



**JOURNAL OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

An International Journal of
Interdisciplinary and Interfaith Dialogue

REFORMATION II:

**THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE IN KNOWLEDGE,
ETHICS AND FAITH**

**Freedom,
Religion & Politics**

Volume II No. 1/2

1990

greater merit is in revealing how far we have yet to go before our colleges can play a more useful role in assuring humankind's future. Faculty, and some administrators, seem to recognize the restrictiveness of disciplinary overspecialization. But, much work remains to be done not only in bringing the old disciplines together, but also examining their underlying assumptions. True integration will bring this about.

Mary E. Clark
San Diego State University

Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares. By A. Valladares. Trans. Andrew Hurley. New York: Knopf, 1986. Cloth. 381 pp. \$18.95.

In 1960, Armando Valladares, a 24-year old employee of the Postal Savings Bank of Cuba, was arrested on trumped-up charges for speaking out against communism. His trial, staged by the Political Police, was a travesty of justice. Found guilty of public destruction and sabotage, Valladares spent 22 years in Fidel Castro's tropical Gulag. This ably translated book is a horrifying yet hope-inspiring account of his imprisonment. The author did not have to spend all those years in Castro's "model" penal system. Like other political prisoners, he was offered a program of "political rehabilitation," which entailed a better diet, more frequent family visits, and early release and "reintegration" into society. There was, however, a caveat: the program required him to substitute Marxism for Christianity. Valladares refused, opting instead to "act according to my own set of values, because reprisals would be more bearable than the reproaches and censures of my own conscience" (p. 20).

Initially, several thousand prisoners refused "rehabilitation." They became known as *plantados*, the diehards or intransigent ones. For years on end, the *plantados* were subjected to brutal physical and psychological tortures by hate-filled and sadistic guards in an all-out government effort to break their resistance. The regime wanted the *plantados* to don the blue uniform of common prisoners, arguing with Orwellian logic that: "In socialist countries there are no political prisoners" (p. 265). Among the outrages and indignities the prisoners suffered were nakedness; exposure to the elements, including extremes of heat and cold; strip searches in the presence of taunting female guards; repeated beatings with bayonets; slave labor; contaminated food lacking all nutritional value; deprivation of water for drinking or washing; lack of sleep; denial of medical and dental care; isolation from family, friends, and news of the outside world; confinement in crowded cells infested with bedbugs and lice, frequented by rats, and overflowing with the prisoners' excrement. As if these punishments were not enough, the prisoners knew

that refusal to cooperate could land their relatives in jail, or result in their loss of an exit visa, job, or a ration card, or their harassment and the looting of their homes by communist-directed mobs.

Few could withstand such treatment. Many died; some were killed outright by the guards, others in hunger strikes. Still others committed suicide. Having reached the limits of their endurance, many opted to join the rehabilitation program. Thus, the ranks of the *plantados* were progressively thinned, until only a few hundred remained. Yet, what they lacked in numbers, they more than made up with solidarity, an esprit de corps that welded them into a heroic remnant which steadfastly resisted all the rigors of communist imprisonment.

Valladares was one of the leaders of the remnant. The source of his strength was not physical; he is a man of average height and slender build who weighed 150 pounds at the time of his arrest, and lost 45 pounds during his imprisonment. While in prison, he developed a case of "nutritional flaccid paraplegia," which led to the loss of control over his legs, and confinement in a wheelchair. As he writes: "We did not have the physical strength. But we did have an inexhaustible spiritual reserve that [the Communists], who know nothing about the essential, spiritual part of the human being, never counted on" (p. 318).

Before his imprisonment, Valladares, a Catholic, had only superficial feelings about religion. But, the first few nights at *La Cabana*--an old Spanish fortress turned into an overcrowded dungeon, where executions by firing squad were carried out every night--were like a revelation to him. The fear of death, and the sound of courageous young men shouting: "Long Live Christ the King! Down with Communism!" only an instant before a hail of bullets snuffed out their lives, drove him to embrace Christ. "It was at that moment, I am sure, and not before, that Christianity became, more than a religious faith, a way of life for me. Because of my situation, it seemed my life would necessarily be a life of resistance, but I would be sustained in it by a soul filled with love and hope" (pp. 16-17).

Today, Valladares, an American citizen, is the U.S. representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Ironically, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Commission turned a deaf ear to Cuban exiles pleading for an investigation of human rights violations by the Castro regime. Early in 1990, with the support of such former Castro allies as the Polish, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak governments, the Commission, at Valladares' request, approved a resolution to monitor human rights violations in Cuba. Castro's response was that he would not comply with a single comma of the resolution. As an epilogue, the author includes Castro's July 1983 statement to a group of French and American journalists. It illustrates well how a totalitarian regime responds to its accusers--with total denial: "From our

point of view, we have no human-rights problem--there have been no 'disappeareds' here, there have been no tortures here, there have been no murders here. In twenty-five years of revolution, in spite of the difficulties and dangers we have passed through, torture has never been committed, a crime has never been committed" (p. 381).

If there is a substantive weakness in Valladares' book, it is this: Nowhere does he relate having prayed for Castro's soul, either in prison or after his release. Perhaps he did, but does not report it. Yet, Christian charity requires that one pray for one's enemies. It is customary for Catholics to pray at Mass for "the conversion and salvation of every man, woman, and child in the world"--and that certainly includes Castro. If the author did that, his book would be an even greater testimonial to the miracle whereby faith overcomes force.

Alfred G. Cuzán
University of West Florida

Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious. By Paul C. Vitz. New York: Guilford Press, 1988. Cloth. 287 pp. \$19.95.

Vitz's study is a revealing piece of Freudian "construction" or reading of the past, peeling it away layer by layer, just as Freud did in an analysis of Dora in 1900 in order to uncover the etiology of her neurosis. However, Christianity is no disease, as Freud himself realized when he called psychoanalysis "a secular pastoral counseling" and the psychoanalyst "a priest" hearing confession. Thus, Vitz is quite justified in seeing the examination of Freud's "Christian unconscious" as a contribution to conscious theory, if only by adding biographical perspective. His stated task is a rectification of orthodox Freudian biography such as by Ernest Jones. According to it, Freud was a "secular saint" untouched by religious emotion, no matter how undirected or uncatechized.

We are introduced to an image of his Czech Nanny from Freiburg, Moravia (Freud's birthplace), which dominated Freud's unconscious mind throughout his life. She sets the pattern, because she meant Christianity to him in its Catholic form and formality--its festivals, emotional events ("going to Church" as a sensual, personal experience above and beyond devout observance), linguistic allusions, and "demonism." For example, the peculiar emphasis Freud placed on Pentecost and even communicated to his fiancée Martha Bernays, who as an Orthodox Jewess knew nothing of its meaning, was drawn from the importance of this festival in Moravia. The same emphasis may well have laid the religio-ethnic basis for the attachment he had for Easter (and, by extension, Rome), a festival much more

CONTENTS

VOLUME II NO. 1/2 1990

Edward Bellamy's Religious Radicalism: <i>Looking Backward</i> as a "Bible" for Industrial America	125
John A. Saltmarsh	
Woodrow Wilson's "Road Away From Revolution": Self-Determination and the Christian Conscience	139
Edwina S. Campbell & Mark D. W. Edington	
Fundamentalism Vs. Social Activism: Where Does the Moral Majority Fit In?	159
Sharon Georgianna	
Church and State in Nigeria: The Shaping of a Nation's Destiny . .	175
Sunday A. Aigbe	

BOOK REVIEWS

Conquest, Robert. <i>Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine</i>	Karen Rosenblum-Cale	191
Giles, Mary E. <i>The Poetics of Love: Meditations with John of the Cross</i>	Patrick J. Mitchell	193
Jaki, Stanley L. <i>Science and Creation</i>	Robert C. Bishop	195
Lefever, Ernest W. & Robert D. Vander Lugt., eds. <i>Perestroika: How New is Gorbachev's New Thinking?</i>	Dmitry Shlapentokh	196
Martino, Joseph P. <i>A Fighting Chance: The Moral Use of Nuclear Weapons</i>	William E. Dean	198
Mitchell, Ralph G. <i>Einstein and Christ: A New Approach to the Defence of the Christian Religion</i>	David Morsey	201
Mungazi, Dickson A. <i>Education and Government Control in Zimbabwe</i>	Franklin Parker	203
Newell, William H. <i>Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Programs: A Directory</i>	Mary E. Clark	205
Valladares, Armando. <i>Against All Hope: The Prison Memoirs of Armando Valladares</i>	Alfred G. Cuzán	207
Vitz, Paul C. <i>Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious</i>	A. Waldinger	209
BOOKS RECEIVED		213
INDEX		215