

Christians 7 Lions 3

Over the break I read a book by Jerry Kramer, called *Instant Replay*. Kramer was an offensive guard with the Green Bay Packers (that's a pro football team in the U.S. for those of you who don't know) for several years, and this book is the diary of his 1967 season.

You may be wondering why I'm wasting my time reading, of all things, a sport book; and why I'm wasting your time telling you about it. Well, I've got this problem: I'm incurably addicted to reading. I read anything, absolutely anything except *National Lampoon* and Harlequin romances. Other than that—the backs of antiseptic bottles, science fiction, *Poundmaker*, you name it, I'll read it.

What all this is leading up to is just a simple statement that you can get a pretty broad world view by reading a lot of seemingly unrelated things.

It's so easy to create your own little vacuum and stay there. Just read one type of literature. Listen to one type of music. Make sure that all your friends have the same outlook on life that you do. Eventually you get the notion that everyone thinks the same way you do. Or should.

When you do discover people who have a philosophy different from yours, you are resentful. After all, you know from personal experience that your philosophy works. It becomes your mission in life to convert others to your way of thinking. And if you meet someone who won't come over, well, write him off as an idiot. Screw him.

Sounds a bit dramatic? You think I've gone off my nut? Take another look around you. Take a look at you, for that matter. Look at how you love arguing people around to your way of thinking. Look at how you tend to avoid or put down those whose lifestyles are in opposition to yours.

Taken out of the realm of the individual, this idea that there is one correct life style, one correct philosophy for all of earth's billions, is what starts wars, what keeps wars going—and I mean both political and religious wars. Because we can't tolerate a way of thinking that differs from our own. Oh, it's truly pathetic how insecure we are, both as individuals and nations.

Now let's bring it back down to the level of individuals. I found something in *Instant Replay* (thought I'd forgot that, didn't you?) that was well high beautiful.

To quote Kramer, "... (This is what I feel about our team. We're all different. We all have our own interests, our own preferences, and yet we all go down the same road hand in hand. Maybe, ultimately, we're not really friends, but what I mean is that no individual on this club will go directly against another individual's feelings, no matter what his own opinion is. No one ever gets into an absolutely contrary position. At the worst, if someone disagrees with someone else, he'll just say, 'Well, whatever you say...'

"...There's no friction, no division into cliques...everyone respects everyone else's feelings...I guess it all comes down to consideration, or maybe it's what Coach Lombardi last year called love..."

Have you noticed that? How very little honest-to-goodness love, and yes, respect there is these days for other people's ideas?

* * *



Now I'm going to ask you a real stinker of a question, and I'm going to ask you to think about your answer before reading mine: Exactly what is love? Another question: How do you get it?

Okay, probably every person who has ever lived has asked that first one; maybe half of them have tried to answer it.

Personally, I think it's love when you put the welfare and happiness of others on a par with your own welfare and happiness.

And how do you get it? I've read every one of the articles in this issue, and I thought, well, this is great—a lot of people say that love is the answer. But something bothered me about the "love replays" from the Christians so I read those articles again. And then I saw it—everyone of them said that to achieve love, you have to turn your life over to God (or Jesus).

This is not a reply to those articles—I've talked to many Christians and attended many different churches and it seems to be a basic tenet of nondenominational Christianity that to accept Christ, you turn the running of your life over to him. Personally, I just can't buy that. I'm not saying they're wrong, since they've demonstrated that they're very right—for you.

But that sort of system, while it doesn't exactly reek of predestination, smacks strongly of lack of free will, and I'm a firm believer in free will.

So consider this article as being for the Lions in the crowd, or at least for those of us who consider ourselves, well, say—"borderline" Christians by their standards.

There is one church which I attended for a while that teaches a philosophy of pre-ordination. That means according to your psychological make-up, you're likely to react in a certain way, likely to do certain things in this life, but the choice is still up to you—sounds a lot like astrology readings.

This church also teaches that come Judgement Day, you'll get your own choice of where you'll go. Basically, they teach that there are four places that you can choose to go; Hell, and three separate levels of Heaven, the highest being in the presence of God, the lowest, being much like earth life as we know it except without all the horrors. The idea behind leaving the choice up to you is that if you really belong in the lowest level of heaven and you get greedy and say that you want to live eternally in the presence of God—you're going to be eternally unhappy, living in your own private hell, because you're not with your own kind.

I suppose, theoretically, if you choose the wrong level, you can still learn to adapt. The things I like about this idea is that the individual pays his own debts.

And that, in my opinion, is the solution to all the world's problems: Ultimate Personal Responsibility.

When we are willing to accept the blame for what is wrong, and to accept the credit for what is right, with the world, then we will have begun to grow up.

It's so easy to say, "It's God's will..." or, yeh, "The Devil made me do it..." or "damned government..." That's the reaction of a five-year-old, though, who hasn't yet learned to own up to his own misdeeds: "Billy did it!" or "Jane started it!" And if that same five-year-old receives praise for a good deed, he shuffles his feet and mumbles, "Aw, Joey did most of it."

How many times have you seen someone fall on an icy sidewalk and just walked on by thinking to yourself, "He's all right—someone else will take care of him."

You say pollution has got to stop, but how many of you still use those green plastic garbage bags or styrofoam cups or coloured bathroom tissue, or leave your lights on all night?

How many of you say, it's the government's fault—let them take care of it? And who elects that government? And if the government doesn't do what we want, who has the power to get rid of it?

When we as individuals are willing to stick our necks out, then we'll have a right to find fault.

The first step towards saving the world is that we're going to have to accept responsibility for our own actions and thoughts. Then we're going to have to be willing to accept responsibility for the actions of others. Then we'll begin to learn what love is all about. When we learn self-love and self-respect then we'll be able to love and respect others.

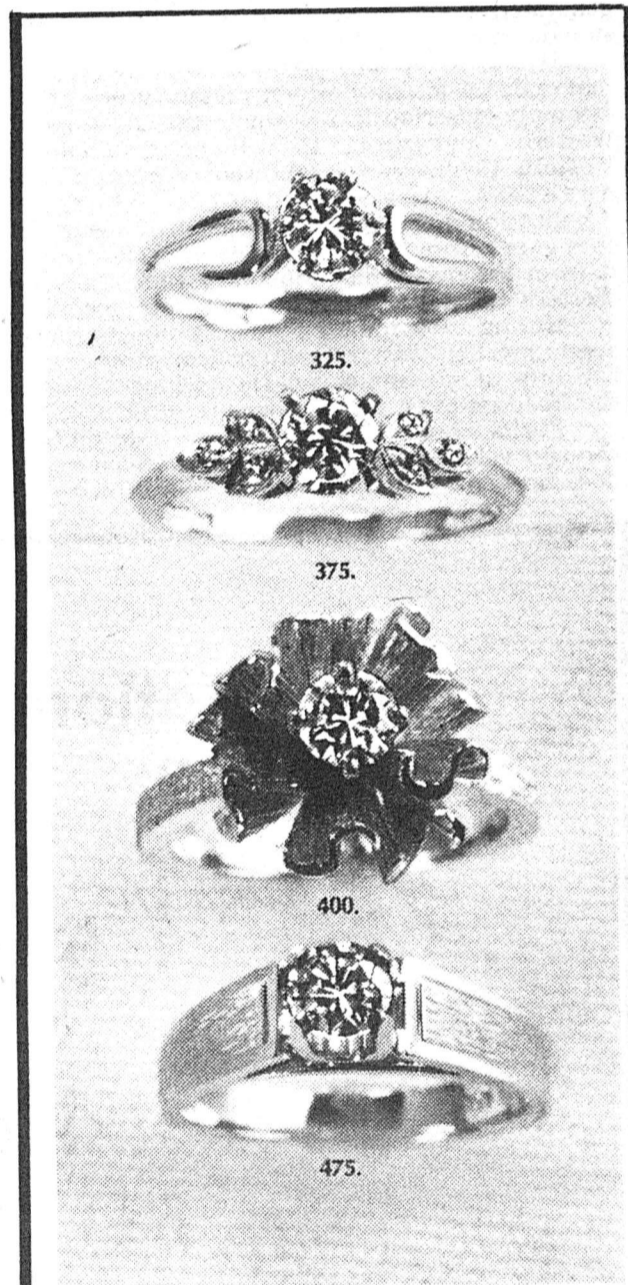
Taken to its furthest limits, what I'm proposing probably means a sort of world anarchy. But with the kind of world I'm proposing, we won't need government because we'll be completely civilized, maybe for the first time in the history of man.

Allyn Cadogan

Imagination.

I see faces in the clouds above
And in the fallen snow
In the rain upon my window pane
But none of them I know
I see faces in the bathroom tiles
And even on the floor
And although I see so many
I've seen none of them before
That girl upon the window drapes
Who always watches me
The soldier in the carpet's weave
His smiling face I see
The stern faced patriarch looks out
From the wires of my phone
Within the flickering log-fire flames
A child's face has shone
In the snow upon the mountains
And the waters rushing down
I see faces in the meadow
When the trees are all in bloom
Faces, faces, faces,
Everywhere I go
They keep me silent company
And I'm never quite alone.

D.H. Strathern.



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