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A TASK TO TEST OUR METTLE

What this country must have is a huge new burst of national energy. To set it in motion, we need a new vision of where we are going as a nation-

Our problems today--poverty, racial conflict, urban decay, archaic government institutions, inadequate education, inflation, crime, air and water pollution, snarled transportation, and so on-- are more complex and deep-seated than most Americans wish to recognize. But I want to talk about them not as problems but as opportunities.

It is not irresponsible to think of a future free of such problems. We do not need to be victimized by technology, or smothered by large-scale organization. We do not need to tolerate racial injustice. We do not need to defile the countryside. Population control is within our grasp. We can devise patterns of social organization that will not alienate our young and systematically exclude our old. In short, we can build a society designed for people--if we have the will.

The Vietnam war may well end in the reasonably near future. With that burden lifted, with our energies available for something else, to what shall we address ourselves?

In our greatest peacetime periods of the past, we tackled problems whose demands on our will and our strength equaled or exceeded those of wartime. We were gaining a foothold on a new continent, forging a nation, settling the West, creating an industrial civilization, gaining control of our economy. Such challenges demanded of us everything that we could give. But it would be wrong to think of them merely as obstacles in our path. The challenges pulled us on to greatness.

Don't be fooled by appearances. A nation doesn't run on dollars or factories or skills or natural resources; it runs on motivation, on aspiration, on a vision of what it might become. A nation needs challenge. A people has to want something.

What do we want now? If the highest goal we can come up with is to add another layer of fat to our already well-padded national bottom, our days as a great nation are numbered.

From that standpoint, our domestic crisis can be seen as a God-given opportunity. Suppose we committed ourselves not to Bank-Aid measures but to an

all-out effort to build a better America--not just to the emergency measures which surely we must surely take immediately, but to the long-term task of transforming our society.

Thank would be a task to test our mettle. The 25-year job of redesigning and rebuilding our cities, the job of carrying through far-reaching economic development in rural areas, the job of repairing lives, rooting out injustice and investing in man--these could give purpose and focus to our national energies.

And it is the kind of task that our economy feeds on. Just to meet urgent housing needs, urban and rural, would be a challenge to our technology, our economy and our will. The job of rebuilding the cities' decaying physical plant is gargantuan. Our efforts would generate economic activity, create jobs. They would provide the dynamic thrust that our society has always had in the past, and is in some danger of losing.

But the thought of creating an economic boom is not the primary reason for tackling the job. The overriding reason is that all the things that you and I care about and have worked so hard for, all the things that generations of Americans have built so painstakingly, are threatened today--by social tensions of unprecedented scope, by alienation and disaffection, hatred and anger, apathy and cynicism.

Within the past 20 years, the urge on the part of large numbers of people to pile into the cities has become anachronistic. For 10,000 years, people had excellent reason to crowd themselves into cities. Only there could they find the richness and variety of stimulation that make for creativity, the massed resources and economies of scale that make possible the greatest enterprises. But today, thanks to advances in communication, transportation and the arts of organization, we can provide those conditions at any point on the map that strikes our fancy.

So the questions become: How can we best use the land space of the nation? What patterns of settlement and open space best serve our purposes? How can we revitalize rural areas, create new cities, and overhaul existing cities in ways that serve human needs, the requirements of economic vitality and the claims of beauty?

It is in the urban setting that the interlocking problems of poverty, discrimination and social desintegration are producing their most spectacular wreckage. There, the impersonality of a huge, intricately organized society wreak their worst consequences. There, man-made ugliness and filth produce their worst ravages. There, we see most clearly how our advanced technology can sometimes make life less livable rather than more livable.

All of that can be changed. But it will not be changed by a punitive effort to control negative attitudes and actions. It will not be solved by succumbing to our fears and hostilities. The only cure for our malaise lies in positive forward movement. And, given the magnitude of the problem, it will have to be a forward movement of a dramatic sort, a huge new burst of national energy. That will come only in response to goals that excite the imagination of the American people, in response to a new vision of where we are going as a nation.

A nation not only has to want something; it has to believe in something. Shared values, shared beliefs, shared attitudes--those are what enable a people to maintain a cohesive society despite the frustrations and tensions of daily life.

Those are what give a nation its tone, its fiber, its integrity, its moral style, its capacity to endure and to rise above conflicts and divisions.

No nation has ever been completely faithful to its animating values. But woe to the nation that has no such values or, having them, gives up the endless effort to be true to them. The price is not just a guilty conscience; it is disintegration of the society.

Most Americans are not in doubt as to their shared values. Even those who are unfaithful to them know what they are being unfaithful to. Justice, liberty, the worth of the individual, equality of opportunity, individual responsibility, brotherhood; those are the values. But it is not enough to reassert them--hell is paved with reasserted values. Such values cannot be said to be alive unless they live in the acts of men.

We have taken more seriously than any preceding generation the American commitment to respect each individual, and the promise of opportunity for all. That is part of our problem. We are in the process, sometimes painful, of taking seriously those values we have long professed and building them into our laws, our institutions and our ways of dealing with one another.

We have undertaken to re-examine all of the conditions that stunt human growth or prevent people from achieving their full potential--among them poverty, discrimination, ignorance, disease, mental and physical handicaps. And we have discovered that some of the obstacles to individual fulfillment--racial discrimination, for example--involve a degree of injustice that we cannot contemplate without shame.

To bring full justice and equality to black people--to all minority groups--is the historic assignment of this generation. We cannot evade that assignment if we are to preserve the kind of nation we care about.

All the things we believe in--the phrases in our founding documents, the words on the monuments--say that every individual is of value. Our past record of dealing with black Americans says something very different. A confrontation was bound to come, and it has come in this generation. It will not be resolved by violence or hatred or bitterness or police suppression. It will be resolved only by patient, determined efforts on the part of the great, politically moderate majority of whites and blacks through programs of education, job training, health care and social services.

A number of other steps are necessary if we are to diminish the malaise of the modern American--particularly the young person--who feels powerless and anonymous in a massively impersonal society. We must provide increased opportunities for participation; we must restore a sense of community; and we must foster a sense of responsibility. All three aims depend on governmental arrangements that disperse power and initiative. All three depend on community and organizational arrangements that emphasize the role of the individual.

It is hard to feel individually responsible with respect to the invisible processes of a huge and distant government. Responsibility comes most rapidly when one can see the consequences of one's actions. That implies participation in a vital local community. And that is why it is so important to design the federal-state-local system so that it continually throws the challenge back to the grass roots, gives communities some real decisions to make, and ensures that citizens

will share in making them.

Each preceding generation had its great work to perform--founding the nation, conquering the wilderness, settling the land. The great work of our generation is to make this land a fit place for any and every individual human being to live a life of dignity and meaning. It is our task to make this a society in which no child's growth will be stunted or fulfillment impaired by circumstances that can be prevented. A society in which ignorance and disease and want will tyrannize no longer. A society that does not assault the senses with ugliness, or the mind with mediocrity, or the spirit with bleakness.

If we want that kind of society badly enough, we can have it.

(This article taken from Feb., 1969 READER'S DIGEST--written by John W. Gardner)

* * * *

WHY I BELIEVE-

by Jean Dixon

I believe in astrology. To me, it is a science so complete--to a point--that I might even advocate it be taught in our schools.

The sun, the moon, and the stars are all part of God's great universe. And with the advance of scientific knowledge, we become ever more aware of the interdependence that exists everywhere.

Here on earth we accept the science of ecology--a branch of science dealing with the close relationship between all living organisms and their environment. And in the universal scheme of things, we accept the pull of the moon upon the sea, sufficiently powerful at times to cause the sea to go wild.

I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the science and art of astrology when I was a little girl, only eight or nine years of age. The priest who was my religious advisor at the Sacred Heart Church in Los Angeles was the instrument for this.

Always fascinated by the star markings in my hands and the things I told him when I lowered my head and shyly spoke of the many strange things that came to me, he arranged for me to meet Father Henry--a brilliant Jesuit scholar from Loyola University.

Looking back, I realize that Father Henry must have been well-briefed in advance about me and my psychic gift, for his interest was immediate and intense. Looking at my hand, he said at once that I should study astrology. "It will mean a great deal to you," he predicted, "and your psychic talent will add greatly to your interpretations."

Father Henry cast my horoscope, a difficult thing to do since the hour of my birth is not known. He had to work my chart backward and forward many times before he was finally satisfied

"You have a talent which, coupled with your religious devotion," he concluded, "could help many people find within themselves the light of God."

For a period of several years, Father Henry made frequent trips from Santa Clara to instruct me. He was never mysterious but talked about horoscopes and constellations as naturally as he talked of religion and teaching, stressing always the importance of numbers.

However, I do not--and let me say this loud and clear--accept astrology as absolute. Only God is Absolute. And He would not have endowed us with a free will had He not expected us to use it. Astrology is an ever-so-helpful road map when the guidelines it shows are correctly interpreted.

When, as sometimes happens, a horoscope proves less than correct, the fault is likely to lie in a misinterpretation of the data provided. For astrological findings depend upon the date, hour, latitude, and longitude that attend our birth.

Horoscopes definitely do show general personality characteristics which fall under particular signs. There may be exceptions, especially if one was born on the cusp--or just as one sign changes to the next.

JUPITER--usually is a lucky planet. It induces cheerfulness and optimism. Women with Jupiter prominent in their chart tend to attract men. Their tendency is to dress in colorful stylish clothes.

SATURN--, the opposite of Jupiter, causes restlessness and pessimism and sometimes--perhaps because of these qualities--a lack of prosperity, depending on certain influences.

VENUS-- blesses with feelings of friendship, love and good things and, in conjunction with Jupiter, effects a magnetic sex attraction.

MARS, exerting a masculine power, rules the world of sports. It brings violence also, far too often.

Frequently, whenever Mars and Saturn appear in my chart, I have five negative days in a month. At these times, I proceed cautiously. But I do not permit my awareness of this negative influence to rule me. I accept it as something which God, in His mysterious way, has allowed to come in my path, while I try to fulfill His purpose for me on this earth.

MERCURY, a little but aggressive planet, is like a child who is forever crying out, "I want that" or "That's mine!" It is, therefore, not surprising that Mercury is closely associated with trade and commerce, mathematics and writing --and, at times, with behavior that is mischievous to a serious fault.

URANUS, not discovered until the 18th century, rules over invention, electricity, and the unexpected.

NEPTUNE is prone to be disastrous at times.

Apropos, I believe that Sen. Edward Kennedy's chart would show that Uranus or Neptune exerted a very strong influence at the time of his automobile accident last July.

PLUTO, discovered as recently as 1930, stimulates a dissatisfaction with surroundings and causes a wanderlust, especially in the young, who, ruled by Pluto, are revolting against their parents and the Establishment.

I predict another planet is soon to be discovered.

The zodiac, quite simply, is an imaginary belt in the Heavens extending for eight degrees--a degree being an astronomical term of measurement--on either side of the apparent path of the sun and the paths of the moon and the planets.

The 12 equal parts into which the zodiac divides the year are named for the mythological beings whose outlines they originally were thought to resemble.

The signs of the zodiac are:

ARIES, The Ram: March 21 to April 19. Those of Aries get their energy from the ruling planet Mars. Strong in competition, they are leaders in business and industry.

Aries takes the lead in trying out new things and moving in new directions. They are ambitious and headstrong but forgiving and helpful to those less fortunate than themselves. As children, they want their own way. As parents, they should avoid a tendency to dictate to their children.

TAURUS, The Bull: April 20 to May 20. Those of Taurus are born under the sign of Venus and are gentle, obliging, truly loving people.

If Uranus shows a strong influence, they entertain strong likes and dislikes and are apt to be stubborn and quarrelsome if opposed. They are resilient and determined, however, bouncing back from apparent failure to win success.

When the chart is favorable, artistic and musical proclivities are strongly in evidence. Great operatic voices sometimes result as well as great artists. Taureans are good in business of all kinds, especially banking and finance.

GEMINI, The Twins: May 21 to June 20. Ruled by the planet Mercury, members of this sign need variety and change to satisfy that nervous energy Mercury gives.

Geminians are literate and hard to pin down to a decision or to yield in a discussion since they love to fence mentally and verbally on almost any topic. Journalists, writers, and teachers are found often among Geminians.

CANCER, The Crab: June 21 to July 22. Those born under the sign of Cancer are "moon children." They have wide interests outside the home but really can be most likeable and human in the home.

Sensitive and sympathetic to a fault, they show a tendency to take on the symptoms of others' illnesses most readily.

Women under this sign make good homemakers--and very protective mothers. The men, too, are rather possessive and domineering about their children.

(To be continued in next month's bulletin-- Source: Family Weekly, November 30, 1961)

NEWS REPORTS:

Clearfield, Utah

David S.C. Kim

During the period of January 1-5, I and Galen had a special trip to California. The car was in good condition; Galen helped quite a lot on the road to make it a safe trip. On January 3, 1970, four of us, -John, Galen, Sung-Soo, and myself, quietly observed the 9th anniversary of our movement in the Northwest and prayed for the families in California and other states and shared the cakes, recollecting old memories of St. Helens and Portland days, way back to 1959 when John Schmidli and Vernon Pearson come to this faith, and they are blessed now by Our Master and Real Mother. Still some kind of problems in the Bay area exist. I am asking for

your prayers to restore the Berkeley chapel financially as well as membership wise.

I had a session with Mr. Sang Ik Choi and Miss Yon Soo Im to discuss the "Sports Air Gun" business in the United States. Miss Im was trained at Seoul, Korea to be the general manager in the U.S. in importing the merchandise to the United States and in distributing the air guns. Lack of finance and business knowledge for the new market makes it difficult for Miss Im to follow through on our Master's instructions on the air guns. At the moment, Sung-Soo (California), Galen Brooks (Utah), and Sara Witt (Illinois), are trying to cooperate with Miss Im. If anyone is interested in the sale of our Sports Air Gun in your state, study the rules, regulations and laws in your state and collect information on the air guns and let us know what area you can help in and cooperate. Nearly 500 air guns have arrived at San Francisco for custom clearance. Miss Im plans to set up an Air Gun shop somewhere in California after custom clearance. Other matters on distributors, sales meetings, branches, efficiency testing of the air guns, etcetera, are under intensive study by a few Northwest American families to suit them to this country for the open market.

On January 25, 1970, we attended the Utah Gun Show where we met quite a few people who are interested in our newly invented air guns. Also, it was a good chance to meet new people, through this common interest, who may be interested later in our movement.

Galen is working hard to bring new people recently, having sessions and private contacts and also he is still looking for his job. Pray for his success in his mission.

The two pigeons are fine. Recently we made two separate boxes, two as their bedroom while the old box is used as dining room where they come and eat "rice". We noticed in the new bedrooms lots of twigs are gathered. This means they plan to produce a child or the season for multiplication is very near. Communication between male pigeon and the two of us is very good. When we signal, he flies through long distance of air to our arms and responding to us in his own language. But female pigeon is long way to go to be associated with both of us.

Our Master and Real Mother's birthdays fall on February 11th this year (1-6-70 Lunar calendar). If you would like to send cards or congratulatory cables, please use to following address:

To: Mrs. Won Pok Choi
c/o Holy Spirit Association
71-3, 1st Ka, Chungpa-Dong
Yongsan-Ku, Seoul, Korea (25¢ via Air Mail)

In case you like to send money, contact Maxine Pearson (Portland chapel) or me not later than the middle of the first week of February month. Then I will take it from there.

Seattle, Washington

Dianne A. Pitts

This month has been "start projects" month for Seattle. I don't know what else to call it but that. We are busily making charts (large and small), song books, and working on various parts of the chapel to be ready for many people that Spring and Summer will bring to our chapel. In short we are re-vamping our organization so that we can do much more, much more efficiently and effectively than ever before.

We have also been concentrating on a study program. I, in my teaching of the more advanced students, having been giving quizzes, etcetera. This is proving very worthwhile and informative---and fun for all. It is a very good indicator as to what your children do and do not understand.

Glen Hilts has been conducting a study with various churches (religious denominations actually) as to their literal believes are as to the Second Coming. How they actually, personally "picture" it happening. He is coming up with some very interesting and different views. I understand that he will be writing them up in some sort of informative style so that we can share them by the next bulletin or so. His study on this is continuing this month also, and so perhaps it will be several weeks after that that a write-up is available.

Some of the contacts we have made are beginning to really respond; one boy in particular at the college class meetings we have been attending. My mother has been doing a bit of witnessing for me and has a middle-age couple (whose back ground is Christian Science) very interested in talking to me. I feel these people could be a stepping stone to young people even if they did not come themselves, although they are wonderful people and would be a real asset to the family.

Seattle's January ended with a visit to Portland, Oregon family. I met one of their contacts, a promising young man. And we enjoyed a good discussion. We all went to Mt. Hood Sunday and enjoyed equally good times together. It was good to see Young John and Vernon and Maxine again. Maxine's recovery from her surgery and her regain of strength was a welcome answer to prayer. It is hard to express how good it feels to be part of this family. And harder to express the deep love Seattle has for all the family.....everywhere.

Clearfield, Utah

Galen L. Brooks

This has got to be my most unusual month. It began well enough with a wonderful trip to Oakland where we celebrated God's Day with a dinner with the Kim family. And we celebrated Portland's 9th anniversary at Berkeley. You should have seen Mr. Kim and John (Schmidli) reminiscing over old times just like a couple of Army buddies.

Mrs. Henniger invited me over to meet a group that has met at her home several times. But unfortunately because of the holidays, many could not come.

All of you, and particularly Maxine, will be delighted to learn that I enrolled in night school in an English course in grammar and spelling. I thought all of you who have read my writing, or attempted it, would appreciate this. I also met a young girl, Harriette Czora, a college graduate, working at a cafe. She had met Mr. Kim through the Job Corps and thought very highly of him. So one night I left for a walk and came back with a girl. (She just stopped to say 'hello' to Mr. Kim.) Talk about watching an expert work! Wow! Talk!! After a very thorough introduction to Principle some personal counseling and a delicious Korean dinner, a telephone call to explain to a friend why she would be late, a pot full of roasted chestnuts and four hours, she finally did manage to leave.

Unfortunately, she had to leave the state one week later. We were able to have her over for dinner once more, and she has our book to study. I just pray that she will be able to read and study and see the truth of this message.

No need to worry about communications between Portland and Utah. In fact, Vern and I did so well as to coordinate car accidents within one day of each other. No one hurt, (I lost my poor car), which took over two weeks to fix. The result was that I was unable to follow up many contacts or to function as I would like. I was able to attend a Bahi' meeting and got several addresses and was invited to their regular meetings.

This has been "The Month of The Air Gun". I have written letters to every corner of the United States; contacted federal, state and local authorities and half the sporting goods stores in the country -- finding out as much general and specific legal information as possible. Sarah, in Chicago, has been doing about the same. We just about have the legal and technical difficulties ironed out, so that by the time the air guns are available, I think the literature and brochures will be also.

I got my car back today. So I will be off and running again.

* * * *

THE COMING KINGDOM

When Will It Be Established
Where Will it Appear First
How Will It Be Accomplished
What Can We Do To Help

For almost 6000 years, according to Biblical records dating from the time of Adam and Eve, mankind has longed for a better world: a world in which harmony and beauty will prevail among all of God's Creation.

Now, in this present Space Age, when man's technological abilities have reached a pinnacle of accomplishment never before realized, we must seriously evaluate our spiritual and sociological development in relation to our technical progress.

We now have the capability to destroy every living thing in our Earth 44 times over. This is known in nuclear physics terminology as "Overkill". In other words, one result of our technological evolution is a bridge over which mankind may rush headlong into total destruction. If the bomb doesn't get us, the population explosion will, according to the dire prophecies of many of our scientists. What about air pollution and water pollution? According to the latest figures on air pollution, if we do not find a solution to this serious problem very soon, the next two or three years could very well bring about irreversible damage to the thin layer of air which surrounds our earth.

So, all things considered, The Kingdom of God must be established now. This could mean before the end of this year. Or next year. Or the year after that. Certainly, from all indications, within the next three years we should recognize some positive sign that God is giving us the means to save mankind and our Earth from certain destruction.

We must understand why mankind came to this sorry state of affairs. Whether we consider the Biblical story of Adam and Eve a myth or an analogy used by the ancient Hebrew scribes to demonstrate a moral, the fact remains that all of the generations since that time have been corrupt; that is to say, there have been none here on Earth who have been perfect in the sight of God, with the exception of Jesus of Nazareth, according to the New Testament.

If we sincerely believe in God, then we must also believe that God is perfect; for who would believe in a God of imperfection? Logic tells us that if God is perfect, and we have been created in His Image, then we were meant to be perfect, too. But, obviously, man has failed to attain that perfection of mind, spirit and body which would then enable him to establish the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth. Why did he fail to attain perfection? Our study of The Principles introduced by Sun Myung Moon of Korea gives us a deep insight into the basic cause of man's degeneration.

In the chapter dealing with "The Fall of Man," we find that Eve, young and immature, is seduced by Lucifer, the Archangel, thereby committing the sin of adultery. After having this non-principles relationship with Lucifer, Eve realized her mistake and knew, then, that Adam was to be her future husband. So, in an effort to redeem herself, Eve tempted Adam, and compounded her sin by seducing Adam and Eve died spiritually, and caused the world to be filled with sinful children. Lucifer became Satan, the opposer, and has continued for the past 6,000 years to make a base here on earth with evil persons to fill the earth with lust, greed, violence, murder, and corruption of every kind, until this very day.

Now, who is going to subjugate Satan and make this Earth a veritable Garden of Eden, a Utopia filled with sinless, perfect children of God? Sounds like a pretty ridiculous task, doesn't it? But how else can we survive? Imperfect man can not be trusted with the greatly advanced scientific knowledge he possesses, which has given him the power to destroy the world many times over. Therefore, there is only one way to survival, and that is to remake the nature of mankind to that Heavenly personality which will phase out the degenerate portions of his nature which were brought about as a direct result of the fall of Adam and Eve, our first parents: i.e., jealousy, pride and arrogance, defiance, anger and hot-blooded temper, and shifting the blame to others.

The United Faith Movement in the U.S.A., together with our sister movements in every country in the world, under the direct leadership of Sun Myung Moon of Korea, is dedicated to the task of building a Divine Bridge which will extend into the world of tomorrow, a world in which we will experience perfect harmony and oneness with God and with our fellow man. This Bridge consists of The Principles, the study of which will span the gap between the past, present and future of every sincere religion on earth. As of January 1, 1970, several hundred thousand of us hold steadfast to our position on this Bridge of Divine Understanding, which will open the way for others to follow, that all may know how to reach The Kingdom.

We who are working diligently to build this Divine Bridge come from every imaginable background, including university professors, businessmen, housewives, white collar workers, statesmen, noblemen, and members of every profession. Our religious backgrounds are likewise diverse, and we number among our Heavenly Legions those of Orthodox Jewish faith (like myself), Catholics, Protestants (all denominations), Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc. For we are One Family, directed by One Messiah, under One God.

We want you to join our United Family and help us to complete our Divine Bridge leading to The Kingdom.

submitted by Sarah Witt

(For those of you who would like copies of the preceding, contact Potomac Chapel, Mrs. Maxine Pearson, or Mrs. Sarah Witt in Chicago, Illinois)

Comparative Religions

(Cont. from previous news bulletin)

Chapter 4

THE HEBREW GOD DEMANDS RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Man at Beth-El

A crowd gathered around the shepherd who began to speak outside the king's sanctuary at Beth-El, in Isreal, just north of the Judean border.

The Israelites listened. It was plain by his speech that he came from Judah, and he was saying the strangest things. Not only was he condemning the people for oppressing the poor and for committing other misdeeds, but he was even accusing them of carrying on the wrong kind of religion. For this, he told them, is what their God had ordered him to say:

I hate, I despise your festivals, and take no delights in your
solemn gatherings.
Even though you offer Me your burnt offerings and your flour
offerings, I will not accept them, nor the peace offerings
of your fatted beasts. Take away from Me the sound of your
songs; I will not listen to the music of your harps.
But let justice rise up like waters, and righteousness like a
mighty stream.

Futhermore, the man warned, if the people failed to listen, their God would surely destroy them.

The people shook their fists at him. What did he mean by such talk? Would their God destroy His own nation? This was treason!

The priest of Beth-El came forward and confronted the shepherd. "Go back to your own land of Judah," he ordered, "and henceforth stay away from the royal shrine of Beth-El. You are speaking outrageous things against our nation!"

The herdsman merely shook his head sadly and replied, "Your sons and daughters will perish by the sword, and your nation, Israel, will be carried off captive to a foreign land."

The year was about 750 B.C.E. The shepherd was the prophet Amos.

A Great Mystery

It was this man and the other Hebrew prophets who insisted that righteous conduct was an indispensable part of religion. Now it was established that the worship of the Deity demanded not merely the performance of rites and rituals, but a high standard of moral behavior as well. For the first time, religion required ethical conduct.

This was only one of the important religious contributions that the Jews were to make. This development is one of the great mysteries of human history. Why, among all the peoples of the world, were the Jews responsible for so many important contributions to religion? And why was it the Jews who first came to know God, the

God that all the Western world accepts as the tru God?

The Hebrew God Demands Righteousness

Varying explanations for the religious genius of the Jews have been propounded. One finds this genius with their early way of life. Subject to the stern hardships of shepherds who lived in desert-like regions, the early Hebrews were compelled to cooperate with one another in order to survive. Out of desert necessity, then, came a stricter code of right-doing toward their fellow man. And even after the Hebrews settled in Palestine, the memories of that desert life with its approved standards of conduct lived on in the people's consciousness. It made them more sensitive to the need for righteous behavior and a higher conception of deity. But many other peoples lived in the desert and they never developed these religious standards.

Another explanation is rooted in the Jews' experiences in the land of Canaan. Living in Palestine, the crossroads of trade, travel, and warfare between the nations and empires of the Middle East, the Jews were exposed to all kinds of pressures. As a tiny group, their political existence seemed always in doubt, their religion in constant danger of being swallowed up by the faiths of their neighbors.

Self-preservation, then, forced them to cling more determinedly to their own ways, and the seriousness of their situation compelled them to think in terms different from those of other peoples. For instance, once the Hebrews realized that they were unable to compete militarily with the great empires of their day, the concept of their Deity as "victorious in battle" had to undergo change. But there were many other peoples similarly endangered who did not come to know God.

Finally, a third explanation claims that the Jews were directly inspired by God Himself. It was He, many feel, who endowed certain gifted, sensitive individuals with special religious insights. Among them were Abraham and the other patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. But that a few people should be geniuses, while most are not, is always a mystery. And we are still left with no explanation of why such gifted individuals appeared only in Israel. At best, all of this simply recognized their remarkable uniqueness.

Perhaps the answer is to be found in a combination of all three. Certainly, as we shall see, without their early desert background, the experiences in Palestine, and the appearance of certain inspired individuals, the Jews could hardly have developed their genius for religion.

The First Hebrews

Judaism traces its origins back to the patriarch Abraham, whom it regards as the first Jew.

The only direct information we have about him comes from the Bible and various traditions created by later generations. However, most scholars oday believe that the biblical account is generally reliable.

The ancestors of Abraham were Mesopotamians, who dwelt in the fertile region watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Originally living in Ur of the Chaldees, an important city located not far from the Persian Gulf, they migrated to Haran, midway between Babylonia and Palestine. From here Abraham took up a new kind of

life in and around Palestine. This is believed to have taken place sometime around 2000 B.C.E. Most likely not only Abraham and his family, but a larger group of people, perhaps a whole tribe or more, migrated with him.

The Bible tells us that Abraham was the father of Isaac, the grandfather of Jacob, and the great-grandfather of all of Jacob's sons, who formed the twelve Hebrew tribes. There are some problems with this simple theory since an interval of about 600 years exists between the time Abraham left Haran and the tribes appeared. But we can certainly accept the fact that the Hebrew people came into being with Abraham.

Jewish tradition produced many stories about the greatness of its ancient forefather. The stories insisted particularly that it was Abraham who first arrived at a belief in the one and only God, who demanded righteous conduct of His people.

The development of such traditions is easily understandable. Later generations were deeply impressed with Abraham's role as the "father of his people," and wished not only to glorify him but to credit him with as many of Judaism's teachings as possible. Among early peoples this was not uncommon. The Mesopotamians, for instance, attributed many of their religious practices to their ancient hero, Gilgamesh, and within the Bible itself we have instances where later teachings were ascribed to other early heroes. Thus the Book of Deuteronomy, which probably was prepared shortly before it was discovered in the Temple in 621 B.C.E., was said to have been written entirely by Moses, who lived some 700 years before.

So, though it is hard for us to believe that Abraham could have made all the contributions that later tradition claimed for him, it is undoubtedly true that he was a pioneer in developing certain religious ideas that mark the beginnings of Judaism. Under his leadership the Hebrew people came into being and with them a kind of religion that was markedly different from all others.

Trying these thousands of years later to discover what really happened to him or to Moses is a most difficult task. Many theories have been produced by scholars, but what follows seems to us to be the most reasonable explanation we have.

- to be continued -

(see last page of bulletin for source of material)

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

February 1	Birthday, Galen L. Brooks
February 11	Birthday, Master and Mother
(Jan. 6 Lunar calendar)	

February 28	1st Anniversary of Blessed couples	in U.S.
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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

On the Plains of Hesitation

Bleach the bones of countless millions

Who - at the dawn of victory

Sat down to wait

--And, waiting -----died.

Source of Material For "Comparative Religions"

"Our Religion and Our Neighbors"
by

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Sylvan D. Schwartzman

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(Our thanks again go to Dianne Pitts who has typed the stencils the last two months. Hopefulle by next month we will be able to resume this work in Portland.)