

# THE PROMETHEAN

Symposium for Liberal Religious Youth

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LR Y



# VANGUARD OF THE MOVEMENT



THE PROMETHEAN

A SYMPOSIUM FOR LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH:  
LRY AS THE VANGUARD OF THE MOVEMENT

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Address contributions and letters to the Editor,  
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The ideas and opinions expressed by contributors to The Promethean do not necessarily represent the position of every LRYer nor of Continental LRY. This is a symposium which welcomes diversity of opinion and invites **letters to the Editor** from youth and adults.

The youth stood in the wings and shouted  
“World, I’m coming  
And when I’M through  
You’ll be the best world that ever was  
I’ll rid you of hunger  
I’ll abolish your slums  
You will only vaguely remember war and hatred  
Your greatest museums will have the only bombs  
All your peoples shall be equal  
All your peoples shall be content  
Sadness will be forgotten”

The man dashed on the stage  
and cried  
“World, I’m here  
I’m here to make you better  
I’m here to feed your hungry and  
clothe your naked  
I’m going to clear your slums and  
abolish hatred and war  
I’m here to rid you of inequality  
and unrest  
Everyone will be happy”

And then he looked at  
his script  
And behold, it was  
his exit line  
And he passed out of existence

Roger Williams



## EDITORIAL OVERVIEW

A vanguard is a group or movement that is actively leading a larger body of which it is a part. In what ways have the youth in the liberal religious movement acted as a vanguard? The answer to that question would take many pages for it is very complex. The names of old AUY and UYF offices and members now in important positions in the denomination would form a very impressive list. The consolidation of the Unitarian and Universalist youth movements to form LRY preceded the birth of the U.U.A.

But is youth doing anything to lead today? The Promethean expresses the idealism of LRY -- some might say we show only the good points. Today there is a struggle between the idealism of our generation and the cynicism that develops when one realizes the vastness of the universe and feels the BOMB hanging heavy over our heads. Roger Williams, the Michindoh Federation Worship Chairman, expresses this conflict in the introductory poem.

The idealism and cynicism will be with us for some time, but I see the idealism becoming the dominating influence. Fritz West, President of LRY, has seen LRY leading through the sense of brotherhood LRYers share at conferences. Peter Baldwin, Executive Director of LRY, expressed his thoughts on LRYers' religious yearnings in a sermon given in the presence of Down East Federation conferees at the Auburn, Maine, Universalist Church. Sections are printed here as "Dry Minds and Empty Spirits." I, too, have a vision of LRY -- it has been and will be expressed in the material I print in issues of The Promethean this year. But those are theoretical points, and religious theory and philosophy are hard to measure.

Action is easier to measure -- we notice the active. Michael Wallace is a Unitarian Universalist student from Mt. Kisco, New York. Michael, the author of "For Peace #2" worked in Mississippi with COFO last summer. Karen Keller is an LRYer from Waterville, Maine; while she does attend the Waterville Church, Karen is a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Meredith MacKeen, a new member of The Church of the Larger Fellowship's Junior Fellowship Youth, lives in Quebec. The Edna St. Vincent Millay poem, "Conscientious Objector," reprinted from Collected Poems (Harper & Row, Copyright 1934, 1962 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis) through the kind permission of Norma Millay Ellis, reflects searching on the part of many LRYers on the subject of the power of peace force in the face of aggression and strife.

I see LRYers on the move; I see a new idealism rising to do battle with the cynicism of our age; I see a tone-setting vanguard appearing in the liberal religious movement.



## A PORTRAIT OF LRY AS A YOUNG LIBERALISM

This will be an impressionistic portrait of LRY as a liberalism which has not yet fully matured. LRY as a group has a definitely liberal character all its own, but in my estimation it does not use all the potentialities with which it is endowed. I hope to point out in my abstract portrait some of these liberal characteristics that have yet to be matured to fruit-bearing traits.

In very simple terms, a subculture is a subgroup of a culture which has common cultural traits with the general culture and yet is distinct from it. In this sense LRY is indeed a subculture of the Unitarian Universalist movement, and yet its relationship has one not so slight innuendo which must not be overlooked. Our relationship with the Unitarian Universalist movement is intergenerational: its basis is the intercommunication and interrelationship of two separate generations. It must be recognized immediately that this presents a communication problem from the very start: the two generations speak in different languages because of their different perspectives and values. I sincerely believe that only in this light can LRY be seen clearly, for it creates the basis from which we interact both with adults and among ourselves.

And how does this affect our interaction as a group? To reveal one facet of this I would like to quote the Reverend Peter A. Baldwin, Executive Director of LRY:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>I feel that our youngsters sense a restlessness on the part of many of their elders in connection with their formal style of personal presentation. This suggests to me Eugene O'Neil's play, <u>Great God Brown</u> which portrays people presenting themselves behind masks. The insight of our LRYers is that</p> | <p>our culture-subculture parents all wear many mask façades. Similarly, LRYers act out what they perceive their parents are without masks.... I do feel that our LRYers are doing more than merely acting out.... There is an authentic searching on their part to create in their lives something quite authentic.</p> |
|---|--|

It is so true that those in our subculture wear so many masks, which hide them from the cold reality that our world is based on paper-thin, unstable values. Our culture is in a state of continual flux and change. The lack of social, political, religious, and cultural certainty all contribute to driving people to find security and certainty in unstable values such as material well-being and conformity, to be trite.

It is also a feather in LRY's hat that we have recognized the superficiality of these values and strive for the establishment of authenticity in our value structure. However, at this point it is time to stop and reconsider ourselves in this light.



I recently read an article in the West-Wind by Alan Cameron that urged all of us coming to the Missouri Valley Federation Conference to act according to the accepted norms of respectability and maturity. Why did he do this? The answer lies in over-reaction. Once having realized the falsity of popular social norms, LRYers tend to lean over backwards in their rejection of these norms. Even to the extent that respect for personal property and for integrity is disregarded. Thus I would qualify the Reverend Peter Baldwin's statement by saying that not only do LRYers act as "they perceive their parents are without masks..." but they go further to the extent that the search for authenticity too often becomes invalidated by overreaction. Too often LRYers express their rejection of our society's norms in exaggerated terms, thus alienating the object of their criticism and defeating their own purpose. In summary, LRY's criticism is highly laudable, but let it be tender criticism which maintains a respect for our older generation rather than probing into the festering value wounds so as to make the prey writhe and foam defensively.

Regardless of the mode of our criticism, its presence gives LRY its most distinctive characteristics. As a result of our running inter-generational value battle, we join together in a closer-knit group. Our closeness is a defense against the dominance of adult values overtaking ours. It is a form of tactical strategy in our value battle. In other words, LRY gains a "sense of community": a fraternal bond caused by our common, yet dissenting values. It allows LRYers to share with each other more deeply, for they are, to a degree, transcending prevailing social norms, and thus can confront each other with honesty more readily. This sense of community is much stronger and much deeper than any bond felt between members of the adult denomination, for the adults are not dissenting from their cultural values, but rather living within the value structure of their society.

Since the "sense of community" allows LRYers to share and interact with greater depth, it also lends to a more mature approach to their religion. This maturity is dramatically demonstrated by three particular issues: (1) LRY's theological approach, (2) its view of man, and (3) its use of art in religion. In these three areas in particular LRY holds the position of a vanguard -- the religious vanguard of the Unitarian-Universalist movement.

The adult denomination has a rationalistic theological orientation. This is rooted not only in Unitarian-Universalist history, but also stems from the scientific orientation of our present culture. Our adult denomination is a direct product of this history and culture. However, LRY complements the rationality of the adult movement with phenomenology. In other words, we do not only recognize the validity of man's rational mind, but also the validity of human experience as a basis for theological belief. We do not require philosophical justification for all of our beliefs, but rather we accept human experience as a valid basis for theology. We, as LRYers, are, collectively speaking, the poet as well as the prose.

Another distinction between LRYers and the adults is our view of man. Too many among the adult denomination dichotomize man by considering the emotional and intellectual aspects of man as separate, thus giving his



personality a dual character. LRYers, on the other hand, view man "holistically"; normatively, the emotional and intellectual aspects of man are an integrated whole. They complement each other and interact as a whole. This is directly intertwined with and necessary to our phenomenological approach to religion. Moreover it is a much healthier view of man for no one can deny that the rational and emotional affect each other continually. It is virtually impossible to think totally unemotionally, and likewise, it is almost never that a person's emotions are not somewhat controlled by his reason.

The last difference between ourselves and the adult denomination which I would like to mention is in the realm of the arts. LRY recognizes the arts as a mode of religious expression: music, art, literature, and drama all play a fundamental role as a means of self- and religious expression. The omnipresence of folk music, the perpetual interest in drama and art, and the reams of creative literature printed in camp, continental and federation publications each year are concrete verification of this fact. Conferences which concentrate on the arts are constantly trying to satiate LRYers' needs for self-expression. The adult denomination, on the other hand, does not approach LRY in this field. Church architecture, art, music, and symbolism are all pathetically deficient in the Unitarian Universalist movement.

These three facets of LRY's theological orientation: the concept of the integrated personality of man, the phenomenological approach to theology, and the use of the arts as a mode of religious expression are what place LRY in the position of a vanguard. We are leaders of the denomination in the maturity of our approach to religion. The maturity lies in the fact that we approach man as a complex being with numerous modes of expression and thought at his fingertips. We affirm his diversified character and revel in it rather than delimit the valid workings of man's mind to only reason, as the adult denomination does, for the most part. Our approach is the fruit of the communication in depth which the "sense of community" affords us.

Yet we have not fulfilled our role as a vanguard. Again, we have the potentialities, but have failed to fully utilize them.

Unfortunately, our sense of community is often carried too far. LRY too frequently is interpreted by LRYers as being a closed society and an end of maturity and growth rather than a means to greater growth.

It is high time that this misconception is cleared up. LRY is neither the stopping point of learning, that painfully perpetual process, nor is it an entity unto itself. Just as John Donne's meditation reminds us that "No man is an island," I will humbly join his company and reiterate that no organization is an entity unto itself. LRY is part of a Unitarian Universalist continuum starting with Junior High, going through LRY, moving to Student Religious Liberals (SRL), and finally ending with the adult denomination. However, most LRYers fail to recognize this continuum, but rather consider LRY as separate from the total Unitarian Universalist movement. Under analysis we realize the concept of youth autonomy holds only insofar as we are organizationally separate from the rest of the denomination. If one extends the concept any further, it merely becomes myth. We are a product of the Unitarian Universalist tradition and an integral part of the Unitarian Universalist culture.



In this light we have a duty, a duty to share our religious sentiments with our adult denomination as Continental LRY has started to do by such means as The Promethean, a symposium of opinions on religious, political and social concerns of the liberal religious experience. At the Board of Trustees meetings last August an International Religious Fellowship Committee was established to develop closer communication with IRF and hopefully send some LRY delegates to their conference next summer. At this time, I am corresponding with members of the Board of Student Religious Liberals in an attempt to increase the numbers of LRYers who enter SRL after their graduation from high school, and hope to develop stronger ties with the Junior High Program. LRY supports a camp, Leedalab, which is designed to be a transition between Junior High and LRY leadership.

But on the federation and local group level there is still a schism between LRY and the adults. In this case, Continental LRY is inconsequential. It cannot do the job. It is your duty as members of a vanguard movement to share LRY's culture and religious orientation with the adults in your church or area as well as to develop stronger ties with church and district organizations as a whole.

In a greater sense, LRY is not an end to maturity and authenticity of values, but rather a means. You can grow only so far in LRY, and you will all agree that it is your duty to go further. A means to go further is provided in the denomination: Student Religious Liberals. Do not stagnate yourselves by considering LRY as a goal, but rather place it in the perspective of only a section of a long road. Upon graduation from our proverbial hallowed halls, do not cling to the glow of musty, misty memories of the past, but rather stretch both your intellect and your maturity. The Unitarian Universalist Association offers you this opportunity to stretch in Student Religious Liberals.

This is my portrait of LRY As a Young Liberalism.

This is a time for reaffirmation and rededication. We need to affirm the composition, tones and innuendos of our portrait and concurrently we need to avoid stagnating our growth with undue praise or lying dormant in the warm glow of past memories. But more important, we need to dedicate ourselves to the sharing of those values which we hold dear with the fellows of our faith, giving to our elders and our friends as we would give to each other.

We are not entities unto ourselves, but rather debtors to our cultural past. We are not the creators of a self-portrait, but rather we share its creativity with those who have gone and those who are going before us.

Therein lies our responsibility. So in this let us share and on this let us act, not merely exist, as a vanguard.

Frederick S. West  
President, Continental LRY



## DRY MINDS AND EMPTY SPIRITS

While Ezekiel preached in the valley of dry bones, the people of Israel, having reconciled themselves to their bondage in Babylonia, were making what they could out of life in an enemy country. It was this spiritual and practical surrender that moved Ezekiel to speak out for renewed confidence in the age-old vision that there was a great destiny for the Jewish people. So in our day the first editor of the PROMETHEAN speaks out in behalf of her generation saying that "the initiation of a 'rational approach' to religion, relegating the mystical aspect of the human character to a status inferior to that of his logical abilities, has created a vacuum within the practice of meaningful religion."

This editor speaks as a modern day liberal Ezekiel for those of our young people who are tired of dry minds and empty spirits, who are tired of liberals infatuated with their scientific method and cerebrally fixated, tired of surrendering to the ultimately nihilistic notion of making a home in an enemy universe and accepting the lot of a shipwrecked people on a doomed planet. They are tired of gritted-toothed Heideggerian life projects, of cerebrally contrived meaning and ultimately futile courage. Theirs is a restlessness to reach out beyond cognition and yet including it, to what is more closely associated with the ineffable experience of form and beauty rather than with logical conceptualizations and empirical findings. It is a thirsting for Being. It may be closer to a craving for vision which must initially remain subjective and private in contrast to truths which may be verified or established by public consensus. Theirs is a need to become more than the actualization of a self-contained process, to relate and commune with the encompassing vital beyond, thus to become a part of ultimate meaning.

There is alive among a significant number of our youth a restlessness of the spirit in the face of overly cool rationality in religion, a restlessness which I believe exists among many Unitarian Universalist adults as well. Many adults have come out of the kind of early childhood church experience which quite understandably has discouraged in them a trust of the non-rational. So they tend to be coldly objective and intellectually oriented. There is gladness in them at times. They give of themselves and respond collaboratively to the being within which they exist. Can this vivre be reduced to logical argument? I say not at all. They feel this way. Why not then go further? Why not permit our minds to give dignity to what we feel in our hearts?

Our religion need not be irrational because we permit non-rational experience to tell us of the meaning in life and the significance of existence. There are many among our young people restless to create within our movement a liberal religion drawing from the depths of human emotion and imagination, as well as from the acuteness of the human intellect. I sense many adults sharing this same restlessness; why not then see the two generations join more closely together to work in common with this restlessness and with this vision.

Dr. Peter A. Baldwin  
Executive Director, LRY



## FOR PEACE #2

In almost no breeze  
 the lake hardly ripples  
 but gently  
                   oh so gently  
                                   it does  
 and laps against  
                                   that crude dam  
 with gaping flaw

Quietly,  
                   so quietly  
 it laps,  
                   whispering  
 "they died for love."

The hands that made it would shudder  
 if they could understand  
 "they died for peace."

But those hands don't hear  
 the ears that belong to them  
                   are deaf  
                                   with fear  
   and hatred  
 "they died for harmony."

and the lake speaks  
 and none hear  
                                   of the horrors it has seen  
 for they don't want to hear  
 "they died for truth."

The hole will be filled  
 the lake is in no danger  
 the flaw will be filled  
 and few will know that it was there  
 and, of those who do  
                                   most  
   will forget  
   why it was,  
 but not the lake  
 "they died for faith."



And some day  
when the deaths of these three  
and Emmet Till  
                                and Medgar Evers  
  and countless others  
so that the list could cover  
  a hundred pages  
  single spaced  
  triple columned  
  both sides  
when all these deaths have been justified  
“they died for their children”  
and a new day has dawned  
  in spite of the hate mongers  
  whom we must pity,  
  if we can  
then people will look at the lake,  
and ask how it could have happened,  
and only the lake will remember  
  
“they died for peace among all men.”

Michael Wallace



## THE PEACEFUL FIGHTERS

(A Synopsis of the Ideals of Nonviolence)

A riot explodes in Harlem, and man is set against man. A group of Untouchables, low caste Indians, kneel in meditation, love and reverence before the entrance of a road through the section of the city where the Brahmins or high caste Indians dwell, asking only permission to use the highway which passes the Brahmin homes. These seemingly disconnected scenes are indeed related; they both are concerned with the struggle for human rights. Of more value, however, is a comparison of their outcomes. The Harlem riots only renewed hatred which already existed, thus widening the gap between races; whereas in India the Brahmins began to doubt their reasons for denying use of the road to the Untouchables, and at length allowed them to traverse it peacefully. The latter incident illustrates the power of love over hate, or nonviolence substituted for violence.

What is nonviolence and how may it be applied to our way of life? Ideally, nonviolence is a code of ethics derived from the blending of two philosophies, one concerning the importance of understanding, reasoning, and forgiveness--the other being the belief that love is a more powerful force than hate. There is a definite trend toward nonviolence in facing many of the problems afflicting society today. This is because more and more people are questioning the right of one human being to injure or take the life of another under any circumstances and are realizing the needless waste in human life and resources hate can yield. For these people, nonviolence is the logical alternative. Some base their beliefs on religious principles derived from the Ten Commandments as handed to Moses, "Thou shalt not kill", and the teachings of Christ illustrating love, forgiveness, and friendship for all people. Others, however, simply believe that violence can accomplish little, and that it is basically wrong for a man to injure or take another's life regardless of his background or beliefs, and therefore refuse to participate in any activities involving violence on the grounds that it is morally wrong.

Nonviolence is by no means a new concept. The Religious Society of Friends was founded in 1650 partly on the principle that it is against the teachings of Christ to kill and that love is a greater force than hate. These people, in their founding of Pennsylvania and their way of life in that colony, demonstrated to the rest of the world how people of different backgrounds could live in peace with one another. Another major victory of nonviolence became evident in 1947 when India gained independence from Great Britain largely because of the work of Mahatma Gandhi and his followers, who were also believers in the constructive powers of love.

Nonviolence is definitely not an "easy way out". Those who practice it realize that only through continued and united efforts will their hopes become reality. In their work and throughout their lives they substitute love for hatred, forgiveness for revenge. They try to find the causes aggravating a problem, be they hunger, poverty or discrimination, and relieve them. They hold little faith in temporary solutions brought about by suppression and fear.

Today, nonviolence is being applied in many situations. Believers in nonviolence have organized themselves into groups so that together they can act directly on problems of both national and international importance. Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), War Resisters League (WRL), and Turn Toward Peace (TTP) are a few organizations which deal nonviolently with the promotion of civil rights, world peace, and disarmament. By becoming a member of such an organization, people are able to support and practice their nonviolent convictions, unified in their efforts.

Increasingly people who believe in a non-violent life are making known their ideas. Already the practice of nonviolence has made marked effects on history, and it will continue to do so as long as there are those who believe in love and the brotherhood of mankind. -Karen E. Keller



**FORREST GLEN FISCHER ESSAY CONTEST**



The Forrest Glen Fischer Essay Contest is sponsored annually by Liberal Religious Youth. The rules of the Contest have recently been changed so that youth aged eleven through nineteen may enter essays on a Civil Rights theme. Prizes of thirty-five dollars will be awarded to the winning essays in the eleven through fifteen and sixteen through nineteen year old age groups. Essays must be submitted to Liberal Religious Youth, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 by March 30, 1965.

The Essay Contest with its expanded age range offers all Junior Highers and LRYers a chance to have their voices heard in the field of Civil Rights. The winning essays are published each year in the Junior High, Liberal Religious Youth and Unitarian Universalist Association packets, thus giving the winners an audience of several thousand. How do we overcome racial and/or religious bigotry? How do we permanently break down the walls of hate and fear that divide us? These questions, so often asked, are today largely unanswered. Forrest Glen Fischer was young, as young as the youngest of those who will be entering the contest; yet he worked hard in the causes he thought just and right. Forrest's parents and the members of his fellowship have provided, through a trust fund, a way through which Junior Highers and LRYers can join Forrest in working for the ideals we all desire to achieve. There is no reason to believe that answers to the pressing questions of today will not come from the young. Each of us can try -- indeed, we all have an obligation to try.



## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF FORREST GLEN FISCHER

Forrest Glen Fischer was a young fellow who lived in an East Texas community where racial segregation and prejudice had become part of the way of life.

His frank sense of justice and feeling of compassion for the unfairly treated moved him to indignantly question the contradictions he saw about him.

He wondered why police were called to chase colored children from a public park, why Negroes were barred from the public library, and why nearly the entire colored population of his city was confined to one room hovels stacked up in filthy slums. As a Star Scout and patrol leader he pondered why his Boy Scout troop which pledged itself to the highest democratic ideals, went on camping trips to a beautiful camp where he saw only white faces.

Forrest listened to the determined words of a Negro leader who was a frequent visitor in his home, and felt the fever of proud people rebelling against shaming discrimination. When dynamite bombs shook the city around him, and mobs attacked Negro youngsters at a school, Forrest searched for ways he could show that some whites did not believe in the racist creed.

He rode his bicycle to a worship service at a little, poor Negro church. He made a point of drinking from the water fountains marked "colored." In school he was scolded for drawing attention to segregation practices in public education during a discussion on democracy.

Forrest joined the staff of his school newspaper, and decided to write. He began to compose a novel length fictionalized account of a young boy suffering the pain of prejudice.

Finally, he campaigned for the election of a candidate who was opposed to segregation. He joined the candidate on a speaking tour, passing out literature, and used his spare time to post placards about his neighborhood appealing for votes.



Forrest knew he had cancer, but he decided to take advantage of the long hours in the hospital to publish a newspaper for and about the youngsters of several nationalities and races who were his companions there. He toured the hospital rooms in a wheel chair to gather items for his newspaper. When he became too weak to sit up to a typewriter he dictated his newspaper from what he remembered his fellowpatients had told him about themselves. At the same time he maintained a correspondence with boys and girls in half a dozen foreign countries.

Forrest died October 10, 1961, at the age of 13. But the pure spirit of common justice and brotherhood which he felt so strongly lives deep in the hearts of many other young people like him. It is the purpose of this essay contest to encourage these young people to explore the problem of bigotry, and continue the search for a solution which will eliminate it from society for all time.

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In memory of Forrest Fischer and in the hopes that other young people might have the dedication to democratic principles he did, the LRY is sponsoring a

**FORREST GLEN FISCHER MEMORIAL ESSAY CONTEST**

made possible by contributions in part from members of the Unitarian Fellowship of the Sabine Area, Texas.

Rules of the Essay Contest:

1. Anyone 11 through 19 years of age may enter.  
Judging will be for 11-15 and 16-19.
2. Essays are to be concerned with the advancement of Civil Rights, the abolition of bigotry, or related to the erasing of religious discrimination.
3. Essays shall be between 500 and 1000 words.
4. The winning essays will be formally published next fall.
5. All essays must be received, typed, double spaced with name and age of the author at the top of the first page by March 30, 1965. Essays should be mailed to the Liberal Religious Youth, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108.

**Prizes**

\$35.00 a piece in each age group

The 1964 prize-winning essays follow.



**CIVIL RIGHTS - HOW YOUNG PEOPLE CAN HELP**  
Janet Volckhausen, Hampton, Virginia, Age 14

“Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country,” said the late president, John F. Kennedy. The realization of the ideal of equal rights for all is an extremely important job waiting for this generation of young people. After one hundred years, some of our parents have finally begun to make some progress in this field. A great deal has been accomplished, but a much greater amount of work remains to be done. This is one job which does not have to wait until we reach adulthood. We can begin to do our part now.

The main cause of prejudice is lack of understanding. As white people become acquainted with individual Negroes, they gain understanding and realize that a person's skin color does not determine his character or personality. We who already know this have a responsibility to bring about an atmosphere where the presence of Negroes seems natural, and whites can become acquainted with them. To do this, laws will first have to be passed to force integration. As prejudiced whites become accustomed to meeting Negroes as equals, and see their friends also becoming friends with Negroes, they will gradually get acquainted with Negroes themselves, and lose their prejudice.

Although we are too young to vote for politicians who will advance the cause of civil rights, we can campaign for them, to influence adults who can vote. We can also write letters to our elected representatives, urging civil rights legislation, and encourage our parents and adult friends to write.

In our everyday actions we can help create an atmosphere where Negroes and whites can become acquainted naturally and help to bring about understanding and tolerance between Negroes and whites. Even something as simple as discouraging “black skin” jokes, instead of laughing with the crowd, can help the cause. These jokes class Negroes as inferiors, and make understanding and tolerance more difficult. Our reaction may help others realize that a dark skin color does not make a person inferior, or determine his behavior. Although it seems a small beginning, it may give others who were afraid the courage to stand up for their principles, thus influencing more people, in ever-widening circles.

This same principle will work in newly integrated schools. As Southern schools become integrated, we have an important opportunity to make the effort successful. It takes only a few, who step forward with a friendly smile for the Negroes, to lead the way for other less courageous students to follow, and the Negroes will usually be quickly accepted. (I know this is possible for it happened in my school when the first Negroes entered last fall.) In schools where prejudiced adults have made this quiet acceptance impossible, I believe that students who try to bring about tolerance and understanding of the Negroes will be glad they made the effort, even if it means the loss of a few fair-weather friends.

Another method by which young people can help bring about equality for Negroes is non-violent resistance. This is the most important weapon for bringing integration to each community, and it is not reserved for adults only. Most of us will not employ non-violent resistance as dramatically as it is used in Cambridge, Maryland, or Birmingham, Alabama, but we can find opportunities to use it if we wish. Young people can, for example, participate in sit-downs at lunch counters and help picket stores and theatres which discriminate in employment practices, seating arrangements or other ways. We can boycott these theatres, even if it means skipping some good movies, and buy from other stores, even if the bargains are less attractive.

Too often the churches are hindering instead of helping the campaign for civil rights. We can invite Negro friends to church, and help our white friends realize that all men were created equal, and that the church has a responsibility to help Negroes receive equal rights.

There are many other ways we can help, depending partly on the communities in which we live. But we cannot afford to deny our responsibility to work for civil rights until we become adults. If we can erase some of the prejudice from the minds of this generation now, perhaps when we reach adulthood we can come close to fulfilling the dream of equality for all.



**A CAMPAIGN FOR CIVIL RIGHTS--VIOLENCE OR NON-VIOLENCE**  
 Gregory Spencer Hill, Portales, New Mexico, Age 13

Our American way of life was begun on a few basic principles. Perhaps the most important was the clause in the Declaration of Independence which states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The treatment received by the American Negro is certainly not in accord with these principles. Certainly no American considers the fact that a Negro cannot be served in a restaurant or a motel with those having the same refinement, simply because of his skin color to be in accordance with basic American principles. Contrary to the opinions of some, however, it is my belief that the overwhelming majority of American people realize that such treatment is un-American and contrary to everything that we hold dear. It is the case, unfortunately, that there is a well-organized minority who consider the Negro to be inferior. Due to the fact that they are well-organized they are more outspoken than their opponents, and their views are taken by the casual listener to be the views of the majority. A good example of the truth of this fact is the case of Little Rock, Arkansas.\* Little Rock, in 1957, had a plan for the desegregation of schools. The citizens of Little Rock had chosen this plan in the School Board election when they voted two-to-one for board members supporting it. But the well-organized Southern segregationist societies decided to make Little Rock a testing ground. They were the ones who forced President Eisenhower to send in the

101st Airborne Division. The citizens of Little Rock were not too long in responding. Under the leadership of Mrs. D. D. Terry, they organized and gained control of Little Rock to the point where they desegregated all public facilities except the swimming pool. The business men who had been fearful of a segregationist boycott, and who as a result of this fear had been segregated, opened their doors to Negroes. Negroes were then given better job opportunities, and segregation died in what was formerly one of the most notoriously segregated cities in the country.

This shows that although most Americans acknowledge the fact that racial discrimination is undemocratic, they will tolerate inequality unless they are somehow prodded. The Negroes have prodded us best when they have used peaceful, non-violent demonstrations. When they prayed on the doorsteps of city halls, and when they insisted that in resisting violent suppression of their rights the only bloodshed should be theirs, they were in the highest traditions of Christianity and at the same time serving best their own ends. These demonstrations have aroused the righteous indignation of white people everywhere. The sight of vicious dogs attacking Christian innocents and policemen using high velocity fire hoses was the prod Americans needed to make them follow their consciences.

Unfortunately, Americans are not perfect. We are sometimes smug, and indifferent to the sufferings of other people. No Christian would deny the need for all of us to genuinely practice towards all races the

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\* Joe Alex Norris, "Little Rock Finds a Better Way", Reader's Digest, Sept., 1964.



brotherhood which is demanded by our religion. But our absence of Christianity is not improved when the Negroes on the verge of the success which their former charity has afforded them, turn to violent forms of achieving their ends.

There has been recently a disturbing trend in Negro demonstrations. Their method is no longer non-violent, and their aim is not simple equality, but instead preference. The demonstrations I am referring to are those protesting de facto segregation of schools in Chicago, New York City, and Cleveland. It is as much a folly to ship Negroes into a school that is far away from their neighborhood for the purpose of integrating it as it is to do the same in the interests of segregation. If the Negro demands preference here, the rest of the populace will cry "What next!", and integration could suffer a serious setback. Another obstacle to integration will be the inevitable hostility of some whites toward the Negro. You can never have a

true integration until both sides accept it, which will take time. You can force someone to live next to a Negro, eat with a Negro, send his children to school with those of a Negro, but you can never force him to accept the Negro as his equal. This will have to be achieved gradually.

The majority of the present generation must accept their share of responsibility for Civil Rights. We can no longer sit back in apathy and let the vocal minority lead the community. The youth of today will have enough problems to deal with and this one must be settled now. This generation must band together, join the Negro, and grant the Civil Rights so long overdue to the Negro. Once this is accomplished a long-existing black mark will be erased from the image of America, and once this is accomplished the youth of today will be able to concentrate on their major problem persuading the whole of America to accept the Negro and other minorities as their equal.



## “Conscientious Objector”

I shall die, but that is all I shall do for Death.

I hear him leading his horse out of the stall; I hear the  
clatter on the barn-floor.

He is in haste; he has business in Cuba, business in the Balkans,  
many calls to make this morning.

But I will not hold the bridle while he cinches the girth.

And he may mount up by himself: I will not give him a leg up.

Though he flick my shoulders with his whip, I will not tell  
him which way the fox ran.

With his hoof on my breast, I will not tell him where the  
black boy hides in the swamp.

I shall die, but that is all I shall do for Death; I am not  
on his pay-roll.

I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends nor of  
my enemies either.

Though he promise me much, I will not map him the route to  
any man's door.

Am I a spy in the land of the living, that I should deliver  
men to Death?

Brother, the password and the plans of our city are safe with  
me; never through me

Shall you be overcome.

Edna St. Vincent Millay



## CULTURAL BARRIERS

As I read various articles about segregation, I was reminded of a somewhat similar situation in Quebec. Here the barriers are of language, culture and religion rather than of color.

A French Canadian is not generally discriminated against when he endeavors to get a job, but he often does not obtain that employment because he cannot meet the qualifications in education and language. Since he does not tend to get the higher pay which the educated English often receive, he is unable to buy a house in a wealthy section of the city; thus he tends to live with his own group. Should a French Canadian have enough money though, he is welcome to join a middle class society. (To be a member of the English aristocracy, one must be white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. This eliminates the French as non-Anglo-Saxon Roman Catholics. However, the French have their own aristocracy of old established families.)

Until recently the French and English were so different in their ideas that mixing was very limited. The Roman Catholic Church has tended to discourage association with the English for fear that their people might question some of the established ideas.

Recently the French have become somewhat united in a revolutionary movement, some of which is violent but much of which is a genuine desire to raise standards. Although the newspapers report incidents of violence, the peaceful yet active movement tends to be ignored for the most part. As in the United States, people of both groups are trying hard to break these walls. During the past year, we have been busy trying to solve this problem.

My father is very active in education, and he is trying to have a regional school where the English and the French would share the same campus and the same equipment; but as yet the difference is too great to share classrooms. He has attended many meetings with French and English school commissions and through these efforts the possibilities, we hope, shall become realities.

We, as the Americans, are optimistic that the fears and lack of understanding can be overcome.

Meredith MacKeen



LRYers have sensed a one-sidedness in their churches and analyzed it as an over-emphasis on the rational. We are trying to meet our religious needs through an approach that allows for the non-rational. We have made art and music essential parts of our worship.

Sometimes after all these years of LRY I get fed up. I look at all the paperwork and swear that I am quitting LRY immediately. And then I go to a conference to lead a workshop or talk on Continental, and I see things that reassure me many times over that LRY is a viable and useful experience -- I see LRYers planning tremendous programs; but more, I see them working together with a group spirit that I haven't seen anywhere else.

Each year several federations hold conferences at which LRYers plan their Utopia; this is in reality an attempt on the part of the LRYers to give their communal feeling a sense of permanence. This same rationale underlies the present plans of MI-CON, Michindoh and Eastern Canadian Federation to establish communal LRY workcamps building or improving future camp sites. Being together -- working together becomes a viable experience. This sense of community and feeling of brotherhood is not something that stops at age nineteen. Ex-LRYers remain in contact through SRL and the adult denomination or without these bodies. Some young ex-LRYers are even planning a permanent homesteading community as their answer to this over-mechanized society.

This is an age when survival of the human race is in jeopardy, and LRY (as I have seen it) is an example for this warring world -- we do love each other; men can live as brothers. But as long as one man can beat or kill another, as long as one child starves, we cannot be secure in our community and internal freedom -- what can be applied to one man can be applied to all. The times demand that we take the lead, still guarding the freedom to run our personal and collective lives and cherishing our deep sense of community, but becoming propagandists, militants and activists for our little portion of

the Truth -- yes, even revolutionaries. For the doctrine of love and the freedom it brings was a revolutionary heresy when preached by Lao-Tze, the Buddha, Jesus, Servetus, Tolstoy or Vanzetti; it is even more so today when Megatons promise Mega death.

The United States government is carrying out an aggressive policy in Southwest Asia that is at best ineffectual and at worse oppressive. Where are the LRYers asking questions? All the LRYers who talk of peace -- where have they been during the many pickets and vigils this past year against the war in Vietnam? Where? They were actively campaigning in the recent election for candidates who have innumerable times reiterated their support for the war.

LRYers spend one weekend at a settlement house workcamp and call it Social Action; they sing "freedom songs" and "Solidarity Forever" at LRY conferences and call it Protest. Anyone returning from the Mississippi Summer Project would laugh bitterly at all this. We seem to outsiders only to be a group of mediocre guitar players without the self-discipline or dedication to learn a score. Indians and Eskimos starve through neglect; the Negroes of the Cotton Kingdom and of Harlem, the miners of Hazard, the Puerto Ricans of the Lower East Side starve even though their voices are now heard; and LRYers eat well and talk about faraway things like "Civil Rights" and a "War On Poverty." Louder preaching is desperately needed from LRYers, but more than preaching action is needed to dignify what we say. Being a vanguard implies living an example.

The Forrest Glen Fischer Essay Contest materials form a special center-section in this issue. It is difficult for younger LRYers to work on the Mississippi Summer Project; it is not so difficult for them to write a good essay on civil rights, which if widely disseminated could change hearts. Most LRYers have talent, and we all have social concern; if we would use the former to voice the latter, the results could be amazing -- and moving.



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