economic consequences. We must acquire not only the will but also the skill to make religion vital at the point of human relations. The school which would serve life must commit itself to socio-economic ways of being, as well as to patterns of personal living. It must seek not only to inspire its students to cherish noble purposes and high principles, but also equip them with the skills necessary to build this new world. Love, justice, and fellowship will live only in the community which has found ways of living that give body and shape to these ideals and purposes, implementing them technically and practically. May Grand View College not only inspire its students to a personal dedication to high ideals, but may it share also in the urgent task of building a new world in which these ideals can live, by equipping its students with the skills essential to this task.

I do not know what the shape of things to come will be; but I do know that our methods must be similar in nature and in spirit to the ends and purposes we seek. We can not simultaneously use methods that enslave, and educate for freedom; nor can we serve life by using methods which structurally and functionally can neither convey life nor lead to organic life experiences. We must find significant ways of releasing creative instincts and stimulating the desire to engage in creative life work. Our educational approaches must fashion a way of SCHOOL LIVING which encourages and equips young people to give a strong, affirmative "yes" to life. Into a world which has seemingly no vital sense of direction must come young people who know not only where they are going and why, but whose destination and determinations are spiritually motivated and directed. The routines of traditional class-room and laboratory procedures will not achieve this purpose. "Class-room" words will not build a new world. The dynamic must be new experiences which spring from words that beget action, words that create community.

May Grand View College be blessed in its life and work from day to day, in a service dedicated to the lives of young people, to their homes and communities, and to the glory of God.

Sincerely yours, C. ARILD OLSEN.