



The Church: 1970

**Left Today,
Right Tomorrow**

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



It is fashionable to say that the words liberal and conservative have absolutely no meaning. The late Cardinal Meyer, for example, used to vigorously reject the notion that he was either a liberal or conservative, though I suspect that by any standards one would care to set up, the late great cardinal was certainly a liberal in his last years.

But just the same, I think there are differences. The liberal is a man who is committed to intelligent, moderate social change, who does believe in the possibility of some social progress and considers an effort toward that progress desirable. A conservative, on the other hand, is very much concerned with social change, is suspicious of progress, and rather likes things the way they are, or perhaps the way they were in Calvin Coolidge's time (or Pius XI's).

Now, by those standards I am, if anything, less a conservative than I was five, ten or twenty years ago. But in our oddly romantic time meanings of words change. Thus, for example, we are assured by a writer in a recent article in the Atlantic Monthly that under the influence of the Scammon and Wattenberg book, The Real Majority, Senator Adlai Stevenson "turned to the right" during the election campaign. By "turning to the right" the author meant that Senator Stevenson manifested considerable concern about the issue of crime.

I find myself wondering who defined the crime issue as a conservative one. My own feeling would have been that those who said there is no really serious crime problem and we don't have to do anything much about it would be taking the conservative position, and that those who said there is a serious social problem of crime in our society and we must cope with it would be taking the liberal position.

What the author of the Atlantic article may have meant was, the self-anointed liberals in American society have completely overlooked the crime problem and have dogmatically assumed that those who are concerned about crime are racists.

In other words, a liberal is a man who takes the right stand on those issues which the group that has appointed itself as the liberal force in society determines at any given time is the liberal doctrine.

If it is conservative to believe in the democratic processes, if it is conservative to believe in

rationality, civility, and serious intellectual discourse, if it is conservative to believe that Christianity has something pertinent to say to the world, and that Catholic Christianity is an indispensable tradition, if it is conservative to say that celibacy, hopefully optional, has an important contribution to make to the Church, if it is conservative to say that one improves institutions by reforming them, not by destroying them, if it is conservative to say that there is no evidence to say that man has lost his need for the sacred or the transcendent, if it is conservative to say that competence is more important than feeling — then I guess I must stand accused of conservatism, though oddly enough, not so long ago, all those positions were the liberal ones.

If, on the other hand, to be a liberal one must believe that hallucinogenic drugs are a positive benefit to mankind, that the younger generation is going to save the world, that the political style of the Berrigan brothers is a meaningful way to change society, that pentecostalism and sensitivity training and the cursillos represent profound and authentic spirituality, that the most important thing that the National Association of Laymen can do is complain about the finances of the Church, that Daniel Callahan is a great moral philosopher, that Mary Daly is competent to sit in judgment on Karl Rahner, and that Michael Novak is competent to sit in judgment on Hans Kung, that Louis Evely has something important to say about the interpretation of sacred scripture, that feeling is more important than intellect, that revolution is the only way to reform society, that Eldridge Cleaver is a great writer, and that the Black Panthers speak for the black people; if one must believe all these things to be a liberal, then I guess I'm not a liberal. Except I must note that not so long ago, these, or similar positions, would have been rejected by anyone who claimed to be a liberal.

In the recent issue of a national magazine a sociologist friend of mine wrote about being "deradicalized." I sent him a letter in protest. His position had not changed at all, it seemed to me, but I resented his willingness to give up the honorable title of radical to the romantic fascists who were laying claim to that title. He wrote back and conceded my point, and added, "Perhaps the difference is no longer between right and left, but between those who think and those who don't think."

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Courier-Journal

On The Right Side

A Military Christmas

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



There is something wrong that the voices of pacifists come out from jails with such beauty, literacy and frequency, while the men who serve country and citizens have few comparable spokesmen. There are 900 pacifists in jail. There are hundreds of thousands of young men in Service. Father Albert Shamon recently wrote with feeling and truth on the place of soldiers, guardsmen, policemen in American society. (CJ, Dec. 9) It was a light of Christian rationality to give renewed confidence and understanding to parents, wives and to grateful citizens.

In 1956 I was assigned to Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, Texas, part of SAC. Before Christmas Lilly Cruise, the Swiss wife of M/Sgt. Toro Cruise, and Captain John Spearsman, a B56 pilot and a man of great compassion, telephoned. They wanted help with their Squadron project, which was the Christmas party for Mexican orphans.

The youngsters were the poorest of the poor: Spanish speaking little Mexicans, cared for by the poorest of Nuns who shared the poverty of their charges. I had visited their place in El Paso: dumpy buildings, stark rooms, monotonous food, and a vegetable garden in the back. Yet the children were happy. They suffered from the neglect or loss of parents and home; but they had the security and exuberance from Nuns whose whole lives were centered in being permanent mothers to Christ's littlest ones. The

Nuns were not highly trained in theology or in social sciences, which threatens to make people more efficient and less Christian. They were magnificent in their evangelical simplicity. The children knew genuine love.

It was arranged. The Committee concurred that before dinner, the children should come to Mass at the Base chapel. Now, I am convinced that just giving to the poor is a dehumanizing act. Whenever possible I have expected and accepted from the poor, a contribution in return. This preserves their personal dignity. So as preparations were being made I said: "Lilly. The children and Sisters must make a contribution. It is wrong just to give and not let the poor give in return. The kids don't have material things to share but they do have their talents. So at Mass we'll have them sing Mexican hymns. This will be their gift."

I blush to recall what followed. After midnight Mass I was in front of the chapel greeting the men and the families. I button-holed Carol Dillon, wife of Col. Steve Dillon, as she came out. As an air-craft inspector the husband was frequently away from home. This was Christmas day, yet I said, not looking her in the eye: "Mrs. Dillon, what are you doing about 11:00 o'clock this morning?" This with full knowledge that her often absent husband and their eight children would all be home together! Her answer was simple. "Why, Father,

nothing that I can't rearrange if I can be of help." I stammered: "The men of Squadron X are having a bunch of Mexican orphans as guests. They're coming for Mass at 11:00 and I want them to sing, but we need the organ accompaniment. Would you come and play the organ?" Her reply was unhesitating. "Of course, Father. And I'll bring Stephanie. She might help with the singing." Stephanie was her beautiful 13 year old daughter.

So it was done. I recall that crisp Christmas: Lilly Cruise, Captain Spearsman, my good assistant Jim Brown who later became assistant to Rochesterian Father Lawrence Ward in Newfoundland; Spesie Pacheco, Sgt. Pete Beniak, so many others, who planned the day out of love; the orphans who gave their own gift of song, the simple Sisters so complete in their vocations; the Dillons, an Air Force family for 14 years. I recall the big dinner at the mess hall with the Service men serving the children; the gifts of clothes and shoes and toys; the tour of the base; the children's delight.

Father Shamon wrote: "We hear so much propaganda against the military today... John the Baptist did not denounce the military. 'Be good soldiers!' he said."

So a Christmas blessing to all men of good will, with a special salute to those good men in the military who on Christmas day will repeat in 1970 a version of Christmas in El Paso, 1956.

On the Line

**Flying Machine
Hard to Sell**

By Bob Considine



New York, Dec. 16—Writing in his diary on Thursday, Dec. 17, 1903, Orville Wright reported the historic event in his laconic manner:

"After running the engine and propellers a few minutes to get them in working order, I got on the machine at 10:35 for the first trial. The wind, according to our anemometers, was blowing a little over 20 miles.

"On slipping the rope the machine started off, increasing in speed to probably 7 or 8 miles. The machine lifted from the truck just as it was entering on the fourth rail. I found the control of the front rudder quite difficult on account of its being balanced too near the center and thus had a tendency to turn itself when started so that the rudder was turned too far on one side and then too far on the other.

"As a result the machine would rise suddenly to about 10 ft. and then as suddenly, on turning the rudder, dart for the ground. A sudden dart when about 100 feet from the end of the tracks ahead ended the flight. Time about 12 seconds (not known exactly as watch was not promptly stopped). The lever for throwing off the engine was broken, and the skid under the rudder cracked. After repairs, at 20 min. after 11 o'clock, Will made the second trial."

There were four flights that morning at Kitty Hawk, N.C.,

when the course of mankind was so obscurely yet emphatically altered. The longest was Wilbur's voyage of 852 feet in 59 seconds.

After lunch, the brothers set out for the Western Union telegraph station. The message to their father, Bishop Milton Wright of Dayton, Ohio, is a garbled masterpiece of understatement:

"Success four flights Thursday morning all against twenty one mile wind started from Level with engine power alone average speed through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform Press home Christmas. Orville Wright."

Bishop Wright noted in his diary.

"The (Cincinnati) Enquirer contained flaming headlines on the Wrights' flying. Dayton Journal and Cinn. Tribune contain nothing! — although I furnished press reporter the news."

But by December 19, Orville was pleased to write:

"Completed packing machine and tools. About noon Capt. Jesse Ward brought telegrams from Norfolk correspondent of N.Y. World asking price for exclusive rights to pictures and story, and one from Editor, Woman's Home Companion, wanting pictures. Later in the day, Mr. Daniels brought over another batch. N.Y. World wanted a 600-word account telegraphed to them. Scientific American wanted pictures. Cen-

tury Magazine wanted exclusive account and pictures."

The Wrights had almost as much trouble selling their contraption to the U.S. government as the present day proponents of the supersonic air transport have had with their somewhat more complicated 1,800 mph machine.

When they were greeted with yawns in Washington, after the first two flights, they courted foreign markets and found a good prospect in France. Wilbur took one of their machines to Le Mans and Pau, and later to Rome. His flights attracted attention all over Europe and honors were heaped upon him. But no sales resulted.

Orville by that time was flying over the parade grounds at Fort Myer, Va., hailed by a few, derided by most. But on February 10, 1908, he and his brother found a buyer: the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

The language of the contract is interesting:

"One (1) heavier-than-air flying machine, in accordance with Signal Corps specification. . . . at a total cost of \$25,000."

We'd continue this epochal story but we just got the final call for a flight to San Francisco aboard a \$23,000,000 Boeing 747, with a cabin and a wingspan longer than Orville's first flight.

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