

**THIRD ANNUAL
FAMILY AND FRIENDS LETTER**

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"He left the church to serve God." These words were spoken in half-seriousness by a friend of mine to a television reporter after the filming of one of my classes in the Free University. Only a small clip of the class was shown on an evening news program, but everyone who has seen me lately was able to recognize me by my big bushy beard. We all laughed at the comment, but in a deep sense it is true. The class was **EXISTENTIAL CHRISTIANITY 2: KIERKEGAARD** one of the sections of which meets in a local coffee house (which was the reason for the television coverage; WCCO-TV was doing a series on the West Bank and that night on the coffee house where we met). It is clear to the students, especially in this course, that I am carrying on Christian work, albeit completely outside the church.

In my last letter, you were informed about my failure in the church and my understanding of that. Now after a year outside of the church I have to say that I have not been any more effective in a Christian way. But I do find myself much freer in the way I live and work. Only a handful of people have been affected by my unconventional approach, but I hope this will grow. I had no foundation from which to work when I came to Minneapolis, whereas when I was appointed to my first churches there was already the expectation of worship services, etc. So it has taken me some time to find the best way to locate people who are really interested in exploring with me the meaning of the Christian faith. But now they are beginning to bring their friends. I expect this will be one of the most important ways in which people will become aware of my activities.

Altho I am not paid (I do accept contributions from my students and most recently have established a \$10 fee for most of my courses), I have been spending most of my time this past year working for the Minnesota Free University. Because of a power-and-responsibility vacuum, within a brief time after my arrival, I found that I was carrying the main responsibility for the Free University. In the two former letters, I listed the titles of the sermons I had preached during those years, now that I am a full-time teacher, it is only appropriate that I say what courses I have been teaching:

Fall 1968

PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT
AN EXISTENTIAL INTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Winter 1969

EXPERIMENT IN LOVE (2 sections)
THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE (2 sections)

Spring 1969

EXISTENTIAL CHRISTIANITY 1: INTRODUCTION (2 sections)

LOVE

FRIDAY GROUP (continuation of one of the sections of Experiment In Love)

THE LOVING GROUP (ENCOUNTER IN LOVE)

WRITING WORKSHOP

Summer 1969

EXISTENTIAL CHRISTIANITY 2: KIERKEGAARD

EXISTENTIAL FICTION, SERIES ONE

EXISTENTIAL FICTION, SERIES TWO

WRITING WORKSHOP (same course continuing)

FRIDAY GROUP (still continuing)

If these Free University activities interest you, you can be put on the mailing list to receive the monthly issue of the Free You (of which I am editor) for \$3 per year. (Make check payable to the "Minnesota Free University".)

I continue to read and write. One major writing project saw its way thru the first draft of about 33,000 words last fall. It is a book to be called An Existential Interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans, which is now being prepared to appear in serial form in the first ten issues of The Existential Christian. The ExCh is a journal of Christianity in the tradition of Søren Kierkegaard and Rudolf Bultmann which I am preparing to publish. Besides the first installment of Romans, the first issue will contain articles explaining the nature and purpose of the magazine, a discourse "How Shall Life Be Fulfilled?", and an article on the Human Predicament as Meaninglessness. If this sounds interesting to you, you can send a dollar for a sample copy or become a charter subscriber for \$10 (for the first 10 issues). Make your check payable to "The Existential Christian Press".

For the next year I expect to continue teaching Existentialism, Existential Christianity, and human relations in the Free University and to continue my editing and writing. The kind of life I have created for myself did not exist 10 years ago, so I expect you will have some difficulty in understanding and explaining to someone else what I am doing. But it is precisely because the free universities are a new thing, something started by the youth themselves, that people have been open and receptive to what I have been trying to do. Compared to the time when I worked for the church, I now have less status but more respect. When I was a paid religious professional, people had a hard time believing that I was a real person; now they can accept me for what I am, not for what a minister is expected to be.

We live in a wonderful and chaotic time. In July man set foot on the moon for the first time. Other achievements will soon eclipse this one. The calendar in front of me lists the anniversary of the first American in space. Who remembers his name or the day? Every day I see more unconventional young people on the streets of Minneapolis. In the long run these people will carry the future even if we are stuck for two years with a former police detective for a mayor. I now find myself a part of the coming new world instead of a protector of the old, established forms. This first year of my freedom has seen the beginning of new kinds of life for me, ways of being and relating I have never known before.

Dear Uncle Wesley,

It was your idea which got me started on this. It has proved an easy way to do an otherwise difficult and sometimes painful task.

When's your next "p & p" coming out?

Yours,

James Pak