



RESURRECTION UNIVERSITY PARISH

Land Stewardship Committee

WHAT'S IN A WORD

Lewis Carroll in his work *Alice Through The Looking Glass* (known to us as Walt Disney's *Alice In Wonderland*) highlighted the game of words in the dialogue between Alice and Humpty Dumpty.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."

Many theologians and spiritual writers have long associated the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament with what the present day Christian refers to as the "Holy Spirit"—formerly known to the elders in the Catholic community as the "Holy Ghost." John of the gospels opens his book with the reference that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God..."

So, we have Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, Wisdom, and the Word all referring to a part of the very nature of God who itself is inscrutable. And truly, if God is inscrutable, how is one to ever fully and maybe even partially understand it or describe it? As humans we are relegated to using words. As in, do we refer to God as he, she, or it?

Vatican II pronounced that God is always within us. So then, why do scores of spiritual writers talk about inviting God to be within us? If stewardship in the true Old Testament meaning is attending to the master's land why is stewardship now a matter of donating money... 10% of your income as a matter of fact? In Bozeman city and county offices the planners speak of landscape while here at Resurrection University Parish (RUP) we speak of Land Stewardship. Landscape is not land stewardship, but land stewardship is landscape. And that takes us back to Alice and Humpty. The question is, which is to be master: the word or the user?

Aldo Leopold

"Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal."



About the Critters 'n Things...

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

Highest and best use is a phrase often used in the real estate industry. It refers to several aspects of land that compete for the title of highest and best use. Such terms as profitability, return on investment, convenience of access, need, taxability, and many other words are used. All the words have one thing in common—they refer to money and interest earned on capital.

Peace, harmony, what used to be, habitat for wildlife, migration routes, migration stop-overs, they don't count. The corridor along Jack Rabbit between four corners and the Canyon entrance is exploding in development and the question asked and answered is "WHAT IS THE HIGHEST AND BEST USE? Money, profit, return on capital.

Sorry. Elk and pronghorns don't get to vote! For more on that pending tragedy see articles in mountainjournal.org.

SHORT TWIGS

There are twelve Montana Native American Tribes (NAI) represented on campus at Montana State University (MSU). From those twelve tribes 820 students are pursuing higher education degrees. We invite all MSU students to become part of the Land Stewardship Ministry where you can share your talents and develop your spirituality from the ground up. To learn more about what you, as a member of Resurrection University Parish (RUP), can do, learn, teach, and pray, see hoechoka.com and read the Green Leaf issues or call Paul Gore or Ellie Weber at 406-587-2001.

REMEMBER

October 24, all phone numbers in Montana switch to ten digits. Have to add the "406," people.



Some parishioners were taken by surprise when the pastor, in a recent homily, made repeated references to some of the great philosophers of past years. Words can and do mean so many things as Humpty Dumpty argued to Alice. Philosophy is required of all candidates for the priesthood. Many people are not aware of that. Fr. Joe's theological training in the seminary transcended the philosophy courses he may have had at Notre Dame Business College. Christianity is deeply immersed in philosophy although it is distinguished from Soren Kierkegaard, Jean Paul Sartre, René Descartes, and Friedrich Nietzsche. And speaking of Nietzsche, he did have a way of getting to and making the point:

Profundity of thought belongs to youth, clarity of thought to old age.

So there is place for the octogenarians at RUP.

A somewhat unknown part of the Soren Kierkegaard philosophy was his involvement in science—most notable in respect to what now is known as stewardship and related areas of ecology. He published a work titled *Christian Discourses* in which he was critical of Martin Luther's interpretation of Matthew 6 and Luke 12. He rejected that the message is one of shaming human toils but instead saw the stories as uplifting with normative implications for human reciprocity with other animals. He stated: "...if you live as the lily and the bird live, then you are a Christian." (CD,9)

For M.S.U. students interested in philosophy as well as Land Stewardship the publication *Theological Studies*, Vol.82 #3 has an outstanding article by G.P. Marcar titled *Godly Diversions and Gifted Teachers: Learning Joyful Stewardship from the Birds and the Lilies With Soren Kierkegaard*.

Green Leaf is a monthly publication of the Land Stewardship Committee of Resurrection University Parish. Comments, questions, or suggestions can be addressed to Paul Gore through the web page at hoechoka.com or by mail via the parish office, c/o Leota Pilon.

A reflection from the Land Stewardship Committee

I Contemplate a tree...I can feel it as a movement: the flowing veins around the sturdy, striving core, the sucking of the roots, the breathing of the leaves, the infinite commerce with earth and air...

I can assign to it a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life...

I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it as an expression of law...

I can dissolve it into a number, into a pure relation between numbers, and eternalize it.

Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition.

But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into relation....

And the tree ceases to be an it.



Martin Buber, *I-Thou*