STICKING WITH THE BEST WE CAN GET

by Dave Meyer

There is a kind of attitude towards politics which says, "Politics is not something of any real importance, but rather is a delusion, or worse yet a distraction from things of real importance. Those who deeply involve themselves in politics are either surrendering their individuality to hero worship and their personal responsibility to a demagogue, or they are simply aggrandizing themselves, grabbing power, money, reputation. Politics offers no hope for any change worth anything, for it is unresponsive to the new and hopelessly controlled by vested interest."

There was a time -- and of course still is for many people -- when politics was an involvement in the evil of this world, a hopeless concern for a damned situation; only care for another, better world was a wise consideration. I would like to suggest that these two attitudes are not so very different from one another as they may seem.

Now, naturally, I could argue from the fact that the final effect of the two attitudes is the same, which it is. But that hardly gets to the core of my concern. All I could say with that argument is what is already clear; such attitudes create apolitical behavior, or justify it.

What is important is that both these attitudes are purist. They say that the world is not perfect, because politics and everything else doesn't work for "the good", and because some kind of sacrifice of individualism (or of purity of soul -- cf. Measure for Measure) is required in an ambiguous (i.e. human) condition such as politics and public concern exemplifies; they must not involve themselves in it.

The problem as I see it is twofold: first, one is involved in it, willy-nilly, for none of us lives that much outside the system; nor will the system leave us alone, as for example in taxes, civil rights, the draft, etc. Second, has anyone the right, even if he could achieve some kind of immunity from the evils and oppressiveness of the system, to abdicate his responsibility to others and say, "I'm safe; to hell with the rest of you?"

I recently say a play in which one of the major characters, a man presented with a dramatic opportunity to make constructive change, confesses, "I have thought myself a good man because I did good; but I did not oppose evil." The apolitical position may do good, but most surely it does not oppose evil.

But there is another position which is perhaps equally bankrupt and equally naive. That is the idea of the pure candidate, the valiant, but lost, cause. For me, politics is a labor of hard-work and toil, the subject of which is pressure, influence and power. Any candidate without hope of gaining enough support to also gain some measure of influence or power is not of interest; you have to settle for what you can get.

Many of us, certainly me and many of my friends, voted in 1968 in this hopeless and I think now innocent manner: most of us voted for Eldridge Cleaver. I hope that I shall never do that kind of voting again.

But even more important, I hope that many of us prone to such thinking have learned enough of politics to get in and fight and stick it out. And this means supporting people who will fight and stick it out, too; and people who, if they are not what we wish they were, are the best we can get.
Sunday meetings at 10 a.m. Portal-Foster Center, 1806 West Lawn Ave.
David Meyer, minister...........................................221-1065

Upcoming programs:

- **March 31** - Joint Good Friday service with First Society...8 p.m.
  This special nighttime service will be a joint service with First Society. The program will consist of some recorded music chosen and recorded by George Calden, live music by Mary Gaebler; and a one-act play by Michel deGheiderode called The Blind Men. DeGheiderode, a Flemish precursor of modern absurdist theatre (and surely a better playwright than most of the absurdist and post-absurdist), has taken Pieter Brueghel's the Elder's painting of the blind leading the blind as a cue and inspiration to the play. The cast includes Bob Koehl, John Zahn, Roland Parrish, and Dave Meyer. Hope to see lots of you for this special evening.

- **April 2** - Easter service by Dave Meyer

- **April 9** - "Value System - Prairien Priorities", Boris Frank, coordinator

- **April 16** - Transcendental Meditation, Theron Caldwell, coordinator

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Another SAUNA and SWIM is planned for April 19 at 10 a.m. at the Karakahl Inn in Mt. Horeb. For more details call Lilo Koehl.

Don't forget to record all committee meetings, circle dinners, etc. on the Prairie calendar.

And... contributions to the Prairie Society can be placed in the contribution "mailbox" in the meeting room at the Portal-Foster Center, mailed to the Society at 1806 West Lawn, or sent to Roland Parrish, treasurer.