

ferent, the right to live according to our own lights is rooted too deeply in the American soil to be passively given up. The citizen has no reason to believe that public officials are exempt from human frailties. As Mr. Stans, speaking before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said last May: "We must not be charmed by the notion that government is a wiser manager of our economic fortunes than is private enterprise."

It is hard to see how political freedom can survive if economic freedom is denied. When people spend their money, they are casting ballots for what ought to be produced. They all make mistakes, as government does in its procurement, but they may be a bit more careful because, after all, the money they are spending is their own. Moreover, the mistakes of individuals are small mistakes, never the billion-dollar variety. ♦

## *The American Predicament*

PERRY E. GRESHAM

A BRONZE TABLET in Indianapolis records one of the wise and relevant remarks of a statesman and prophet: "Here February 11, 1861, Abraham Lincoln, on his way to Washington to assume the Presidency, in an address said: 'I appeal to you to constantly bear in mind that not with the politicians, not with the Presidents, not with the office seekers, but with you is the question: Shall the union and shall the liberties of this country be preserved to the latest generation?'"

Dr. Gresham is President of Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia. This article first appeared in the May 1959 issue of *The Kiwanis Magazine*.

This timely warning calls each responsible person to assess the nature of the present American predicament with an appraising eye and a clear head. Three massive facts appear. The state is already enormous and is continuing to grow. The individual is very small and growing smaller. Only a revolutionary action can recover the autonomy of the individual person and the values of private enterprise.

War multiplies the size and power of the State. National survival demands a dictatorship in a time of enemy attack or a time of international warfare. The two re-

cent world wars have given most of us experience in totalitarian citizenship. The wake of World War II has continued the apparent necessity for powerful central authority to withstand the external threat of hostile communist powers. Consequently, the American State has taken on colossal proportions. Approximately four fifths of the enormous federal tax revenue goes to pay for wars past, present, and future. The Kremlin helps to enhance the size and power of the American government.

Internal American strife has created larger and larger bureaus with more and more personnel spending more and more money. Big labor and big business require big government to serve as referee and arbitrator. Each time a labor union cries out for federal help, as in the Wagner Act, a new bureau is formed with its retinue of vested interest career people and its bureaucratic needs. Each time an industry seeks special advantage through subsidy or legislation to improve its position for survival, or additional consideration in protection or profit from the various commissions, or seeks for regulation to avoid competition, new government agencies appear. As expenses mount, an army of tax collectors must be put in the field to divert funds from private

to state use in order to meet the insatiable demands of Leviathan.

### ***The General Welfare***

The State grows because it is committed "to promote the general welfare." This concept has come to mean a Welfare State with social security for the aged, unemployment compensation for the jobless, support and services for the indigent, and health services for the many. The needs of man outrun his supply, no matter how vast the provision. Pressure for more social security, more unemployment compensation, more pensions, more health services, and more secure and easy government jobs builds up until the Leviathan grows apace, whether his strange head resembles a pachyderm or a jack-ass.

Politicians must gain office and stay in office, or they are not politicians. The most inviting and the most venerable means of getting elected is to make promises. The exclusive formula for retaining office is either to keep the promises or to make bigger promises to obscure the failure of performance with reference to those already made. Since giveaway promises appear to get quick results, they occur to parties and candidates alike. The State grows in proportion to its programs of expenditure. With the colossal greed of military de-

mands and the insatiable pressure for welfare programs, the State must arrogate to itself more and more functions, power, and proportions. Parties and persons who aspire to office out-promise each other in a race to feed the Leviathan.

Inflationary pressures encourage the growth of the State. Everybody wants inflation for himself, but not for anybody else. As pressure builds up for more and more wages, prices must go up. The same pressures build up with respect to profits. The parties pinched by inflation cry out for government help, and the sensitive politicians respond with the creation of new administrations, which involve more taxes, which require higher prices, which demand more wages; and the round repeats itself. The net result is more and more government.

### **Individualism Discouraged**

Alexis de Tocqueville, noted French political scientist of the last century, described individualism as "a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellow creatures; and to draw apart from his family and his friends, so that, after he has thus formed a circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. Individualists owe

nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands. Individualism is of democratic origin and threatens to spread in the same ratio as the quality of conditions." This creature of early American origin is little more than a museum piece. The individual features have become blurred in a collectivist world.

With "security" as a major aim for the earning motive and conformity as the principal consideration for the consuming motive, there is precious little individualism left. The virtues of Puritan America — honesty, industry, and frugality — are widely ignored as irrelevant. People who can attain security by belonging to the association, the union, or the party are not likely to knock themselves out by working and planning for it. Even wild birds prefer the feeder to the tent caterpillars in the forest. The responsibility to save for a rainy day has been turned over to Uncle Sam. "Honesty," which once included payment of debts, has been delegated to posterity. The conditions of contemporary society do not encourage individual responsibility.

Keeping up with the Joneses has

taken a new turn under the spell of mass media. It may be "keeping down with the Joneses," or "up," as the case may be, but it must be *like* the Joneses. Consequently, our coeds move their waist lines up or down, and our cars get bigger and "finnier," or small and foreign. Our homes grow more automatic and our children grow more nervous in an effort to belong to the crowd. Deferred payments enable the newlyweds to conform to the pattern of their parents. Our music tastes level out to match our preferences in architecture, drama, and literature. We have variety without great difference. We prefer the organization man to the individualist. The dissenter, or the private thinker, is an inconvenience.

The individual feels powerless against the political organization. Consequently, the voter tends to join the consumer quest for the candidate who fits the norms of sincerity and federal generosity. Only the conformist can belong to the machine, and only the machine can elect. The responsible citizen is obscured. The campaign oratory becomes perfunctory and dull, since it has little bearing on the election returns.

The private enterpriser in learning has become lost in the crowd on the campus. The Benjamin Franklin formula of a lifetime of

learning has been replaced with the "four years and a degree" formula, with as little learning as possible. Individual thought on crucial issues is hard to come by. Executives read a few cult papers and a few mystery thrillers with very little else to stir up the neurons.

Even the last citadel of man—his religion—has become socialized. Instead of a vertical answer to God, man tends to give horizontal answers to the well-dressed and highly respectable congregation that has status. Private prayer has become beautifully professionalized. The multitudes huddle together in Jerusalem without much recollection of the lonely vigil on a mountain top at midnight or the silent walk by the shores of Galilee.

As the State grows big, the individual becomes small. People huddle together to dispel their loneliness and increase their share in security and advantage. The family becomes weak as a social unit. The peer group outranks the parents in prestige for the young. The conditions that beget autonomous people have given way to conditions that encourage the mass society.

The recovery of private enterprise begins with religion. No person is an individual until he can say: "I must obey God rather than

men." This is the moral basis for all private judgment. The individual human mind which operates in culture, economy, politics, or family life can be reinforced and sustained only by a divine influence which transcends all society. This is no invitation to fanaticism or antisocial attitudes. It is rather the basis for autonomous self-realization and private enterprise in acts and letters, as well as in money management and citizenship. Robert Frost has a wise old Yankee farmer say: "I call you to a one-man revolution; the only revolution that is going to come."

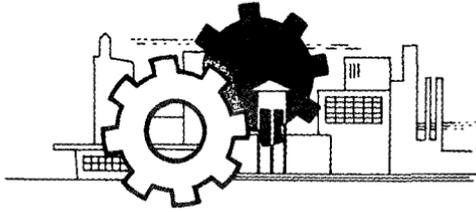
The right to be wise is posited on the assumption that a person thinks privately. Education must be restored. Invention, creative art, new developments in the social order, and new ideas are the result of individual thought rather than educational conformity. The quest for wisdom is a highly individual matter. The appetite for learning is antecedent to intellectual achievement.

### ***A One-Man Revolution***

A one-man revolution in the economy begins when a laborer stands up against his union or an industrialist stands up against his association in behalf of some worthy moral principle. The man who resourcefully develops his business without running to Uncle

Sam is a one-man revolution. The young man who earns what he can by hard work and spends what he can afford is a private individual. The young wife who buys what is practical and beautiful rather than what is popular is a true person. The executive or statesman who decides on the basis of his best insight into the will of God rather than expediency has found himself.

The problem of the ever-growing State must be met if any sphere for individual initiative is to be maintained. There are two massive social forces that resist the encroachment of government. These are resentment against high taxes and resentment against the loss of individual liberties. The man of independent mind can encourage these forces by intelligent conversation and astute action. The employer has responsibility to make employees acutely aware of the tax that is diverted from his pay check. He is responsible to dramatize the loss of liberty that comes with the overwhelming State. The intellectual, the clergyman, the worker, the homemaker, the common man in any vocation is involved in the struggle to recover the cherished concept of individual responsibility that is essential to personal fulfillment and the good society under God. ◆



# *A Time of Decision*

ROGER M. BLOUGH

MORAL PRINCIPLE is the foundation of all business credit and contract. Yes, our political freedom and our whole free enterprise system — in fact our whole Western civilization — rests upon the promises men can trust, upon the confidence that men have in each other because they live by, or at least try to live by, moral principles.

But our security as a nation and our freedom as individuals depends upon more than moral principle. It also depends upon our material strength.

The two are interdependent. Naturally, the moral strength comes first. All the material wealth in the world will not save a nation whose moral foundations rot away.

On the other hand, morality alone will not save a nation whose

material strength has been permitted to dwindle far below the strength of a powerful and pagan enemy determined to destroy it. I would like to discuss some aspects of that material strength which we, as a nation, must have if we wish to earn the good life for our families and to defend ourselves against possible aggressors.

I recently returned from a journey to far away places and I have had an excellent chance to compare the progress in many other lands with the progress in our own.

What a transformation is going on around the world! Ore boats and blast furnaces in the land of the sacred cow! Steel plants rising in the land of the fig tree and the camel. Strip mills humming on shores once filled with sampans. Strip mills, incidentally, that can compete with the best we have in Pittsburgh or Chicago. The changes taking place around the

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Mr. Blough is Chairman of the Board of Directors, United States Steel Corporation. This is a condensation of his remarks before the Greater Philadelphia Council of Churches, May 16, 1960.