

'Monster', A State of the Union?

"Monster" by a group called Steppenwolf, is one reflection of the state of the union.

"Monster" steps back into the past to show that from the beginning this country has put forth both good and bad faces. "Like good Christians, some would burn the witches. Later some bought slaves to gather riches."

Many people will be angry and bitter about this song. They'll say it is a serious attack on this country, both past and present. But we believe it would be shortsighted to condemn this song as one-sided, or slanted.

Even if our country has had its problems from the beginning, still it brought into being a true and worthy ideal. "From near and far to seek America they came by thousands to court the wild. But she just patiently smiled, then bore a child to be their spirit and guiding light."

Often, folks try to avoid criticism by saying something like this: "Sure, we've had our problems, but we're still better than any other country in the world."

That's not a bad point, and "Monster" says the same thing: "But though the past has its share of injustice, kind was the spirit in many a way."

But the song goes on to another truth, that what starts out good doesn't necessarily have to end good. "But its protectors and friends have been sleeping. Now it's a monster and will not obey."

What kind of shape is the spirit in now? "The spirit, it was freedom and justice, its keepers seemed generous and kind. Its leaders were supposed to serve the country, but now they don't pay it no mind."

The spirit could combat injustice, it could "patiently smile" in the face of outright

abuse. But it wits under indifference and hypocrisy, it has no defense against mindlessness. So the "guiding light" becomes a destructive flame, and the "spirit" grows weak. The "child" has become a monster.

"The people grew fat and got lazy, and now their vote is a meaningless joke. They babble about law and order but it's all just an echo of what they've been told."

You don't have to be a Christian to appreciate the fact that Christ constantly contrasted the law and the spirit. "Monster" describes the same contrast. When law and order become the main goal, the spirit has to suffer.

The point is this though: When the spirit suffers, we suffer. "It's a monster on the loose, it's put our heads into a noose, and it just sits there watching." The monster doesn't have to move to attack. If America can just be stalled, kept still, that's enough to destroy it.

"America . . . don't you know we need you now? We can't fight alone against the monster." Such a statement shows the irony of the situation in our country today. Young people like the ones singing this song are so often criticized for polarizing attitudes in the nation. Yet they're willing to admit to the rest of their compatriots, "We need you now."

"Monster" is not necessarily right in its judgments. But it is an expression of how some people feel. A person can react to "Monster" in any of three ways. He might listen and sing along. He could listen and then try to help the singers out of their confusion.

Then, too, he might listen and merely watch. But if he chooses the last, he should remember that the Monster also "just sits there watching." (Catholic Press Features)

the music bag

'MONSTER'

Once the religious, the hunted and weary,
Chasing the promise of freedom and hope;
Came to this country to build a vision
Far from the reaches of Kingdom and Pope.

Like good Christians, some would burn the witches.
Later some bought slaves to gather riches.
But still from near and far to seek America.
They came by thousands to court the wild.
But she just patiently smiled, then bore a child
To be their spirit and guiding light.

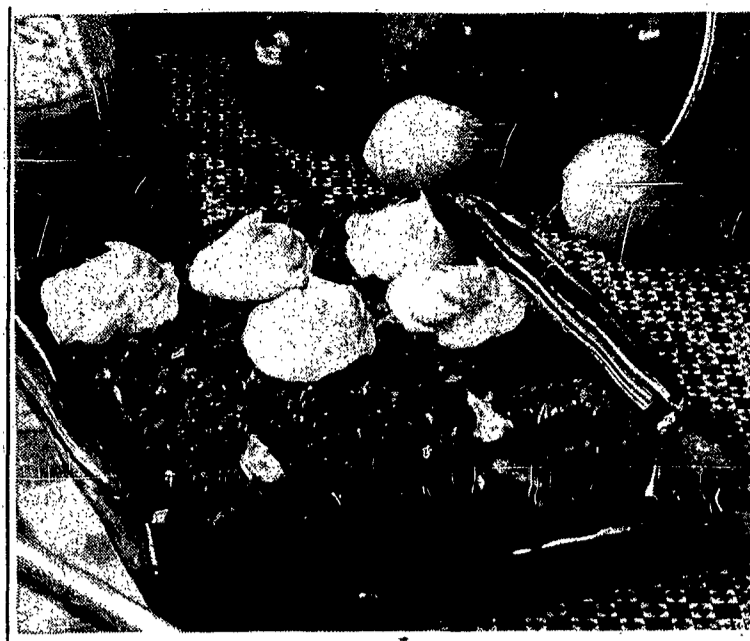
But though the past has its share of injustice,
Kind was the spirit in many a way.
But its protectors and friends have been sleeping.
Now it's a monster and will not obey.

The spirit, it was freedom and justice,
Its keepers seemed generous and kind.
But now they don't pay it no mind,
'Cause the people grew fat and got lazy,
And now their vote is a meaningless joke.

They babble about law and order but it's all
Just an echo of what they've been told.
It's a monster on the loose, it's put our heads
Into a noose, and it just sits there watching.

America, where are you now? Don't you care about
Your sons and daughters?
Don't you know we need you now? We can't fight alone
Against the monster.

(Published by Dunhill Music)



Easy to Make & Take

A riddle for the tureen supper season: What's easy to make, easy to serve and easy to carry to the parish hall?

Apple crisp, for one thing. Probably everybody likes it, whether it's brought on warm or cold.

This recipe makes eight servings:

APPLE CRISP

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 6 cups (about 2 lbs.) sliced apples

Thawed frozen whipped topping

Combine crumbs, brown sugar, salt, lemon rind, and spices. Add butter and lemon juice; mix well. Sprinkle half of the crumb mixture into a greased 8-inch square pan. Ar-

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From Actor to Brother

(Catholic Press Features)

Kentfield, Cal. — Many actors dream about becoming directors some day, and Brother Christopher made it. The former actor is director of Brothers' vocations for the Dominican Order's West Coast Province.

Instead of selling various products — as did in many TV commercials — Brother Christopher Eskell, O.P., is selling the merits of the Religious life, a life he turned to after a successful career as an actor in commercials and on a variety of TV shows — from Phil Silvers' "You'll Never Get Rich" to "Your Hit Parade" — and in many touring musical productions.

Billed as Kevin Kelly, the actor-singer was doing very well in his budding show-business career until the Fall of 1961, when:

"One day I was singing in a nightclub. The next day I was a Dominican."

As he tells hundreds of young men in his speaking engagements along the West Coast:

"There was no unhappy love affair, nor was I disillusioned with the professional life. I was not running away from anything, but I ran into something.

"I felt dissatisfied with myself. I didn't feel I was doing anything for my fellow man or for Christ. I decided there was something more to life. When you take Christ at face value, you have to commit yourself in one way or another. I chose the Dominican commitment."



(Above) Brother Christopher as Kevin Kelly, T.V. personality. (Below) Brother recites his vows as a Dominican brother.

Brother Christopher, born Richard Eskell in Duluth, Minn., converted to Catholicism during his senior year in high school, but the religious life held very little

attraction for him while he embarked on a career that saw him performing in touring musicals such as "Li'l Abner," "Bells are Ringing" and

CRS Trains Vietnamese

New York — (NC) — The priest who directs the relief program maintained by U.S. Catholics in South Vietnam, said here that the Vietnamese people are "tremendously interested in the search for peace," a condition unknown to most of them.

Father Robert Charlebois, Catholic Relief Services program director in Saigon, came to headquarters to report on conditions.

The program in South Vietnam, he said is primarily concerned with the socio-economic development of the people. In an interview with NC News Service, he also spoke of the Church in South Vietnam, "which is not hiding, which is very much alive."

Father Charlebois is a graduate of the Catholic University of America's school of social service. He spent five years in Ecuador before going to Vietnam three years ago.

In Vietnam since 1954, CRS carries out its activities in cooperation with Caritas-Vietnam, the relief agency of the Catholic Bishops in Vietnam, and with the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Relief.

The CRS program, the director said, gives "in-service training for the government as well as the Church."

"If we are to really make a positive contribution we have to train them to help themselves, and with the same professional competence so they can carry on," he said.

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Japanese 'Religion-Less', Baptist Minister Declares

Wayne, Pa. — (RNS) — The Japanese people are, for the most part, "religion-less," this-world oriented, pragmatic, and mater-of-fact," an American Baptist leader of Japanese ancestry said here after returning from a visit to Japan.

Dr. Jitsuo Morikawa, secretary for evangelism planning of the American Baptist Convention, reported on his two-month trip to the Central Baptist church here.

He said that while he always considered himself an American, he had looked forward to "going home" for a time where he would be "part of the racial majority rather than a visible minority."

Dr. Morikawa said he experienced a "succession of shocks and disappointments."

Instead of finding Tokyo a Japanese city, he said, he discovered a city no different from New York or Chicago. . . . I was met by people little different from Americans, in dress, style of life, and cultural modernity, and with all the same urban ills of pollution, crowded housing, congested traffic, student revolution, youth rebellion, family disintegration, with the same car and television in every home."

The churchman realized, he told the Wayne congregation,

that "Japan is not my home. America is my home, and yet even America is not my ultimate home. Home is where one lives anywhere in the world. We are world citizens. . . ."

Dr. Morikawa discussed several specific dimensions of the religious scene in Japan. The new Buddhist sect called Soka Gakkai, which has 7 million families, has developed into a political party, he said, adding that there is question whether it is a "religious movement or a socio-political movement using some religious symbols with gravely dangerous nationalist undertones."

The Christian church, he continued, is still a "fragile institution" after 100 years of Protestant missions and a longer Catholic presence. One per cent of the population is Christian.

Yet Dr. Morikawa found the impact of Christianity strong on such things as the status of women, popular education, social welfare and work class conditions.

He believes that the main issue facing Japan is how its industrial and technological capabilities will be used. Dr. Morikawa asked whether the capabilities will be used for self-consumption and building an

"island of affluence in an ocean of poverty" or will be shared with the underdeveloped nations of Southeast Asia.



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