

FROM THE MINISTER

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"VIOLENCE"

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"Bonnie and Clyde" is a portrayal of the spiralling fury and loneliness of violence. Though the two young bank robbers begin their career with adventure, humor, their own stylish answer to boredom; the spiral takes effect when the full tragedy of murder and the inevitable pursuit of justice, like a relentless tightening circle, crowds in upon their lives. The film begins with the exhilaration of open stretches of Midwest countryside, of long carefree drives from town to town, but it ends with darkness, self-imposed confinement, little rented motel rooms, crushed family relationships, and finally, the close, hot air of an old car attempting in vain to escape reality.

I believe the movie is a significant achievement in that it has interpreted one of the gravest problems of our time, violence. Violence has at the beginning a certain unmistakeable appeal. It is an adventurous shortcut; it offers to settle everything quickly and decisively, and as long as you are able to maintain your reign of terror without serious challenge, it offers wide open space as the crowds thin away from you. Violence makes no moral demands since within your own grasp, whether you hold a gun, a fast car, a political alliance, a bull horn at a public meeting, you hold the symbols of judge, prosecutor, firing squad. You are everything, thoroughly intoxicated by the raw force of power.

But every man who ever reached toward the club or gun or any other instrument of punishment to prove his authority and to get his way is finally, gradually, inevitably squeezed in upon himself and at last destroyed.

"Do not be deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Bonnie and Clyde is a contemporary grappling with Paul's great Galatian text. The way of freedom which recognizes the rights of other people, the way of the positive move in the face of crises, the way of love in human affairs -- this way is harder, offers no shortcuts but the spiral is outward and the result is life.

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