

Editorial

SUICIDE & XIANITY

In my six years as a psychiatric nurse, both in Charlottetown and Toronto, I was often involved with people who were "suicidal". There are two principal types: attempted suicide and, successful suicide. The former, which is the attempt by an individual who is not so concerned with successful suicide as he is with drawing attention to the fact that he's suffering a crisis and feels unable to deal with it effectevily. Although this is serious in itself, the only real danger to his life is if he should "accidentally succeed" in killing himself when he is only trying to draw attention to a personal crisis whether it be psychological or ontological. The latter ("successful suicide") is more serious and is the type with which I am here concerned.

The successful suicide is simply that - one who succeeds in destroying himself. But what is of interest to me here is the manner by which he decides. Formerly, the potential suicide is very depressed due to his inability to continue with success the ongoing struggle day-to-day living implies. First, this struggle becomes very heavy - a burden. He at-

tempts to deal with it but finds his efforts thwarted and in succumbing, becomes very depressed. He resigns. The world is too much for him. However, he cannot continue this way. He is forced to make a decision either to continue, or to find a way out.

I often observed the manifestations of a decision to "end it all". Where he was once very depressed, he suddenly becomes active, almost happy. For the perceptive nurse, this sudden transition is a clue to the fact that he has given up the struggle, has chosen suicide as the only alternative, and intends it seriously.

It's this sudden change that interests me; it's as though all one's troubles were "lifted from your shoulders".

Let's move now to another phenomenon - the "Jesus Movement". In my interactions with those of the Jesus Movement, I found the same characteristics that I found in the suicidal. Where before their lives were "drole", "meaningless", "unhappy" they suddenly became the opposite by "giving themselves to Jesus", by "accepting Christ as their savior", etc. Again, there is this sudden euphoria when one denies the struggle of day-to-day life

and throws oneself into "the hands of Christ". The only difference I can see between suicide and Christianity is that in the former (most radical) one denies life altogether, whereas in the latter, life is still affirmed but reality is rejected in favor of an ideology which permits a safe escape.

Indeed, how attractive the Christian ideology must have appeared to the persecuted and enslaved at the time of Jesus! Christianity is a religion for the slave, the weak, the herd. It provides them with a unique weapon to justify themselves and make the stronger appear weaker so as to build themselves up. However, more on this theme another time.

Nevertheless, it is still remarkable that "Christianity" thrives in North America which is capitolist - par excellence! Within the capitolist ideology, it is a battle of the strong few against the weak many. With the majority expropriated by the few is it any surprise that "Christianity" is the official religion to enable you to cope with this expropriation - exploitation? Not at all - for it enables you to see yourself as strong although you are weak.

-Stan Dalton

Letters to the Editor



Dear Mr. Hansen:

May I correct a point which appeared in your "Kampus Koncern" column on examination? I am afraid that I do require some form of final examination in my science courses. The idea that I do not may have arisen from the varying nature of this final: I have experimented with as many types as possible in attempts to improve a situation that I do not like.

Another explanation occurs to me: I have been involved in non-science programs and courses which evaluated students in terms of projects rather than finals.

Coincidentally, I am a member of the Senate Committee on Examinations and

Evaluation. This Committee will be considering the question of final examinations; we would be happy to receive comment from anyone. I had planned on contacting the Cadre with an appeal; I believe that your column will help in bringing forth opinion on this subject.

Yours faithfully,

Ian MacQuarrie

Mr. King:

It is with considerable regret we are unable to publish your article which you wrote in French. Our typewriters are, unfortunately, not bilingual. However, if you would consider converting your article to English, we would gladly consider it for publication.

I might also point out to those who would like an article published in a foreign language to either consult with our typist as to column width and then type it accordingly as well as submit a translation or settle for an English equivalent.

-Editor

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