

THE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY FOUR
JOSEPHINE GOULD DISCOURSE
delivered at the Annual Meeting of the St. Lawrence District of
The Unitarian Universalist Association
"THE ENTREPRENEURS OF RELIGION"
by The Reverend Carl F. Thitchener

I had just finished delivering a sermon in which I incidentally mentioned having attended a theological school. After the service I was greeted by an enthusiastic first-time visitor who expressed great relief at hearing that fact. "Your religion sounds so wonderful," she said, "that I was afraid you had just made it up!"

While I understood how reassured she felt about our heresy having had a history, there are times when I think that we all have indeed "made it up," that North American Unitarian Universalists are the entrepreneurs of religion who have chosen to "make up" their own religion, and are in the process of, as our colleague Dick Gilbert puts it, "Building Our Own Theology."

While in England, most Unitarians are born into their faith, on this continent, most North American members of our movement chose this church, having been "born again" in the sense that we have rejected the church of our childhood and found, if not founded, this faith. No wonder we have been described as "God's Choosing People."

While I agree that our children should be free to choose their own religion as well, I hope that this generation of parents will not make the mistake many of our forebears made. We so agreed with William Ellery Channing's admonition "not to stamp our

minds upon the young," that we sometimes did not even tell them what we believed and why our faith is important to us. Remember the rest of what Channing said regarding our relationship with our children. "The great end is to awaken the soul; to bring understanding, conscience, and heart into earnest, vigorous action on religious and moral truth, to excite and cherish spiritual life." A task, I would add, well suited to the "entrepreneurs of religion."

Entrepreneurs have been derogatorily described as people who believe in the motto, "Ready, Fire, Aim!" I think a better definition comes from Robert Schwartz, the director of the school for entrepreneurs, in Tarrytown, NY. He says, "A true definition of an entrepreneur comes closer to: A poet, visionary, or packager of social change."

Entrepreneurs enjoy the satisfaction of offering products and services in which they genuinely believe. They enjoy shaping their business to reflect their social and personal values, setting a tone or atmosphere for their work life with which they feel comfortable. They enjoy making decisions about the direction of their business and seeing the results of their efforts. They enjoy the creative opportunities to experiment, to try out new ideas without needing bureaucratic approval. These people are working to be themselves.

Career consultant, Lawrence G. Bolt describes entrepreneurs as "artists of their own lives." The five essential ingredients of entrepreneurship according to him are Sensitivity, Creativity, Courage, Initiative, and Grit. Sensitivity, to perceive what is needed; Creativity, to conceive of a way of providing it; Courage, to try something new, perhaps even to boldly go where no one has gone before; Initiative, to act and

act, and act; and finally, Grit, to stick with it when all of the people who tell you that you don't have the above qualities tell you it can't be done.

These are precisely the characteristics I see in our Unitarian Universalists forebears.

These are precisely the characteristics I see in you!

In the hope of stimulating your entrepreneurial energies tonight, let me tell you a story of one of our own modest experiences in this kind of endeavor:

Maureen and I have a retreat that we go to in the Bristol Hills, south of Rochester, NY. From the top of our hill we can see in the distance, the white steeple of the little United Church of Bristol which was originally the Universalist Church where the Reverends Richard Gilbert, Wilfred Ward, Ray Nasemann and Lew Scott attended. Like so many other Universalist Churches in New York State it preached its message of God as a loving parent figure who would never condemn any of its children to eternal damnation. We reflected on how sad it was that although, by and large they were successful in conveying their message to the community, the Universalists there, like so many other places had in the process lost their institutional base. Their members after accepting the theology, migrated to the nearby city, or to other nearby larger mainline churches. Although the cemetery in the back is filled with Universalists, the pews on Sunday morning now are occupied by members of the United Church of Christ...and a few Universalists who just wouldn't leave! The congregation was a small one, (approximately one hundred members). Maureen and I fantasized persuading a sufficient number of our friends to join the church, infiltrate it and ultimately call a congregational meeting. We would reclaim the

building's heritage by winning a vote to change the congregation's denominational affiliation to Unitarian Universalist, in our own modern re-enactment of the famous Dedham Decision when almost half the Congregationalist churches in Massachusetts were converted to Unitarianism, buildings and all. An early antecedent of the hostile takeovers in the corporate world today!)

We didn't do that! It was hard to feel hostile in such a nice setting. But we continued to wonder why and if. Why, a liberal church no longer existed in this area, despite the fact that the migration of people to the city has long since been reversed. People now were purchasing homes in Ontario County, some willing to commute the hour to Rochester in order to purchase lower cost housing in a slower paced setting, and some to work in the growing number of local enterprises, either being located or relocated in the area. We also wondered If there was anything we might do to help start a Unitarian Universalist congregation here. Maureen and I knew nothing about starting a new congregation. All of our experience as Unitarians and Universalists had been with large and medium sized congregations. We first joined the First Unitarian Church in Rochester in 1957 which was started in 1829, a far cry from a start-up church. We presently serve as co-ministers of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst and the Waterloo County Unitarian Fellowship, both of which are approximately 40 years old. We did have experience, however, in starting businesses. In the two decades in which we were active lay members of the Unitarian Church in Rochester, as entrepreneurs, we started 5 business enterprises, one of which failed, one became a public corporation, and three were ultimately sold

to other companies.

The conventional wisdom for anyone interested in starting a new business is to begin with lots of money. At least enough to tide one over for a year or so of development costs. One should know something about the business one is entering and it is also wise not to compete head on with a far more well established enterprise with far greater experience and resources.

We have never been conventionally wise. We started on a shoestring in Rochester, NY and chose the microfilm and information retrieval field. Yes we did know something about the business we were entering. (Well, one out of three isn't bad!) For us those years as entrepreneurs were fun. Since we did not have the money to spend years of planning and market research to develop products, we used a more marketing oriented style of product development. We would come up with a product idea, go out and try to get orders for the product. We were quite clear with our prospects that at least part of what we were doing was testing the market, and that the new product we were describing existed only in our minds at the moment. If companies were sufficiently intrigued to give us an actual order, only then would we proceed to build the product...knowing that we would have at least one customer for our efforts. It usually turned out that by the time the product actually existed we had several more customers who had placed orders providing us with the expectation of some income to offset our development costs. The slang expression for what we were doing in those days was "run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes!" The customers who purchased these nonexistent products were without exception caught up in the excitement and adventure of being involved with something at the ground

floor, "starting from itch," as I used to say (which is even before scratch!)

The more staid and conservative companies, of course, waited until the product existed and had proven itself.

It was fun competing with the giants; we came close to naming one of our enterprises "Don Quixote Inc." but changed our minds because we thought it might be too esoteric a reference for the business world of that time. It was with this background that as Unitarian Universalist ministers we sat on the top of the hill and dreamed "impossible" dreams about whether an entrepreneurial approach to growth of this movement we loved might result in a new congregation in Canandaigua, and regaining a liberal religious presence in the Finger Lakes. What follows will be a frank exposition of the details of one new Unitarian Universalist Congregation's early beginnings. I share it with you in the hope that each of you will be encouraged to use your varied talents in your own way to participate in the growth of our movement.

We shared our dreams with District Consultant, Wendy Colby who told us

that coincidentally she had recently spoken with Shelley Page a woman who lived in the Canandaigua area who was supportive of the idea of a

new congregation there so that she and her family would not have to

drive an hour into Rochester to attend a Unitarian Universalist Church.

We phoned her and set up times when Maureen and I could separately meet

with her. I remember going to a crowded restaurant for my meeting

wondering whether we would recognize each other. Just to play it safe, I

bought a copy of Robert Fulghum's latest book and prominently displayed

it on my table. Since it was to make the NY Times Best Seller's list, meaning that a lot more people than Unitarian Universalists were buying it, maybe it wasn't such a creative idea in retrospect. But for whatever reasons, physical or metaphysical, perhaps I just had a liberal look about me, she walked right over to my table and our conversation began. Shelley was a marketing representative for a nearby national food products company. She and her husband had two young children and they were members of the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, about a one-hour drive from their home. She had also facilitated some ceremonies in the Canandaigua area as expressions of earth-based spirituality. We described the UUA's New Congregation training program which would be held in Boston within a few months, and she indicated an interest in attending if it could fit in with her work schedule. We agreed to hold a meeting in a public place in Canandaigua to which we would invite any others we could identify who might also have an interest in starting a new congregation in the area. I contacted the First Unitarian Church and the First Universalist Church of Rochester explaining our plans to investigate the feasibility of a new UU Congregation in Canandaigua. We were pleased that both congregations' Boards passed resolutions of support for our efforts. A date for our first meeting was chosen, announcements were placed in both congregations' newsletters and individual letters were sent out to people on the mailing lists of both congregations who lived in ZIP code locations that were in the Canandaigua and Finger Lakes area.

Our next step was to select a public location for the meeting, rather than a private home since we thought that some people might feel somewhat uncomfortable going to a stranger's home. We found that the public library in Canandaigua had two meeting rooms which were available for public use by nonprofit organizations. We booked the smaller of the two feeling that if a small number of people attended it would feel less cavernous (and discouraging). The room had a conference table which seated approximately 13 people. Fortuitously 13 people showed up for the meeting.

The program for the meeting consisted primarily of the sharing by each person of her or his reasons for attending the meeting and their opinions, hopes and dreams about our denomination's growth and the possibility of such growth in Canandaigua. I briefly described our denomination's previous extension efforts including the fellowship movement of the 50's inspired by Monroe Husband. While a great many fellowships were founded throughout the continent, and some went on to become full fledged congregations with professional leadership, many others either remained very small in size, or failing to reach a "critical mass" had ceased operations entirely. Although some which have survived are small congregations similar to extended families and serve the spiritual needs of their members very well, they seem to attract people interested in the "extended family" style of community and,

therefore, were self-perpetuatingly small.

We unanimously decided while a new congregation in Canandaigua might initially consist of a small number of people, our desire was to ultimately become a congregation of 250 or more members with its own building, and with professional leadership. Half the people in the room said they would be willing to work to form such a congregation. They then became a steering committee. Shelley was elected to chair the committee. It was further decided that Shelley and Maureen would attend UUA New Congregation training in Boston, and we would sponsor four monthly public lectures on Unitarian Universalism. By so doing we hoped at the minimum to bring the message of Unitarian Universalism to the community and perhaps interest people in attending services at one of the congregations in Rochester. We further hoped to identify any additional prospective members of a new congregation in Canandaigua. We purchased an ad in the local paper which paraphrased what was perhaps the most successful Unitarian ad of all time by the old layman's league. Ours asked, "Are you a Unitarian Universalist without knowing it?" "Do you believe that there is truth in all religions, but that no religion has all the truth?" "You are invited to attend a public lecture at the Sheraton Inn on the Lake on Monday evening, 7:30 and then the date. We sent out announcements to the local Pennysaver, and one member made small posters announcing the events and put them up in laundromats, libraries, and supermarkets.

None of the meetings attracted a huge number of people. Attendance ranged from a minimum of three to a maximum of 27. But each time we met new people who had not been there before, and each time our list of prospects became larger. Incidentally, I want to thank those friends of ours from Rochester who had no intention of leaving their present UU Congregations but cared enough about the growth of our movement to attend some of these meetings so that there would be knowledgeable lay people to meet with newcomers and socialize with them after the lectures. ("Shills," as we lovingly called them!) As a result of these lectures we decided to hold four full-fledged worship services during the month of July.

During one of these services, Ariel Wunrow, who grew up in a Unitarian Universalist church and had fond memories of her own church school experience said that if we started holding regular services she would enjoy working in a religious education program for children. Another night, a local high school music teacher, Bill Mehls, after patiently sitting through my attempts to fake hymns from the green hymnal in the key of "C", graciously offered to play the music for future services. And sufficient interest resulted from these four summer services that we agreed to hold regular weekly services and church school starting in the fall. Maureen and I offered to share the preaching responsibilities if the services were held at 4PM in the afternoon. (We were gainfully

employed in Williamsville and Waterloo on Sunday mornings, of course.)

That fall, regular services were held each week at the Thompson Cooperative. Attendance and enthusiasm grew, and in the Spring, the congregation that was pretending to be a church, held its first canvass, decided to apply for membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association, and called a student intern for the year. On Oct 3, 1993 they held their Charter Sunday and in January of this year I was proud to be the UUA trustee who placed their name in nomination for membership in our continental association.

As I look back on that experience, I'm pleased to have been a part of the process. Sometimes I wondered why we risked the possibility of failure when we were quite happy and well accepted by the congregations we presently serve. But in retrospect the rewards were worth it. And I feel that our ministries in Williamsville and Waterloo benefited from what we learned as well.

In our society today, most mainline religious institutions are declining in membership and participation. Among the exceptions to that trend two movements stand out. The first is the well organized, well funded fundamentalism of the religious right. The second is a religious organization that no one, except in jest, has ever accused of being well organized, and which according to some sources has the lowest giving level of any denomination. Guess who? (The Unitarian Universalists!)

When the former president of our Association, Bill Schulz, first took office over eight years ago he spent much time in his first term speaking out against the religious right. He warned us of the dangers of what has since come to be called "Christian Reconstructionism," a political theology which seeks to impose what it calls "Biblical Law" on all of society. They believe that they have a divine mandate to build what they call "the Kingdom of God on Earth." Some of their leaders have said that would include the institution of the death penalty, not only for such crimes as murder and rape, but adultery, idolatry, heresy, blasphemy, homosexuality, witchcraft and juvenile delinquency, and possibly the breaking of the sabbath. (cf "The Making of a Christian Police State"" by Frederick Clarkson in the September/October 1994 edition of The Freedom Writer). While the rhetoric in Canada is not as extreme, I am sorry to say that I have heard similar views expressed on broadcasts emanating from the "True North" as well!

Since Bill Schulz warned us about these matters, millions of dollars have been generated each year by Pat Robertson's evangelical media empire. What used to be called CBN (The Christian Broadcasting Network) now calls itself the "Family Channel" and uses reruns of old TV sit-coms to attract an audience for programs like his "700 Club" which now airs on almost 10,000 cable systems and reaches some 55 million homes!

While Bill Schulz's words were applauded by many of us, he also was criticized in some quarters for what was called "fundamentalist bashing." When he came here to Buffalo during that period the reporter covering his visit said that "this head of a religious denomination which prides itself in religious tolerance proceeded to attack the religious convictions of the religious right." In the later years of his presidency, Bill, spent more of his time on other issues, implying that while the adrenalin flow he created and felt while engaged in the attacks on the religious right felt good to him, and to many of us, he often felt that he was "speaking to the choir," i.e., reinforcing the views of those who already shared his views.

Our Unitarian Universalist Purposes and Principles speak of "the inherent worth and dignity of each person" and the "interdependent web of all existence." How can we live our lives in accordance with the meanings and values embodied in these words and still appropriately respond to the reality of the religious revolution during which we are living.

First of all, I think it is important to realize what we have in common with the radical religious right. First of all, we are both very small movements. The radical religious right recognizes this. Generally speaking, their strategy has been to turn out high numbers of voters

from a disciplined church-based voting block which can take advantage of the fact that since most people don't even bother going to the polls, a candidate needs only get the support of a small group of citizens to win. (e.g. 7% to win the average mayoral or city council post.) As a result the radical religious right knows that they can have an influence on society way out of proportion to their small numbers.

Unitarian Universalists know this too. Despite Thomas Jefferson's overly enthusiastic prediction that not a young man then living in the U.S. would die without becoming a Unitarian, and despite our recent growth in membership, we are still a tiny two hundred thousand in the U.S. and as few as five thousand in Canada. Our minuscule movement, however, has had a huge influence on the larger religions and the larger society.

What UUs can **UNIQUELY** do!

1. Don't bother trying to convert the radical religious right. I do think it is appropriate and in accordance with our principles that we support their right to express their views without censorship...we of all people should remain committed to a free and open expression of views...and we should not give up freedom in the name of freedom!
2. Support inter-faith dialogue. Unitarian Universalists are in a

unique position to encourage true interfaith dialogue between everyone who wishes to engage in such conversation. In the past there has been the Council of Churches which was mainly a Protestant interfaith organization. Since Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church has begun so-called ecumenical dialogue with the rest of Christianity. And Jews and Christians work together in organizations like the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Conversation between THESE groups and the REST of the world's religions is really only beginning. Last summer the Congress of World Religions met for the second time in 100 years in Chicago. This community (Buffalo, NY) is one of only 9 cities in North America to have an interfaith organization that not only welcomes Catholics, Protestants and Jews but also Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, Bahai, Hindus, Buddhists, aboriginal people, and all others who wish to learn from each other and to work together on common causes. We have worked TOGETHER to oppose the display of religious symbols on public property, and to support the Williamsville, NY school board's bold initiatives against the practice of sectarian religion in the public schools while encouraging the study and understanding of ALL religions. I am proud to say that the BMM Board decision to give that support was made by a meeting of that interfaith organization's Board of Trustees which was held at a local Unitarian Universalist Church!

3. Let's take our light out from under the largest bushel in the

history of basket-weaving! Despite the fact that most people visit a new house of worship on the invitation of a friend...according to Debbie Weiner of the UUA, most Unitarian Universalists invite a friend to church ONCE EVERY SEVENTY YEARS! Religion is the most important thing in a person's life. It is where we concern ourselves with who we are, why we are here, and what we must do about that. The very word "religion" comes from roots which speak of those things to which we are "bound." Our colleague, Richard Gilbert in "Building Your Own Theology" calls it the core of meaning and values out of which we live our lives! Like the God of the Hebrew Bible who was so important that one was not even to speak its name aloud, most of us don't ever speak aloud about our "religion" even to our best friend! In fact, it is not uncommon for people visiting our congregations for the first time, to be surprised to encounter a friend or neighbor whom they have known for many years and **WHOM THEY DID NOT KNOW WAS A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST!**

You know that that's true, and you know why it is so! How many of you have ever had an unwelcome visit to your home from the men with the white shirts and ties willing and eager to give you a free copy of the Book of Mormon in exchange for a lengthy lecture on that denomination's doctrines? How about Jehovah's Witnesses. How many of you have had similar encounters at airports or other public places? How did you feel about the experience?.....Most of us hated the experience. Most of us have been so put off by the practice of proselytizing by others that we

don't even TALK with our neighbors and best friends about "that core of meaning and values out of which we live our lives" - -- our religion.

I'm not suggesting that any of you put on white shirts and ties and start lecturing strangers on the "inherent worth and dignity of every person, a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." You may not get the polite treatment I suspect you gave your own uninvited callers...not even if you tried to buy them off with copies of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" or Robert Fulghum's "Uh Oh!"

I'm not recommending anything more than that we start to level with the people we know and care about, about the religion we know and care about. I am also not recommending anything less!

Several years ago, Newsweek magazine called us the "quintessential religion" for North Americans in their 30's and 40's. Of all the religions in North America, Unitarian Universalists have the Principles and Purposes shared by this important slice of the population. And yet most North Americans in the 30's and 40's (as well as other ages as well) **DON'T EVEN KNOW WE EXIST.**

As a former entrepreneur, this sounds to me like a wonderful marketing opportunity. We don't have to PERSUADE people to accept our principles and to agree with our purposes. **OVER 40% OF THE POPULATION ALREADY**

DOES!

All we have to do is to provide them the opportunity to experience what the overwhelming majority of you felt when you first discovered that there was an organized religion that felt the way you did.

Now, how do we do that?

When I was a child, I was raised as a Lutheran. I regularly attended church school, I sang in the choir, I attended confirmation classes to learn what Lutherans believed, and after I found out what Lutherans believed, I left the Lutheran church and joined the 40% of North Americans who don't go to any church.

My roommate during my senior year at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois was named Dexter Olsen, who was majoring in sewage treatment. We seemed to have very little in common, but Dexter happened to be a son of Arthur W. Olsen, the Unitarian minister then serving a congregation in Toledo, Ohio. Dexter had left some of his father's writings around the room. Reading those books and pamphlets turned out to be the single most important event of my undergraduate experience. I was astounded and thrilled to discover that there was at least one organized religion in which I might feel comfortable. That triggered the series of events in my life which ultimately led to my being here tonight.

How many of you had similar circumstances which have led to your being here tonight?

Thank you Dexter Olsen, whom I have not seen since 1949, for not turning your roommate off by aggressively trying to convert him to your religious faith. But thank you, also, for not hiding your faith. I'm glad the books and literature were out where I could find them.

How many of you have any pamphlets or books about Unitarian Universalism in your home where anyone might actually see them? Or do you hide them?

If you are a Unitarian Universalist minister, what do you say to the person in the next seat on the plane who inquires about your occupation?

I know a former colleague, indeed, a former President of the UUA, who replied to that kind of question by saying he worked for a book publisher. While it is true that the Unitarian Universalist Association owns Beacon Press, a book publisher of which we can all be justly proud...I think there was a least a little bit of obfuscation in our colleague's reply, don't you?

We don't have to SELL, but we should at least TELL others about what we think and how we feel.

I only met Arthur W. Olsen once in my life and that was when he gave the address to the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association as the representative of those ministers who had served for 50 years. I

particularly remember the part of his address where he encouraged experienced ministers, serving large congregations, to resign and let new ministers replace them while they started or helped fledgling congregations who could most benefit from their experience. "We've got it upside down," he said. He went on to say that because of economics, the fledgling congregations do tend to call ministers who are almost as inexperienced as they are, while our large congregations which have lots of experience might even prosper without the pervasive pastoral presence of their long-time leader. Indeed they might even be more likely to survive the inexperienced religious leader and help her or him grow.

I did not come home and submit my resignation to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst as a result of Reverend Olsen's remarks. In fact I am now ending my 13th year as a settled minister in that wonderful congregation. But I am also an unsettled minister. I am uneasy and disturbed that we as a religious movement who have done so much on behalf of religious freedom and social change are still a statistical speck on the contemporary religious scene. UUA President John Buehrens is right when he sets our sights on significant growth by the year 2,000. Indeed, I think his goal of an increase from 200,000 to 250,000 Unitarian Universalist women, men and children by that date is not only attainable...I think we can do much better than that. After all, that goal represents an average increase of only seven members per year per congregation.

Margaret Mead has remarked, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." More important than the size of a group is its dedication, or commitment, to purpose. As Louis Ginzberg put it, "There is no great thought that has become an impelling power in history which has not been espoused by men (or women) willing to put all their physical and spiritual powers entirely at its service." We tend to forget that political changes like the American Revolution, technological changes like the personal computer, and social changes like the abolition of slavery or women's suffrage began with a few dedicated individuals, and many of them were Unitarians and Universalists.

Tonight I want to urge each of you thoughtful, committed Unitarian Universalists (the Entrepreneurs of Religion) to decide to do something more to increase the awareness of the Unitarian Universalist option. If you are a minister, consider participating in the Minister-on-Loan program in which you can enable a small congregation to experience experienced professional religious leadership for six weeks, while your own congregation can use that time to benefit from the fresh perspectives of others. (They might even appreciate you more when you get back!)

Every one of you can help. Can you make a poster? Why not make one with

your congregation's name on it and the date and time of your services as well as next week's sermon topic. Post it on the public bulletin board in your supermarket, your library, or your laundromat.

If your church does not advertise in your local newspaper, why don't you buy an ad once in a while?

Put a flaming chalice on your car. Wear flaming chalice jewelry. (You can buy them both at Uni-Uniques.) And when someone asks you what it is, tell that it is a symbol of your religion which is Unitarian Universalism and that it stands for religious freedom.

Leave Unitarian Universalist literature around your home. And for the truly bold, consider inviting a friend to church.

Winston Churchill once said, "(In everyone's lifetime) there comes a special moment when he (or she) is figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them, and fitted to their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds (them) unprepared or unqualified for the work that could be (their) finest hour." I hope that tonight is the moment that some of you will look at your own talents and decide to use them to do a special thing, unique to you to help our denomination survive and grow. Use your entrepreneurial energies so that more of the hundreds of thousands of people on this continent who feel as we do and do not know we exist can have the

opportunity to experience the joy and relief that you and I experienced when we first found out about this religious faith.

I've been told that there is a painting in a European Gallery of a scene in which Faust sits opposite the Devil at a chess table. Faust's face is contorted in anguish for he retains on the board but a knight and a king. The king is in check. Thousands of people have walked by this painting, aware that on the very next move the Devil will secure the victory.

But one day a Chess Master happened to stop by and stared. The minutes changed to hours. Still the master stared. And then suddenly, "It's a lie," he screamed. "The knight and the king have another move! They have another move!"

And so may it be for thee and me!