



greg wasson

tabled indefinitely

First voice: "That's certainly going to change world-wide religious philosophy."

Second voice: "Yeah, it's going to be hard to scare the hell out of anyone anymore."

The Firesign Theatre

And God knows they've tried. Throughout the years, guilt — often caused by a large dose of fear — has been a major motivator in keeping people on the church's prescribed path. Cosmic dismissal was promised to those trying to hasten moral evolution by building their own moral structure — rather than allowing the established church structure to impose upon them.

As one survivor of Catholic school puts it: "The church was caught in an interesting situation. On one hand, the nuns were trying to give us the education required to arrive at academic revelations on our own; on the other they were striving desperately to insure that we didn't apply (their) training to (our own) moral development."

The idea that humans are basically

weak and unable to devine adequate value systems of their own has allowed the church to maintain its conservative hold on the world. The theory has also presented those who don't feel helpless, but have been told from grade one that they are, with a paradox; a paradox that's often so strong it impedes personal development. Consider those who attended parochial school.

Rather than prepare participants for the moral tribulations they are sure to face, the parochial system, most notably that of the Catholic Church, has saddled more than one emerging psyche with mental blocks — impeding an individual's painless development into a real person. Many are forced to overcome the first 18 year's of training before turning their attention to the many years that lie ahead. This exercise often means rejection of two decades of learning, resulting in the good of the Catholic being thrown out with the bad.

"There are so many trite, meaningless rules," says one South Dakotan escapee, "that many (of my classmates) just dismiss all their training, refusing to

deal with any of it. The basic notion of the religion, that one should be a good person, gets obscured by all the worthless garbage."

Even when a parochial product works through the maze of "garbage," he or she is often not freed from the clutches of the church.

"My sister plans to marry a non-Catholic," explains the woman, "and my mother has been writing letters lamenting the fact she didn't raise her daughter right — and because of that (her daughter) is headed for hell. Not only does my sister have to deal with the way she was trained, but she has to deal with the way her actions now affect our mother."

An accepted notion is that our generation, freed from the concern of where the next meal is coming from, has enjoyed increasing time to ponder the abstracts of existence. For many young Catholics, this has meant a chance to dissect and examine the teachings of the church with a magnifying glass — denied to large segments of previous generations. The result is a growing unrest in

the shrinking ranks of young churchgoers.

"My mother didn't reject the church until she was 45," explains one 25-year-old product of the system. "For many years, she accepted many of the things I can't deal with because she never had time to really think about them."

Offering the church a way to remain afloat, this motor-city transplant offers the following theory:

"... Used to be that one was told of the benefits of enduring the pain of the dentist's chair. It's slowly evolved so that you get the benefits of the dental work but, through the use of nitrous-oxide and other drugs, are spared the discomfort which the visit previously guaranteed. It seems that if dentists can make that realization, priests should be able to also."

"The real world, always one of the possible ones, is not one in which all promises are kept."

from: "Basic Contract," by Lon L. Fuller

yours

Peace elusive

I too am a Vietnam Veteran, but I am a double minority — a woman Vietnam veteran — which I feel very dearly.

I started through my experience of delayed stress, ironically, on a very hot, muggy day. I've always referred to it as "the day I went crazy," but I'm changing that to "the day I learned to live again." I sought professional help, for I was truly in a life-and-death crisis.

Let me take this time to express a woman veteran's feelings and reactions to Vietnam. I was a newly graduated RN when I joined the army. I volunteered for Vietnam — a decision I'll regret for the rest of my life.

I was stationed at the 85th Evac hospital in Phu Bai. I spent most of my year as an emergency room nurse, triage officer, and evaluator for the KIA as to the cause of death.

You know what it's like to face death every day, but do you know what it's like to get that 20-year-old in — minus legs, arms and face? How can you tell him everything will be okay? How can you reassure him that he'll find peace, understanding and comfort within himself — that the hell has ended — knowing full well that he may die with no one around to hold his hand and say "it's okay to step into the other side of life. I'm here to help you take that frightening step—you'll not be alone on your journey."

I have hundreds of people to grieve for, to work through and tell myself it's all right: I had the viable wounded to worry about. The sight of pain, suffering and blood makes me ill; and I grieve because it is hard to cope with my feelings when I'm working.

I become immobilized with fear if a male makes a gesture beyond "Hello." I am so afraid to reach out and love again because death can snatch that person away in the blink of an

eye. Overseas, one minute I had a friend and the next minute I was determining his cause of death.

Like male combat veterans, I too have fits of rage. I throw things and have broken windows. I swear like a logger, yet I'm one of the gentlest women on this planet. I avoid my family and friends like they have the plague. I am angry at everything around me. I am angry with myself.

I desperately want my childhood back with its innocence and ignorance. I want to go back to Vietnam and make it different. I want to come home to a marching band and "red carpet." I want to hear a "thank you." I want to hear "I'm sorry." I want to feel at peace with myself.

I expressed my feelings to my parents and brothers, with hopes that they would perhaps come to a clear understanding. They, and many others, have voiced their inability to understand why I have delayed stress, since I did not carry a gun or kill anyone. Well, I saw what war does, and I have been very much affected.

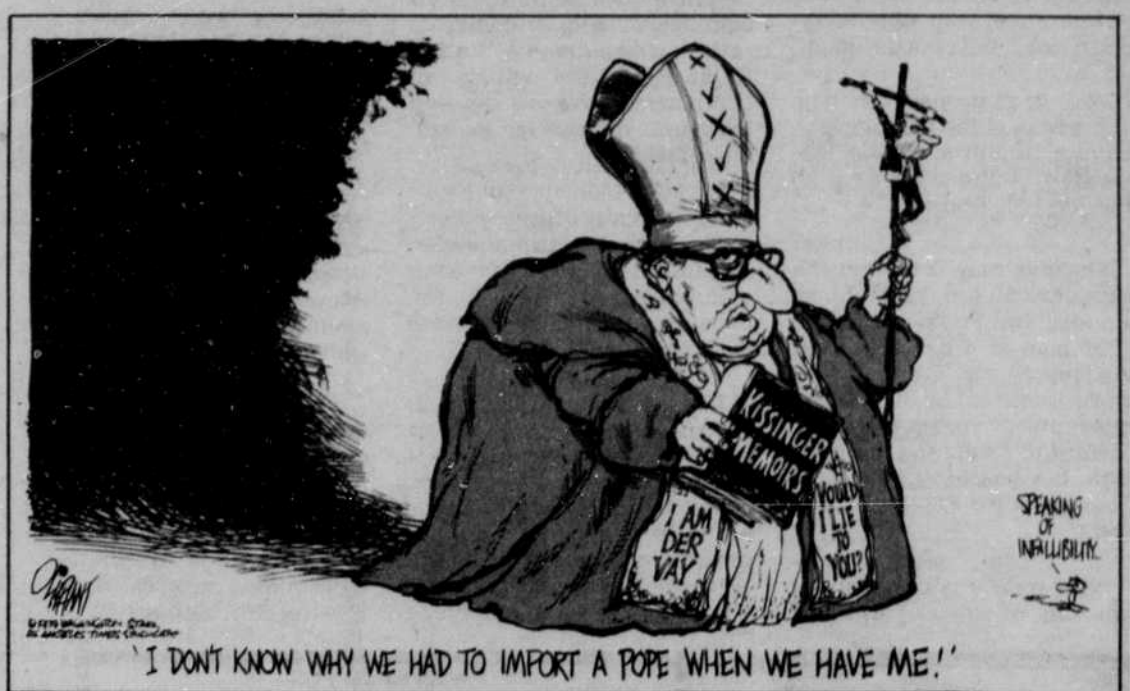
I hope soon all Vietnam veterans will find a way to live at peace with themselves.

Kathy Gunson
University Veterans; Suite 3,
EMU

Junket flack

When ASUO President Scott Bassett embarked on his precedent-setting junket to the Oregon-Michigan State game last month he opened a can of worms that may eat their way through the foundation of his power base and perhaps topple the tower of his "Imperial Presidency."

Under the blanket of "executive privilege" he has smugly pooh-poohed attempts to call him on the carpet for having "a blast" at the expense of his constituents while feebly ex-



cusing his action as a "fact-finding mission," a fact I find more a mystery than a mission.

But Bassett is wrong to feel secure in his citadel for there exists a growing wave of decent, hard-working Eugeneans fed up with the high costs of University football tickets. This wave of people may soon crash into Bassett's career, stripping him of his power and maybe a little cockiness, too. Already this sordid story, first revealed here in the Emerald, has caught the eye of the lofty Eugene Register-Guard. Soon the Washington Post and the New York Times will be giving it front-page coverage, and the question will inevitably be asked, "How could this have been allowed to happen?"

It happened because a majority of the few students who voted in the ASUO elections last spring decided that "politics as it's always been is good enough for me, so why not keep electing status-quo candidates like Bassett? Besides, he was the only one who cared enough to throw a preelection free beer

bash."

I, too, was taken in by the Bassett mystique in the early days of the campaign. I even bought a bumper sticker for my car that read, "Bassett's the One," but somehow it didn't stick. Candidate Mike Lee, who always seemed to be ridiculing status-quo candidates by insisting that no one vote for him angered me with his coy flippancy so much that I voted for Lee out of spite.

Still, in spite of my preference for Bassett, I was outraged that the wishes of about 13 thousand students who did not vote as an overwhelming show of force for Lee were ignored and that the presidency awarded to Bassett on a technicality. I realized then that I could never support a political system in which the arrogant maneuverings and power plays of a few people in a smoke-filled room could decide an issue as critical to 17 thousand people as the ASUO presidency.

Now we are reaping the regrettable rewards of our collective cop-out — our refusal to

face the issues and think. Now we have a President, who behaves like all the big shot politicians in Washington, representing the entire student body of this University. The University's fine name may soon become besmirched by the exposure of this incident; this "boondogglegate." The only course of action by which we may avoid a national disgrace is to call for the resignation of Scott Bassett and the rightful installation of Mike Lee as ASUO President, and the sooner the better.

Keith Cook
Senior, Journalism

letters policy

Letters must be typewritten, using 65 character margins, and should be triple-spaced. Letters must be signed, the author's field of study (or faculty status) noted and should include address and phone number when possible.