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SOME LARGE QUESTIONS

ON the twelfth of October, 1492, Christopher Columbus, early in the morning, drew the *Santa Maria* close to the shore of a small island in the Bahamas which he named San Salvador, and landed, where he found green trees, fruit, and plenty of water, and friendly natives who were greatly pleased by his simple gifts. At once he claimed his discovery for the monarchs of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella. The natives were garbed in cotton, which they grew and wove. He went on to discover other islands. On his second voyage he returned to San Domingo where he had established a Spanish colony and built a fort. The *Santa Maria* ran aground and he had built the fort called La Navidad with the hulk. He now had instructions to Christianize the inhabitants and early in 1499 he sent word to their Catholic highnesses of the possibility of establishing a West Indian slave trade. On his return to La Navidad he found the fort burned, the men he had left in charge gone back to Spain, the Indians outraged by their treatment by the Spanish. Using European arms Columbus subdued the Indians and sent five boatloads of them to Seville to be sold as slaves. Spanish explorers and *conquistadores* soon followed the example of Columbus—Cortes in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru.

Columbus was a man of great stature, imaginative in mind and heroic in determination. He was a man who brought a new way of life to the New World and began the flow of people from Europe, and later elsewhere, to the Americas, and the migration is still going on. But if we look back on his time over the almost 500 years since he landed in the Bahamas we may feel sick at heart at what conquest and colonization accomplished in the West. What, one wonders, would or could a sage have said to Columbus in his meditative hours, when he was filled with the dream of finding a westward route to China and Japan? Are there times in the life of a man doomed or blessed to bring about large historical consequences when he wonders about the meaning of the decisions he makes, about the good or evil which may result? Columbus, it seems most likely, had no doubts about what he had set out to do. He had his vision, he had the ships and men, and the ocean was there to cross, and he was a mariner capable of crossing it. So there was really nothing that a sage could say to him that would change the course of coming history. The level of the motivations of humans in his time was set, and he did not aspire to alter them, but only in some way to fulfill them. He was indeed a child of his time, though a brave and courageous one.

Is our time, speaking essentially, any different from his? Could a sage, that is, have anything to say to us, with the hope of being understood? This is a bit like asking: What is settled about the present and the future, and what is still unsettled and open to decision for us? There are other questions of some importance. Such as, for example, what are the decisive influences in human decision? How much part is played by fear in what we do? What weight have feelings such as integrity and vision? What is the interplay between self-interest and the will to serve the public good? Is there any way of deciding about such things other than looking around to see what kind of world we have and how people are behaving?

A book of recent issue, *Beyond the Bomb*, by Mark Sommer, subtitled "A Field Guide to Alternative Strategies for Building a Stable Peace," published by Expro Press (Room 519, McGuinn Hall, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass., 02167, $7.95), has material in it that might be helpful in considering these questions. The last chapter is devoted to the haunting fear of nuclear war on the part of nearly everyone who reads the papers and who knows something about what atom bombs did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Toward the end of this Epilogue the author says:

> In the case of the nuclear threat, of course, we are not victims alone but in part our own executioners. Whose hands, after all, assemble the missile components? Whose dollars pay the taxes

that finance research? Who pours the concrete for the silos? Why do we sentence ourselves to death and commission our own coffins? Perhaps because we dread still more than our known terrors the unknown terrors we might incite by resisting our fate. These risks are tangible and not to be lightly dismissed. Those who resisted in the Warsaw Ghetto while others sleepwalked into the ovens endured the agonies of protracted struggle against an unremitting and merciless aggressor they knew they could not overcome—and most died. Was it worth the effort to resist? Those who survived would likely say yes.

But how do we cease being victims of our most malignant invention, the Bomb? How do we break out of the victim's self-willed fate? . . .

To move beyond the Bomb, we will need not only, as Einstein said, a substantially new way of thinking, but a substantially new way of feeling, about both ourselves and our world. And it is here where existing resources fail us. For though there is a small corpus of work on the psychology of war—its cultural and emotional roots, its non-rational sources—virtually nothing has been written about the psychology of peace. By the phrase, psychology of peace, I refer to those attitudes and emotions which foster peace at both individual and social levels and ;the ways in which they are nurtured. We have done some thinking, though not nearly enough, about the roots of war. But we have not yet asked in any speculative detail what are the non-political sources of peace, the cultural and emotional conditions in which peace can take root and thrive. . . .

Can we imagine and evoke a culture of peace in which the preservation of life in its natural splendor and diversity instead becomes the highest good? And more importantly, can we create a culture and myth sufficiently compelling and attractive to overcome the species' lingering but obsolescent fascination with war? . . .

For even after we have determined the wisest policies and strategies to pursue, we still require the will to make peace which only changes of heart and mind can supply. Where there is a will, there may well be a way, but where that will is weak, the better ways may never matter.

We are by no means sure of what Mark Sommer means by "the psychology of peace," although what we understand by the term surely contains some of the answers he is looking for. If anyone asked us for material on this subject, we should at once suggest reading in Emerson and Thoreau, Tolstoy and Gandhi. There are others, of course, but at the moment these four will do.

Emerson, when he was thirty-five, gave a lecture on "War" in Boston, now cherished as a peace classic. Fundamentally, it is a treatise on psychology, not an academic study but in plain language. "It is," he said, "a lesson which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances." We are surrounded by the apparatus of war and fill our minds with its images. All this becomes "reality" for us, "to constitute an imposing actual, which will not yield in centuries to the feeble, deprecatory voices of a handful of friends of peace." He goes on:

> Thus always we are daunted by appearances; not seeing that their whole value lies at bottom in the state of mind. It is really a thought that built this portentous war establishment, and a thought shall melt it away. Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or their state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a *thought* of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers. Observe the ideas of the present day—orthodoxy, skepticism, missions, popular education, temperance, anti-masonry, masonry, antislavery; see how each of these abstractions has embodied itself in an imposing apparatus in the community and how timber, brick, lime and stone have flown into convenient shape, obedient to the master idea reigning in the minds of many persons. . . .
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> We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and our ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or books or cannon or churches. The standing army, the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt; how low his hope lies. . . .
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> It follows of course that the least change in the man will change his circumstances; the least enlargement of his ideas the least mitigation of his feelings in respect to other men, if, for example, he could be inspired with a tender kindness to the souls of men, and should they come to feel that every man was another self with whom he might come to join, as left hand works with right. Every degree of the ascendancy of this feeling would cause the most striking changes of external things: the tents would be

> struck; the men-of-war would rot ashore; the arms rust; the cannon would become streetposts; the pikes a fisher's harpoon; the marching regiment would be a caravan of emigrants, *peaceful* pioneers at the fountains of the Wabash and the Missouri. And so it must and will be: bayonet and sword must first retreat a little from their ostentatious prominence, then quite hide themselves, as the sheriff's halter does now, inviting the attendance only of relations and friends; and then, lastly, will be transferred to the museums of the curious, as poisoning and torturing tools are at this day.
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> War and peace thus resolve themselves into a mercury of the state of cultivation.

Here, surely, we have an abstractly precise account of the step-by-step alterations that will accomplish what Mark Sommers calls the "changes in mind and heart" that are necessary to "the will to make peace."

The pungent essays of Henry David Thoreau take us directly into the interior of a man of changed heart and mind, showing what he thinks and how he lives, what he values and to what he is indifferent. His subjects are various, his themes few. His entire philosophy of life is set down in the few pages of "Life without Principle" which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1863, a little more than a year after his death. "It is," Walter Harding of the Thoreau Society has said, "both *Walden* and 'Civil Disobedience' in miniature and one of the great documents in man's battle for his own soul." Near the beginning Thoreau says:

> Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives. This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awakened almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me make a minute in the fields took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. . . .
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> If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down! . .
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> The community has no bribe that will tempt a wise man. You may raise money enough to tunnel a mountain, but you cannot raise money enough to hire a man who is minding *his own* business. An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not. The inefficient offer their inefficiency to the highest bidder, and are forever expecting to be put into office. One would suppose that they were rarely disappointed. . . .
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> I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes. You must get your living by loving. But as it is said of the merchants that ninety-seven in a hundred fail, so the life of men generally, tried by this standard, is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied.

Thoreau set his standards for himself, admitting to his mind only those thoughts that he felt able to use to some purpose.

> There is inspiration, that gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven. There is the profane and stale revelation of the bar-room and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the hearer determines to which it shall be open, and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be permanently profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. . . . We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Of what consequence, though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion? In health we have not the least curiosity about such events. We do not live for idle amusement. I would not run round the corner to see the world blow up.

Here we have a man for whom peace is a wholly natural part of his life, in whom fear has no place, save for the care to be used and the skill to be acquired in handling an axe and for other tasks of everyday living. Reading good books was as natural to him as breathing, but he went to school to the woods and regarded learning as a process without end, or an end in itself. There was pain in his life, but hardly of his own making: he suffered the pain the world was making for itself, and was disinclined to stop making. He spoke to the world of this as well

as he could, and left his body at the outbreak of the Civil War, which in some sense was good for him. He did not talk much of "peace," but lived it by bringing it with him in his mind and heart. The world is now making an effort to learn from him, but not seriously enough. We are nearly all of us still in the kindergarten, some in the adolescence, of undeveloped life. To realize this is the first step in accomplishing a change of heart.

What, indeed, is the psychology of peace, and where shall we find a manual that might aid us in "growing up"? The greatest pacifist of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly Leo Tolstoy. His *Christianity and Patriotism* combines several lines of searching criticism with an appeal for individual rejection of war that is indescribably stirring. He wrote in 1894:

> One free man says truthfully what he thinks and feels in the midst of thousands of men who by their words and actions are maintaining the exact opposite. It might be supposed that the man who has spoken out his thoughts sincerely would remain a solitary figure, and yet what more often happens is that all the others, or a large proportion of them, have for long past been thinking and feeling exactly the same, only they do not say so freely. And what was yesterday the new opinion of one man, becomes today the public opinion of the majority. And as soon as this opinion becomes established, at once, gradually, imperceptibly, but irresistibly, men begin to alter their conduct. But the free man often says to himself: "What can I do against this whole sea of wickedness and deception which engulfs us?"

Tolstoy answers:

> That the order of life opposed to the conscience of man should change and be replaced by one that is in accord with it, it is necessary that the public opinion of the past should be replaced by new and living opinion.

Gandhi, whose complete works encompass some ninety volumes, wrote for *Liberty*, April 5, 1941:

> The world of tomorrow as I see it will be must be, a society based on non-violence. That is the first law, for it is out of that law that all other blessings will flow. It may seem a distant goal indeed, an unattainable Utopia; it is often criticized as such. But I do not think it in the least unattainable, since it can be worked for here and now. I believe it perfectly possible for an individual to adopt the way of life of the future—the nonviolent way—without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can observe a certain rule of conduct, cannot a group of individuals do the same? Cannot whole groups of people—whole nations?
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> I think it is necessary to emphasize this fact: No one need wait for anyone else to adopt a humane and enlightened course of action. Men generally hesitate to make a beginning if they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. It is precisely this attitude of mind that is the greatest obstacle to progress—an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away himself, and so influence others.

For the foundation of the psychology of peace there is a simple principle well put by Joseph Weizenbaum in *Computer Power and Human Reason.* In his last chapter he said:

> For the present dilemma, the operative rule is that the salvation of the world—and that *is* what I am talking about—depends on converting others to sound ideas. That rule is false. The salvation of the world depends only on the individual whose world it is. At least, every individual must act as if the whole future of the world depends on him. Anything else is a shirking of responsibility and is itself a dehumanizing force, for anything less encourages the individual to look upon himself as a mere actor in a drama written by anonymous agents, as less than a whole person, and that is the beginning of passivity and aimlessness.

The world may take some time in getting around to this view, yet there are steps or degrees of movement in that direction. Each step is an advance, as both Emerson and Gandhi suggest. Mark Sommer's *Beyond the Bomb* is especially useful in providing a critical survey of many of the steps now being taken in the modern world. All are signs of the beginning of a change in heart and mind. They are only steps on the way, but it seems necessary to most human beings to exhaust the possibilities of going only part way toward Thoreau and Emerson, Tolstoy and Gandhi. The plans they are making may not avert war, but actually, no plan can be successful without the abolition of fear.

REVIEW
WORLD WATER SUPPLY

WRITERS of the *Worldwatch Papers*, which come out several times a year, published by the Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, at $4.00 each, assume that their readers assume—or are ready to assume—a measure of responsibility for the various things that are going wrong in the world, things that, directly or indirectly, are caused by human beings and over which they have at least some control. Man-made disasters are rapidly losing their local character. By reason of the dimensions of the things that go wrong, all the world is affected by them. If the course of events is to be changed, we all need to begin by making ourselves feel responsible, for only then can we generate the bonds that make people feel able to act together for the common good. If we want to stop wars, we must work together to get rid of the national state. If we want to have enough to eat for the next generation, we have to start using our soil in better ways; if we don't, the good soil will wash away and what's left will be largely sterile. If we want air that's fit to breathe, and will keep our trees and other useful vegetation alive, we must stop poisoning them with pollutants—all over the world.

How can we begin with this? We must know more about what is happening as well as correctable throughout the planet. The Worldwatch Institute is putting this essential information in readable form, distributing it mostly in this country but also abroad. Knowledge creates responsibility for humans, and getting the knowledge is the first step in moving toward more responsible behavior. When enough people feel and get responsible for obliging governments to cooperate, change can begin—in some encouraging cases has already begun. We need to know about those cases, too.

Worldwatch Paper No. 67, by Sandra Postel, *Conserving Water: The Untapped Alternative*, begins:

> Despite modern technology and feats of engineering, a secure water future for much of the world remains elusive. In Africa, prolonged drought, combined with a severe lack of developed water supplies, has triggered a crippling famine that some experts fear is but a prelude of things to come. Nowhere is water's crucial role in meeting basic human needs more evident. Yet water planners in many corners of the world—in humid climates as well as dry, in affluent societies as well as poor ones—are projecting that within two decades water supplies will fall short of needs. In the spring of 1985, officials in the eastern United States declared a drought emergency, asking millions of residents to curtail non-essential water uses, and in some cases rationing supplies, to avoid a critical shortage of drinking water.
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> Historically, water management has focused on water development—building dams, reservoirs, and diversion canals—to supply water wherever and in whatever amounts desired. Governments often built and financed large water projects to encourage agricultural and economic expansion. In the United States, for example, the 1902 Reclamation Act aimed to settle the western frontier by offering family farms cheap water and power. The Act established a separate agency, the Bureau of Reclamation, explicitly charged with developing the West's rivers for irrigation and later for hydropower. Since 1902, hundreds of dams have been erected, and the Bureau has built or authorized more than 160 irrigation projects. Collectively, they supply water to about one-quarter of the West's irrigated land. . . .
>
> Today's water institutions—the policies and laws, government agencies, and planning and engineering practices that shape patterns of water use—are steeped in supply-side management philosophy no longer appropriate to solving today's water problems. Aquifer depletion, falling water tables, and streamflows diminished to ecologically damaging levels are increasingly widespread. Though the conventional approach of continuously expanding supplies may work when water is abundant, it is not well suited for an era of growing scarcity, damage to the environment, and capital constraints.

The only feasible alternative would be a fundamental change in policy from trying to

increase the water supply—by building more dams and diverting more of the flow of rivers—to more economical use of water, repeated use of the same water, and the elimination of waste. These methods have already been applied with gratifying success in many parts of the world. As Sandra Postel puts it: "Only by managing water demand, rather than ceaselessly striving to meet it, is there hope for a truly secure and sustainable water future.

A few of the early paragraphs in this paper make plain the measure of our worldwide water problems.

> A look at some key water trends drives home the need to redirect water policy and planning. In several of the world's major crop producing regions, water use exceeds sustainable levels, potentially limiting future food production. Water tables are falling beneath one-quarter of the irrigated cropland in the United States. In the five states where levels are dropping most pervasively—Arizona, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas—net irrigated area declined between 1978 and 1982 by 678,000 hectares, or 14 per cent. (One hectare equals 2.47 acres.) Depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer, an essentially nonrenewable groundwater supply, threatens agricultural economy of the U.S. High Plains, where 40 per cent of the country's grainfed beef are raised. Pumping in the Texas plains accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the Ogallala's depletion so far and has diminished that region's supply by about a fourth.
>
> Trends in other major crop-producing regions are equally disturbing. About half the Soviet Union's irrigated area is in the central Asian republics and southern Kazakhstan in the southwestern part of the country. Their fertile soils and sunny, warm climate make these regions ideal for expanding crop production, but lack of water severely limits this potential. In dry years, virtually the entire flow of the area's two primary rivers is already used. Little remains either to expand irrigated crop production or to supply the burgeoning population of this largely Moslem territory, which now totals more than 25 million. In China, a water deficit is building on the North Plain, which accounts for about a quarter of the value of that nation's crop output. Near Beijing, groundwater use exceeds the sustainable supply by a fourth, and water tables are dropping as much as two meters per year.

A water shortage is far more serious than the diminution of fuel supplies. There are many sources of energy that could in time replace fossil fuels, but there is no substitute for water, and the supply is plainly finite. Meanwhile the cost of water is going up. Because of the increase in the cost of fuel, pumping water from underground sources to the surface raises the production costs of the farmer, and this means that food products are continually more expensive. Diversion of fresh water streams and lakes to supply water need for irrigation drains lakes and rivers, which means the loss of fish which people need to eat.

What can be done? We must stop the wasteful methods of water supply and use and make the various arts of conservation a natural part of our lives. Sandra Postel says:

> Wasteful use and poor management of water impose serious costs as well. Seepage from unlined irrigation canals, excessive watering of fields, and insufficient attention to drainage cause underground water levels to rise, eventually waterlogging the root zone of soils. In dry climates, water near the surface evaporates, leaving soils laden with a damaging layer of salts—a process known as salinization. Together waterlogging and salinization sterilize 1 million to 1.5 million hectares of cropland each year.
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> Collectively, these factors—pervasive depletion and over use of water supplies, the high cost of new large water projects, rising pumping costs, and worsening ecological damage—call for a shift in the way water is valued, used, and managed. If food production is to keep pace with expanding food needs, attention must turn to increasing water productivity in agriculture. Sustaining economic growth and supplying growing cities will require recycling, reusing, and conserving water to get more production out of existing supplies.

It is well to remember that agriculture consumes about 70 per cent of the water available for use in the world. Consumption of water in the home is only a small amount by comparison with agriculture and industry, the flush toilet being the major user. In the United States, only four industries—paper, chemicals, petroleum, and primary metals—use 80 per cent of the water required by all manufacturing. These industries

are now learning to use water again and again, the paper mills, for example, using it 7.2 times. Petroleum refineries recycle water about seven times also.

The bulk of this pamphlet is given to methods of conservation of water in agriculture. Details of methods of irrigation, some of which cut the water required to a half or less of present use, are given. The U.S. has developed some of these methods, Israel various others. There has been progress, but hardly enough. Sandra Postel concludes her paper:

> High costs, environmental risks, and tight budgets will make large water projects increasingly unattractive and hard to implement for some time to come. Yet few officials and water managers have replaced their strategies of increasing supplies with ones geared toward reducing demand. This gap in policy, planning, and commitment can only lead to worsening water deficits and economic disruption. The transition to a water-efficient economy will not be easy or painless. But it has begun, and it should be fostered. With the technologies and methods now available, even modest expenditures on conservation and efficiency could make unnecessary many of the inordinately expensive, ecologically-disruptive water projects that have dominated water-planning agendas for decades.

COMMENTARY
THE MAIN THEME

THE one thing that the contents of this issue of MANAS strongly suggest is the importance of regaining individual responsibility, with all that this implies. The lead article, for example, is devoted to the question of putting an end to violence and war. How is that to be done? At present wars are engaged in by the powerful and not-so-powerful nations pretty much over our heads. We regret them but feel unable to stop them. We do not make the wars, the national states make them, and our control over the decisions of the states, despite all the claims of democracy and self-government, is virtually nominal, not actual. Yet on the whole people go along, feeling that there is not much else they can do. Opposing the state in time of war presents certain inevitable hazards. If you are of draft age and refuse military service you may go to jail, perhaps for years. If you refuse to pay taxes, as some are doing, it becomes almost necessary to revise the whole scheme of one's economic life.

Another step one can take, not directly related to war is to begin to honor, respect, and collaborate with the ecological community instead of the political unit in which you live. This is a gradual transfer of allegiance in key with all basic human needs and will in time reduce the power and authority of the national state. Without the interested support of the people, the state will soon collapse. Something like a Gandhian community of villages, plus the technology that applies, might result. This is certainly worth working toward, no matter what others do.

A change in goals will certainly lead to a change in priorities, and this will mean general cooperation with the steps in conservation proposed by Sandra Postel in this week's Review. The definition of unfulfilled responsibilities seems always to apply to "other people," largely because we have grown so isolated from those undertakings which are social in origin and development. The return to responsibility will mean accepting them as ours, however remote from our control they seem at the beginning. The rule, here, is that given by Joseph Weizenbaum on page 7.

A responsibility we need to accept as almost entirely ours, as shown by Herbert Kohl in this week's "Children," is for the appropriate education of the young—our own to begin with. Like all the other areas, this will take time, but what could be more worth doing?

Frontiers is about conditions in South Africa, where millions of black people are prevented by unjust laws from exercising the responsibilities they long for. Some understanding of the problem of the whites of South Africa may be gained by Americans by reflecting on how long it has taken for us to begin to recognize the injustice we have committed against the red Indians, and how difficult it is today, to put things right.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ON UNUSED CAPACITIES

MOST people have no idea how they learned to read. Those of us who have children may get some idea of how it is done, through fragments of experience, but the actual learning process remains obscure. New words are acquired from the way they are used, without use of a dictionary, and in time we gather something of the spread of their meaning. Writers, of course, use the dictionary a great deal, in order to avoid some foolish mistake, but in general we learn to read the way we learned to walk, stumbling a bit at first, taking a few falls, but eventually managing very well. No teacher is required, although parents may help a bit at the beginning. So, much of the time, with reading. Why, then, do we hear about the problems so many children are said to have in learning to read?

In his book on the subject, *Reading, How To* (Dutton 1973), Herbert Kohl, author of *36 Children*, begins his Preface:

> There is no reading problem. There are problem teachers and problem schools. Most people who fail to learn how to read in our society are victims of a fiercely competitive system of training that requires failure. If talking and walking were taught in most schools we might end up with as many mutes and cripples as we now have non-readers. However learning to read is no more difficult than learning to walk or talk. The skill can be acquired in a natural and informal manner and in a variety of settings ranging from school to home to the streets. The conditions for natural learning are minimal and certainly not mystical or technically complex. Reduced to basics the following are sufficient to enable people to acquire the skill of reading as well as develop the ability to perfect that skill. . . .

He then gives eight common-sense conditions applying to the teacher, such as paper and pencil, respect for the child and a desire to help him, and some patience. The learner needs to be able to use language and to want to learn to read. But children mostly learn by picking up things in the family life; brothers and sisters teach each other and correct each others' mistakes.

Kohl has three children, two girls and a boy—Tonia, Erica, and Josh, who is a year and a half.

> Erica knows which side of the book is supposed to be held up, but forgets which way the pages turn and the writing goes. Tonia helps her and sometimes reads stories she has memorized to Erica who follows avidly. . . .
>
> The other day I came upon Tonia [who is five] and a six-year-old friend sitting in her bedroom reading a simple comic book. He was teaching her what he learned in school—pointing out words, reading sentences, explaining the story. He remembered what he picked up in school and being just a first-grader saw nothing wrong with sharing that knowledge.
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> Many of us underrate what we know or forget how we learned ourselves and therefore do not believe in our capacity to teach. We are trained to believe that professionals are the only ones who can teach, and that teaching requires a school. We are afraid to teach our children to read, or to teach other people's children to read because we might mess up the work of professionals. We deny that professionals fail even when we see it happen and allow ourselves to believe that, rather than the professional being wrong or incompetent, our children are failures.

While professionals have their place in life, their importance is often exaggerated. As a result, much of our life slips away from us, so that we become incompetent as individuals and adjust to isolation and dependence. Our relations with our children make a good place to start correcting this debilitating habit. Meanwhile, as Kohl says:

> Of course professionals, in order to maintain their special claim to teaching or law or medicine, encourage our feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. They even develop ingenious ways of covering up their own mistakes as well as the hollowness of many of their claims to expertise. For example, there is a new category of diseases that doctors have chosen to call "iatrogenic diseases." Translated into simple language "iatrogenic" means doctor-caused. The iatrogenic diseases consist of health problems people develop because of doctors' mistakes and include ailments ensuing from side effects of drugs or aftereffects of surgery or mistakes in diagnosis. To call those ailments "doctor-caused"

> is to place responsibility where it belongs—that is, with the doctor. To call them "iatrogenic" legitimizes the doctor's errors and assimilates them to other disease categories such as cardiovascular diseases. Instead of a doctor's admitting that he made a mistake or didn't have adequate knowledge, he can tell the patient, "I'm afraid you have an iatrogenic disease," thereby locating the problem with the patient and creating the impression that he has a professional understanding of what is wrong. . . .
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> The process of "professionalizing" ignorance is very common in our culture, which is obsessed with credentials and the power they can provide. Teaching need not be the province of a special group of people nor need it be looked upon as a technical skill. Teaching can be more akin to guiding and assisting than to forcing information into a supposedly empty head. If you have a certain skill you should be able to share it with someone. You do not have to get certified to convey what you know to someone else or to help them in their attempt to teach themselves. All of us, from the very youngest children to the oldest members of our cultures should come to realize our own potential as teachers. We can share what we know, however, little it might be, with someone who has need of that knowledge or skill. This is not to deny, of course. . . . that there are different levels of competency. However one need not be an extraordinarily gifted reader to bring others to the point of being able to teach themselves on as complex a level as they want.

Readers who wonder about what Kohl says about "professionalism" serving as a mask for ignorance and about the obsession with credentialism that pervades our culture would do well to read in the *Atlantic* for last December James Fallows' article on what faith in credentials has done to the business schools of the country. An investment banker said recently that if he had his way, he'd "close every one of the graduate schools of business." What is wrong with them? They have come to ignore the immeasurables—the human qualities they can't test and grade, Fallows says. They have stopped trying to give attention to the crucial creative qualities which enable a manager to design "the conditions that will permit the design and production of high-quality goods," while also neglecting the intangible but essential qualities of being able to inspire and lead.

Herbert Kohl does not write for credentialed teachers. His own work, through the years, has included trying to help children in grade school who have been harmed by the teaching profession and could no longer read or far from well enough. His book is filled with accounts of ways to restore the child's confidence in himself and to generate a genuine interest in reading. It is a book for parents who want to help their young. He knows where and why problems in reading may occur, and something of what to do about them. His fundamental rule is, trust the children and help them. You can't really "teach" them anything, what they really learn they have taught themselves.

> As long as students are not trusted and are observed and measured at every moment, more of their energy will be directed to getting around the system or playing with it than to gaining the skill to free themselves of teachers. . . .
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> Instead of assigning homework I have found it useful to give my students a list of things they can do by themselves or with a few friends to help them learn reading. For example, I have shown kids how to play word games like hangman or Scrabble; have given them lists of activities they could do at home or on the streets such as the following:
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> 1. Copy down all the words you see on the way home.
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> 2. Make a map of your apartment and label all the parts.
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> 3. Make a family tree writing down all the names of all your relatives you know of.

There is more to this list, but it would be better to get his book from the library and see how well he understands children, read what he says about "problem" children he has worked with, and the ways of helping them he worked out by experiment.

FRONTIERS

Non-Violence in South Africa

DESMOND TUTU, now the Anglican bishop of Johannesburg in South Africa, was born in 1931 in a town in the Western Transvaal, seventy miles west of Johannesburg. He went to a secondary school for blacks and to a teacher training college in Pretoria. He taught for several years, but when the Bantu Education Act took the education of children out of the hands of the church and turned this teaching over to a negligent civil authority he decided to enter the ministry. He worked as a minister for several years and was ordained in 1961. He lectured in black universities and worked for a year in Britain. On his return to South Africa in 1975 he was the first black person to serve as Dean of Johannesburg, but he decided to live in Soweto instead of the luxurious deanery in the "whites only" section of Johannesburg. He was made Bishop of Lesotho but later took the post of General Secretary of the SACC (South African Council of Churches). He became widely known for speaking out against apartheid and the pass laws, carrying his own form of identification. He led peaceful demonstrations and has the reputation of being a courageous Christian pacifist and a leading spokesman for the cause of the blacks in South Africa. In the paperback edition of a collection of his sermons and speeches, recently published in this country by William B. Eerdmans, the editor, John Webster, speaks in his introduction of the dilemma which men like Tutu are confronted by:

> The whole problem of violence, and the more specific question of when its use could be justified in the cause of freedom from oppression, are perhaps irresolvable—until the situation demands that a choice be made. It cannot be denied that non-violent action to bring about social change can be extremely effective—as has been amply demonstrated by the lives and work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King: both men changed the face of their countries through nonviolent means. Yet peaceful methods of attempting change are often seen as ineffective by the oppressed—a sense born of bitter experience. . . . The main opposition party in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) moved away from non-violent strategy in 1961, after the Sharpville massacre. . . . their peaceful demands had been met with escalating force and increasingly repressive legislation.

The resulting tension for pacifists is reflected in an interview with Bishop Tutu by William Raspberry published in the *International Herald Tribune* of Dec. 6, 1985. Tutu, this writer notes, was a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, so he asked him why there was no real non-violent movement for black rights. Tutu replied that the ANC was nonviolent from 1912 to 1960, but made no headway. He went on:

> But as to non-violence as a strategic weapon, I have a theory. Non-violence presupposes a minimum moral level. And when that minimum level does not operate, I don't think non-violence can succeed. . . . The situation here is intrinsically violent, with the violence being basically the violence of apartheid. What we are really asking is whether we can keep the level of violence within manageable proportions, keep down the number of deaths and keep as low as possible the destruction of property. What chance do we have of doing that?
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> In many ways it is going to depend on what the international community is prepared to do. . . . If the South African government did not believe—and believe rightly—that it would almost always be protected from the consequences of its intransigence and quite vicious actions, it wouldn't go on doing what it is doing. Look at the audacity that they have of constantly making incursions into Angola, knowing full well that they will get the backing of the U.S. because the Reagan administration has the same interests as South Africa has. . . .
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> The victims of apartheid have not been aware of any significant changes. (The authorities) have overturned the mixed marriages act, which I agree is some considerable relief for those caught up in that mesh. But they haven't moved on "group areas" and they still provide us with inferior, discriminatory education. There were 160,000 arrests just last year on pass law offenses.
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> They tell you we are going to have common citizenship, and just when you get excited then they tell you: "Actually, no, it does not involve political power." Well, what is citizenship if it does not mean fundamentally having the vote?

A European member of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation brought this interview to the attention of an active Gandhian, Narayan Desai, who works in Vedchhi, India, obtaining this comment:

> I can very well understand Bishop Tutu's frustration. . . . They have had a long struggle in South Africa and anyone who has some sensitivity left in him is bound to get frustrated once in a while. . . . But I beg to differ with what the Bishop describes as his theory. What non-violence presupposes is not a minimum moral level, but that of goodness in everyone. The Bishop seems to have assumed that the British Government had a higher moral level and the South African Government has none. Governments are composed of men (and women). Does the Bishop presuppose that the South African Government has no human being whose heart or head could be touched by the suffering of black people? In that case it is as good (or as bad) as saying that they are of a different species. Isn't that argument at the base of all arguments for apartheid, too? To presuppose that one set of human beings is inferior to another is to deny the basic unity and equality of human beings. The minute we accept the argument that the South Africans are inferior morally to the British or Americans, we accept the theory that the whites are born to rule over the blacks or the Germans were born to kill the Jews. Non-violence presupposes a level of humanness—however low it may be, in every human being. It is on this basic faith in human beings that non-violence acts.
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> There is another point that the Bishop seems to have missed. I agree with what he says about the lack of pressure from the rest of the world. But non-violence does not entirely depend upon pressure from "without." It also creates a pressure from "within." No injustice and exploitation can exist long unless there is a tacit cooperation with the injustice and exploitation by the victims. . . . It was only after the Indians made the pressure of non-cooperation "intolerable" for the British that they paid heed to the pressure from outside India. I am not sure how far non-cooperation with apartheid has been successfully practiced in South Africa. . . .
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> Fundamentally, the question seems to me to be how you look at non-violence. Whether you look at non-violence as a "strategic weapon" or as a creed born out of faith in human beings, is the crucial question. . . .
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> The struggle in South Africa, I grant, has been long—too long. But our despair will not make the struggle any shorter. Even from the point of view of a "strategic weapon," we must not forget that the forces against the ANC are far stronger in violent methods. They have more experience, more training, and they are much better equipped. No use fighting the South Africa Government with means which are much more suitable to them. Nonviolent methods are far more difficult to deal with than violent ones.
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> I am not saying all this to preach non-violence. I have no such moral right, nor do I claim to be an authority on non-violence. All that I have tried to do, since you have asked me, is to give my own humble opinion as I see things from this distance. I regard Bishop Tutu as a man of wisdom, and I am sure some of the things I have said have already occurred to him.