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SYMBOLS DO MATTER

Matthew 4:1-11

There was an article in the Express Friday a week ago about a bizarre party which took place in the Delta Upsilon House at Lafayette College. You may recall it, it was called a "Back to the Womb" party. It featured lighting effects and decorations which were to simulate a woman's uterus from the inside. And there was also rather grotesque decoration surrounding this area which was the fraternity house's bar. I do not want to go into more detail because if your interested in the grotesque you can find it for yourselves. Needless to say, the party set off a wave of protest at Lafayette, especially among the women students. And therein it seems to me was its value. If it had gone without notice, we would have even more ground for concern than we do even now.

The affair was planned by men, of course, and those who planned it said they meant no harm by it; it was simply a gimmick to have some fun. They had heard about it on another campus or two and nobody seemed to get upset by it. Some of the women who attended agreed that no harm was meant by it. The DU's are some of the finest men on the campus: they're normally well-mannered and polite, as opposed to some of the boors that they had met, so the interviewer pointed out. They didn't see that the symbols used mattered. Some other women indicated that the party represented something more to them, it offended their sensitivities. For all of the enlightenment that these young people are supposed to have, they fell for a ploy of manipulating and using women as sex objects. The "Back to the Womb" party portrayed the womb as a playground, complete with several choices of beer, and by a corollary it indicated that sexual intercourse is part of the playground equipment. If you take it too seriously it isn't fun anymore, and that worries me. And doesn't it worry you, when the finest are insensitive, when life gets more and more cheap, when the realm of the sacred shrinks to where there is no wonder? Now that isn't what the DU's wanted to say. But by the choice of their symbols, that is what they said. You wonder what is next: a Dachau Party or how about a Starving Children gala? It reminds of some years ago when I wrote a letter to a women's club who was having a Poverty Party, and I asked, "Is that what you really want to say, is poverty that much fun that we can play with it and dress up as if it is romantic and warm?" It's great to be poor, ask anybody there. It isn't, is it?