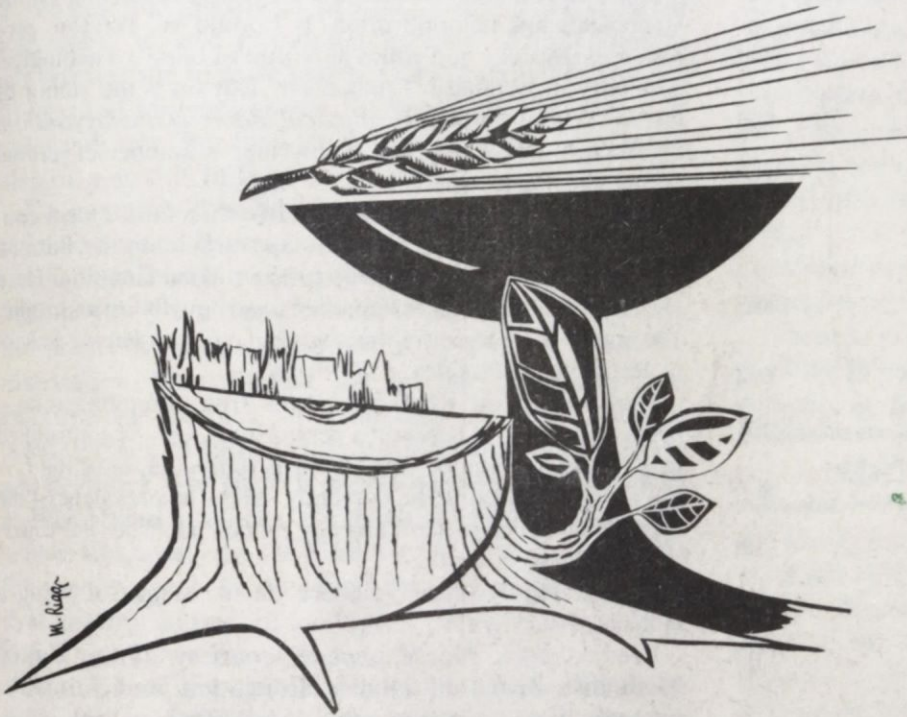


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# The Christian CENTURY

CELEBRATING OUR  
CENTENNIAL  
1884 + 1984

OCTOBER 3, 1984



## The Ordinary as Mask of the Holy

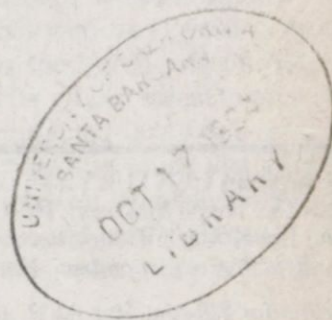
BELDEN C. LANE

## Canadian Catholicism and Privatization

TOM SINCLAIR-FAULKNER

## Sexual Violence in Film

Symposium on  
Oneness Pentecostalism



# The Christian CENTURY

VOLUME 101, NUMBER 29, OCTOBER 3, 1984

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**B**ELDEN C. LANE leads off this week with an article on discovering the holy in the ordinary. This is a theme that the author has elaborated previously in several different variations. Dr. Lane, professor of theology at St. Louis University, recently became a Century editor at large.

Another new editor at large, **Tom Sinclair-Faulkner**, writes from Canada about the pope's recent visit to that nation; he relates the trip to changes in the status of Canadian Catholics. Dr. Sinclair-Faulkner is associate professor of religion at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and is the author of various studies on religious life in modern Canada.

## IN THIS ISSUE

A meeting at Harvard University this past summer focused on the Oneness Pentecostal denomination. Reporting on the symposium and its implications is **Donald W. Dayton**, professor of theology and ethics at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Illinois. Dr. Dayton is the author of the forthcoming book *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Scarecrow Press). He has also written a number of journal articles on Pentecostalism.

Editor-at-large **Robert McAfee Brown's** most recent contribution (August 15-22) was a major article on the Barmen Declaration and its relationship to our current situation. Here Dr. Brown takes a lighter approach to an equally serious topic. The author is professor of theology and ethics at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

A reflection on what constitutes true communication—between people, or between a person and God—is contributed by **Carroll E. Simcox**. The author is retired editor of the *Living Church* magazine; he currently serves as president of the Foundation for Christian Theology, which publishes the *Christian Challenge*.

Next week: Werner Weinberg on the stages of being a Holocaust survivor.

Credits: **Jack Morse**, *motive*, courtesy of the **United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry**, February 1963, p. 896; *motive*, April 1960, p. 900.

**The Christian CENTURY.** An ecumenical weekly. Established 1884. Named The Christian Century 1900. Refounded 1908 by Charles Clayton Morrison. Joined by New Christian 1970. *Editor*, James M. Wall. *Executive Editor*, Dean Peerman. *Managing Editor*, Linda-Marie Delloff. *Associate Editor*, Martin E. Marty. *Assistant Editors*, Nancy McCann Hostetter, Trudy Bloser Bush. *British Correspondent*, Kenneth Slack. *Advertising Manager*, Kathleen Wind.

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grinding out titillating titles aimed more for the cable television market than for the theater circuit. (R) Paramount.

J. M. W.

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## BOOKS

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### Take Judaism, for Example: Studies Toward the Com- parison of Religions.

Edited by Jacob Neusner. University of Chicago Press, 264 pp., \$22.50.

This is an important book not only for what it reveals about the intrinsic dynamics of the Jewish way of life, but also for what it illustrates about how this subject can be approached most profitably.

Jacob Neusner is Ungerlieder distinguished scholar of Judaic studies at Brown University, and the author (counting translations) of

more than 150 books. His works, such as his recently published *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*, have been justly hailed as ground-breaking and epoch-making. Neusner has done more than any other scholar to revitalize Jewish studies and to win it an integral place in the academic study of religion.

*Take Judaism, for Example* provides expert testimony that the intellectual influences run in both directions. Not only does the study of Judaism belong to religious studies, but it can significantly influence the shape, direction and course of such studies. The essays that Neusner has collected illustrate just how. One of the strongest is by Jonathan Z. Smith, whom Neusner acknowledges to have influenced the intention of this book. Smith expertly demonstrates that Judaism is a self-conscious exegetical tradition whose ongoing interpretation of its sacred texts marks ways of relating to its historical past as well as to its social present. Smith's example fortifies Neusner's theme that religious traditions inform culture, interpret history and shape society. Neusner's intention is to ensure that Judaism be taken seriously within comparative studies in religion; his achievement lies in illustrating how such studies are strengthened when Judaism is approached both as focus and as indispensable contributor.

Walter Capps.

### John Cheever: The Hobgoblin Company of Love.

By George W. Hunt, S.J. Eerdmans, 326 pp., \$17.95.

George Hunt reports that midway through the writing of *Falconer*, John Cheever ran out of his house shouting, "He's going to get out"—referring to his hero, Farragut, who was going to escape from prison and be free. In *John Cheever: The Hobgoblin Company of Love*, Hunt, the literary editor of *America*, explores the religious significance of Cheever's work as he struggled to delineate life in America's secular middle-class suburbia and small towns.

The first third of the book sets Cheever in his literary and religious context. Hunt develops a Kierkegaardian theory of irony, which allows him both to place Cheever as

a writer of postmodern sensibilities and to redeem him from the charge that he was a cynic. Where critics saw cynicism, Hunt finds original sin as the subtext of Cheever's various themes. Hunt describes it as "the conjunctions and disruptions perceived on every level of human personality: the ontological, the moral, the psychological, the social, the emotional." In Cheever, he finds a complex unity between the ubiquity of sin and the surprise of grace.

The author's finest achievement is in his discussion of Cheever's style—a difficult and usually disastrous task. Psychological studies of style tend to define it as the way a personality is organized, but Hunt approaches it as containing "the idea to be expressed and the individuality of the author." This section is a necessary balance to his chapter on "themes in tension," for in it he seeks to deal with the criticism that Cheever was fundamentally a short story writer, and that the longer fictions lack sufficient attention to the classical unities of narrative organization.

Hunt tends to turn Cheever into a poet. Although in fiction narrative is as important as theme, Hunt constantly tries to redeem Cheever's novels from the demands of narrative style. Readers experience the sense of disconnection largely because the connections aren't there. While that may be the strength of some writers (Barthelme, Hawkes) and irrelevant in others (Dostoevsky, Faulkner), Cheever does not belong in either category. While Hunt's method of using image, symbol, theme and biography to interpret Cheever is very revealing and ultimately satisfying, it may also show why Cheever remains in the suburbs of greatness.

Gerald E. Forshey.

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## RECENT ARRIVALS

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**Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition.**  
By E. H. Gombrich. Cornell University Press, 270 pp., \$34.95.

Shrined here are tributes to a dozen worthies, including Hegel, Lessing and Freud, along with lesser known moderns like George Boas, Johan Huizinga and Dame Frances Yates. Gombrich acquired his reputation as a classicist who has contributed to our understanding of the modern sensibility. People as original as he often seem to have sprung from nowhere, so it is gratifying to see him ready to pay tribute to those who influenced him and others. All

### OXFORD WINTER STUDY

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### Reviewers

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