

Speaker raps self-interest

By Ron Hunt
Of the Emerald

America has been tearing more and more holes in its moral fabric since 1970, according to sociologist Robert Bellah.

The nation's post-World War II success brought affluence, mobility and other changes, weakening the traditional morals of family and community, said Bellah, author of *The Broken Covenant*. But since 1970, self-interest has increasingly replaced "equality of opportunity" due to the economy's slow growth, stagnation and decline, he said.

He attacked the individualism of most Americans, both in the "amoral majority" — those who "look out for number one" — and the Moral Majority. "In an age of scarce resources, justice dries up in the heart of the average American," Bellah told a sparse EMU Ballroom audience earlier this week.

The "amoral majority" is hooked on the gospel of success which says, "Do everything you can do to keep from having to share," he said. Secular freedom — to be "left alone by others" — is its highest value, Bellah said. He quoted a woman who said, "In the end you're really alone. . . . You're responsible for yourself and no one else."

Individual needs are the only criteria for action in the "amoral majority," making marriage, friends, work, community and church dispensable, he said.

Symptoms of individualism are intensified by higher education, Bellah said, calling the American university a missionary outpost for the "amoral majority."

The Moral Majority, however, merits more alarm and distress than the amoral version, he said. The Moral Majority, whose adherents have never been close to the centers of power and are more apt to be poor, old and from the South, is a "backlash of people who feel left

out," Bellah said.

Reacting against changing sex roles, increasing permissiveness and the growing homosexual movement, the Moral Majority concentrates on a "relatively simple explanation," Bellah said. It believes individual behavior is the key problem because individuals are wicked and subject to punishment from God.

More ominously, he said, the Moral Majority alternates between two dangerous archetypes of the United States — evil Babylon or hopeful New Israel.

"They shift from one image to another in mid-sermon," Bellah said. Hundreds of thousands of people view America as Babylon and propose withdrawal, waiting for total collapse, he said. Others see America as the New Israel — under punishment from God but ready to clean up its act by "putting homosexuals in prison, or, perhaps better, executing them," he said.

Most Americans are deeply repelled by the Moral Majority approach, Bellah said. "The last thing they want is anyone telling them what to do — certainly not Jerry Falwell."

Participatory democracy, authoritarian rule, or a collapse into violent pluralism are three options for a nation bent on individualism, Bellah said.

Participatory democracy, based on a major restructuring of the economy, is "the most hopeful prospect."

Another possibility is pluralism — "the loss of any coherent center." Violence is likely in this scenario, Bellah said, citing Northern Ireland and Lebanon as two of the most pluralistic nations in the world.

An authoritarian government would not show its power by swastikas, but by a president who tells Congress to go home because he can do a better job.

"We certainly have seen signs of that already."

Hawaiian club holds 7th annual luau

The EMU ballroom will be transformed into the setting for a Hawaiian luau Sunday during the seventh annual luau presented by the Hawaii Club.

Performances include the dances and music of Hawaii, Samoa and New Zealand. The first show is at 2 p.m. and costs \$3. The second show, which includes a genuine Hawaiian dinner of kalua pig, lomi salmon and poi, is \$7.50 for adults, \$6.50 for students and \$5.50 for senior citizens and children. Tickets will be sold outside the University bookstore through

Friday and at the EMU main desk until the show.

"We want to bring the Hawaiian culture to Eugene with the dances of Hawaii and the food," says Frances Libby, co-chairer of entertainment. "We want to have the general atmosphere of Hawaii." The event is the annual fundraiser for the club.

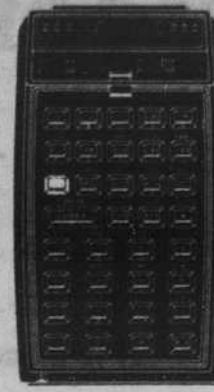
The musicians and 50 dancers have been practicing about four hours a week since January to prepare for the hour and a half show.

Much of the of the food and

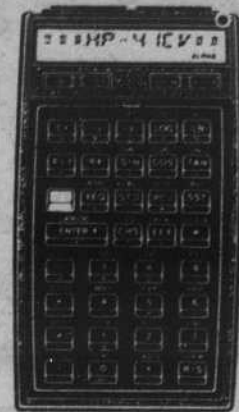
flowers used at the event is flown here from Hawaii. Some of the it is donated by friends, parents and companies in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Club uses the money to sponsor trips for Hawaiian students to various places in Oregon.

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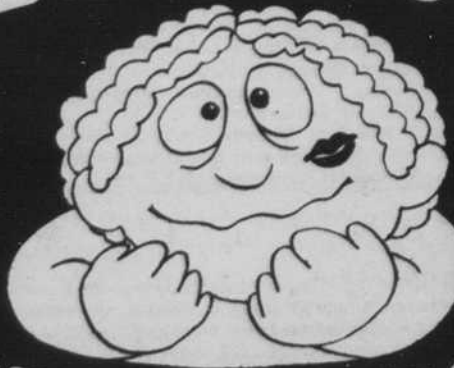
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