

letters

understanding and love, then this love will manifest itself in actions done for the good of all. When a "critical mass of people" become committed enough to love in its purest form (the unconditional love of God), then our society will become transformed.

Physicists have an important contribution to make to the transformation of society. Fritjof Capra, physicist and author, had made this plain in his recent book, *The Turning Point* (Simon and Schuster, 1982). It is a synthesizing work which begins with the paradigms of modern physics and connects them with the best that is being accomplished in biology, medicine, psychology and economics. The result is a vision of our Western society being transformed by the energy of love—in practical ways, by practical people.

If we acknowledge that our main purpose here on Earth is to love ourselves and each other and each moment and if we recognize that love encompasses and includes understanding, then our task becomes clear: to choose love rather than fear in every thought, every endeavor, every moment. Think about it, and apply it—now, before it's too late!

JANE JACKSON

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1/83

Restrictions on religion

I read with great interest the letter by Mujaddid Ijaz on the subject of physics in Saudi Arabia in May (page 9), and I was pleased with the progress that is being made towards bringing a quality physics program to that country. However, I must relate a tale to you that might put some of the peripheral problems of that society into perspective.

A former student of mine, Khaja Subhani, has been assistant professor of electrical engineering at the University of Petroleum and Minerals (UPM) in Dhahran since 1977. We met at a conference in Berlin during the summer of 1981, where he informally invited me to visit UPM some time during the past academic year to present three lectures on selected topics in solid-state electronics. We corresponded further on this, and during the winter I received a formal invitation by telex from the chairman of his department. My plans were to visit in May 1982, and the UPM office in Houston sent me visa forms. I was advised both on separate sheet and by two of my Arab colleagues that, although I maintain no formal religious affiliation, I must complete the part asking for my religion in an acceptable manner. Not knowing what was "acceptable," I

phoned the Houston office and told them that both my parents were Jewish. The Houston office apparently viewed this as a dilemma and wired UPM asking for advice. Within a week I received a telex from Subhani stating simply "my contract has been terminated." He wrote me a letter, which arrived the following week, stating that the "rules of the Kingdom are strict."

It may be that my invitation to speak in Saudi Arabia and the sudden termination of Subhani's contract are disconnected events, in which case my wait to receive a re-invitation from UPM should be rather short. However, the close proximity in time of the two events surely casts some doubt on the rosy picture of burgeoning scholarly activities presented by Ijaz.

MELVIN P. SHAW

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1/83

THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: The tale narrated in Melvin Shaw's letter does not surprise me. There have been restrictions on the entry of Jewish visitors to the kingdom for many years. People with other religious faiths have been given appointments in the kingdom and most of them have been made aware of the rules and regulations of the kingdom at the time of signing job contracts. Saudi Arabian jobs are by no means governed by equal opportunity laws.

MUJADDID A. IJAZ

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2/83

Require renewal of PhDs

For many years it has been tacitly understood that in physics the PhD is a research degree. What I propose here is a mechanism by which this understanding is made formal.

The PhD would be reviewed and renewed at five-year intervals by the graduate department that granted it. The degree recipient would be required to submit reprints of at least three research papers published in the preceding five-year period. (The requirement would be prorated for those receiving degrees between evaluations.) Failure of a PhD recipient to submit the required number of reprints would result in the graduate department replacing the PhD with a Doctor of Arts—a non-research degree. To regain the PhD, the graduate would have to meet the requirements at the next evaluation.

In this way graduate departments would be required to maintain responsibility for their graduates, and the PhD will be recognized for what it really is.

continued on page 102

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