

BUILDING ON NEW FOUND SHORES

As children all of us have dreamed of adventuring through far-off places. The child-mind, expanded by imagination, can make moving ~~in~~ pictures which wander over the ~~face~~^{trails} of the earth in pursuit of the strange and fanciful. As a child I use to dream of sailing far away into the blue horizon, skipping swiftly over the seven seas, where at last I could land on a strange and mysterious coast. As my mind worked excitedly to picture these events I could sense the thrill of going ashore on a far island of the sea along whose beaches I could travel and ~~into~~ whose deep mysteries I could probe.

In these last few years I could only think with sadness and regret of my many comrades who were really ashore on strange places far away, not because they were lured by creative adventure, but because their purpose was grim and desperate. Friends are coming back now - back from the ends of the earth, and it seems that there is no wholly new, unexplored region of the world to which I might go for those adventures which ~~were~~ so captured my childhood imaginations. The places of the earth are no longer new, for even the ~~far~~ tiniest, farthest islet of the farthest sea has been reached and landed upon by men who sail far away. Where is there a new shore to which I ~~may~~ go and upon which I may venture?

~~But~~ lately I have been thinking and wondering. At times I let my imagination soar again - not this time in long flight across the islands and the continents of the world, not just ~~the~~^{over} the places of the earth. Rather my mind's ~~eye~~ is drawn to an Alpine height where I may look out across the life of the world. There I ~~see~~ see a world of men, struggling with the problems of life, garbed in the robes of humanity ~~life~~ which make the world so beautiful and yet so tragic. I see there an earth scorched and scarred, where men and women and children move sluggishly and almost hopelessly through the wreckage of their homes

The waves unbuild the wasting shore;
 Where mountains towered, the billows sweep,
 Yet still their borrowed spoils restore,
 And build new empires from the deep.
 So while the floods of thought lay waste
 The proud domain of priestly creeds,
 Its heaven-appointed tides will haste
 To plant new homes for human needs.
 Be ours to make with hearts unchilled
 The change an outworn church deplores;
 The legend sinks, but Faith shall build
 A fairer throne on new found shores.

The world has stretched its muscles and the long lines of its mind have been pushed to farther lands. The beating of its common heart is stronger and louder. And new shores await us who are adventurous in spirit. Do we dare to BUILD on these new found shores? If you will dare with me, let us look ~~at~~ upon at least three new found shores which challenge our powers to build.

I

The first new shore is within us - it is our personal religion.

The first great discovery we make is the need for greater character. It has never been easy to be a Christian; it is certainly less easy now. Being a true Christian has always been a serious, difficult experience. It has required the staunchest, strongest kind of character. But the demands for character are now increased.

We may as well be realistic. No Christian ever had to struggle against a world like this. We are called upon to be Christian in a world of intense secularism. This means a world that attributes little or no value to the spiritual, moral life. We will not be made captives, or tortured, or burned at the stake because we are Christian. But our struggle is more stern than that. We must surmount a world which has all but disavowed the values which mean so much to us. When the American pioneers settled on this continent religion was accepted as a by-word in every home. It was an integral and inseparable part of the national culture. Today it is not. If we want to be Christian we

cannot depend upon our national life to give us large encouragement. We must drive our own stakes more deeply. We must dig our own foundations. We must lengthen the roots of our faith. That means that our character must be stronger and deeper.

The world has always been evil; but in spite of mankind's progress it has never been as evil as it is now. We all know that the world is a hard and evil place in which to live - in spite of its towering beauties of nature and ~~some~~ ^{many} noble lives. Therefore the fight to achieve character is stiffer.

We might as well face it: it is harder to achieve character on a great campus like our own. Here all of the world is brought to focus and what we contend against here is what we will face in the world. We all know of the snares and pitfalls which face a sincere Christian student on any big campus. The large number of students on our campus are not wicked; rather they are indifferent~~y~~ and unaware of real values. But indifference ~~is~~ ^{is} stultifies and is therefore an obstacles to the good life. Christian students are radiantly happy in their fellowship but to live outside of that fellowship and remain a true Christian would be terribly hard.

All of us have to choose the kind of character we want. Even when we drift we make a choice: we have chosen to drift. To choose to be a Christian, to try honestly to achieve the highest character, is hard. But it is an adventure. From all of the councils of the world's wise men there are coming the pleas that the only thing of crucial importance in our world now is the improvement of human character. This, they say, is imperative, if civilization is to survive.

Bishop McConnell once wrote a few words which apply, I think, to our situation as college students: "We are something like a little clearing in the forest, and if we can but sit down in the cool of the evening we can hear the tiger calling."

We are all familiar with the temptations which beset us and the struggles we must make. The prevailing opinion of our culture is that it is only the polite and social and interesting behavior to indulge in liquor with those who would shape our ways. Our society has reached the all time highmark of the mad desire ^{for} ~~which is~~ gambling. No generations of youth has ever been so cast adrift in the passionate sea of sexual licence as have we. We have come up out of a generation which saw the breakdown of the home, to the place where marriage is held cheaply and the divorce rate is outstripping the number of marriages. On every hand we are tempted into mild cheating and dishonesty. And our world rings with the discordant notes of coarseness, vulgarity, and profanity which bespeak the degradation of human dignity. All of these things, you see, pull upon and against us for they are the corruptions of the Christian life. A real Christian must keep his body clean for he conceives of it as being the temple of God. A Christian is hardly one who will waste his entire life in riotous living. A Christian youth strives to rebuild the sanctity of the home and therefore believes that chastity is better than promiscuity and that faithfulness to a life-time mate is the highest achievement that he can make. A Christian must be honest and just in all of his dealings. And a Christian places such a value on his God-given dignity that he can hardly allow himself to engage in loose and vulgar speech. In this kind of a world it is hard to be a Christian. All of these things may sound trite, but they are the material from which character is made.

Two ~~forces~~ forces seek to fashion our lives: the ways of evil men and the Way of Christ. The great English preacher of another generation Chas Kingsley one wrote an open letter to the young men of his parish which began in this way:

My dear young men: The human race may ~~be~~ for practical purposes be divided into three parts - honest men who mean to do right, and do it; knaves who mean to do ~~right~~ wrong and do it; fools who mean to do whichever of the two is pleasanter. And the last may be divided into black fools and white fools - black fools who

would rather do wrong than right but dare not unless it is the fashion;
white fools who would rather do right than wrong but dare
not unless it is the fashion."

To which of these categories do we belong? And ~~why~~ if we really want
to do right, what is the power that can fashion us?

The only way I know to do rightly and achieve the character which
in our world is of such crucial importance is through my personal religion
which is my contact with God who made me. And the only road I know
that leads in God's way for my life is in the way of my Master. Prayer,
therefore, must be at the very heart of my life. I strive to do right and
to be clean, but on my own power I fail. Only God can keep me clean
and strong. Only God can give me courage. Only God can give me the
understanding to find my way through this confusing life. And only
Christ can show me the way. Therefore I must make a sacred place in
my life for the development of my personal religion from which there can
flow the strength of my character. Said Tolstoi once to an eager, youthful
reformer: "Young man, you sweat too much blood for the world; sweat some
for yourself first . . . If you want to make the world better you have to
BE the best you can You cannot bring the Kingdom of God into
the world until you bring it into your own heart first." Newly found
shores the world over call me, but the first upon which we must build
is our inner life.

At the end of his life, the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians
at Phillipp: "Be faultless children of God in the midst of a crooked
and perverse generation. There you shine like stars, holding forth the
message of life". (Phil. 2:15,16)

II

The second new shore is endless, embracing the earth: it is One
World. Upon this shore there awaits an exciting adventure in building
and pioneering. This shore line begins at our back door, ~~and~~ runs thru
our city streets, weaving its way everywhere throughout the world.

It is trite now to say that science has made One World. We all know that. ~~But this shoreline is not new for it requires the building of One Family of nations and people.~~ But the shoreline of which I speak is new for it requires the building of One Family of nations and people.

~~There are multitudes of people the world over who do not yet realize that this IS One World. There is the shore upon which we must build. Several months ago I was attending a conference in the little town of New Concord, Ohio where I stayed in the home of a man who was proud of his family and worked hard for them. He had a large number of books and was an avid reader. In talking with him one night he informed me that that was the best town he knew of in which to bring up his children. "This is an All-American town," he said. "There are no Jews, no niggers, nor foreigners whatsoever in this town. Everybody's an American". You see, in One World that is a tragic conception and makes us realize that a great deal of building will have to take place on this new shoreline.~~

We who are young will have to land on that shore and build against heavy obstacles. We shall have to face bigotry and racial hatred and religious intolerance. We will meet with isolationism and nationalism and just plain self-centeredness. It will require much building but the challenge is imperative.

We who have a vision of One World must get into the world of business and labor, the shops and the factories, and the management office. There we must extend and expand the embrace of democracy to the underprivileged and the uneducated and the unenlightened. And everywhere we go we've got to build with the tools of Christian democracy. We've got to build our own America so that when we salute its flag and sing its hymns we can be proud of its free life for all. And whenever the voices are raised in song and ~~the flag~~ wherever the flag floats above the American throng, we want to be sure that there are not these fearful evils lurking in the shadows.

Our forefathers, heroic as they were, never lived in a day like this. They had no lofty concept of One World and One ~~World~~ Humanity. We have to go beyond them. We have to make our landing on this new shore, there to dig new foundations and lay new buildings.

Surely this begins at home. Many of you will recall the story that Sgt. Shaw told us last Sunday of his own son's experiences in Italy. His son, a Negro, never received the kindly treatment in his own America than he did in Italy. There he was privileged to attend the University of Florence and to enjoy the ~~other~~ ^{that others enjoyed} rights of ~~most people~~.

One cold, wintry night he was riding in an army truck with both white and black men. It was so cold that one of the white boys huddled close and put his arm around him and said: "Let's keep each other warm". Looking at him somewhat amazed, the Negro lad said, "Where do you come from in the U.S.?" "Mississippi", was the answer. "I am ashamed to admit it. But I am going back home when the war is over to do something about what I know is in your minds". We who would build on the shore of One Humanity must give our embrace to all friends of different colors and creeds. We are ashamed of bigotry and prejudice, but we can build something better on this new shore. It begins right where we are - at home in America.

And if we follow this shoreline in the pursuit of further adventure it draws us irresistably into the streams and tides of the entire world. We've got to go forth to life prepared to meet the opportunity as statesmen and diplomats. We've got to work for the UNO and its success. We can build by creating understanding and by sharing with other peoples around the world. Do you realize how possible that is in this world now?

And as we ~~work~~ make this venture in One World we will have the opportunity to give our embrace to fellow beings in far off places. Recently I heard Dr. Horace B. English of the psychology dept. tell of his experiences in being sent to Japan by our government to study the political reactions to defeat. One day he was interviewing

an old Japanese man who was embittered ~~because~~ toward Americans because his only son had been killed in the war. But one day, the man told Dr. English, he was in town and he saw an old woman carrying a heavy burden on her shoulders. Two American G.I.'s took her burden and carried it for her. In almost a literal translation by the translator this is what he told Dr. English of that experience: "I cannot tell you how from the very deep of my heart my opinion of the Americans changed". That's the power to build on a new shore!

But to build on that shore, we must lengthen the radius of our minds and enlarge the circumference of our hearts.

III

The last shoreline of the I would mention which beckons us toward it adventure is the rebuilding of the Church. This is, I feel, the most important, because here ~~we~~ the new demand for personal religion and the necessity of One World meet. The Church is the sacred soil in which both may grow. It is the solid rock upon which both may be built. It is the tie which binds the individual Christian with his world. And we who are Christian youth are called upon in this day to rebuild the Church and make it strong.

Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician, derived a principle of the universe which fits the church. He declared that if you contemplate lifting the world you must find a fulcrum outside of the world on which to put your lever. For 2000 years men have believed that the Christian Church was God's divine agency on earth which moves through the affairs of men. Today this world as men is striving desperately to lift ~~the~~ itself out of the morass into which it has fallen. But if we know anything about the nature of the universe we know that ~~it~~ ^{the earth} cannot be lifted by its own strength. It needs desperately to find its leverage on a fulcrum that is outside of it. The Christian Church has that fulcrum and as someone has recently said, "The Church must be the bridge over ~~which~~

the world must pass from war to peace."

Oh, I know all of the shortcomings the failures, the sluggishness, even the sins of the Church. I am ashamed of them and for them I ~~do not~~ ^{make no} apologize. I know its weaknesses, but I know, too, its strength. This morning removed as we are ^{from} the city life we are met here to consider our faith and our adventure under the leadership of the Church.

All of my life I have loved the Church. I have loved it from the first day that I sat as a child and looked up into its high dome where the light seemed to stream in as though it were from heaven. I have loved it from the first days when I heard its stately music and was inspired; from the days when I learned its hymns and songs which I sing now over and over again. I have loved it from the first day when I discerned that good people comprised its inner life and sent its radiant light around the world. I have loved the Church from the first days when I began to hear its message and understand that this was the life which is life indeed. I could love the Church even for the fact that it has brought my life to its deepest satisfactions in the Christian ministry. I love the Church because from the days of my childhood longings it has nurtured my dreams and fed ^{me with hope} ~~my longings~~. But most of all I love the Church dearly for what it may yet become - for the promise it gives to the world.

The Church is far from perfect - I know that. But I love her like a friend who has fallen, who has lost the way, who has failed. But because she is a friend, because I love her, because her friendship has meant so much through the years, my allegiance and loyalty shall remain the same. Now in the hour of her greatest hope I come to her and embrace her and give her my life in service. I come to her on my knees in the hope that new life can redeem and remake her. I shall stand by her and together we shall work and live and triumph at last.

A second century letter has been uncovered in which there is made this startling observation of the early Christians: "They hold the world together". That's our job! It's our chance to build in this world of ferment. And Christians have always worked through their Church.

The Duke of Wellington once remarked about the Battle of Waterloo that its victory had been won on the playing fields of Eton, a public school. It might just be that here on this great State University campus that the struggle for peace in the world, too, will be won. It might just be that from this very group here there will arise the youth of Christian leadership who, joining hands with other Christian leaders around the world will make a crucial difference in the salvation of the world. It might just be that out of Wesley Foundations like ours there will come the leaders of God who will go forth to the far shores of the earth to build and make secure his Kingdom in our time. You who have the talent; you who are prompted and stirred from within your souls to ~~make~~ consecrate your lives in service cannot avoid this challenge! If the Battle of Waterloo was won in the public schools of England, then it might just be that the Achievement of Peace in our time will have been won in a church group like this!

A number of years ago a hurricane destroyed a little church on the coast of England. The people found themselves unable to replace it and made provisions to worship elsewhere. One day a representative from the British admiralty came to the minister and asked him if they were going to rebuild. The minister stated their position. Then said the representative of the admiralty: "If you do not rebuild the church, we will. That spire is on all our charts and maps. It is the landmark by which the ships of the seven seas steer their courses." The Church through all of these centuries has been a beacon light to humanity, its ~~ps~~ spire pointing ever toward the God who gave it life. Its spire has pointed to God even when it has been torn by dissension and crippled by sin. Surely today on these new found shores we must rebuild it and raise it gleaming

towers higher where it shall guide all men as they walk the earth.

This week I have been thinking deeply about the Church. And one day while I was thinking ~~I came across this~~ and reading I came across this prayer:

'Revive thy church, O Lord, this day, beginning with me'.

It was a dark and fearful day when the Marines lunged from their landing craft on to the beaches of Guadalcanal, there facing into fire and death with their only equipment that of destructive engines. It was a tense and terrible day when the allies ~~whe~~ went ashore on the Normandy beaches, prepared to kill and destroy and beat their way through ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ the enemy's stronghold. Those shores lie now wrecked by havoc and drenched in blood. But let us ^{those} who are Christian youth, now awake! Let us behold that the day is at hand when we may land on new found shores - there to build and create. ^{advent.} And perhaps on a May day in 1999, we can walk along the shores we helped to build and rejoice in the beauty of the earth and peace among all men. Then, if we are thoughtful, our minds will slip ~~back~~ back quietly over the years to this time when we began our work. We began when the silent graves of comrades haunted those shores. We began in the midst of death and destruction, but we found new shores upon which to build. And shall we not be stirred again by that adventure which called us to build? To build these towers ~~with~~ which stand now gleaming in the light.