An Open Letter to the Prairie...

Some of you are already aware of the fact that the last few months have been ones of introspection and examination for Pat and me. We have been in a state of rather significant turmoil in a number of areas. I think it only fair to the people of the Prairie to let you know some of the results of that turmoil.

First, I will not be returning to Meadville as I had originally planned. I have decided for the moment to not return to seminary. Whether I will ever return to seminary and whether I would return to Meadville if I did, are questions I cannot at this time answer. Certainly, I will say that I very strongly affirm the value of my theological training, although the degree to which it prepares one for work in a parish is very small. I will also say that as matters stand right now, I would doubt that I would return to Meadville; the problems there are so multiple and so apparently difficult to face or pin down, that I think the school would have to change very considerably before I would return rather than go elsewhere.

However, as I said, I do not intend to return to seminary in the near future. Clearly this means that, for the moment at least, I am leaving the ministry—more precisely I think, leaving the ministry as it is usually defined: in terms of a parish. I must emphasize the fact that my current decision is not a temporary one; I may well return to ministry sometime a few years down the road from now. I feel that the ministry is a meaningful and valuable profession and that I have had a rich and mutually rewarding experience here at the Prairie.

The reason I am leaving is not because of any negation of my role or activities at Prairie; rather I am attempting to affirm something else in myself. I intend, in so far as it is possible, to work as a professional writer. I have always thought I had some talent and that I could do well as a poet and playwright. However, I have always been very busy at a number of things, so I never had the time to really do what I felt I might. In a way, this was the best of all possible worlds, for I could go around thinking of myself as talented, but I had a perfect bundle of excuses whenever I wrote something and inferior (or didn't write anything at all). Now I am stripping away those excuses, and I must write and write well or become disillusioned with myself.

Pat has had many feelings of upheaval and turmoil as well. She has been deciding what she wants to do with herself and her life—-in a sense finding out something about who she is, which is very much the same as what I've been doing. She, too, has decided to try something for a time to see if she can do and be what she wants. She has begun working more seriously in the crafts, particularly in textiles and ceramics. Her intent is to become an artist-craftsman working in these fields plus perhaps some photography. In good measure it will be her decision which will govern where we may be for the next few years as she casts about the country for places where she may seek training of one sort or another.

Obviously at this point we don't know where we will be or what we will be doing next year. We are currently looking into a number of possibilities. Our hope is that one way or another we may radically simplify our life-style and our economic needs, so that we may have as much time as possible free to work in our arts. There are many questions still unanswered; there are many issues unaddressed as we look toward some changes. We are sort of flying the seat of our pants and taking a risk on ourselves that what we can do and say will have some worth and value for others and that we can do something meanwhile to keep ourselves alive as we take the risk.

Dave Meyer

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:
January 23 - Dane County Juvenile Court Judge Erwin Bruner, one of the country's leading experts on the problems of youth, will speak.

January 30 - Middle Class Value System #4. "What is Obscene?" Everyone bring an example of something very obscene or offensive to you—photograph, book, joke.

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MADISON
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NEWSLETTER
January 19, 1972
Sunday services at 10 a.m. at the Portal Foster Center, 1806 West Lawn Ave.
David Meyer, Minister...

The Prairie Folk Dancing classes are off to a good start. Classes will continue on second and fourth Thursdays at 8 p.m. at the Center. Particularly welcome are the teenagers who have been coming, and to encourage this a new price of 50¢ has been set for high school students.

A change for the directory: Clark Edwards...new phone number: 221-2143

WANTED: Janitor for the Portal Foster Center. $30/month (or about $2.50/hr. for three hours/week). Do major custodial work (floors, shoveling snow, cutting grass). High school students have been used in the past. Preferable hours: before and after weekend, possibly Thursday and Sunday. Contact Frank French at 256-6533 if interested.

WINTER WARM UP: Sauna and swim---Thursday morning, January 27 from 10 a.m. at the Karakahl Inn on Hwy. 18-151, Mount Horeb. Furnish your own suit, hat, towel. COST: 50¢ per person...Open menu lunch at 12:30...Sandwiches available.
For information and reservations: Betty French...836-5244

Landscape architecture professor Richard Blakeley and students will present several models and plans for the playground area next to the Portal Foster building at 3 p.m., January 21, at 1806 West Lawn. Anyone with ideas of what could be done with the playground area is invited.

Sheila Swanson is still in St. Mary's Hospital, but is improving rapidly and hopes to be out by the weekend.

PLAY READING GROUP---will meet at Dave and Pat Meyer's house on January 22 at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome:

PRAIRIE PARTY JANUARY 29
8 p.m. at the Portal Foster Center
There will be refreshments........ and maybe a few surprises.