

Lake Avenue Baptist Church

FEBRUARY 12, 1985

NEWS: Vol. 48, No. 23

THINGS ALONG THE WAY

I delight in the news essays written by columnist, Sydney J. Harris, especially his category of things learned while looking up something else. Yesterday I was shuffling through various file folders to lay my finger on a particular piece of information someone had requested. While looking for something else, I came upon these: (*I have given the pieces my own titles in order to make brief commentary.*)

CREMATION AND 'SPACEATION'

OR

6-ft. Under, Now 24,000 Miles Up

A firm of undertakers in the north of England is offering the solitude of space, which they call the ultimate resting place. Plans are projected to scatter one's ashes in space after cremation. A registry for such purpose is now set-up, and so is a storage of the ashes until a space flight is available. Four levels of disposal are being offered -- 300 miles up, 24,000 miles, and so on.

What is the difference between 6-ft. under and 24,000 miles up, I ask? And is there a theological weight on the side of the burial of the body as opposed to cremation? This thought surfaced last week when a local mortuary and hospital erred in picking up the wrong body -- one was cremated when she explicitly asked for burial in making her pre-death arrangements.

I myself have no strong weight to tip one's preference. I would offer this description, however. Fire is a tormenting, devastating image and reality in some people's minds. On the other hand, fire is not a devastating image, rather it is a recreating concept. An early metaphor of God is the descriptive language that God is fire. Fire cleanses and purifies. Fire both strengthens and makes pliable, as in the work of a blacksmith at the bellows and open hearth. Fire reduces substance to its basic elements, as does the process of decomposition in burial. Decomposition is a form of energy, is it not?

Finally, I wonder if clergy will be requested to preside at commitals
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The notion that the "call to ministry" does not just come to those who seek ordination or who enter professional church work has enjoyed widespread support here at Lake Avenue for many years. That all church members, whether lay or clergy, employed or retired, leaders or followers, young or old, have the opportunity to claim their own God-given gifts for ministry within a multitude of daily environments, is a challenge that is often heard from our pulpit and a concept which underlies much of the activity of our various boards and committees. Certainly, it is a thought which can lead to some refreshingly new and liberating understandings of our personal identity, of who we are and, most importantly, of who we can become with God's grace and empowerment.

As I am becoming increasingly aware, however, the process of identifying one's own special abilities and living out that giftedness once identified, is not only a lifelong endeavor, but also, one that is, quite simply, not that easy. It can be filled with risks and frightening moments, yet with exciting experiences and deep fulfillment as well.

Elizabeth O'Connor has spoken of the reality of this challenge in her book, Eighth Day of Creation: "The identifying of gifts brings to the fore, the issue of commitment. Somehow if I name my gift and it is confirmed, I cannot 'hang loose' in the same way. I would much rather be committed to God in the abstract than be committed to him at the point of my gifts... Doors will close on a million lovely possibilities. I will become a painter or a doctor only if denial becomes a part of my picture of reality. Commitment at the point of my gifts means that I must give up being a straddler. Somewhere in the deeps of me I know this. Life will not be the smorgasbord I have made it, sampling and tasting here and there. My commitment will give me an identity."

CHARLES MARVIN, a member of Lake Avenue since 1929, died on February 4. Our thoughts are with HELEN and the rest of the Marvin family... PATRICK STEELE, one-year-old son of BRUCE and CHRIS STEELE, has been in Strong Memorial undergoing some tests in recent days, but should be home soon... MILDRED TREAT will celebrate her 80th birthday on Feb. 16. Many happy returns!

NOTE FROM THE CHILDREN

Did you figure out what the hymns we chose for you to sing last Sunday had in common? The 5 songs in the hymn sing plus the processional all contained the word "heart." Love, the children. P.S. Would you like to do this again?

CENTRAL AMERICA TASK FORCE

An important meeting of this Peace Task Force will occur Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. in Webster House. Discussion topic: Sanctuary. Any church members or friends interested in joining us are most welcome.

WINTER FUN DAY

Come a'long ... Winter Fun Day, this Saturday, February 16, 1:00 to 9:00, at Brighton Town Park.

CIRCLE MEETINGS

"The Last Rite", a play reading given by Hazel and Eric Stettner, centering on "Touch God's Earth, But Not With Nuclear Weapons", will be presented at both Women's Mission Society Circle meetings this month:

Carman Makeham Circle -- Tuesday, February 19, 10:00 a.m., social hall.

Ishihara San Circle -- Thursday, February 21, 7:30 p.m., Webster House.

NEEDED

Desperately needed at Clothing Cupboard -- infant and children's clothing.

Fairport Baptist Home needs loosely knitted bed booties, large size; also, volunteers to read and write for residents.

THINK ABOUT IT

If God
seems far away,
Who moved?



yellow pages

"FINDING GOD IN THE YELLOW PAGES"

That, dear friends, is the sermon title for this Sunday, February 17. "Finding God in the Yellow Pages" is the third in a series of sermons on The Lord's Prayer.

"WAR WITHOUT WINNERS"

The provocative film, titled above, will set the stage for the Adult Education Forum, following worship on February 17. Don DeMott will lead the group's discussion.

WELCOME HOME, GEORGE

Our former minister, George W. Hill, has several homes. One is the place of his beloved rootage --California. To be sure, one is his present abode--Washington, DC. And we'd like to believe that another is where he pastored for 17 years, right here in Rochester. Let's be here to welcome Dr. Hill when he preaches February 24.

NEWS:

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in outer space as we now offer prayers at gravesides? If so, a warning to our trustees -- you'd better increase my travel allowance, and I may not make it back in time for a Sunday's service!

THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF

I never did find the particular piece I was searching for in my file, but I did come upon this guiding thought by Peter Maurin:

"Case for Utopia"

The world would be better off
if people tried to become better.
And people would become better
if they stopped trying to become better off.
For when everybody tries to become better off
nobody is better off.
Everybody would be rich if nobody tried to become richer.
And nobody would be poor if everybody tried to be poorest.
And everybody would be what they ought to be
if everybody tried to be
what they want the other person to be.

THE MILITARY IS RIGHT

In the following quote, carried by *SOJOURNERS* magazine, I think the military is right in this instance. "At a recent gathering of 200 top military leaders at the National War College, a revealing statement was made: 'The greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches.' The speaker was a high-ranking general who went on to say: 'A whole new way of thinking is developing in the churches, and we have to know what to do with it.'"

Peace to You -- Jim Miller