



The Decree

VOLUME XX, NUMBER 6

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, N. C.

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 1982

GODSPELL IS HERE!

By Tony Pierce
Decree Staff

The expression "Everybody loves a Musical" has never had more meaning than it has this spring at Wesleyan. Fred Heaviside (who hasn't been to a Wesleyan production in a year) has made reservations two weeks in advance! So have many other faculty, students, and Rocky Mount community members. To what do we owe this high anticipation?

In case you've been living under a rock for the past few months, the answer is a very unique production of "GODSPELL" which opens here on Tuesday the 24th. Part of the uniqueness of the show involves different production procedures like sending out approximately 2000 publicity flyers to churches, schools, perspective students, and graduates of Wesleyan. Another production procedure is a one dollar admission fee for students and faculty.

Phyllis Gitlin who is Production Manager for "GODSPELL" explains the reason behind the new policy. "This is the most expensive show we've done since I've been here. The royalty fee and script rental was approximately \$800 alone. That does not include the set, costumes, make-up, etc."

The show is well worth every penny. It's full of production numbers, hilarious as well as touching scenes. A tremendous amount of this is due to the third female director Coltrane theatre has seen this Year - Susan Marrash Minnerly. Susan is not just the wife of Douglas Minnerly (Wesleyan's Technical Director). Susan received her M.F.A. in directing from the University

of Virginia and has directed such shows as "EL GRANDE de COCA-COLA", "EVENINGS AT ELEVEN", "MIDLAND--AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT" just to name a few. She is also a very talented actress and was last seen in the Tank Theatre's production of "THE EFFECTS OF GAMMA-RAYS ON THE MAN-IN-THE-MOON MARIGOLDS" as "Beatrice". The following is the result of an interview conducted a week before the opening of "GODSPELL":

Tony - How did you get to be the director of GS (GODSPELL)?

SUSAN: IT WAS A MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN PHYLLIS AND I. IT GAVE ME SOMETHING TO DO AND IT GAVE HER A CHANCE TO DO OTHER THINGS.

Tony: How did you pick the cast for the show?

SUSAN: THIS WAS A DIFFICULT SHOW TO CAST. FINDING PEOPLE WHO CAN SING, DANCE, AND ACT WELL IS DIFFICULT. I CAST FIRST BY ACTING VERSITILITY. HOW WELL THEY USED THEIR IMAGINATION AND ADAPTED TO NEW IDEAS. THE SECOND PRIORITY WAS MUSIC ABILITY AND THIRDLY DANCE. THE ONLY CHARACTERS I WAS PICKY ABOUT WAS THE JESUS, JUDAS, AND MAE WEST CHARACTER OTHER THAN THAT I WANTED PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED WELL AND WORKED WELL WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

Tony: Is there any special reason behind the Vaudeville concept for GS.

SUSAN: WHEN I READ THE SCRIPT THE VAUDEVILLE STRUCTURE WAS THERE. DOUG READ

IT AND GOT THE SAME STRUCTURE FROM THE SCRIPT. AND WE BOTH WANTED TO DO SOMETHING MORE DIFFERENT. IT'S BEEN MORE DIFFICULT BUT WORTH IT.

Tony: Is there any special message that you as a director is trying to convey?

SUSAN: YES, TO BRING JESUS CLOSER TO A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. WE TEND TO MAKE JESUS ONLY A SAINT - WE LOSE HIS HUMAN QUALITIES WHICH WERE VERY REAL AND IMPORTANT. HE HAD TO HAVE HAD SOME TREMENDOUSLY HUMAN QUALITY TO MAKE PEOPLE GIVE UP EVERYTHING THEY HAD AND FOLLOW HIM TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY DID. I'M NOT BEING SACRELIGIOUS, NOR AM I PREACHING. I JUST HOPE THAT OUR INTERPRETATION OF GS WILL MAKE EVERYONE'S BELIEF - NO MATTER WHAT IT IS - STRONGER AND MORE PERSONAL FOR THEM. EVERY ONE WHO SEES IT WILL GET SOMETHING FROM IT. IT APPEALS TO EVERYONE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS.

One of the greatest challenges is the role of Jesus which is handled quite well by Rusty Styron. When asked how he feels portraying such an Important person in history he said, "It has been personally gratifying to know that Jesus may also have had a sense of humor and at times became frustrated in obtaining his quest for man."

Another very Important figure that adds to GS's uniqueness is the musical director Steve Wilson. Steve

served as musical Advisor and Permenant Conductor for the musical Theatre Society at Emerson College in Boston. He has been the musical director for such musicals as "NO, NO NANETTE", "COMPANY", and "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA". Steve said he enjoyed collaborating with the theatre department. "I think it's good that faculty collaborates. There should be more of it. It gets me to know more of the talent than just those who particiapte in music department ensembles." When asked what he liked most about GS he commented, "The real Beauty is the text".

Another real beauty is the collaboration. Not only has music and theatre joined forces but others have joined as well. Janet Doles, (secretary to the Registra) is the piano accompanist. Nancy Johnson (wife of Steve Johnson-South) who was last seen in "Wanda" in

"KENNEDY'S CHILDREN" is the drummer. Amy West a senior from Rocky Mount Senior High makes her debut as one of Jesus' apostles. Admissions counselor Hank Hardy portrays another one of the apostles. The other apostles are played by: Lisa Hummerickhouse-an English Major, Christy Oglesby, Cathy Ballou, Virginia Evans, Issac Hodge, and Tony Pierce who plays Judas and is the choreographer. Christyle Johnson (Psychology Major) is assistant choreographer.

Well, with all these highly energetic and talented people at work is there any doubt for such high anticiaption from the public? Says David Guth, "I think it's going to be a terrific show. I am looking forward to this one more than I have any other show."

"I'm just looking forward to it," says Rachel Dormagen.



Christie Oglesbee and Issac Hodge in "Godspell".

Budbill Shares Poetry

By MARTIE BARBOUR

David Budbill, a writer from Vermont, was at North Carolina Wesleyan College last week to share some of his poetry with students and faculty members.

During this poetry reading on Tuesday night, the characters in his poems came to life as he intoned the northern mountain dialect which characterizes the inhabitants of Judevine. This is the fictional setting for a series of three of Budbill's poetry books from which he read.

"I've always been interested in dialects," he noted. But he doesn't believe that these dialects exist as colloquialisms.

"There is no such thing as a colloquialism," he maintained. "There is American. American resembles English - but nobody talks English."

From these observations, Budbill reveals the Judevine residents, through his poetry, as real people in a real setting. "I like to tell stories and create characters," he said. "I like to do all of the things that novelists do."

"The difference between poetry and prose," he added,

"lies in the musicality of the language. Poetry is much more musical than prose."

For the most part, Budbill strays away from traditional verse forms. "When you jam the language into an iambic line (a traditional poetic rhythm), you fracture it," said Budbill.

"I think a lot about what poetry is," he commented. "But I haven't come to any conclusions yet."

He has come to one conclusion, however. "You can't define poetry other than by the musicality of it."

Budbill sees a substantial relationship between poetry and music. "It's not like a John Phillip Souza march - poetry is subtler than that," he noted. He recognizes that there are rhythmic patterns in poetry, but they should not be forced.

The real test of poetry, according to Budbill, comes in the feelings evoked from them, rather than the forms they take. "If it moves and touches, it's a success. If it's boring and doesn't do anything for you, it's a failure," he noted.

His poems are, for the most

part, narrative in form. They do tell stories, so some people may dispute the fact that they even are poems. But this doesn't bother Budbill.

"Call them 'gavardnicks' - it doesn't matter what you call them. If you see and feel it, it's a success," he said.

While discussing one of his books, he explained, "My objective is to pull the reader into some other life or place. I am trying to show it, and let the reader experience it, rather than telling what ought to be felt."

Budbill's major themes are human love and loneliness. "I concentrate on how people relate to each other - or don't," he noted.

He explained that many of his ideas come from things that he has actually seen. "Other ideas come out of my dream life," he said.

"I have no loyalty to the facts," he added. "I change them around as I need to. And some of it is complete fiction."

"I have rejected nothing as a part of the poetic experience," he maintained. "It's a question of being open to everything - not shutting off anything."

Critics have described his work in "From Down To The Village" (the third in his series of Judevine poems) as "notable for its simplicity and honesty, for its affectionate and unpatronizing portrayal of individuals."

This work was also described by one critic as, "full of loving interest in other people and in what I still insist on calling the real world..."

Another critic noted that Budbill "makes us feel what life - and death - are like in a simple environment stripped to the essentials."

Humor is an element in many of Budbill's poems. Sometimes it is intentional, sometimes it is not. "There are funny things that happen in life," he explained. "Humor gives us a way to cope with anguish and make life more bearable."

Budbill has been writing seriously for quite some time. "I made it part of my living about 15 years ago, and all of my living 3 years ago," he said.

In college he studied philosophy and art history, receiving a graduate degree in theology. "The church was too constraining," he commented. So he abandoned this endeavor

and became a writer.

He has written four books of poems, a children's book, a collection of short stories, a novel and several plays. His poetry and prose writings have also appeared in numerous periodicals.

He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and now resides in the mountains of northern Vermont with his wife, who is a painter, and their two children.

Budbill has never studied English literature formally. "I have studied it extensively on my own," he stated. "I have even taught English courses on the high school and college levels."

"I was a lousy student," he recalled. "I went to college on an athletic scholarship. I was interested in music and theatre but not in writing."

However, he did get interested in writing through the encouragement of one of his English teachers. He explained that the teacher had seen something that he had written, and had given him the incentive to continue writing.

"If he hadn't come along," commented Budbill, "I probably never would have become a writer."