

NEWS

Have you recently reminded your students that the Correspondence School offers a course on the study of the Old Testament? Now is a good time to urge Unity students to enroll. A new course is now being prepared by the Correspondence School, on the study of the New Testament. Unity students may want to enroll in the Old Testament study now as a preparation for the new course. Students can take the Old Testament course concurrently with the regular Correspondence School course. To enroll students simply write to the Correspondence School.

Additional copies of 1966 Unity calendars can still be ordered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Retail price is \$1.00. Cost to centers is 75¢ when ordered in quantity.

* * * * *

ARTICLES

HOW SHOULD A UNITY MINISTER DRESS?

by William L. Fischer

Perhaps for as long as the ministry has been a profession "set apart" those who have been a part of it have felt some urge to dress in a manner that indicated to the masses that they are indeed set apart from the rest of the people. Somehow our fellows down through the years have felt that special attire was a hallmark of holiness. Thus it has been that the professional religionists (both male and female) have worn clerical clothing to designate their "calling."

Now in Unity a tendency has developed among some of our colleagues to feel compelled to wear the traditional clothing of the clergy. And this has raised serious question in my mind as to whether or not this is actually defeating the very reason and purpose for there being a Unity field activity. Therefore, I want to offer my appraisal of this tendency, and along with it some observations of others whom I have asked for their comments.

May I first make two qualifications? I shall not attempt to appraise the clothing practices of the woman leaders in the Unity field. Since I am not a woman, I am sure I cannot "feel" the woman's reasons for wearing any attire she does. I shall leave the appraisal of female attire to one of my feminine colleagues. Also, though I shall quote various persons in these observations, I shall not name the persons whom I quote. *

One of the startling things that occurred to me in making inquiries in this area was when one of our well-known leaders, who incidentally does not wear clerical clothing and who occupies one of our more prominent pulpits, said: "Personally, I have no strong feeling or opinion about the wearing of clerical garb in itself." This seemed to me to indicate a certain apathy about this subject. Whether we are for or against this practice, I think we ought to have a feeling or opinion about it.

One leader in the western part of the country told me about a luncheon meeting he attended for Unity ministers, where several of them came attired in the traditional dress of Roman Catholic priests. And one of them even arrived wearing some of the trappings usually reserved for a bishop. When he was questioned about his clothing, he replied that he always dressed this way. To me, this seems like an unfortunate thing, and we need to discuss it.

Of course, all of our colleagues do not feel that it should be discussed. One of our more articulate fellow ministers wrote me: "Bill, I do not believe that this is a proper subject for debate in Unity. I think it is your inalienable right to determine how you shall dress in performing the functions of your ministry. To me all of this seems to be about as senseless as the great theological argument of a century or so ago which well-nigh split the Church of England over how many angels could stand on the head of a pin." This friend also informed me that a Unity minister is no longer invited by Forest Lawn Cemetery to perform funeral services in their chapels because one of our ministers appeared there wearing "light brown shoes." Such an attitude on the part of the officials of Forest Lawn Cemetery is most unfortunate. But just because their attitude is such does not mean that we should adjust ours to conform with their obvious narrow-mindedness. Not being from California, I cannot help wondering if the conducting of funeral services at Forest Lawn Cemetery represents some sort of status symbol. If what a minister has to say at such a service is not more important than the color of his shoes, then I should think that the officials of Forest Lawn Cemetery need to make some serious adjustments in their policies.

In my mind an important question to be answered is whether or not the wearing of clerical garb detracts from our teachings and purposes in Unity. Of course, I know that if what we say is important enough, then what we wear will have no effect. On the other hand, if the Unity field activity is going to conform with (shall we say) the Episcopal Church, then why do we not just try to get the Episcopalians to teach some Unity, all become Episcopalian priests, and disband the Unity field activity? However, if we have something that has a unique place in the world of religion, then can it not stand alone as a teaching, without the clerical frills we are sometimes inclined to garnish it with?

I have taken license to make inquiry among some of the officials of Unity School on this subject. One of them, who has also had extensive experience in the Unity field ministry, wrote to me: "I realize that there are some who feel they need the clerical clothing and other

trimmings of an orthodox church to attract people and to make them feel at home in a traditional church setting. Nonetheless, the power of our Unity presentation is the message, and it seems to me that the message loses something in a traditional setting." Another official of Unity School who is vitally involved in the field activity, and who also had a close personal relationship with Charles Fillmore, wrote me: "I have not been able to find any written statement by Charles Fillmore on this subject in my personal files, but I will have this material researched for such. I do know from my own interpersonal relationship with him that he considered such obeisance to the trappings of the priesthood to be completely incompatible with the Unity message of salvation through spiritual self-realization." He also said in the same letter, "I believe that a Unity minister who uses the traditional dress and the recognized accouterments of the church is graphically demonstrating his lack of faith in the potential divinity of the individual human being. To me this embracing of the vestments clouds the Unity message, and confuses it with others, and weakens our subscription to the principle of the indwelling Christ."

In my correspondence with a man who has been one of the most creative and progressive leaders in the Unity field for the past almost twenty years, I received this provocative observation: "The word 'minister' comes from the Greek word 'to serve.' In the early Christian church the minister was the one who 'handled the arrangements,' did the work, in other words. Down through the ages the minister became more and more distinct and separate--and the distinctive garb arose. To wear the garb is to propagate an erroneous concept, a backward step for a movement that claims to be a forward step in religion."

Of course, those ministers who wear the clerical clothing feel that they are justified in doing so. One minister who has contributed greatly to the expansion of field work in Unity for many years, and who has almost always worn clerical clothing, wrote me: "The type of edifice and related (or consequent) garb are likely to reflect the temperament of the leader: the flowing gowns or robes and pastel tinted walls, seats, and so on of some of our centers with women ministers reflect this. Should (must) we all be the same? Even many of the 'orthodox' Christians allow their ministers some leeway in such matters. I think we should, too." And from another of our dedicated fellows comes these comments: "I have found that the clerical garb seems to be very much appreciated by the bereaved people when I am performing a funeral service. Also in all circumstances where the habiliments of the clergy are worn there seems to be added dignity to whatever service is being performed for people. These things may not be too important to some, and yet I believe that it is the ministers obligation to give to his messages and the performance of his duty the very utmost in everything that will enhance its value in the eyes and minds of those he is serving."

I also have had correspondence with one of the young men in our field work who has served several congregations and whom I consider to be one of the rising stars in the movement. He, at one time, felt it necessary to wear clerical clothing in his ministry, but has since changed his mind. This is his thought on the matter: "What we

associate ourselves with, we become mentally and emotionally a part of. Since leaving the collar and robe on the shelf, a transformation has taken place in me. It has taken place so easily and rapidly that I sometimes am overwhelmed and especially overjoyed. It is my recommendation that all Unity ministers immediately drop all robes, all clerical collars, all statues, all Gothic and whatever else appointments in the church and move into this way of Truth which is the foundation upon which Unity will grow. I have run the gamut and found clerical collars an advantage in recognition in public but a vast detriment to the advancement of Unity."

Personally, I concur with the astute observation made by a highly respected minister in the Unity field to the effect that he "realizes that the people themselves put ministers up on a pedestal of some sort, and it seems to me that the wearing of clerical garb merely accentuates this process. I should rather be identified with the rest of humanity than to be a part of the professional clergy separated from the rest of humanity. It seems to me that we, as ministers, have enough difficulty identifying ourselves with the congregation without wearing the costume that shouts we are separate from them."

In keeping with this I have also received this thought: "The origin of the ministerial garb goes all the way back to early Catholicism, and outgrowth of the concept of the priestly class, with the minister or priest having a special relationship with God through the acceptance of his vow. He was to dress differently because he was different. He did not freely mingle with people because he was no longer one of them. The vestment is a sign of separation, a barrier, a protection."

It seems to me that it is a matter of asking ourselves and answering the questions: Is it my desire to be a member of a priestly class apart from the people? Or is it my desire to be a servant of God, humbly seeking to meet the needs of his children in my congregation? To be a humble servant certainly does not require special clerical attire. As for me, rather than being immediately recognized as a member of the clergy class because of my attire, I would rather hear the still small voice softly say to me, "Well done, good and faithful SERVANT."

*These names will be supplied by the author on written request.

THE FILLMORE FOUNDATION

by Phillip Pierson

What would you do if someone of retirement age came into your study and said he wished to sell his home in order to establish an annuity for his retirement? Certainly you would pray with this person for the right outworking of his affairs. But, would you also put into his hands the information that could help him to retire more comfortably than any other possible way? If the individual's need is retirement

income obtained through the disposal of real estate or securities, he can through gifts to the Charles and Myrtle Fillmore Foundation create a retirement program that may well surpass any other available retirement plan. To help someone obtain this would certainly bring us great joy and add to the giving dimension of our ministry.

The Fillmore Foundation can be a tremendous positive channel of blessing for many people and at the same time it can fulfill a great need in the Unity movement. Our movement stands at a great crossroad in its unfoldment. A great message of prayer has been proved through the work of Silent Unity. A great teaching has reached countless lives through the medium of Unity literature. Now this proved Truth needs new channels of sharing to be opened in order that the entire world may know of it and feel its promise of salvation. There are many such channels to be opened and all of them call for the investment of large sums of money. We are all in agreement that if we are spiritually right and open to all available channels of supply this substance should be made manifest now. Certainly it is the Father's will that this message be conveyed to the world in ways that are second to none. Yet, we are surely all conscious of the fact that many other groups draw far more substance to put their message across to the world. As this is true let us accept the responsibility together of exploring ways and means to let the Father's flow of substance come into this work now.

There are only two broad reasons that could account for the fact that at present we have a vision without the substance to fulfill it. One is that our consciousness of supply is inadequate. The other is that our consciousness is adequate but that we have failed to recognize the available channels to the supply. I feel that the former reason is not our problem. It seems to me that our problem is that we have not exercised or explored deeply enough the channels that are available now and have been used by many exponents of the Christian faith to do what we now seek to do. The Fillmore Foundation is set up to do precisely this!

As I make this point, I am well aware that some of us feel that the channels used by other spiritual groups are built on negative principles. The two most obvious are the ideas of "asking" and the idea of "death gifts." Let us talk about these questions from the standpoint of the Charles and Myrtle Fillmore Foundation.

There is little question in any of our minds that we cannot build a Truth movement on "an asking campaign." We are always startled as Truth students to find this approach being used in a spiritual work. There is, however, a duty to our members and friends to make know to them the presence of a need. We each do this in our way, but always presenting the need as a positive expression rather than as a negative one. We can do this in regard to the Foundation also. There is nothing inherent in the aims and goals of the Fillmore Foundation that would make it an "asking" campaign. It could, of course, become this, but it is not a necessary expression. The right and present direction of the Foundation is to educate our people to opportunities

of mutual benefit. This can be done in a completely positive presentation.

Now let us consider the question of "death gifts." The objection raised is that to lead people to "leave" their estate to the Foundation is to lead them into the idea of death. Again it is possible that the Foundation could run such a campaign of promoting the death idea, but it is not going to and need never do so.

Whether or not a person even thinks of death he should and usually does feel the need to have his life in order at all times. Not to set in order one's affairs is a great evidence of a lack of concern for one's family, for there are often heavy taxes on "unplanned estates." If one "knew" of course that he would not die plans would be unnecessary, but in our present unfoldment it is yet a possibility for anyone of us. A great man is always as prepared for failure as he is for success. Not that he dwells on failure, but he is prepared to deal with it in a mature and courageous way.

As Truth leaders we are not of course called upon to make a crusade of "facing up to the death possibility." Indeed we can and should work with everything within us to lift people to the vision of perfect health and external youth. We should not, however, close our eyes to the fact that most of our members are trying to order their lives and do want to plan their estates. They will be happy to know how they can do this in a way that will bless the Unity movement and also bless their heirs. We need only to familiarize them with a wonderful service that we do have in the Unity movement to assist them better to do what they are going to do whether we encourage it or not.

Thus, I feel that these two questions we have just discussed should not stand in the way of letting us recognize the Fillmore Foundation as a promising new channel for God's substance. If we all get behind the Foundation and it does not quite unfold the way we wish it to, that will mean it is not our right channel. If, however, we do not get behind it we will never know if it was or wasn't our right channel! Let us always handle the unproved by holding it most positively in our consciousness in order that the Father may reveal its rightness or wrongness for us.

My hope for our center is that one day when there is a cause for Dale Batesole, the head of our Foundation, to come to Honolulu that we can have him talk to anyone in our congregation who would be interested. This could be accomplished by a dignified announcement of the service that Mr. Batesole has to offer to people who are interested in retirement or estate planning. He would bring to them the latest and finest of insights into these vital questions. This announcement would not have to emphasize your need, the Foundation's need, or the question of death. It would rather emphasize the offer of service to those interested in these questions. I am confident that Dale Batesole could enlighten many of our people with information that would financially help them and also further this great Unity message.

Let's all join together in holding the very highest vision for the Fillmore Foundation and the work of Dale Batesole. Let us see this as possibly a great channel of substance for the Unity work, a channel that is based upon the idea of service to our people!

A NEW WAY TO ORGANIZE CENTERS

by Dorothy McLaren

BEGIN WITH A MINIATURE SILENT UNITY

Keep prayer in every center!

Since Silent Unity supports Unity School what better foundation for a local center?

Call it "UNITY PRAYER CENTER." It would not in any way take the place of our Silent Unity at Headquarters.

HOW ABOUT A TEAM OF LEADERS?

There could be two trained people for just this purpose; these two to go into a territory for a period of about six months. They would go with the new ministers.

FIRST TWO WEEKS: (or longer)

Only Prayer and Idea Sessions:

All day in the building where the work is to be started keep a prayer vigil.

Have regular prayer services three times a day or more.

Conduct idea meetings in which the minister and the team would gather ideas, formulate plans and discuss possibilities which would be most helpful in that particular area!

FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH:

MINISTER:

Advertise
Start classes
Begin center organization
Meet local people, discuss some of the plans
Join team in prayer services daily

TRAINED TEAM:

Continue prayer, remaining in the center during the day
Answer phone calls
Write letters
Counsel

MOST IMPORTANT: begin to train local people to be center prayer workers, a secretary, hostesses, ushers, and other helpers.

The team and minister could gradually progress, the minister taking more and more of the responsibility with the help of trained local workers and the team gradually releasing itself. With constant prayer and the work of the team the minister would be free to accomplish more of actual center organizational duties.

A strong foundation could thus be built and continued steadfastly to maintain spiritual consciousness.

Silent Unity has always been the most successful part of the work, therefore, why not Unity prayer centers in every local center for its own local work?

.

INTRODUCTION TO RESOURCE BOOK MATERIALS

4U Quotations for Bulletins---October 1965

File in front of the September issue.

4W Special Services

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a very special time of year and calls for inspiring spiritual services in Unity centers. Here are two services developed by Gertrude Tuntland.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas will be here soon too. Now is the time to start planning. Here are two services prepared by Unity ministers.

1. A Candlelighting Service for the Home by Leslie D. Saunders
2. A Candlelighting Service for the Center by Wilbert Crawford

Copies of the above material are available from your UMA office.

Last month I announced that Volume 2 of the Resource Book would soon be ready. Because of the imminent change in Executive Secretary and the uncertainty of what form the resource materials will take in the future, the order for the second binders has been cancelled. You will surely find a way to keep your materials intact until a decision regarding the future of the resource materials can be made at the January council of committees.