

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



Harvey Cox, in his famous book *The Secular City* written seven years ago, characterized contemporary Americans by the picture of the "the man in the cloverleaf." He then added that "we can expect the pace and the scope of mobility to increase as time goes on."

Now Vance Packard, well known for his books *The Status Seekers*, *The Hidden Persuaders* and *The Waste Makers*, has published a new book, *A Nation of Strangers*, with statistics which prove how right Cox was.

We are a nation where 42,000 people change their address annually, a nation of gypsy children who change schools every two years, a nation perpetually in transit, a nation of "social fragmentation."

Harriet Van Horne, in her review of Packard's book in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, points out how this constant mobility has turned most of us, even those who do not move about so much, into "don't care" drifters, job-hoppers, unhappy and alienated — "a nation of strangers."

Packard puts a major share of the blame for this worsening condition onto the shoulders of industry and government who, he says, are "mindless and heartless" in moving families from city to city, state to state.

He lists specific examples of the new "don't care" Americans — they do little or no volunteer work for religious or community organizations, they show little concern for the good opinion of their neighbors, they neglect their property. And, another very disturbing development, there is increasing casualness of bankruptcy, whose total has trebled in the past ten years. The new mobile American also tends to be sick more often, and significantly much of the sickness is mental and emotional.

Packard also tabulates the toll mobility has taken on the nation's political life.

In 1968, 47,000,000 citizens eligible to vote did not vote at all. In the 1970 primaries, only half of those eligible to vote did so. How can democracy endure when half its citizens opt out of the process?

Packard and Cox with their statistics and symbols pose some unsettling questions for Christians and for Catholics in particular.

The Catholic Church is filled with the imagery of family and community — holy Mother the Church, the priest called Father, nuns are called Sisters, religious order men are called Brothers, we are all called children of God.

Our prayers are overwhelmingly formulated in the plural — Our Father, have mercy on us, grant us peace. Seldom does the liturgy speak in terms of I or me or my.

Our greatest sacrament is Communion and how near that word is to community.

And before Communion we are asked to exchange a sign of peace with those who worship with us.

Yet how can people who are in fact strangers honestly participate in a worship that assumes we are not strangers, that we are supposedly a family, a gathering of friends. If we are indeed strangers then our worship is a farce and a lie.

Another widely-read book these days is "The Exorcist." The Church, like its Lord, has always admitted there are demons who torment us, and the Church, just like its Lord, has always had power to exorcise those demons so life can be humane again.

Certainly one of the demons of modern America is this "don't care" demon who blights not just the lives of a few individuals but whose infestation blights the nation.

I think it is our task to counter that fragmenting and sloth-making demon by a massive dose of "I do care" spirit. The medication is readily available but no doctor can inject it. It has to be taken voluntarily and constantly.



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY
**On The
Right Side**

A HOSPITAL MEDITATION.
Stuffed head. Stuffed lungs. Mucus clogging bronchial and sinus tubes. Can hardly breathe. Virus of the larynx. Harrowing! Feels like a fat oyster lodged in the throat. Won't go up. Won't go down. Maddening!

I look at the crucifix on the wall. Instead of pondering on the passion of Our Saviour I ponder on the lump in my throat. Good thing I make the Morning Offering each day. "O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You this day, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all my thoughts, words, deeds and suffering. I unite that lump with Your Holy Passion in reparation for my sins. But if it please You, Lord, remove this lump from me!"

Psychological change. Ordinary interests slip away. Replaced by dullness, by unconcern for anything excepting my own miseries. Well, I can't be that unconcerned. Must arrange for replacements for my commitments. Success! Father Vogt will take the Rexville Saturday night Mass I promised to say for him so he could be available for his teen-age Canisteo dance. Father Widman will take Canisteo Masses Sunday. At St. Ann's Fathers MacNamara, Sturmer and Delmonte can manage without my Saturday night help. Notify Cohocton Father Baker I must cancel out on 40 Hours. And, O Divine Providence! Nunda Father James Cosgrove is home in Hornell. His mother fractured a leg two weeks ago, so he is taking his vacation now and will celebrate Mass in the chapel and take emergencies, with Father Neu of Alfred University as backup.

Am I sick enough to be anointed? Well, when one is 64 and as wretched as this, of course. Phoned Father Hafey. "I feel punk. Will you come and anoint me?" "I'll be there at 3:30."

Secretary Sister Teresita Williams and consultant Sister Scholastica Cauffield come to assist. Father H. comes, escorted by Father Delmonte who just happened in to visit the sick. It is a grand liturgy: confession (private), the anointing, Holy Communion and the Apostolic Blessing. And it my birthday, September 8, feast of the Nativity of Mary.

Despite the anointing the miseries continue. The doctor cheerfully comments: "It will go away eventually. Some viral cases last a couple months." (Interesting psychological fact, a patient's emotional dependence on his doctor. I used to wonder that patients frequently are depressed because "my doctor didn't come today." Now I know. A doctor gives more than medical directions. He gives what is so needed by suffering people — assurance. I wonder if doctors realize this.)

As miseries lessen I become conscious of the care by nurses, aides and housekeepers, and their kindness. I admire the dietary department which delivers such tasty meals; and bless all the departments, especially the faithful laundry people. From my window it is beautiful to study the visitors, with faces varied: eager, worried, fresh, tired; some radiant, as was the face of a new father bringing flowers to his wife and baby. People come: most wanting to be kind and helpful; a few from a sense of duty. But they come.

MORAL: Sickness is not a time of prayerfulness. The rosary beads are the easiest form of prayer. They comfort the soul as well as praise God and Our Lady. Mental prayer is impossible, excepting to offer up one's afflictions as a prayer. Wisdom says: "Do your praying when you're well. When you're sick you feel like a zombie with the miseries."

**Bishops' Unit Rejects Survey
On 'Communion-in-the-Hand'**

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — A proposed national survey to determine Roman Catholic opinion on taking Communion-in-the-hand was rejected by the 40-member Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) because U.S. Catholics are not well enough informed on the subject.

In a statement by the NCCB general secretariat, it was pointed out that the committee feels the nation's Catholics would need further information on the practice if a survey were to produce "meaningful results."

The Vatican has made the practice optional, permitting national episcopal conferences to authorize reception of Communion in the hand rather than on the tongue. Thus far, the NCCB has not acted on the option which requires a two-thirds approval by the bishops.

The NCCB Administrative Committee has turned the matter over to the conference's Committee on the Liturgy and it will be up to that committee to recommend further action, the secretariat said.

Last April, at the bishops' meeting in Atlanta, the prelates discussed the question, including proposals for a national educational program and survey. No vote was taken on the proposal and it was referred to the NCCB Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices.

That committee, however, was

unable to come up with a workable plan, the NCCB secretariat observed, and members of the Administrative Committee "expressed the view that the proposed survey could not produce meaningful results unless and until the Catholic public was much more familiar with the whole question . . ."

A vote was taken by the Administrative Committee and they rejected a survey at this time.

**North Dakota
To Vote
On Abortion**

Bismarck, N.D. (RNS) — The question of whether to allow legal abortion in North Dakota for reasons other than to save the life of the mother will be on the November general election ballot.

Secretary of State Ben Meier said his office has validated more than the 10,000 signatures required to place the proposal on the ballot. Under the proposed law, women with 90 days residence in North Dakota could have legal abortions up to the 20th week of pregnancy.

"We of course would like to see the law changed and we felt that there was so much opposition in the legislature from the Right to Life Association, that no legislature would pass a liberal bill in North Dakota," said Mrs. Wendy C. Walsh of Fargo, who organized the petition drive.

**'God Day' Crowd
Warned Against
'Berriganism'**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (RNS) — "Berrigan brigands" were condemned by a Benedictine abbot at a patriotic "God Day" rally at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception attended by more than 3,000 persons.

Referring to the two activist priests, Father Daniel and Father Phillip Berrigan, Abbot Edmund F. McCaffery of Belmont Abbey in North Carolina said:

"Our country cannot afford extremists on the right or left — self-appointed minutemen or vigilantes or Berrigan brigands — those who interfere with legitimate governmental function and who burn draft records and cause disorder in the name of peace.

"Berriganism is wrong because it subverts the common good, is ungentlemanly, disobedient, avows the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means, and seeks peace without the firm foundation of justice."

Abbot McCaffery also warned against "exaggerated patriotism, such as extreme nationalism. It must never be allowed to obliterate moral distinctions; otherwise it is not true patriotism."

The Berrigan brothers, who have been convicted as a consequence of their anti-war activities, "call for peace at any price," the abbot said, "which is immoral."

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