

SKANDALON

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The growing division between black and white in the United States finally became apparent and relevant to State students last spring when many became involved in establishing a civil rights project in Raleigh, North Carolina.

It is often said today that "it's obvious things aren't good here; but they're getting better." They are not. Since 1950, the financial gap between black and white has doubled. Overt violence has become the focal point of national attention, not because of the agitation of white "liberals," not because of generous news publicity - but because the magnitude and intensity of inter-racial distrust and conflict has flamed ever higher.

Despite the widening gulf, many Americans maintain some hope, that so long as there is interracial communication and interaction, some resolution may be possible. These people, working together, have thrown themselves into the battle for human dignity, often at great personal sacrifice and risk. Nowhere has such activity been so perfectly exemplified as in Mississippi during the past summer. State students and faculty contributed considerable amounts of time, books, and money to insure the project's success. One State student, Miss Lola Johnson, was herself a participant in this organized onslaught on the bastions of human degradation.

Miss Johnson, who also participated in the Voter Registration Project in Raleigh, North Carolina, taught in a Freedom School in Batesville, Mississippi. Now a teacher in the Albany area, she will report on her experiences in the Project, her evaluation of the Project's accomplishments, and her outlook regarding the future of civil rights in Mississippi on Tuesday, September 29, at 7:00 p.m. in Brubacher Hall.

All State students and faculty who are interested in how they themselves can be a part of the civil rights revolution are urged to attend. Future courses of action will be proposed and discussed after the formal meeting.

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"SKANDALON"

Skandalon. A Greek word, it has special meaning for the Christian, both in his life and in his relationship with God. Christ was a skandalon to the world; it was and is scandalous that God, in all his glory, purity, and goodness, should so lower himself, so demean himself, to participate in the life - and death - of common men such as ourselves; a skandalon because He came not as a King but as the Carpenter; a skandalon because He came not to bring men peace but division. (Luke 12:51).

Skandalon was adopted as the title of this journal both with humility - and with arrogance. Humility, because we recognize the skandalon of St. Peter to the Christ; because as he, in his good will and human concern, was a stumbling block to the destiny of Christ, so we recognize the dangers of our probing and piercing. With arrogance, because we hope to fare a bit better than St. Peter.

Within Skandalon we hope you will find - and write - articles of concern. Concern, not only to Christians, but to men of all faiths, religious persuasions, and dissuasions - to men who care about the world about them, enough to involve themselves in its problems. Enough to be disturbed by the fundamental questions, disturbed enough to want to participate in their resolution. Skandalon does not seek to provide the answers. We hold only one truth to be invariable, the truth of the Cross; and our understanding of that grows and changes as we grow. We seek, rather, to probe, to pierce, to arouse, to irritate, to sadden. Our concerns are of our world; of civil rights, science, theology, sex, war and peace, the university, love and lust, of politics.

Skandalon welcomes you to the university; we pray your year will be pleasant - and profitable.

-Editor-

AN OPEN LETTER TO FATHER SMITH

Newman Club has a new Chaplain. Late in August, Father Donald Starks, a veteran of seven or eight years, was appointed Chaplain at St. Peter's Hospital, and Father Paul Smith, formerly at Hudson Valley Community College, became his successor at Albany State. To Father Starks we say "godspeed" and to Father Smith, "welcome."

A welcome, however, should be more than a single word, including at least some inside information, or an opinion, at least, about the neighbors and the neighborhood, their problems, prospects, customs, and traditions. First, then, something about the University. What a place and what a people! Chaotic, to be sure, but generally speaking, the chaos of creation (see Genesis 1). Occasionally dull, in corners anyway, but ideas and people with ideas in abundance beyond the deserving of most of us. Really, very "secular," to use a much abused term, but who would have it otherwise?

To this last point, let me speak. We both know that the nice old days when it could be assumed everyone was a Christian [or, I might add, a "Jew," but this is a letter to a priest rather than a rabbi] are over and done with, if, indeed, they ever existed. For one thing, ours is a much more diverse society, with men of many creeds, including those who claim to have no creed, competing and contending in the forum of opinion. And the books, plays, and lectures that set men thinking and shape their commitments are as likely to stand over against the Christian tradition as they are to grow out of or be rooted in its deepest convictions. This, however, is not a cause for alarm - of undue alarm, at least. Students, "good Christian students" even (or perhaps "especially"), need to come to terms with Jean-Paul Sartre and Linguistic Analysis, the claims of psychology, and the promises of biology. For the Church (by which I mean here, students, together with their priests and pastors) is called to live out its life in the world, and this is the world given us in these years of grace. Welcome, then, to a university which takes few truths for granted!

Our welcome has another side, however, when the new neighbor is not really a stranger, but a member of the family. This is something I suspect neither of us could have said a few years ago. But great things have been happening in the life of the Church. Catholics and Protestants have come to discover that they are related, even rather closely so! When and how did it start? Perhaps with good Pope John, though obviously he had many allies. In any event, it was the work of the Spirit, drawing together men who before then had rather grave doubts about one another. We speak of the "Ecumenical Movement" and the "Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue," but such terms fail to convey what is happening at a more personal level, as students, faculty, and clergy discover they share "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

We are not suggesting Catholics will be enthusiastic about everything which is said in this journal or the various programs and activities of Campus Christian Council (any more, indeed, than Protestants will endorse every action or statement or Newman). Styles of piety and ways of work, to say nothing of doctrinal matters, differ too widely for that. But the old walls are down and the future is open which gives a very special quality to our welcome.

-Frank Snow-
Campus Minister

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For the past three years, Campus Christian Council has sponsored a Language Arts Program for the underprivileged children of the Arbor Hill Section of Albany. The general purpose of this program is to increase the reading skills, comprehension, and vocabulary of children selected by their teachers and principals from grades three through six.

Since the public schools are crowded, capable children for want of individual instruction often fail to learn the mechanics of reading. Working in small groups of two or three, the State student volunteer-teachers attempt to teach the children to "sound out" words, to pronounce strange letter combinations, and even the alphabet.

But most important, State students give these children whose only world is the slum section of Albany a direct contact with another world which is unknown to them. And the student, in turn, can learn about a world from which he has been cut off or at least has avoided.

Volunteers to work with these children are urgently needed. Students meet for one hour a week from 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. in the classrooms of the Temple Baptist Church at Ten Broeck Street and Clinton Avenue, a short block from the Palace Theater. All transportation costs are financed by Campus Christian Council. This is not a "religious program" - which is to say we do not use traditional materials drawn from the Bible. Accordingly, all students should feel free to participate.

If you are interested in helping these children, please contact Claudia George, Pierce Hall, or Susan Jones, Alden Hall, through student mail or in the dormitory; or contact Mr. Snow, the Campus Minister.

FAITH AND HUMAN MEANING

Every man is born with potentials which he develops through his life toward the actualization which Paul Tillich calls "ultimate concern." When man is brought into being, his environment, faculties, and basically, his entire potential are the result of an inconceivable phenomenon. Man's life is spent striving toward self-fulfillment or his ultimate concern. The motto of the State University is expressive of this striving: "Let each become all he is capable of being." When man is seeking purpose in life, he is groping, searching for these capabilities and potentials, so that he can seek and develop fullness of life. During his maturity he should realize his freedoms and responsibilities as a thinking being and consider the possibilities and opportunities that are opened before him. Sensing this freedom, he should seek meaning in life through creative living to discover these potentials. Then, becoming aware of these potentials, men should subjectively drive toward self-fulfillment. Through unconditional surrender and confidence in this ultimate concern, he displays a genuine act of faith which assumes that he comprehends the momentousness of such an act. He conceives of what he strives for, but may or may not reach it.

An analogy can be drawn here to the concept of limit in mathematics. The quantity two has meaning for us and seems real as a result of our imagination and learning experiences. Let us take the sum of the geometric progression: $f(x) = 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \dots$. They will never be equal to the quantity two, even if we added the terms indefinitely. However, in calculus we can say that the sum of this continuous function $f(x)$ will approach the number two if we take the sum of an infinite number of terms. Mathematicians qualify this statement by asserting that the difference between the limit taken and the number itself can "be as small as we please." By analogy, I am saying that this difference in mathematics can correspond to the concept of faith in man's life. Man can approach this self-fulfillment of his potential that he conceives of, but can never actually reach it, for his life would become meaningless. The faith, therefore, is the difference between what he actually achieves and what he hoped to achieve.

Learning to Swim

This bridge or gap referred to above is explained in a similar analogy drawn by Soren Kierkegaard, when he states that faith is "the confidence necessary for learning to swim." The assurance that one is lighter than water and can float is like the assurance of faith. The person can wade out in the shallow waters and has security so long as he can touch. Reason represents this wading in shallow waters. Then the person may see an island in the distance, called the "ultimate concern." If he has the courage, he takes the leap of faith, accepting the risks involved, and dives forward into the water. Notice that the whole self is involved in the act, the same as in the act of faith. Depending upon his swimming ability, he may or may not reach this island. And, of course, it may be that he will never get off the dry land; he may think he is swimming, but be only squirming about on dry land in his own ignorance. Each swimmer or individual becomes aware of his existence and then the existence of other persons and substances in his world at one time or another. These other substances and men I shall designate as levels of nature.

By drawing a parallel between these levels of nature and the dimensions as thought of in geometry, the concept of faith as related to man's existence will be made more lucid. The first demension in geometry shall represent the first level of nature or all inanimate objects and substances such as stone and water. The second level corresponds to all forms of life other than man's consciousness. The third level is man's consciousness and his awareness of self and surroundings; and the fourth dimension or level of nature is what man calls God or a deity. The first dimension is a line, the second a plane or two lines perpendicular, the third is a cube or three mutually perpendicular lines, the fourth is an inconceivable figure of four mutually perpendicular lines. Just as the fourth dimension of geometry is not perceivable to man, so the fourth level of nature is not perceivable to man. Proof of this fourth level of nature cannot be made except by drawing analogies from the second and first dimensions to the third and extending them to the fourth dimension and perhaps even to dimensions beyond the fourth dimension. Algebra is a common factor of all the dimensions; so existence is common to all substances in nature and the capacity to affect and influence other existences. Just as animals are dependent on water for existence, and man is dependent on animals for food, so the Being beyond man may be dependent on man for His existence. He may feed on our intellects in the same manner as man exploits animals for the purpose of food.

Kinship with Eternity

But where does the concept of faith enter into the discussion? This can only refer to the confidence and concern man has that his sphere of existence he is aware of is essentially good. Man is finite in his freedom to exist and participate in the vast process of nature, but he is capable of rising above the limits of particular situations through his imagination and creativeness. "His life is bounded in time and is moving toward death; yet he has a strange kinship with eternity because he can rise above the present and see its relation to the past and the future." (David Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief) This state of being, which can rise above the finite to the infinite and realize its

relation and union with infinite being is an act of faith. Paul Tillich asserts that "man is driven toward faith by his awareness of the infinite to which he belongs, but which he does not own as a possession . . . In the infinite, it sees its own fulfillment." Faith, therefore, as an attitude of mind must seek to bring meaning to man's existence, A meaning that gives man a satisfactory sense of purpose or relationship to his environment. Reiterating, this sense of purpose is realization by imagination and fulfillment of his capability through revelation of his potential.

-Arthur Coles-

Idoto

Before you, mother Idoto
naked I stand,
before your watery presence,
a prodigal,

leaning on an oilbeam;
lost in your legend.....

Under your power wait I on barefoot
Watchman for the watchword at
HEAVENSGATE;

out of the depths my cry
give ear and hearken.

Christopher Okigbo

Reprinted from Heavensgate by Christopher Okigbo, Mbari Publications, Ibadan (Nigeria) 1962.

Office Hours

The Reverend Frank Snow, Campus Minister, has an office at 501 State Street (just around the corner from the University Library). This office is usually open:

- Monday 11:15-12:15; 1:30-4:30
- Tuesday 11:15-4:30
- Wednesday 11:15-12:15; 2:30-4:30
- Thursday 11:15-12:15; 2:30-4:30
- Friday 11:15-1:30; 2:30-4:30

Other hours can be arranged by appointment. Phone 436-9275.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Tuesday, Sept. 22, 9:00 p.m.
Administrative Meeting of CCC,
501 State Street

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
"Mississippi Report," with Miss
Lola Johnson, veteran of Mississippi
Summer Project, speaking; presenta-
tion of projected campus civil
rights group. Brubacher.

Tuesday, Oct. 6. Next issue of "Skanda-
lon"; copy due by noon, Sunday,
Oct. 4.

SEX AND THE
HUMAN PREDICAMENT

A conference of the
New York Student Christian Movement

To be held October 16-18
at Lisle, New York (near Binghamton)

Speaker: Dr. Herbert A. Brown, Dean of
Brooklyn College

Cost: \$12.50. For further information
contact Mr. Snow.

Skandalon is the biweekly journal of
Campus Christian Council. Articles,
poems, essays, drawings, or short
stories are welcome. Welcome also are
written responses to articles published
in Skandalon. Anyone interested in sub-
mitting his or her work should contact
Guy M. McBride, Editor, via Student Mail,
or leave materials at 501 State Street,
the office of the Campus Minister.

Campus Christian Council has planned, or
is planning, a variety of projects and
programs for the Fall. If you would like
to help out or take part, please return
the form below.

I am interested in learning more about or helping out with the following Campus
Christian Council programs and activities:

_____ "Skandalon" (needs writers, typists and others to assist in planning and
producing the paper)
_____ The Language Arts Program (see Page Two)

_____ A "Coffee House," to be held Friday nights, providing an opportunity for good
talk, folk singing, and the like

_____ Study Groups, to be held when and where interest indicates, on:

_____ "Mere Christianity" (Mr. David Heal of the Social Studies Dept.)

_____ "Contemporary Christian Thought" (Mr. Snow)

_____ Other topics (if you have specific interests, please note)

_____ A Sunday Service of Worship for Students and Faculty

NAME.....

SUNYA ADDRESS..... TELEPHONE.....

(Please return to Guy McBride through Student Mail in Lower Draper)