"ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

INTRODUCTION It was back in early October when the Pope was visiting our city that a friend passed this clipping on to me. The title read "Rise in Moral Standard Cited in Delaying Trial". It went on to say:

"DES MOINES, Iowa, Sept. 29th - A criminal trial scheduled for next week has been delayed because of the higher standard of morality that might exist in Des Moines as a result of the Pope's four-hour visit Thursday.

Ronald Arthur Massey of Des Moines had been scheduled to go on trial next week on a charge of keeping a house of prostitution. But his lawyer, Alfredo Parrish, went to court seeking a delay. Mr. Parrish argued that the papal visit "creates the immense possibility that the standard of morality may be magnified 50-fold, causing an adverse effect on the defendant."

It reminds us of the power of personal influence and that one person can make a difference. To come directly to the point of today's sermon - it is my belief that in recent years we have been too quick to dismiss the importance of the individual. The sixties and the seventies have been decades that have called for massive responses to massive social, economic and political problems. We've almost worn out the alphabet naming action-minded organizations that have sprung up to battle all of our problems.

At the same time, by virtue of our great concentration on large scale movements, we have all but lost one of the Bible's most helpful and oft-repeated lessons: namely, that one man of faith - in any situation, in any place, at any time - can make a tremendous difference! The power of personal influence.

Look where you will in the Bible: Abraham in Canaan, Joseph in prison, Moses in Pharaoh's court, Samson in Gaza, Elijah on Mount Carmel, Ruth in Moab, Paul and Silas in a Philippian jail, Dorcas in Joppa, Titus on Crete, John on Patmos. History can act on faith alright, but faith - mind you - can also act on history. This is the brunt of what I wish to drive home today. But - if the person of faith is to make this difference then there are some things he must keep in mind.

NUMBERS ARE NOT DECISIVE First, he must remember that numbers are not decisive.

True faith - real faith - in God is apt to be something of a minority experience. For those of us in this city, it certainly seems to be true. Granted, there's more to faith than going to Church on a Sunday morning. But how long has it been since you've seen someone else coming out of your building on Sunday morning and going to Church. I seldom see anyone, but I head out earlier than you do. A number of years ago a performer received a Tony Award for playing the role of a minister in a Broadway play. His response at the microphone upon receiving the award was "I thank the Lord I still believe in Him, after four years in New York City".

Some of us fight hard for what faith we have. It doesn't come easily. Whether we live in so-called Christendom, or in the midst of a hostile culture, true faith in the "living God" is always a minority experience.
The Hebrews in the Psalm read earlier in the service were raising the same question, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" But a "strange" land is the only kind of land that faith has ever had in which to sing.

However, remember this that the mathematics of the Kingdom are different from the mathematics of the world. "One plus God makes a majority" is the way that we shall put it on the bulletin board outside the Church this coming week. Remember that. In the arithemetic of faith, one can chase a thousand, and two can put ten-thousand to flight. We may have forgotten this, or tend to overlook it, and when we have, then let us learn it again as Elijah's servant learned it from his master.

"Fear not" said Elijah, "for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

**IMPACT** Remember that individuals countering or discountering numbers have made stunning changes in the history of the world. They have radically altered many an environment. One nurse on a hospital floor. One tenant in a building. One player on a team. One stewardess on a delayed flight. One typist in an office. One clerk in a store. One teacher in a school. Each can lift the level of life for countless souls around them.

Individuals who have not forgotten that they matter have frequently altered the course of human events. It was one vote that elected Thomas Jefferson president. It was one vote that authorized the Erie Canal. It was one vote that admitted Texas, California, Washington and Oregon to statehood. It was one vote that beheaded Charles I of England. One vote made France a republic in 1875 and ended it in 1940. One vote saved the Selective Service Act in 1941.

What was it that Robert Kennedy said back in 1964 when he was being interviewed on TV by Gabe Pressman? He was running for the Senate. Asked by Gabe Pressman, "have your experiences in recent years in Washington taught you any one thing?" Smiling, with that wistful look on his face, he quietly replied, "Yes, I've learned the difference that one life can make."

"Some men see things as they are, and say 'Why'. I dream things that never were, and say 'Why not!'"

**SYSTEMS ARE NOT THE ONLY FOCUS** Moving on, the man of faith must also keep in mind that systems are not his only focus. Over concentration on changing the system can turn the theater of our daily life into a wasteland. This is so because in reformist periods of history, men tend to be brutal and mean and uncaring toward one another. Let us hold to the vision of a better world, for without vision the people perish. But in the meantime, let us not fail to raise life where we are through personal initiative, personal sacrifice and person-to-person ministries.

Sometime ago I cut out of the papers a short letter that was written by a rural mail carrier in Maine upon his retirement. That he had the presence of mind to write at all says something about him, and what he wrote says even more. To each family on his route, he sent this message:

"Dear Patron,

It has been a wonderful experience to serve such a fine and loyal group of people."
I have rejoiced with many of you when you received letters from loved ones away from home. I have sorrowed when some received letters of bad news. I have anticipated with you that long awaited letter that never came.

When I made mistakes your understanding carried me on. Now may the years ahead bring you and your families much joy and peace.

Sincerely,
Bill Frizzle

The point is that if we make the system our only focus we are quite likely to depend exclusively on the system to alter life and perhaps fail to make our own personal contribution. For instance, when we see litter on the streets the first impulse for most of us to ask is "Who do we call?" Why don't we pause and pick it up. Who don't we stop assuming that help must always come down from some official office or Bureau. What about our own contribution? It can make a difference.

GOD IS AT WORK AMONG US

Second, systems ought not to be our only focus. And the third thought: it's the spiritual truth that God is at work among us, in all of this. Our influence and our action in this world may seem about as significant at times as a whiff of perfume in a gale. But, what if God is working with us, among us, and through us - then it takes on a different feeling.

One does not lead in worship in this church easily. There's always a feeling of some tension on a Sunday morning in terms of this responsibility. I remember one Sunday morning, several years ago, standing in the narthex before the processional hymn, that one of the ushers came up to me, put his hand on my arm, leaned over and said, "Let it happen, preacher". It came to me a few minutes later after we were up here in the chancel what a marvellous insight that was - not only for that Sunday service, but for all of life. My friend was suggesting that the initiative for getting a service off and moving does not just lie with us. He was, in so many words, saying that God's energizing presence is already here - at work. And what we have to do is stand back and "let it happen".

There's a prior power already at work, our own efforts are only a small part of the story.

I heard a story recently of a man whose wife had had a cat that he could not stand. It use to bother him that when he came home hungry and tired out at the end of the day that his wife would use the can opener to open food for the cat before she used it to open something for him. She apparently was more attentive to the needs of the cat at meal time than she was to his needs. And, moreover, each time he wore his blue suit and sat down on the sofa, he would pick up cat hairs.

To put an end to his problem, he took the cat one night while his wife was out, put the cat in a bag, and went over to the East River and dropped the cat in the water. A bad way to solve the problem. His wife was inconsolable; she cried so - all through the night and the next day. He hadn't told her what he had done, just that the cat had run away. Finally, out of desperation and realizing he had to do something for his wife, he said:
"Darling, I'm going to post a $500 reward for our cat. It's the least I can do".

He told one of his friends at work about the $500 reward and the friend replied,

"Isn't that a lot of money for a cat?" The man replied, "When you know what you know, you can afford to take risks".

"When you know what you know, you can afford to take risks". Think about it. As Christians, we know that there's meaning to life after all, that God is at work in the world. By faith, we know this. We know that God is working His purposes out and that His purposes will prevail. We know we are "co-workers" with Him. We know that God's nature is love. We know that faith can cast on history. Knowing all of this, we ought then to be willing to take greater risks in the expenditure of ourselves!

If God has made a difference in you, you can make a difference in the world.

CLOSING Some years ago I enjoyed reading the novel Stoaway. Toward the end of the story which unfolds on the high seas on a ship called the Liberty Belle, a man by the name of O'Hara, the first mate, determines to make something of his remaining years.

He shares his resolve with a fellow seaman who puts him down with a cynical "What's the use attitude". "No man's life counts for much!" At this point, O'Hara's face flushed, a blood vessel in his temple throbbed. "You're wrong, mister" He said, "The whole world may not be mine. But the space of it I'm in - my part of it - is! It may not be for sure, or for much, or for long. But while I'm in it - it'll know me!"

That's what we mean. And so may it be with all of us, as we go now from this place of worship, back into the world, remembering that one person of faith can make a difference. That faith can have an impact on history! "When you know what you know, you can afford to take risks!"

PRAYER O God, we aren't much, but we're all we have. Take us with our assorted weaknesses, limitations and few talents and by the power at work within us, make us channels of Your grace, agents of reconciliation and bearers of life and love, hope and health - wherever we may be, in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.
.....cherished members and friends of our parish.

Comfort the bereaved and the broken-hearted among us. Abide among us as a healing benediction.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I share with you the Good News:

We are forgiven!

Will you all pray with me for:

Grant them courage and hope.
Make them receptive to the
touch of the Holy Spirit.

Answer the unspoken prayers offered to thee on the altars of our hearts, spoken in the name and spirit of Jesus who taught us to say when we pray:

"Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy
name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive
us our trespasses, as we forgive those who
trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and
the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

Will you pray with me for the two and a half million people of Cambodia who are living on the edge of starvation. Make sensitive
our hearts, 0 God, to this tragedy of our time.

Let us pray for the safety of those held hostage in Iran. Let us seek God's guidance in our search for peace and human brotherhood, and pray for the safe return for those whose lives are threatened.
INTRODUCTION  The week of toil has ended. The day of rest is at hand. May the rest and the quiet of this hour of worship refresh our inner life. May it renew in all of us a sense of God's holy and abiding Presence.

In silence, let each now pray as the heart may prompt.

MEDITATION  We rest our hearts in the Promise of Jesus who said:

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light!"

"Bless the Lord, 0 my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

"Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart."

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary. And they shall walk and not faint."

"For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. As you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it unto me."

"Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you."

"And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing...you shall receive. And as many as touched Him were made whole."

PRAYERS  LORD'S PRAYER  O Thou, who hearest prayer, hear our prayers for others, as well as for ourselves.

Touch with healing, O God, those whom we mention in our prayers this hour:

Phyllis Westermann. Ruth Frame.
ANNOUNCEMENTS: November 25, 1979

GREETING TO THE VISITORS We greet the visitors in the congregation this morning. We're pleased to have you with us, and we hope that the opportunity will be ours to greet you personally before you depart - either at the door or downstairs in the Russell Room where tea and coffee will be available.

Please, be free in the sharing of your name with us. Take a moment to sign one of the Guest Books. Join us on other Sundays in worship. You worship in a Church that has been ministering in the name of Jesus Christ to the needs of people in this city since 1837. It is in His name that we bid you welcome this morning.

NEXT SUNDAY Something very special is "in the works" for next Sunday evening. Called "US - Japan Night", sponsored by our Committee on Ecumenical Affairs and Social Concerns, it is open to all. 6 to 9.

Shiro Oda, our dear friend and Chairperson of the Ecumenical Affairs Committee, is going to take a few moments to tell you more about it. Shiro Oda.

CONCERNS It has been brought to my attention that Lenox Hill Hospital, 77th Street and Park Avenue, is in need of more volunteers to serve as help take patients to the Sunday morning chapel service. We need ESCORTS persons who could share an hour from 9:15 to 10:15 on a Sunday morning with the Hospital. It involves pushing wheel chairs of the patients on to the elevator and taking the patients to the chapel for a brief religious service. Speak to me if you're available, to share in this escort ministry one Sunday of month.

A word regarding the Financial canvass. We have not yet reached our goal of $65,000 and 200 pledges. Several more thousand dollars are needed and 55 more pledges ..... if you have not yet responded, may we encourage you to do so today. Pledge cards are available in the narthex. Ask an usher for one.

Next Sunday will be your last opportunity to purchase Christmas cards through the UMW. Look over the selection. Carol Lyons reminds us that delivery of the cards takes about two weeks.

Again, a word of deep gratitude to Lynn Bruhn and to all who worked with her to make this year's Christmas Fair such a great success. Many good things will be happening around the church and community because of the hard, enthusiastic work of recent weeks which culminated in the Fair of Saturday, a week ago.

Thanksgiving gifts are still being received. The envelope in the pew is there for this special appeal.

ADVENT BEGINS Advent begins next Sunday. I got it right this year. Last year I had Advent here one week too soon. I hope we shall have a big congregation to usher in the Advent Season and prepare for Christmas. The Christmas flower and decoration envelope will be in the pews starting next Sunday and will be there for three Sundays.

JESUS SAID: "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Phyllis Westerman, who has been a patient in Col. Presy. for a week returns home today.
ETERNAL GOD, OUR FATHER, here in worship we again would reflect on our condition.

We confess to You our failure to be a power that unites, a people that cares.

WE GATHER here as individuals, each a separate life, hearts beating and blood flowing through us in the miracle of life. We are made grateful when we just think of the individual body, each one with separate thoughts, each with an individual history, each with a name, each with personal feelings, each with fears and problems.

BUT YOU HAVE CALLED US to become a part of a new Body. We are to be more than a part of a body of worshippers, but to express how we are one body in You.

Make us aware now of those sitting near us this hour. We do not know the thoughts, the disappointments, the fears, the feelings of those seated around us. And yet, we are called by You to be one body.

We are separate and yet we are joined in prayer. Later we shall join in singing a hymn. May these acts help us to understand how we are called to be ONE in the SPIRIT.

Enable us to see ourselves more than a gathering of individuals, a collection of people. Give us a vision of our being the Church of Jesus Christ, joined into one Body, for one mission in the world.

WE PRAY NOT ALONE for being Your Body here in worship, but for the larger community of Faith. The walls of denomination so often divide us. But Your love unites. Help us to be instruments of Your love, bringing together the people of God.

THEN MAYBE, LORD GOD, we can become a means of reconciliation in our community and in our world.

We cannot separate ourselves from the problems in our community, in our city, in our state, in our nation, in the world.

Make us people who deeply care and are committed to work for healing and uniting the fractured fellowship of our society.

Your Son, Jesus, was always alive to those who were around Him. That is why we pray this hour, that by Your Holy Spirit, we, too, can become alive to the needs of those around us.

In His name and in His spirit, we pray our prayers.
U.S.-JAPAN NIGHT
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1979 • 6:00-9:00 P.M.
THE PARK AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
106 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. • Tel: 289-6997

Under the direction of Ecumenical* Affairs and Social Concerns of the Church, featuring Art Exhibition, Karate Demonstrations, Music and Dance Performances.

PROGRAMS

- Art Exhibitions—Miwako K. Suga and George W. Sanders, Jr.
- Dinner—Japanese Buffet Style
- The Academy of Greek Theatre and Dance—Adonis and Akrivi (Michiko) Gargassoulas
- Shorin Ryu Karate Demonstration (Okinawa style), Ansei Ueshiro—Grand Master
- Jiro Yamaguchi—Cellist

Admission: $6.00 (includes dinner)
Payable to Park Avenue United Methodist Church
(tax deductable)

*"Ecumenism" is a term of recent origin denoting in an admittedly vague manner the awakened conscience of the Christian Church towards its universal aspects and its renewed sense of mission and service.
ANTHEM: "As He Spake"

"As He spake to our Father, to Abraham and His seed forever."

ANTHEM: "O Be Joyful"

"O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His presence with a song. Be ye sure that the Lord, He is God; it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

O go your way into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and speak good of His name. For the Lord is gracious, His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth from generation to generation.

Glory be to Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

ORGAN POSTLUDE

The organ postlude - a final offering of our praise to God - is played after the Benediction. Time permitting, we invite you to remain to share in the beauty of it.

PECANS

The pecans have not yet arrived, but should be here and available for distribution next Sunday, December 2nd.

THE ADULT CLASS

A class for adults meets on Sunday mornings from nine-thirty to ten-forty in Fellowship Hall. The Gospel of John is being studied. William Proctor serves as leader. Coffee is available and new members are always most welcome.

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

The response last Sunday to the Thanksgiving offering was most gratifying with over five hundred dollars received for the Cambodian Emergency Appeal and over four hundred dollars received for the needs of the Church here at home.

Thanksgiving gifts are still being received. Your gift (in the event you missed last Sunday) may be placed in the envelope in the pew and put in the offering plate. We are most grateful for the generous response.

THE FINANCIAL CANVASS

November is the month of our 1980 Financial Canvass. Our goal for the coming year is $65,000 and 200 pledges. To date, 145 pledges have been gratefully received! Pledge cards are still being received in the Church office. Chances are you have sent in your pledge card - but, just in case you haven't, may we encourage you to do so today. Pledge cards are available in the narthex. Ask an usher for one.
AF Progressive Dinner
Dec. 8, reservations
due by 12/4.
See Doreen Surber for more details.
Rise in Moral Standard Cited in Delaying Trial

Special to The New York Times

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Ronald Arthur Massey of Des Moines had been scheduled to go on trial next week on a charge of keeping a house of prostitution. But his lawyer, Alfredo Parrish, went to court seeking a delay. Mr. Parrish argued that the papal visit "creates the immense possibility that the standard of morality may be magnified 50-fold, causing an adverse effect on the defendant."
PARK AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
106 East 86th Street
New York, N. Y. 10028
AT 9-6997

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SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT
November 25, 1979

ORDER OF WORSHIP
11 A.M.

ORGAN
"Psalm Prelude"

CALL TO WORSHIP
Huston

HYMN NO. 38 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (seated)

Most merciful Father, we have done little to
forward Thy kingdom in this world, to foster the
brotherhood of man, and to establish love as the
law of life. We have allowed self to blind us,
pains to embitter us. Pardon our shortcomings;
forgive our neglect; give us a pure heart intent
on pleasing Thee. Help us in all our seeking to
seek first Thy kingdom and Thy righteousness.
And make us to come, as came Thy Son, not to be
ministered unto, but to minister. We ask this
in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen

SILENT MEDITATION - WORDS OF ASSURANCE - LORD'S PRAYER

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PSALTER
"Bless the Lord" No. 587

GLORIA PATRI No. 792

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH No. 740

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ANTHEM
"As He Spake" Bach

SCRIPTURE Ephesians 6: 10 - 20 Page 1020

PASTORAL PRAYER

PARISH CONCERNS

ANTHEM
"O Be Joyful" Huston

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING WITH THE DOXOLOGY No. 809

HYMN NO. 217 "He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought"
SERMON "The Difference One Person Makes" Mr. Clarke
HYMN NO. 548 "Not Alone for Mighty Empire"
BENEDICTION

ORGAN
"All Depends On God's Blessing" Karg-Elert

*** Interval for Ushering

LAY READER

We welcome Mrs. Dorcas Demasio as our Lay Reader today. A native of Ghana, West Africa, a graduate of NYU as well as Columbia University (Master's Degree), Dorcas is Chief Dietician for Blanchard Management Corporation. Mother of five children, she is an active member of the Church choir.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers on the altar are given in honor and in
loving memory of Manuel Garcia Perez and Margarita
Flores de Garcia by Josefina Garcia.

AN INVITATION

Coffee and tea will be served in the Russell Room
following the service. Members and friends are invited
to share in these moments of fellowship made possible
for us today by Miss Frisbee, Miss Ahmad, Mrs. Avgerinos,
Mrs. Balk, Mrs. Bruhn and Miss Langley.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Sessions of Church School for children are offered
every Sunday morning from eleven to twelve on the third
and fourth floors as well as in the downstairs Russell Room. Nursery care for infants and toddlers is available on the fourth floor.

PICK UP YOUR COPY

Be sure to pick up your copy of the November issue
of "A Word In Edgeways". Copies of our parish newssheet are available in the narthex.

Articles, notices and items of interest for the
December issue should be in the Church office by noon on Tuesday in order to make next week's issue.