Poll finds narrowing gap between church, state

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most Americans now believe churches should speak out on political and social issues, according to a study that finds religion playing a growing role in U.S. politics.

As the line between church and state blurs, white evangelical Protestants — now representing a quarter of all registered voters have become especially politicized, to Democrats' detriment.

"The conservatism of white evangelical Protestants is clearly the most powerful religious force in politics today," the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press says in a report released Tuesday. Six in seven voting age Americans are Christian and regardless of denomination, the more religious they are, the more conservative they are, the study finds. That's especially true for whites.

That conservatism goes beyond abortion, homosexuality and other moral questions to such issues as international security, the environment and gun control, the center reported in a study based on a national poll — May 31-June 9 — and analysis of previous surveys in 1994-95.

Overall, 54 percent in the new poll said churches should "express their views on day-to-day social and political questions" and 43 percent preferred that churches "keep out of political matters."

In 1965, the balance tipped the other way when the Gallup Poll posed the same question: 53 percent said churches and politics don't mix, 40 percent believed churches should express social and political views.

The polls found conflicting evidence over just how much politicking from the pulpit is acceptable.

Asked if "it is ever right for clergymen to discuss political candidates or issues from the pulpit," 66 percent said no, compared with 68 percent in 1965; 29 percent now say yes, up from 22 percent; and those who didn't know or refused to answer fell to 5 percent from 10 percent in 1965.

Among people who say they attend religious services at least once or twice a month, one in five said the clergy at their place of worship speaks out on candidates and elections, and 78 percent of those said that's a good thing.

Sixty percent said the clergy speaks out on abortion, 56 percent on prayer in schools and 36 percent on laws regarding homosexuals.

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[See Hsbandry for what may be an updaate of this]

Separating Church and State

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function."

F. Scott Fitzgerald

This United States has been operating under two opposed ideas since we adopted the Constitution. Keeping church and state apart is difficult but we decide, in every generation, that a nation so founded should long endure. The most convincing argument is a good look at strife between zealots around the world.

Just now there is enough tension between church and state, even in America, that a caption in the <u>New York Times</u> reads: "Scientists Deplore Flight From Reason."¹ The concerned scientists, doctors, philosophers, and educators gathered at the New York Academy of Sciences "to counterattack against faith healing, astrology, religious fundamentalism and paranormal charlatanism. But beyond these threats to rational behavior, participants at the meeting aimed their barbs at 'post-modernist' critics of science who contend that truth in science depends on one's point of view, not on any absolute content."

[cite Thoreau and Leopold as two who separated Church & state. Leave out modern writers.]

[Church & State]

.... the relationship to the world that modern

science fostered and shaped appears to have exhausted its potential.... We may know immeasurably more about the universe than our ancestors did, yet it increasingly seems they knew something more essential about it than we do, something that escapes us.

Vaclav Havel []

People will have beliefs. I believe that we need both spirit-world and real world. But if we are to hang on to fragments of nature, as opposed to the Nature that is a point of view, we must understand that the two are distinct.

Church	State
myth	science
traditional ethic	land ethic
individual animal	population of wildlife
belief	observation
Nature	nature
Balance of Nature	stewardship
what ought to be	what works
meat from God	crop

Whether these decisions correspond to right and left hemispheres of the brain, I don't know, but we humans are in some way equipped for two very different kinds of thinking. The constitution shows the way -- and so does the duck in my south 40.

For economic purposes, a wild mallard is as clearly a crop as the grain on which it fattens. Without this farm on which to breed and feed, there would be, say, a hundred fewer ducks to fly

south next winter. And without thousands of other such wetlands in the northern states and Canada, whole species of ducks would be in danger. If they are doing reasonably well today, it is because there have been major public and private investments in wetlands and nesting areas.

For spiritual purposes, on the other hand, the mallard I eat is "meat from God" -- a quotation from Aldo Leopold.² A hunter who does not feel what Leopold felt ought to consider taking up golf.

Good scientists are all good at observation, by definition, and some come to nature because they like being there. Read Aldo Leopold first -- a romantic before he was a scientist. [Epigraph]

And spend a lot of time with Henry Thoreau, who lived intensely in the worlds of both church and state.

[At least the following \P should stay in Hsbandry with other Abbey stuff]

[Edward Abbey does not seem capable of facing realities and measuring consequences -- matters of state -- but he is wonderful on sensations and emotions. His is a vein as old as Aesop. Is it not good to interest readers in Nature -- any Nature they are willing to see? Even if she is distant from the real thing?]

Any old Nature seemed good to me when I was growing up, and I had the good fortune to be exposed to both kinds. We lived in town and bought our food, but Uncle Bob carried a romantic musk of the swamps. A cycle of nature-fakery³ early in the century had made an impression on my father, who sat me on his knee to read William Long's fables of gentle little creatures in the woods. Sunday dinner, on the other hand, involved a real cockerel. We

did not kill him as a European cook might have done it, slitting his throat in the kitchen and saving his blood, but we did chop his head off, pluck him, and draw him. A child involved in that process knows where dinner comes from.

Nature-fakery is more dangerous today because, with more and more people pressing on land that is less and less wild, it is possible for a post-modernist public to imagine any Nature it wishes. There is no Uncle Bob, for most children today, no chicken flopping headless. There is a Disney-deer who talks and has little friends from other ethnic communities.

I suspect that the market has become a natural force stronger than the rest of nature. Want Utopia? You can visit a theme park with happy endings. Want virtual reality? We've got the technology. Want to see a bear? Stop at the Park's entrance and catch Yellowstone, the movie.

For now, then, church and state are at odds. In the pews are sensitive, largely urban, life-affirming persons, and how could they not extend their values to all of Nature? In barns and fields, meanwhile, death-accepting stewards of nature wonder what's coming next. Do not dismiss these as mere political differences. They are tectonic plates drifting apart, creating another of the chasms that divide America.

(1) Language in this paragraph is drawn from a report by Malcolm Browne in the <u>New York Times</u> of June 6, 1995, on a conference of scientists launching a "crusade against quackery."

(2) A Sand County Almanac. p.viii.

(3) See Lutts, Ralph H. <u>The Nature Fakers.</u> Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum, 1990. This work is deeply researched, balanced, and easy to read.

What's in a Word?

Power and others noted that Montana's economic future depends upon its comparatively unspoiled landscape, citing "recreational opportunities, wildlife, water quality, scenic beauty, and intact ecosystems." But Power admitted that hard-core environmentalists compain also about people moving in and tourists passing through. "If you make a list of things the environmental community is against, then all you have left is a fantasy world of people engaged in home-based arts and crafts," he said.¹

Mas?

Environmentalism is a seven-syllable word meaning, roughly, love of nature.

dividing people.

Even here

Anna walked to her truck in her billowing choir-gown last night, picked up a sheet of music she'd forgotten, and walked back to church. A male teenager followed, taunting, showing off for his girlfriend: "Christian, huh!"

We were less surprised when nasty words were painted on a synagogue in Billings -- Montana's largest town. Still, it takes a determined person to be anti-Semitic, in this state. You might have to drive a couple of hundred miles to find someone you can discriminate against.

(1) Thomas M. Power is Chairman of the Economics Department of the University of Montana.

on Latin American corn varieties, one of a handful of researchers who understood the value of the missing samples. He was stunned by what he discovered. "It turned out that one day, in cleaning up Fort Collins, somebody found these samples and didn't know what to do with them," Goodman said later. The seeds were stored in small, old packages, and clearly were not part of the regular collection.

The laboratory wrote to CIMMYT to inquire about the samples. CIM-MYT officials apparently were confused about which samples the

that some of the seeds be returned. The rest of the samples, which the CIMMYT officials believed they held in duplicate, were simply thrown away.

That was a mistake. "CIMMYT did not have what they said they had, and no one did any cross-checking," says Goodman. "A lot of the stuff that was thrown out was lost." According to Goodman, no one at Fort Collins made any effort to contact him or any other researchers with special knowledge of Latin American corn. "If I'd known it was laboratory was referring to. They asked happening, I could have stopped it,"

Our Founding Farmers

IN THE EARLY DAYS of the republic, when farming was the predominant occupation, some of the nation's most famous farmers took a great interest in seed collecting. These farmers understood America's need for new agricultural crops.

One early seed collector was Benjamin Franklin. While serving his country in the diplomatic corps, he spent much of his time encouraging the introduction of new plants to the New World. His diplomatic sojourns abroad always doubled as seed-collecting trips.

Franklin made one of his most important discoveries while serving in England as the agent for the colony of Pennsylvania. There he came across some interesting beans that were known as Chinese caravances. The beans, which could be made into a kind of cheese, fascinated him. He sent a few home with instructions that they be distributed to farmers willing to plant them.

The Chinese caravance is now known as the soybean. The "cheese" that interested Franklin was tofu. The seeds that Franklin sent home gave rise to a soybean harvest that is now worth \$10 billion each year to American farmers. Half of all the soybeans produced in the world today

anaf 82

are grown in the United States.

Franklin was not the only prominent American of his day to introduce foreign seeds to the struggling new nation. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other farmers and landholders made a point of collecting seeds during their travels abroad.

Jefferson was one of the most dedi-

cated of the

early plant ex-

plorers. As min-

ister to France in

the 1780s and

arranged for an-

nual shipments

1790s, he

of seeds to

America from

the Jardin des

Plantes in Paris.



Thomas Jefferson

He also obtained seeds from Italy. China, Egypt, Palestine, and Africa.

In a short, reflective piece written in 1800, Jefferson listed what he thought were his most valuable contributions to his country. The Declaration of Independence was one. His work to promote freedom of religion was another. But in his opinion, his most important contribution lay elsewhere. "The greatest service which can be rendered to any country," Jefferson wrote, "is to add a useful plant to its culture."- P.R.

Renc

Goodman says ruefully. "So could a dozen other people. But no one ever asked." Researchers can only guess what valuable genetic traits the lost seeds might have carried. There will be no chance to find out.

That was only the beginning of Goodman's investigation of the seedstorage laboratory. As he continued to examine the collection, he concluded that virtually all of its samples of tropical corn were in jeopardy. On that point, there is little disagreement. The administrators of the Fort Collins collection admit that many of the seeds stored in the laboratory's refrigerated vaults were not replanted when they should have been. Many of those probably will not germinate now. They are dead.

"There might be five thousand to ten thousand tropical corn varieties [stored in the vaults]," says Goodman. Some date back to the 1950s, many to the 1960s, and a few to the 1970s and 1980s. "All are in potential trouble," he says.

Samples from the 1950s have likely deteriorated to the point where only about 50 percent of the seeds in each sample will sprout, he says. The seeds in each sample are not genetically identical. Like a roomful of people, a seed sample is made up of individuals, each with its own set of genes. If 50 percent of the seeds in a sample have died, many of the genetic traits in the original sample have disappeared with them. If the seeds are not replanted and regenerated, their genes will continue to disappear as the sample deteriorates.

For seed samples collected before 1950, the picture is even worse. George White of the Agricultural Research Service estimates that perhaps 33 percent of the samples collected in the 1940s survive. Of seeds collected in the 1930s, only about 11 percent can still be found in U.S. collections.

But these seeds may someday be needed to fight pests such as the Russian wheat aphid. By the spring of 1991, five years after the aphid appeared in Muleshoe, Webster and his

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evaluating those samples. Each does about 30 samples a year, for a total of 120 annually. At that rate, it would take 250 years to regenerate and evaluate the entire collection. Samples may survive for several years or sometimes a few decades, but certainly not for centuries. If the regeneration program is not expanded, many of the corn samples may soon die.

The Agriculture Department deserves much of the blame. In the words of a General Accounting Office report released on the eve of President Clinton's inauguration, the department has become "a twentiethcentury dinosaur" that has scarcely changed since the 1930s.

The Agriculture Department estimates that the germplasm in seed banks has been responsible for crop improvements worth \$1 billion annually. Yet the budget of the seed banks—\$30 million—is too small to rate the status of a separate line in the department's budget. In Congress, where the budget is reviewed, that sum is far too small to be noticed. The department's food assistance programs spend three times that much every day.

Why are the seed banks so undervalued? The answer has something to do with the peculiar nature of plant genetic resources. It is true that they are enormously valuable, and many are exceedingly rare. Unlike the gold in Fort Knox, however, the treasure in seed banks can be made available in unlimited quantities. Seeds are a renewable resource. And this biological treasure is given away. Any bona fide researcher who wants seed samples gets them—at no charge.

This peculiarity has led to a dangerously casual attitude about the riches in the seed banks. Sometimes the consequences have been disastrous. In the late 1960s, for example, seeds from about 5,000 varieties of tropical corn were sent from Mexico to the NSSL. The precious samples were the product of an ambitious effort to collect and preserve rare corn varieties from all over Latin America. The samples sent to Fort Collins du-

05 PS 96

Billion-Dollar Corn

A 69-YEAR-OLD botanist from the University of Wisconsin, Hugh Iltis

is one of a small band of explorers who scour the world for rare plants. The aim of these explorers, whose work goes largely unnoticed, is to find genetic breeding stock that can be used to improve farmers' crops.

One of the plants discovered by Iltis could revolutionize the cultivation of corn. It has been called the botanical find of the century.

What Iltis found was Zea diploperennis, a perennial cousin of corn that could be crossed with corn to produce perennial corn plants. Such an achievement could transform the American grain belt.

American farmers grow corn on 60 million acres. Each year, farmers move row by row across those 60 million acres to plant corn. The corn is watered and tended over that vast acreage. Pesticides and herbicides are applied where they are needed. Then, at harvest time, farmers move across the entire 60 million acres again. The corn is carried away, and the fields are prepared for the next planting.

Iltis' discovery could dramatically revise that picture. The grain belt

could theoretically be transformed into a huge "orchard" of corn. Farm-

ers would plant corn "trees" once, and the perennial corn would yield a harvest year after year—without plowing, planting, or soil erosion.

It is unlikely that a perennial corn hybrid will ever completely take over the U.S. grain belt. Such a

Hugh IItis rides across flooded lowlands in El Salvador to study the only wild corn known to flourish close to sea level (left). In Mexico, litis studies corn harvested from a small field 7,500 feet above sea level (above left).

hybrid probably could not survive

northern winters. But the climate in the Sierra de Manantlan mountains of Mexico, where *Zea diploperennis* was discovered, is similar to that of the southern United States. Perennial corn might survive easily there.

"Here was an almost useless plant that had tremendous economic and botanic importance," Iltis recalls. "A weed sitting out there on the mountainside, barely used by anyone, yet you could estimate its potential value to our corn crop in billions of dollars."— P.R.

plicated a collection kept outside Mexico City at the International Center for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat, known by its Mexican acronym as CIMMYT (pronounced SIM-it).

A few years after the seeds were dispatched to the United States, budget woes at CIMMYT nearly forced a shutdown of its seed bank. Some samples were lost. But researchers there did not worry. The backup collection was safely stored at Fort Collins. Or so they thought. What they didn't know was that the duplicate samples at the NSSL had never been entered into the permanent collection. They had disappeared.

Major Goodman, a widely respected crop scientist at North Carolina State University, decided to investigate. Goodman is an authority



THE NEW YORK TIMES THE LIVING ARTS THURSDAY, APRI

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

Of Objectivity, Subjectivity and Painful Mishmash

By CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

For Alan Lightman — a physicist (who teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and novelist ("Einstein's Dreams" and "Good Benito") — the distinction between science and art is sharp. And out of the tension between the two arises some of the better effects in "Dance for Two," a charming collection of Mr. Lightman's favorite two-dozen essays, most of which first appeared in two earlier collections, "Time Travel and Papa Joe's Pipe" and "A Modern-Day Yankee in a Connecticut Court."

Often he simply balances the two subjects, as in "Pas de Deux," where he describes the physics of ballet, or in "Smile," where he details what goes on biophysically when a man and woman see and greet each other, or in "Students and Teachers," where he dramatizes how both physicists and painters require strong teachers in the mainstream of tradition.

Yet science tends to have the upper hand in his awareness, and he writes delightfully about it. He may well have been a klutz in the lab, as he makes entertainingly clear in "A Flash of Light," "Other Rooms" and "Seasons," each of which touches on some lab project he botched. But his experiments in language certainly succeed, particularly his description, in "To Cleave an Atom," of a nuclear chain reaction as resembling a roomful of cocked mousetraps and bouncing Ping-Pong balls.

The problem for Mr. Lightman is that science, being objective, "offers little comfort to anyone who aches to leave behind a personal message in his work." This presumably is why he set out to write fiction. You can see him taking his first steps in this collection in the way he plays with time travel, a favorite subject of his.

In the first essay he ever wrote, "Time Travel and Papa Joe's Pipe," he explains the many reasons time travel is impossible and then dips his toe into the past by smoking the favorite pipe of a great-grandfather who died 70 years before he was born. But later in the collection he throws practical obstacles aside. In "A Visit from Isaac Newton," he brings the past into the present. And in "A Modern-Day Yankee in a Connecticut Court," he plays an amusing variation on the situation of the man who travels back in time and tries to describe the future to unbelieving denizens of the past.

Which only goes to show that while people may not be able to fly — for reasons Mr. Lightman explains in "If Birds Can Fly, Why, Oh Why, Can't I?" — even scientists can overleap the boundaries of fact.

Susan Neville, who teaches English at Butler University, sees no such clear distinctions between the objective and subjective in "Indiana Winter," a collection of essays first published two years ago and now reissued with an enthusiastic introduction by the writer Dan Wakefield, like Ms. Neville an Indiana native.

"The problem with the world is that things are so enmeshed," Ms. Neville writes in "Quake," about a predicted cataclysmic earthquake that failed to occur in New Harmony, Ind., in 1990. "You can't predict a thing, good and evil so bound together that it's impossible sometimes to separate them," she continues. "You try so hard for control and order, and you get disorder. You put your faith in science, and you see ghosts. How do you know how to live your life? The ground is always shifting underneath your feet."

Blending fictional and reportorial technique, Ms. Neville unwinds a tapestry of the Indiana seasons, often describing herself in the third person, often embracing the banal. "This is the art we live with," she writes about an exhibition of "pretty" rural scenes, "our vision of the good, the way our lives would be if all the pain were boiled away and we were as pure as distilled water. This is the art that calms, the art that feassures."

But for her the pain has not all boiled away, and in scene after remarkable scene she succeeds in disturbing and undermining one's calm. In "Seeds: A Meditation on the Body," she takes her two children, "both c-sections," to a state fair, where instead of a rich harvest they look at an exhibition on war. In "The Problem of Evil," she conveys with subtle art that despite the fecundity of the land she and her husband farm, she is about to have a miscarriage.

"In the John Dillinger Museum" describes a comically pathetic tourist attraction, where the author and her husband act out in contrasting

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DANCE FOR TWO Selected Essays

By Alan Lightman

169 pages. Pantheon. Paperback, \$12.

ways their bewilderment over losing their baby son. Finally, in the book's long concluding piece, "In the Suburbs," Ms. Neville writes about growing up with a mother who from time to time would break down emotionally and have to be hospitalized.

"There is clearly a genetic basis for affective disorders, and the same gene also produces artists," she writes. "Why would the same gene that produces dissolution also produce form?"

And how, she wants to know, can you tell the difference between mad-



Victoria Kensington/Indiana University Pre

INDIANA WINTER

By Susan Neville

With an Introduction by Dan Wakefield. 249 pages. Indiana University Press. Paperback, \$12.95.

ness and creativity?

Her answer is that "there's an authority in the voice of the creator" that gives us faith in "the created world." She concludes, "We lack that faith in the voice of the mad, sometimes to our detriment as well as theirs." To this she might have added that a sustained sense of design lies in the work of the creative that is rarely present in the expressions of the mad.

But her neglect to do so doesn't matter. Her moving book itself makes the point.



y About the 10 Biblical Plagues



John Marr with some of his favorite amphibian things.

A scientist explores

the gory part of

Passover and the

ed the frogs for a while he fish that " The lack d the frogs ribes them into beds. se amphibid, they died,

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anything. plagues ocefore Aris-Searching e hit upon m or punprofile and

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feed

Exodus story. animal disease center run by the United States Department of Agriculture on Plum

Island, where he discovered "The Handbook of Foreign Veterinary Diseases." He was looking for diseases transmitted by culicoides, and he found two: African horse sickness and Bluetongue, which affects cattle and sheep.

Just why the Jews and their animals were spared is a little difficult to explain scientifically. Dr. Marr says that culicoides are weak fliers and probably could not have reached the Hebrew land of Goshen, which was about 100 miles north of Memphis, the ancient capital.

For the sixth plague, which caused boils ak out on humans and animals, Dr. upon glanders, a highly contagious cterial disease that can also be t contact by flies. It was first totle in 330 B.C., and it's still found throughout the Middle East and Africa. Glanders may also have been spread by eating tainted meat, Dr. Marr said.

Then came the seventh plague — the hail storm that beat down on man and beast and "every herb of the field."

The hail devastated the seasonal food supply, and then came the eighth plague, the swarms of locusts, which ate up the last standing crops and any green seedlings.

Dr. Marr imagined the Egyptians, already denied the protein of healthy fish and cattle, rushing out to save their fallen crops and hastily taking them into granaries and underground storage places.

'These crops would have been broken and dampened by hail," the report reads, 'damaged by immersion in

fields and contaminated by insect feces rich in bacterial and fungal microorganisms."

Then came three days of darkness. Dr. Marr thinks it was caused by a sandstorm with hot winds like the one in the Ipuwer papyrus. Think of all those ruined crops, full of bacteria and mold, baking under warm sand.

After all this, the Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go, so God sent the 10th plague - the death of the firstborn, both animal and human.

Building on an earlier study that suggested that moldy grain may have caused this plague, Dr. Marr and Mr. Malloy thought back to the sudden death of eight children in Cleveland two years ago from airborne mycotoxins drawn up from a moldy basement. The deaths were caused by a black fungus called Stachybotrys atra, which releases the lethal mycotoxins. It also grows rapidly in the top layers of poorly stored grain.

So picture 2.5 million starving Egyptians digging out after three days of darkness, then rushing to the granaries for food.

The first to enter — one of the elders perhaps - would be blasted with airborne toxins. And the first to eat from the top layers - the most important members of the family and the most dominant animals would be more likely to eat poisoned grain. Voilà.

This epidemiologic tour de force has

ers, like Barbara Brown, 45, of Odenton, Md., a former lawyer, are devoting their quilts to contemporary African-American issues and themes.

She is adding a section on civil rights to a story quilt she designed for the film "How to Make an American Quilt," "because my ry does not end with slavery," she said. y quilters in the Women of Color Network are creating appliquéd, rican art quilts, which depict from Nelson Mandela's rethe Million Man March. a Michigan quilter, ilt dedicated to her of a cerebral otographic ving to drawn a variety of reactions, from contempt

to praise. "All of their interpretations are clearly reasonable and certainly could have occurred from an epidemiologic point of view," said Dr. Pascal Imperato, a former Public Health Commissioner of New York City, who heads the department of preventive medicine and community health at the State University Health Science Center in Brooklyn. "The dilemma is that none of us were there, and none of us objectively documented that these things were there. So we're left with interpreting events that occurred in a pre-scientific era. And therein lies the difficulty."

But he was intrigued by the paper's eco-logical approach. "In the late 20th century, we're attuned to the fact that we live in a very complicated environment where the relationship between man and pathological organisms is a very delicate one," he said. "And disruptions can lead to very significant disease - like mad cow disease, where man's tampering with normal food that cows eat resulted in outbreak of disease in man.'

But Dr. Marr's use of the Ipuwer papyrus as evidence that things like plagues and "bloody" rivers and sand storms actually occurred has irked at least one Egyptologist, who says the papyrus is an ethical guide, not a document of historical events.

"When it says the river is blood and people drink it like water, these are literary images," said James Tate, an associate curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The point of these papyri is to show that when people act wrongly, disasters come upon the country," he said. "They always end up with a new Pharaoh coming who acts properly, who restores the country to righteousness and right order."

Dr. Marr knows all that. But he's fascinated with the causes of disease - mycotoxins, for instance, which kill as easily today as he thinks they did in ancient Egypt.

"I was attempting to give rational explanations to events as if they occurred," Dr. Marr said. "But that still does not mean that Yahweh did not produce them. But of course when God does something to humans, he translates it into things we can understand with the exception of miracles."

So maybe it was a miracle.

"God most often works within natural ways," said Rabbi Avi Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, who also teaches Judaic studies at Stern College in Manhattan. "But even if it looks natural, it has a supernatural imprimatur. That it happens when it happens, to whom it happens, indicates a higher power."

tradition. The definition of an African-American quilt has been the subject of scholarly debate in recent years. Some historians have interpreted it strictly as a Southern rural utilitarian quilt, based strictly on "remembered" African precedents. Cuesta Benberry, a quilter and historian in St. Louis, has a simpler definition: "An African-American quilt," she said, "is one made by an African-American.'

As it was with the work of their mothers and grandmothers, the bits of cloth will become heirlooms, tethered to tomorrow's history (each time Frances Boyd, 78, a Daughter of Dorcas member, finishes a quilt, she puts it in her will).

And if the banter around Mrs. Hall's table is any indication, quilting contributes to longevity.

Mrs. Green: "Why do men pass first?" Mrs. Hunt: "They don't quilt." ting in the church bas

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THE NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED FRIDAY, JULY 8, 1994

The New Measure of Man

Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, received the Philadelphia Liberty Medal at Independence Hall on July 4. Here are excerpts of his remarks.

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By Vaclav Havel

here are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has ended. Many things indicate that we are going through a transitional

period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying and exhausting itself, while something else, still indistinct, were arising from the rubble.

The distinguishing features of transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds. These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements.

Today, this state of mind, or of the human world, is called post-modernism. For me, a symbol of that state is a Bedouin mounted on a camel and clad in traditional robes under which he is wearing jeans, with a transistor radio in his hands and an ad for Coca-Cola on the camel's back.

I am not ridiculing this, nor am I shedding an intellectual tear over the commercial expansion of the West that destroys alien cultures. I see it as a typical expression of this multicultural era, a signal that an amalgamation of cultures is taking place. I see it as proof that something is being born, that we are in a phase when one age is succeeding another, when everything is possible. Yes, everything is possible because our civilization does not have its own spirit, its own esthet-

This is related to the crisis, or to the transformation, of science as the basis of the modern conception of the world. The dizzying development of science, with its unconditional faith in objective reality and complete dependency on general and rationally knowable laws, led to the birth of modern technological civilization. It is the first civilization that spans the entire globe and binds together all societies, submitting them to a common global destiny.

At the same time, the relationship to the world that modern science fostered and shaped appears to have exhausted its potential. The relationship is missing something. It fails to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality and with natural human expetience. It produces a state of schizophrenia: man as an observer is becoming completely alienated from umself as a being.

Classical modern science described only the surface of things, a single dimension of reality. And the more dogmatically science treated it as the only dimension, as the very essence of

reality, the more misleading it became. We may know immeasurably more about the universe than our ancestors did, and yet it increasingly

seems they knew something more essential about it than we do, something that escapes us.

The same thing is true of nature and of ourselves. The more thoroughly all our organs and their functions, their internal structure and the biochemical reactions that take place within them,

are described, the more we seem to fail to grasp the spirit, purpose and meaning of the system that they create together and that we experience as our unique self. Thus, we enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence easier in so many important ways. Yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves, where to turn.

The world of our experiences seems chaotic, confusing. Experts can explain anything in the objective world to us, yet we understand our own lives less and less. We live in the postmodern world, where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain.

We are not here alone nor for ourselves alone.

This state of affairs has its social and political consequences. The planetary civilization to which we all belong confronts us with global challenges. We stand helpless before them because our civilization has essentially globalized only the surface of our lives. But our inner self continues to have a life of its own. And the fewer answers the era of rational knowledge provides to the basic questions of human being, the more deeply it would seem that people, behind its back as it were, cling to the ancient certainties of their tribe.

Because of this, individual cultures, increasingly lumped together by contemporary civilization, are realizing with new urgency their own inner autonomy and the inner differences of others. Cultural conflicts are increasing and are more dangerous today than at any other time in history.

Politicians are rightly worried by the problem of finding the key to insure the survival of a civilization that is global and multicultural: how respected mechanisms of peaceful coexistence can be set up and on what set of principles they are to be established.

These questions have been highlighted with particular urgency by the two most important political events in the second half of the 20th century: the collapse of colonial hegemony and the fall of Communism.

The artificial world order of the past decades has collapsed and a new, more just order has not yet emerged. The central political task of the final years of this century, then, is the creation of a new model of co-existence among the various cultures, peoples, races and religious spheres within a single interconnected civilization.

Many believe this can be accomplished through technical means — the invention of now organizational, political and diplomatic instruments. Yes, it is clearly necessary to invent organizational structures appropriate to the multicultural age. But such efforts are doomed to failure if they do not grow out of something deeper, out of generally held values.

In searching for the most natural source for the creation of a new world order, we usually look to an area that is the traditional foundation of modern justice and a great achievement of the modern age: to a set of values that were first declared in this building. I am referring to respect for the unique human being and his or her liberties and inalienable rights, and the principle that all power derives from the people. I am referring to the fundamental ideas of modern democracy. Even these ideas are not enough. We oday, we are in a different place and facing a different situation, one to which classically modern solutions do not give a satisfactory response. After all, the very principle of inalienable human rights, conferred on man by the Creator, grew out of the typically modern notion that man — as a being capable of knowing nature and the world — was the pinnack of ereation and lord of the world.

This modern anthropocentrism inevitably meant that He who allegedly endowed man with his inalienable rights began to disappear from the world: He was so far beyond the grasp of modern science that He was gradually pushed into a sphere of privacy of

sorts, if not directly into a sphere of private fancy — that is, to a place where public obligations no longer apply. The existence of a higher authority than man himself simply began to get in the way of human aspirations.

The idea of human rights and freedoms must be an integral part of any meaningful world order. Yet I think it must be anchored in a different place, and in a different way, than has been the case so far.

Paradoxically, inspiration for the renewal of this lost integrity can once again be found in science. In a science that is new — post-modern — a science producing ideas that in a certain sense

allow it to transcend its own limits. I will give two examples. The "anthropic cosmological princi-

ple" brings us to an idea, perhaps as old as humanity itself, that we are not at all just an accidental anomaly, the microscopic caprice of a tiny particle whirling in the endless depths of the universe. Instead, we are mysteriously connected to the universe, we are mirrored in it, just as the entire evolution of the universe is mirrored in us.

The moment it begins to appear that we are deeply connected to the entire universe, science reaches the outer limits of its powers.

With the "anthropic cosmological principle," science has found itself on the border between science and myth. In that, however, science has returned, in a roundabout way, to man, and offers him his lost integrity. It does so by anchoring him once more in the cosmos. The second example is the "Gaia hypothesis." This theory brings together proof that the dense network of mutual interactions between the organic and inorganic portions of the Earth's surface form a single system, a kind of mega-organism, a living planet, Gaia, named after an ancient goddess recognizable as an archetype of the Earth Mother in perhaps all religions.

> ccording to the Gaia hypothesis, we are parts of a greater whole. Ou destiny is not depend ent merely on what we do for ourselves

but also on what we do for Gaia as a whole. If we endanger her, she will dispense with us in the interests of a higher value — life itself.

What makes the "anthropic principle" and the "Gala hypothesis" so inspiring? One simple thing: Both remind us of what we have long suspected, of what we have long projected into our forgotten myths and what perhaps has always lain dormant within us as archetypes. That is, the awareness of our being anchored in the Earth and the universe, the awareness that we are not here alone nor for ourselves alone but that we are an integral part of higher, mysterious entities against whom it is not advisable to blaspheme.

This forgotten awareness is encoded in all religions. All cultures anticipate it in various forms. It is one of the things that form the basis of man's understanding of himself, of his place in the world and ultimately of the world as such.

The only real hope of people today is probably a <u>renewal of our certainty</u> that we are rooted in the Earth and, at the same time, the cosmos. This awareness endows us with the capacity for self-transcendence.

Politicians at international forums may reiterate a thousand times that the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from the respect of the miracle of Being, the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence.

Only someone who submits to the authority of the universal order and of creation, who values the right to be a part of it and a participant in it, can genuinely value himself and his neighbors and thus honor their rights as well.

It follows that, in today's multicultural world, the truly reliable path to peaceful co-existence and creative cooperation must start from what is at the root of all cultures and what lies infinitely deeper in human hearts and minds then political opinion, convictions, antipathies or sympathies: it must be rooted in self-transcendence.

The Declaration of Independence, adopted 218 years ago in this building, states that the Creator gave man the right to liberty. It seems man can realize that liberty only if he does not forget the One who endowed him with it.