

Moral perspectives

Equal treatment demands full amnesty

Lawyers cry for justice; clergymen cry for mercy. The full presidential pardon, granted by President Ford to the former President Nixon was a magnanimous expression of mercy with little or no concern for justice.

However, at the same time as the full pardon, the Ford decision on amnesty for conscientious objectors and exiles from the Vietnam war has been "postponed indefinitely."

The American public, in particular the legal profession, has expressed indignation for contempt of respect of the law as demonstrated by issuance of the full pardon.

Indications are that this same indignation of the American public was the reason why President Ford had "postponed indefinitely" his decision on amnesty.



By
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Church

may remain as a source of controversy in the months to come, but it is a legal reality. Now is the time that the ephemeral promise of amnesty becomes a reality.

If mercy is good for the former president because "he has suffered enough," this same mercy is good for the thousands of exiled young men who also have "suffered enough."

The issuance of a presidential pardon is primarily a political and legal matter. But when the President gives favored treatment to one classification and acts differently toward another classification, this gives rise to a double standard of ethics.

Thus, it becomes a moral issue. The granting of a full presidential pardon and the promise of granting an amnesty now takes on a "Moral Perspective."

OUR PRESIDENT has been concerned about reconciliation. The history of God dealing with his people has been a continuing story of reconciliation.

In the Judaic-Christian ethic, the promise of a Messiah, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the continuing forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament of Penance, are examples of ongoing reconciliation.

A merciful forgiving God is made manifest by acts of reconciliation. Pope Paul VI has proclaimed this year of 1974 as a year of preparation for the upcoming Holy Year, 1975, as a year of reconciliation.

IN HIS MERCY, President Ford has granted a full pardon to the former president. In that same spirit of mercy, President Ford should grant an unconditional amnesty, especially to those whose protest was based on moral conscientious objection to war.

A dual standard of law is a common reality on the American scene. "Suspended sentence," "parole because of good behavior," "he has suffered enough" have been the basis of selective mercy for men of prestige, prominence and power.

For minorities, those ignorant of their constitutional rights and those unable to engage competent legal counsel, the fullness of the law of justice has been invoked.

Now is the time for the American public to call upon the President to put aside a dual standard and show similar mercy in granting amnesty.

THE FORMER presidential press secretary, Gerald R. Horst, in announcing his personal resignation, stated that the President granted the pardon based upon a decision of his conscience.

Let the President show that same respect for the men who made a decision of conscience when they would not serve in an immoral war and who were denied this classification by their draft board and were thus forced to flee the country.

Even in the question of service to our country, a dual standard of morality has existed.

A PREFERENTIAL class was favored. Those who were wealthy enough bought their amnesty with college deferments; those who were skilled enough and had sufficient financial resources were able to obtain medical verification for "their personal amnesty."

It was the minorities, those ignorant of their constitutional rights and those unable to engage

competent legal counsel who were forced to flee.

I for one, continue to cry for mercy! The righteousness of a full presidential pardon may be debated for years to come but it is a legal reality. The promise of an amnesty has been "postponed indefinitely." It is now time for a legal reality for unconditional amnesty for "they have suffered enough."

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Mrs. Stewart H. Rodman of Orchard Lake and Roland Richter of Pontiac have been studying under the direction of Dr. Frederick L. Marriott, the Kirk's organist-carillonneur, for the past two years. They will play a medley of classical and popular tunes in the final carillon concert of the season at the Kirk.

Both recitalists are Kirk members. Mrs. Rodman is also director of children's choirs at the Gothic-styled Bloomfield Hills church located on West Long Lake Road.

She also served as assistant organist at the Methodist Church in Lima, Ohio, before becoming a member of the Kirk in 1972. She has studied organ and carillon under Dr. Marriott for the past two years.

MRS. RODMAN was graduated from De Pauw University and received her master's in music from Boston University in 1967, majoring in organ and choral music. She is a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, honorary music sorority, and lives at 6393 W. Doherty Drive, Orchard Lake.

A music education graduate of the university of Minnesota, Richter received a master's degree in secondary education from the University of Michigan and has taught music and language arts in the Pontiac schools since 1958.

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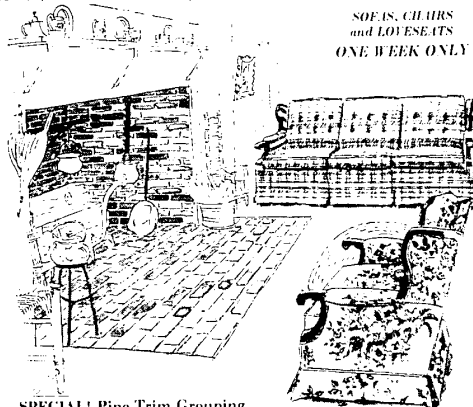
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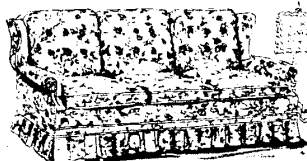
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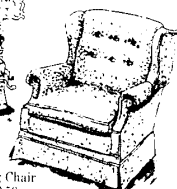
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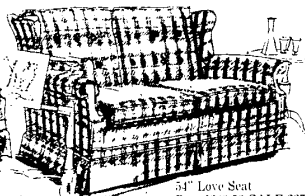


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