

Violence and fear are the enemies

Leaders have changed in Moscow. An election year brings sound of change without changing names in Washington. We begin to hope as we hear new dialogue around issues and economics.

Do new faces on the scene really bring change? Does the pressure of election really change policies? International and domestic problems can be solved only by going much deeper into human motivations.

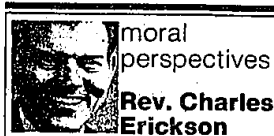
Crime, assassination and war must be examined at the level of causation. I grew up assuming terrorism was a way to settle problems only in barbaric nations such as those we call banana republics. Today we all act as if violence is civilized behavior.

THE PROBLEM of violence is rooted in our preference for it. We enjoy it in recreation and entertainment so it seems normal to run government on a foundation of violence. Is there any basic difference between modern prize fights and the gladiators of old? Aren't the same emotions flowing in football or hockey as in riding parties by vigilantes of ancient or modern times?

The problem is the bestial side of human nature which leads us to see grandeur in violence. The continuum from police to the criminal justice system is unbroken. The spectrum from entertainment to reelection to military power is uninterrupted. At all levels we assume might makes right. Power is defined as brute strength in both muscles and hardware.

Real power is doing right because I want to instead of to avoid punishment. Real power is using freedom to create instead of circling the wagons to defend. Power is nurturing and birthing, not restricting and killing.

Linked to violence is fear. We live in fear of neighbors and bombs. Our skill in seeing an enemy everywhere is nothing short of paranoia. The think,



moral perspectives
Rev. Charles Erickson

feel, and behave defensively. It should be no surprise that in cities and nations we budget heavily for weaponry and protection.

The better royal houses through history budgeted heavily for sages and artists in residence. Appropriation of beauty crowds out the degrading "fun" of applauding violence. Joy in color and form, graceful movement and flowing lines, inspiring vision and proud heritage overcome



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power in the human spirit. From the spiritual reservoir come through and emotion aimed at refinement and dignity.

LIFE IS REAL. While we cultivate a capacity to dream, we must fight evil. The trick is to stop pointing at evil in bad guys and start fighting our own debased tastes. The enemy is settling for cheapness and thrills when we could enjoy beauty and abiding satisfactions.

Morality requires a long view. Negatively, religion helps us admit finitude so we gain urgency about developing character in our few years on earth. Positively, we need religion and the arts to encourage the nobility of peace and the joys of creative freedom. We need every aid we can find to cultivate a capacity to hope for freedom, dignity and peace.

Nothing really changes with new leaders or political seasons. Change will come by attacking the twin enemies of violence and fear. We eradicate them by commitment to excellence. Morality requires the patient perseverance which gives top priority to beauty, freedom and cooperative human relationships.

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volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau has a current file of volunteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings call the bureau at 842-7272.

RECEPTIONIST — The Boys and Girls Club of Pontiac is seeking a female 16 or older who is courteous and honest to answer the telephone, issue membership cards and counsel girl members. The assistance is needed from 5 to 7 p.m.

CRAFT DEMONSTRATOR — Volunteers willing to display or demonstrate crafts to children are needed by the Volunteer Programs

of Oakland County Juvenile Court to work on the Craft fair from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13.

PUBLIC ACCESS TV — Centuripe Productions of Southfield, producers of "Instinct on Success" on Continental Cablevision, needs someone with good writing skills to write public service announcements, prepare flyers and write letters to publishers for eight to 12 hours a week. The company also needs a production assistant for four to six hours a week until the end of May.

OFFICE SKILLS — Family Living Center needs someone 18-45 years-old with good phone manner for receptionist duties for 10 to 15 hours a week. Typing and some filing is required.

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