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Reapings At Random

Twilight Zone Teaches Theology Lesson

We watched a television show the other
night — one of the "Twilight Zone" series
produced and directed by the talented play-
wright, Rod Sterling.

Mr. Sterling, a mixture of psychiatrist and
philosopher, has a generous amount of both
traits in his awesome tales prepared for the
viewers. They are by no means children's
programs. I feel he sometimes out-does Al-
fred Hitchcock.

Sterling's presentation the other night
concerned a lone-wolf burglar (I don't know
the underworld jargon enough to characterize
him any better). He was obviously a scoundrel,
who lived by his wits; who never did a decent
thing in his life; who was caught looting a
jewelry shop and was shot by the police. Until
then, Mr. Sterling's offering seemed routine
fare; other words, a game of cops and rob-
bers. However, here the play began to take
on a novel angle.

Our crook awakens in the alley and a
whole new life begins for him. He's provided
with a mansion that has everything — indeed,
he had everything that Hollywood could
imagine to give it an almost heavenly look.
There were bright chandeliers, lush carpets,
Queen Ann beds, and everything else that

General Electric and Westinghouse could con-
jure up for luxurious living.
Our crook proceeds to live the type of
life which he had always dreamed the world
owed him and which he sought to achieve
by looting jewelry shops.

He goes to the local casino and his win-
ning streak is unending. He amasses more
money than he could ever hope to spend.

His coins in the one-armed bandit hit the
jackpot every time. He plays the dice and lo,
the bank is broken with hardly a bag big
enough to hold the winnings. He journeys
in a bright Cadillac convertible and every-
thing is at his beck and call.

Then this existence begins to pall. He
has everything he wanted; has done every-
thing he wanted to do and yet life means
nothing to him. He is bored stiff and the un-
relieved pleasures are driving him crazy. He
decides that if this is Heaven it is not for
him. He requests a change to "the other
place" where he had always expected to go.
Thus he learns his doom, for this is "the other
place."

As I said, it was an interesting presenta-
tion by Mr. Sterling with quite a respectable
message. It certainly was a different type of

hell than is imagined by most people on this
earth. But it was obviously an awful place
to be. It was a hell of his own choosing, cus-
tom tailored to suit him.

It's a salutary thought that the gods we
worship might become our individual hell.
What are they, these gods? They are not
primitive and crude. They are, instead, that
which we spend our time pursuing, that which
our thoughts dwell upon; that which our
every muscle strains towards.

We may not openly acknowledge our de-
votion, not even to ourselves, but we can spot
it if we examine our aims. The true Christian
centers his life on Christ, his goal is to be
one with Christ. The man who deludes him-
self that he, too, can be called Christian, seeks
not Christ, but a material heaven in union
with the false gods he truly worships.

Our lives today often beguile us into ac-
cepting these false gods as simply an ordinary
part of today's way of life. For many it takes
the form of just getting some fun out of life;
for others a drive to escape loneliness.

We try to forget that it is when alone we
find God. "Be still and know that I am God."
For many, also, it is a lifetime effort to ac-

quire material wealth and betterment for
their own sake. Yet whether we like it or not,
man's nature will always acknowledge the
basic truth, "Man does not live by bread alone
but by every word that proceeds from the
mouth of God."

So it is with most of us, impatient with
eternity, we strive like Rod Sterling's char-
acter, for heaven here and now, only to have
it turn to ashes in our mouths. Life is filled
with inevitable sorrows, yet how many of us
create our own false attitudes in relation to
our fellowmen — be it concerned with the pig-
ment of skin or social or economic justice.

Many of us create our own hell on earth
because we want Heaven before we have
earned it. The wise man will prefer to be a
fool in the eyes of the worldly. He will not
seek the glitter that the world holds out as
heaven. He will attempt to live his life, ac-
cepting the joys and sorrows as part of the
puzzle, that he may eventually be worthy of
the real Heaven and see his God. We often
forget that victory is not in this life. It was
never meant to be.

Who'd have thought we could have got
a serious meditation while visiting the
"Twilight Zone."
—GERARD E. SHERRY

Congo Turmoil Threatens Missions

Washington — (NC) — The
current disorders in the Con-
go may have "tragic results"
for missionary work in Africa,
a meeting of Catholic mission-
ary societies was told here.

The statement was made in
the 15th annual report of the
Mission Secretariat which was
presented (Sept. 12) to the
15th annual meeting of U.S.
mission-sending societies.

The report was prepared by
Father Frederick A. McGuire,
C.M., executive secretary of
the Mission Secretariat, which
is a clearing house of infor-
mation and services to aid
American Catholic foreign
mission work.

The meeting of mission-
sending societies was attend-
ed by more than 800 priests,
religious and laymen con-
nected with mission activi-
ties.

Father McGuire cited the
ominous developments in the
Congo as one of "two events
of major importance to mis-
sionaries" which occurred
during the past year.

He identified the other as
the series of developments
relating to stepped up aid to
the Church in Latin America.

Father McGuire, a veteran of
mission work in China, re-
called that he spent some
time in the Congo two-and-a-
half years ago.

"Then there was not appar-
ent this extreme nationalism
and anti-white feeling," he said.

Recalling the extensive
Catholic educational system
set up in the Congo, he de-
clared: "It is quite possible,
and even probable, that this
whole educational system will
fall by the wayside for lack
of financial aid."

He continued: "What hap-
pened there? It has been re-
ported that there have been
more than 20 Congolese who hold
university degrees. Who is to
administer the government of
this vast central African
country?"

Citing the shortage of
trained native administrators
in other emerging nations of

Africa, he declared: "Inevita-
bly the question will be
asked, 'What is the Catholic
missionary doing to train
lay leaders in the political
and professional fields?'"

"We may well ask our-
selves whether or not we have
done everything possible to
create in our converts self-
confidence and a positive
zeal," he continued.

"Mission methodology must
constantly be reappraised and
adapted to changing circum-
stances. Are we making this
serious reappraisal?"

Among the important de-
velopments relating to Latin
America, Father McGuire
mentioned the meeting last
November of representatives
of the Latin American, U.S.
and Canadian hierarchies, at
which plans were discussed
for aiding the Church there.

He also recalled the estab-
lishment of a Latin America
Bureau in the National Cath-
olic Welfare Conference and
the Holy See's announced
plan for "papal volunteers"
to go to Latin America.

He said the latter plan "has
given great impetus to the
lay missionary apostolate."

The "papal volunteers"

program, he said, "will be a
truly cooperative venture with
Latin American countries in-
viting volunteers from other
lands to assist their own lay
organizations."

Father McGuire said "very
careful planning" is the key
to the project's success. He
said that "undoubtedly" many
U.S. mission sending societies
will be invited to take up new
work in Latin America, but
emphasized that the number
of available priests, religious
and laymen is "of necessity
limited."

"It would seem wise to
concentrate our forces in
those areas of assistance
where the greatest possible
results might be expected in
the briefest possible time,"
he said. "We cannot afford
to spread our forces thinly."

Father McGuire recom-
mended that the mission of-
ficials read a new book on
the relationship between so-
cio-economic betterment and
religion — "The Missionary
Role in Socio-Economic Bet-
terment," edited by Father John
J. Condine, M.M., director of
the N.C.W.C. Latin America
Bureau.

Workers In Cathedral Rite

La Crosse — (RNS) — Or-
ganized labor played a major
part in a cornerstone-laying
ceremonies for the new Cath-
edral of St. Joseph the
Workman, now under construc-
tion here.

Principal speaker at the cere-
monies was Joseph D. Keenan,
national vice-president of the
AFL-CIO and executive secre-
tary of the International
Brotherhood of Electrical Work-
ers. Before the event, represen-
tatives of labor unions in the
La Crosse diocese marched in
a procession to the construction
site.

Among other articles, the
cornerstone contained a list of
all men employed in the cath-
edral's construction, copies of
labor contracts negotiated by
unions involved in the project,
a copy of the local AFL-CIO
newspaper, and a list of all local
unions of the AFL-CIO Council.

Students Protest Closing Of Newman Center

Cleveland — (RNS) — Delegates to the 40th con-
vention of the National Newman Federation here at-
tacked the recent action of the Arizona Board of Re-
gents in ordering that a New-
man Club center at the Uni-
versity of Arizona be closed to
make room for university ex-
pansion.

The federation's resolution
called the action a departure
from the norms of secular edu-
cation in America and an "af-
front to the traditions of true
Americanism and Democratic
liberty."

"In colleges throughout the
country, the work of Catholic
centers of religion and other
religious centers has been held
in high esteem and respect by
university administrations," the
resolution declared.

"This action of attempting to
close the Newman Center, where
courses in ethics and religion
are being offered," it
continued, "is a direct attack



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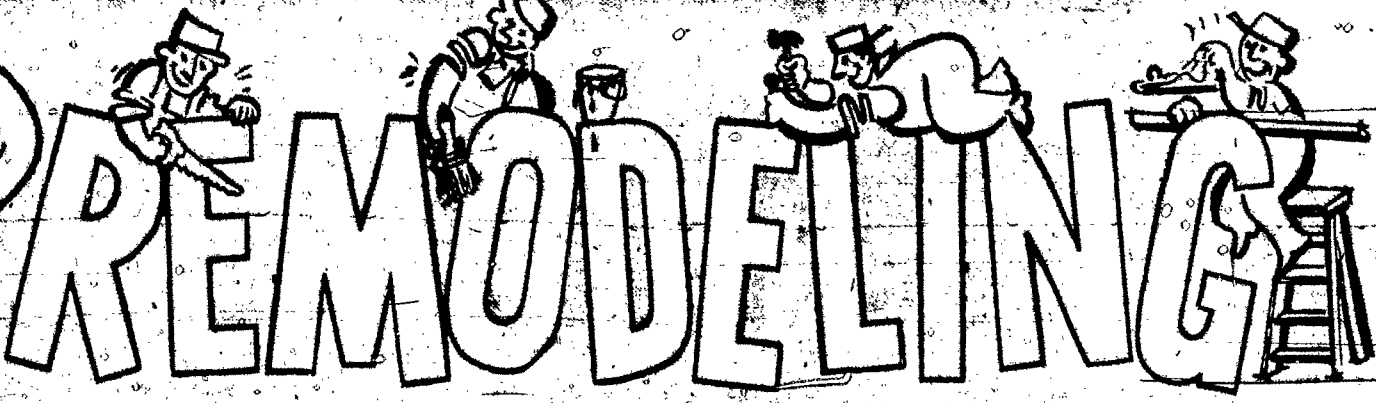
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