Sometimes I think we live in the very strangest of times: on the one hand change seems incessant, frenetic, chaotic. Hardly do we realize something has happened before it is passe or dated; new generations occur every four or five years; movements sicken and die almost before they arise. On the other hand, change seems impossible and hopeless. No matter what we do, the deepest and grossest ills of our society seem to endure and prevail: the war widens and more are killed (Orientals, not Americans, so the government can show how the war winds down); crime and violence on both sides of the badge accelerate; black people in a time of economic hardship experience rapid loss of many of the slight economic gains they had made; peril to the environment seems to multiply, rather than reduce; hostility and polarization increase. I must admit that much of the time I find myself feeling the impotence of change more sharply than its fruitful advance. Such change as does occur seems all too often to be trivial or superficial: color television for black and white; beards and long hair for men, no bras for women; Jesus freaks for Elmer Gantry.

However, when I am more rational, I know that real and beneficial change is taking place. Perhaps the most powerful example of this fact is the public attitude on the war, and even on war in general. Whatever the various motives people may have, the last year has seen an increasing number of very notable reversals of attitudes toward the involvement in Vietnam. Many people who were once staunch supporters of this war have decided that this country can no longer stand such a war, that we must get out. Assuredly, many have changed their minds because of the economy, because of the bitterness and disillusion they see rampant among our youth, because of the dollar costs of the war (dollars which many argue we must blow into this or that program here at home), or because of the apparent rise in influence wielded by the military. None of these reasons gets to the base of our problems in Vietnam or our foreign policy. None of these reasons indicates a change in fundamental values such as I think we must make if we are to avoid disaster like this in the future. None of these reasons challenges some of the foundations of our foreign policy, our understandings of national interest, etc. But these reasons may, finally, get the war ended. And who can quibble with that?

I can, and I can't. To end the killing, the maiming, the social and ecological destruction, etc. would be wonderful. And I really believe that this will happen. But to end it without learning from it? without being changed by it? Surely we can do
better than that. Now is the time when we must see with a clarity which is sometimes hard to live with that this change to end the war is not the goal, but only the means to more fundamental change. Peace is a process by which we can make things better. As the late A. J. Muste said, "There is no way to peace; peace is the way." What is needed now is the sticking power to take the slight gains we have made through public demonstrations, referenda, letters, resistance to the draft, etc., and talk and talk with it. What we must do (I think, I hope) is to talk to friends, people we work with, people in organizations we belong to, in political parties and offices, not against the war -- or against racism or any other current problem, as such -- but about ourselves and our culture, about the basic feelings and thoughts which all of us live with or at least grew up with, about the things that create wars like the one in Vietnam or that create ghettos, violence, etc. I doubt that we can do this kind of talking and sharing with others. (In an attempt to help all of us grow) if we don’t first try as hard as we can to face the shortcoming we find within ourselves, the ways we participate in elements of the culture which are corrupt, and second face the real pain of discussing with friends and associates not only uncomfortable and controversial issues on which we do not agree, but also our own personal feelings and involvement in those issues. The issues may be easy, but our involvement? That’s another story.

David Meyer

RE: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The visits to various church which were planned for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade class this spring have been cancelled because of Lilo Koehl’s illness.

We have very few firm commitments for teaching in the church school next year. Each trimester last 3 months. The plan for the various age groups will be available next Sunday. Please volunteer!

SOCIAL ACTION

Bikes & Cycles and Bike-to-Work Days are Saturday, May 8 and Monday, May 10. At this time the proposed Madison bike route will be published and made available to the public at Fire Stations, Libraries, and City Hall.

We hope everyone with a bike will be out on these days to demonstrate the need for bike paths in the city.

On Tuesday May 25 a public hearing on the proposed bike routes and ordinance changes will be held before the Common Council. If you feel the bicycle can be a viable alternative to the car, please do more than pay lip service to the proposals. Get out and ride your bikes, study the routes, call Jane Ruck at 238-1610 with questions.

Contact your alderman and let him know of your support and attend the hearing!

Can and Bottle Pickup: This Sunday, May 9 will be can and bottle pickup in the Pondue Chalet parking lot across from the Y. People will be there with containers to put your bottles and cans into between 10 and 10:30 a.m. Questions call Ellie Friedman 257-3365 or Rosemary Dorney 238-4382.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a meeting of the executive board, Thursday, May 6 at 8:00 p.m. at the home of Bob Siegfried, 5209 Tolman Terr.

The Playreading Group will meet on May 22 at Roland and Avis Parrish’s, 302 Glenway, at 8:00 p.m. For further information call them at 238-1725 or Rosemary Dorney at 238-4382.

FIRST SOCIETY INVITES PRAIRIE TO JOIN IN SPRING FESTIVAL

Jane Farwell, experienced organizer of folk festivals, is helping the First Society with an all day international festival, something fun for all ages, Saturday, May 22, from
Beginning with learning and teaching songs, dances, games, and crafts in the early afternoon, and ending with an evening party, the day will also include plant and handicraft sales, an invited craft sale, a maypole, a stroganoff dinner, films, and two programs. Your may wear a costume or devise one when you arrive. Bring an instrument if you play one, and we hope many in the Prairie Society will join us in some preliminary activities. We're now holding workshops for all skill levels to use string -- macrame, crocheting, or knitting. The next scheduled meeting is 2:00 p.m Saturday, May 8 at the First Society.

For details call the church office 233-9774 between 9:15 and 4:30 or Jane Clay 238-3225 or Diana Cotton 233-9509.

As many of you already know, Charles Eddis will visit us for a few days at the time of our annual meeting, consulting with various new and old committee chairmen, with Dave Meyer, and with the executive board members. On Tuesday evening, May 25, there will be a party for all members and friends at the Caldens', 1606 Waukesha, at which time Charles may be met on a casual basis. Anyone wishing to talk to him about Prairie should feel free to do so either at this party or by contacting Dave in order that a suitable time may be arranged.

ANTI-WAR MEETINGS

Thick Nhat Hanh, head of the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace delegation to the Paris Peace Talks and exile from South Vietnam (because of his opposition to the military and the present regime), will be in Madison this Friday (May 7). He is one of the most popular poets and story-tellers of Vietnam, a noted Buddhist scholar, leader of the Unified Buddhist Congregations of Vietnam, and a university professor. His current speaking tour, to address himself to the American people about a peace solution which could meet the hopes of the peasant population without a military victory for either side, is sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Anyone interested in hearing or meeting Thick Nhat Hanh is encouraged to attend one of the following three events (or all of them): a meeting of Church Women United at 2:00 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Segoe and Mineral Point Rds.; a very simple supper ($2 charge to help defray expenses for his visit) at First Congregational Church, 1609 University Ave., at 6:00 p.m.; following the supper, Thick Nhat Hanh will read some of his poetry, after which, at 8:00, he will address an open meeting, also at First Congregational.

Many people expressed interest in seeing the slide show Dave Meyer and Al Nettleton did on April 25. They will present it on Friday May 21 at the First Society at 6:15 p.m. Dave and Al have finally thought of a title: "The Garden is Open".