

BELIEFS Values

Messenger from page B5

which was written by John Courter for the event and the carillon. The Detroit Brass Society, Kirk Chancel Choir and Kirk Boys Choir will also appear at the service.

For more information, call the church at (248)626-2515.

ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL

St. David's Episcopal Church, 16200 West 12 Mile Road, between Greenfield and Southfield roads, Southfield, will dedicate The People's Window at the 9:30 p.m. Eucharist, Sunday, May 23.

The stained glass window overlooking 12 Mile Road depicts Christ's Great Commission, "...go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." The annual Togetherness Sunday will be celebrated in conjunction with the dedication, and a reception will follow the service.

Reservations appreciated by calling (248)567-6213.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

A traveling exhibit commemorating the contributions of Mary Baker Eddy and other reformers of her time will be featured at the Christian Science Church at Inkster and Maple in Bloomfield Township on May 23.

A musical program will include two organists, a classical guitarist and a vocalist. The program will begin at 2 p.m. Admission is free. Call (248)626-5369 for more information.

EILU V EILU

At 8 p.m. May 27, Rabbi Weiss will present "You Are What You Eat" at the Laker Education Complex, 2075 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield.

Free, no reservations required.

All are welcome, regardless of affiliation, background, or Jewish study experience. For information, call (248)737-1931.

Culture of nihilism at war with religion

During the last decade of the 20th Century, the spirit of nihilism has invaded our society. The nihilistic spirit has come to us in both benign and malignant forms.

The popular television show, "Seinfeld," is an example of the benign form of this nihilism. It has been said that Seinfeld's popularity was due to the fact that the show was really about nothing at all. Seinfeld elevated the mundane and the trivial to the level of ultimate concern. In so doing, it spoke to a collective consciousness that views life as being primarily mundane and trivial. Seinfeld did not champion its form of nihilism as some great social project; rather it presented us with a portrait of the meaningless of existence as a fact to be accepted. Therefore, the Seinfeld form of nihilism was relatively harmless in that it has no axe to grind.

However, other forms of nihilism have appeared in this decade that are much more terrifying. This is most dramatically exemplified in the neo-Nazi nihilism that has wreaked so much devastation in Oklahoma City and in Littleton, Colo. The bombing and the shootings in those two communities were the result of a nihilistic posture that has no regard for human life. It was this form of nihilism, as given expression by the German philosopher

FOCUS ON THEOLOGY



REV. ALLAN W. EICKELMANN

Frederick Nietzsche, that served as the spiritual power that fueled the rise of Adolph Hitler earlier in this century. It is that same nihilism that we see present in so much of the popular culture today. From television talk shows that glorify the personal agendas of those whose lives are devoted to hatred and violence, to the music and comedy that feeds those sentiments, we can see that a very virulent form of nihilism has invaded the land.

We are in the midst of culture wars. Our young people seem to be most aware of this truth. The warfare is over which vision of reality will prevail, that of the nihilists, or the vision of those who sense that our destiny is guided by a higher authority than that of our own personal prejudice and desires. Perhaps you have seen the t-shirt that sharply portrays the

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battle line in this cultural war; on the front it reads, "God is dead," Nietzsche, while on the back it reads, "Nietzsche is dead." You see, this cultural war is being waged between those who feel that any means justifies achieving their own desires and those who feel that we are accountable to a higher power for our actions.

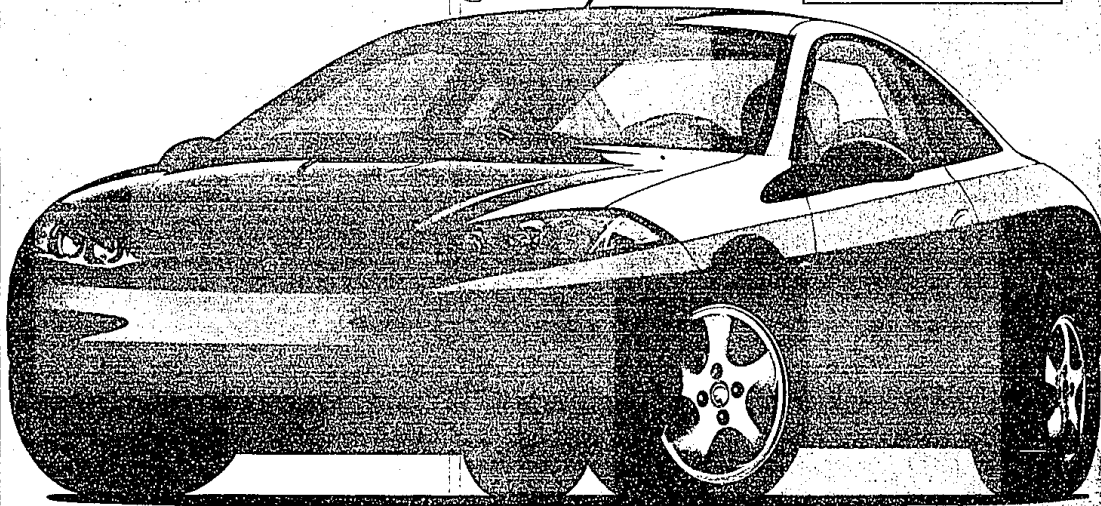
In churches, synagogues and mosques around the country, you will find young people who understand that their vision of reality is set against a popular culture that denies the basic value of both human life and religious faith. They know the outcome of this cultural struggle will set the course of life in our country for the next generation. This is perhaps as serious of a struggle as our country has ever known, with consequences that extend far into the future.

Dr. Allan W. Eickelmann is senior minister of The Congregational Church of Birmingham.

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