

RENEWAL

Sleeping Through the Revolution (Rip Van Winkle)

Washington Irving was born on the banks of the Hudson River in 1783. As a noted writer, historian, and public official he created a certain mythology for the area of his birth. Typical of his writing is *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* which included *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, which he began in 1819.

Much of what he wrote, no doubt, was a reflection of life in the Catskill Mountains as he observed it. While his writings are quaint and entertaining some seem to reflect a certain cynicism, or at least somewhat of a commentary on people who are out of touch with the times.

Take Rip Van Winkle, for example. God forbid that he should ever be representative of Mr. Average American . . . yet, he unfortunately does portray a certain pitiful segment of society.

Poor old Rip was a Dutch Colonist in the Catskill Mountains near to the Hudson River. He had an aversion to all kinds of work and spent much time with his hunting dog "Wolf." One reason

for the many hours spent away from home was his vicious and dominant wife who screamed at him incessantly. Thus, he spent much time on the hunt and dreaded to go home.

As the story goes he was returning from a hunt one day, with his customary dread, when he was approached by a strange looking man carrying what seemed to be a cask of liquor. He helped the stranger carry the load through the mountains to an amphitheater where some odd looking people were playing nine pins. They emptied the keg into some large flagons and Rip drank himself into a stupor.

When he awakened he couldn't believe that he had slept all night long . . . when, in reality, he had been asleep for twenty years. His gun was rusted, his body was stiff, his dog was gone, and his beard had grown to be a foot long.

It was a strange home coming indeed. His clothing was out-of-date . . . his weapon was out-of-date . . . his ideas were twenty years behind the time . . . but still he recognized his son who had grown up to be the "spitt'n image" of his father.

His good friend Nicholas Vedder had been dead for 18 years and the wooden "tombstone" upon his grave had already crumbled into dust. Brom Dutcher had gone off to the army and been killed in the storming of Stony Point. Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, had also been in the war but advanced to the rank of General and was now serving in Congress.

Rip kept trying to tell everyone about his unswerving loyalty to His Majesty King George III of England . . . totally unaware that he had slept through the revolution and was now a free citizen of the United States of America.

Unfortunately Rip Van Winkle has too many counterparts in the Christian world. We are sometimes living B.C. lives in an A.D. world. We profess our loyalty to the Law out of ignorance about our freedom. We speak much of Christian leaders whom we know by name but who have been dead for many years. The current leaders of religious thought are men whom we've never heard of and to whom we find it difficult, if not impossible, to

relate to or understand.

Perhaps never before in the history of Christianity have so many exciting things been happening around the world. The July 11, 1986 issue of *Christianity Today* details incredible growth all over the world. From 1980 to 1983 as many as 27,000 people per day may have become Christians in Red China bringing the Christian population of that country from about 1,000,000 in 1949 to perhaps as many as 55,000,000 today.

This is happening all over the world . . . but some are sleeping through the revolution.

Dostoyevsky

Fyodor Dostoyevsky was a nineteenth-century Russian novelist who gives his readers a profound insight into the dire consequences of communism. Though he came before Marx and the Communist revolution he anticipated both and his writings now serve as a model for such contemporaries as Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

In his book *The Brothers Karamazov* he tells the "Myth of the Grand Inquisitor." In the myth the Second Coming occurs in A.D. 1000 in the city of Madrid. Jesus heals the sick and raises the dead only to be arrested and imprisoned by the Cardinal of Madrid. The Cardinal, however, is distinguished from those who arrested Jesus in the First Century by the fact that he knew Jesus was the Son of God. He just disagreed with the basic philosophy of Christ.

For example, the Grand Inquisitor felt that Jesus made three fundamental mistakes in the wilderness temptation. He felt that Jesus should have turned the stones to bread and alleviated the problem of world hunger. He felt that Jesus should have leaped from the temple and brought humanity to God by means of miracles. He felt that Jesus should have worshipped the Devil . . . received all the kingdoms of this world and brought peace to mankind.

On the surface it seems that the Grand Inquisitor had more compassion for mankind than did Jesus. Exactly the reverse was true. The Grand Inquisitor had no respect for humanity. He saw them as inferior to himself and considered them incapable of self-determination. He had pity, but not compassion. Pity is what superiors feel for the inferior. Compassion is an emotion among equals.

How aptly this personifies the skeptical intelligentsia who not only do not believe in God . . . they do not even believe in their fellow men. Their arrogance leads them to form a society which

feeds, cares for, and entertains the public but denies them the priceless gift of freedom. Such leaders, Dostoyevsky taught, would not represent the Christ, but the Antichrist. He predicted that the social revolution would come to Russia and that "messiahs" would come to power as despicable as the Grand Inquisitor. It is no wonder that many have considered him a prophet.

Freedom, he thought, was God's ultimate gift to humanity. Animals do not act, they react. Certain stimuli elicit certain associated responses. Pavlov's dogs did not enjoy the decision making freedom which God has bestowed upon man whom He created in His own image.

So, also, he found fault with the philosophies of the ancient Greeks, the Moslem mindset of the Middle East, and even the basic structure of Roman Catholicism. Each of these he feared dealt with man on a lower lever than God intended. Freedom, he felt, should not be bartered away for the fatalism of the Greeks, the tyranny of the Moslems, or the benevolent totalitarianism of the church.

Dostoyevsky not only believed in God, he believed in people. Debased by the aristocracy and ridiculed by the bourgeois intelligentsia, he still believed that the simple peasants of Russia offered more hope for mankind than the sophisticated dilettantes who ruled them. The common people discover God in their relationships of love and joy. They find Him in their tears and agony. They sharpen their focus as they wrest out a living from a reluctant economy. He felt that faith was formed in the crucible of guilt and despair more than the comfortable discussion of ideas and concepts.

He, like Jesus, knew that when we know the truth, the truth will make us free.

Condensed from *Partly Right*
By Anthony Campolo

A Christian Manifesto

(Francis Schaeffer)

Almost everyone has heard of the "Communist Manifesto" and the "Humanist Manifesto." You may not be aware, however, that Francis Schaeffer has recently come out with "A Christian Manifesto." The January issue of *Moody Monthly* contains excerpts from the Manifesto together with a penetrating article about Dr. Schaeffer.

I first heard of Dr. Schaeffer in association with the Christian community which he founded in the Alpine village of Huemoz. It is called L'Abri. He is now world famous for his encyclopedic knowledge of history and for his probing questions regarding the destiny of Western Civilization.

Heretofore Schaeffer has been in the headlines of the Christian Community but now he feels he may break through the "hidden censorship" of the secular media. This book, he says is so "timely" and so controversial that I can't see how the secular establishment is going to sweep it under the rug."

The fact that Francis Schaeffer carries the hard sentence of cancer in his body perhaps provides him with additional motivation. With the fervor of a prophet he calls us to action that we might avoid impending judgment. He is disturbed and perplexed by our refusal to use the many liberties at our disposal to reverse the course of history and to stem the tide of communism and humanism.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Christian Manifesto to me, was the dire prediction that Christians may have to become actively involved in organized resistance to our own government here in the U.S.A. "If there is no final place for civil disobedience" he said, "then the government has been made autonomous, and as such, it has been put in the place of the Living God. . . ."

A specific example of what he means by "civil disobedience"

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involves abortion. After all normal constitutional means of protest are exhausted, he suggests the possibility that at some point Christians may refuse to pay a portion of their tax money. He is aware that such a suggestion should not be made binding upon all Christians and he warns that we should be willing to accept the reality of trials and the possibility of jail sentences.

Dr. Schaeffer saw Germany begin with abortion on demand and end up with the holocaust. He sees in our present disregard for human life the seeds of genocide. The landmark decision of the Supreme Court not only made abortion legal, but it also made it ethical. Dr. Schaeffer sees this as but one unfortunate event in a series of changes which have debased America.

He is astounded that such dramatic changes could occur in so brief a span of time. "It hasn't been 400 years" he says, "but 40 years."

In the meanwhile the Christian community has been held captive by two influences. One, a false pietism which has compartmentalized religion so as to drain major segments of society of Christian influence. And the other is a platonic view of spirituality which has made passive spectators out of church members.

"It is not too strong to say" he states, "that we are at war, and there are no neutral parties in the struggle. One either confesses that God is the final authority, or one confesses that Caesar is Lord."

Dr. Schaeffer is now deceased

Soren Kierkegaard

A century and a half ago Soren Kierkegaard was a caustic critic of the institutional church in Europe. Though berated, belittled, and undoubtedly often misunderstood, he has still been called the "greatest Protestant Christian of the 19th century" as well as the "profoundest interpreter of the psychology of the religious life . . . since St. Augustine." A short time before his death he wrote a series of pamphlets which have been translated into English and titled "The Attack upon Christendom." S.K. insisted over and over that all he wanted from the Church was an admission of its mediocrity so that it might "take refuge in Grace." This admission, however, the church steadily refused to make.

A deathbed conversation with Pastor Boisen has been recorded in which S.K. was criticized because his "attack" was so severe that it did not correspond with reality. Soren replied "So it must be; otherwise it does not help." He obviously felt that a one-sided corrective was necessary to restore a proper balance.

Here are a few samples of his incisive wit to stimulate your thinking. Under the heading, "The Sort of Person They Call a Christian" he describes a man with no religion. He does not read the Bible, he does not go to church, he expresses no opinion of religious matters, he is totally unaffected by religion until he marries and father's a child. It then becomes his traditional responsibility to subject the infant to "Christian Baptism."

So they notify the priest, the midwife arrives with the baby, a young lady holds the infant's bonnet coquettishly, several young men who also have no religion render the presumptive father the service of having, as godfathers, the Evangelical Christian religion, and assume obligation for the Christian upbringing of the child, while a silken priest with a graceful gesture sprinkles water three times on the dear little baby and dries his hands gracefully with a towel —

And this they dare to present to God under the name of Christian

baptism. Baptism — it was this sacred ceremony the Saviour of the world was consecrated for His life's work and after Him the disciples, men who had well reached the age of discretion and who then, dead to this life (therefore immersed three times, signifying that they were baptized into communion with Christ's death), promised to be willing to live as sacrificed men in this world of falsehood and evil.

He continues the harrassment of tradition by charging that the priests must act quickly (while the mother is weak in the delivery room and the father is in hot water) for should they wait until the child matured enough to make his own judgment they would be virtually out of business. Thus, he felt that his countrymen had no religion at all, "except by reason of family circumstances" and that the whole experience was but a "pitiful comedy" where the priest would do well to express a genuine concern over the father than sentiment over his child.

In another place under the heading "ludicrous" he describes again the man whose whole life is worldliness . . . his thoughts, his efforts, his waking and his dreaming. But he is considered a Christian for he happened to be born in "Christendom." "This", he reasoned "is just as ludicrous as when the savages adorn themselves with a single piece of European clothing — for example, the savage who comes on board stark naked except for the epaulets of a general upon his shoulders."

Small wonder that Soren Kierkegaard was a man in the midst of controversy. He died without the sacraments because he would not receive it from a priest — only a layman. His pamphlets had created such a furor that a riot almost took place at his funeral. A group of University students formed an honor guard and at the last minute one demanded the right of reading from the Apocalypse that passage about the church of the Laodiceans. This was a shocking event to occur at a graveside, but said Lowrie, "S.K. was at peace, and I cannot think that his peace would be disturbed by knowing that the fire he had kindled con-

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tinued to burn.”

Information taken from *A Kierkegaard Anthology*
Edited by Robert Bretall, Princeton Univ. Press, 1951

No King Like Josiah

Josiah was the son of Amon, King of Judah. He succeeded his father as King in about 639 B.C. when he was only eight years of age. The scriptures say of Josiah

And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him (II Kgs. 23:25).

The name Josiah means "Jehovah heals."

Following the death of King Solomon the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The Southern Kingdom was called "Judah" and was presided over by twenty different individuals prior to the Babylonian captivity. Josiah was the sixteenth king to reign over Judah.

During the days of Solomon the nation began to suffer from internal decay. This corruption continued to grow for many generations. The two kings immediately before Josiah were his father Amon, and his grandfather, Manasseh. The scriptures teach that Manasseh seduced the people to commit more sin than even the nations which God drove out of the promised land (II Kgs. 21:9). He performed abominations and did more wickedness than the Amorites did (II Kgs. 21:11). He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood from one end to the other (II Kgs. 21:16). The scriptures teach that Amon did evil in the sight of the Lord just like his father Manasseh did (II Kgs. 21:20).

At this juncture Josiah begins his reign. Being very young he was obliged to continue the set policies and traditions of the nation, but in the 18th year of his reign an amazing discovery was made which transformed the nation. In the process of repairing the house of the Lord the book of the Law had been discovered. The people had been drifting for many generations while the

words of Jehovah gathered dust on a forgotten shelf in the temple.

Young king Josiah in his innocence had no idea what God wanted, he was simply "doing what they had always done." When he heard for the first time the word of the Lord he rent his clothes in shocked amazement. The nauseating and overwhelming premonition of doom settled upon him. God would surely bring judgment and wrath upon a people who were so disobedient.

At this time Josiah enquired of the Lord and inaugurated a sweeping reform. First of all he summoned all the elders of the people to inform them of God's word (II Kgs. 23:1). Everyone both small and great was also there to hear the message of Jehovah. It was evident that the nation was corrupt both morally and spiritually. It is significant to note that the reform began in the house of God. The pagan vessels and images were removed and burned and the crooked and idolatrous priests were put down. The Kings of Judah had dedicated horses and chariots to the sun and erected altars to pagan deities, these were burned and destroyed in righteous indignation. The houses of the sodomites were broken down and the wizards and workers with familiar spirits were all put away. There was no easy way to reform a nation so steeped in apostasy. There was no gradual way to phase out the false teaching and replace it with truth. It was necessary to be decisive and deliberate. The lines were drawn and judgment came that error might be abandoned.

I wonder what Josiah would do if suddenly he became the ruler of America. I am aware that the Jewish Theocracy was a unique government but I cannot help but feel that we need a little of Josiah in both the nation and the church. Perhaps the time has come for us to be a bit more decisive in separation from the world and the renunciation of error. Divorce, perversion and illicit sex are at the point of social acceptability. What the scriptures teach has given way to ethics demanded by the situation. We have been set adrift upon a shoreless sea and ruin and loss stalk us with

NO KING LIKE JOSIAH

every approaching wave.

Too bad . . . no king like Josiah . . . before . . . or since.

