

possible ones. Several of the communities had already died when he wrote, and it is of the nature of many of them that they will only last a short time. 'Community' normally refers to visible groupings of people in particular places, though it can have a more fluid reference when the subject is team ministry in Notting Hill, for instance. The author eschews analysis of traditional (celibate) religious communities.

Because groups of the type this book is concerned with are so varied and so variable, they are a difficult subject for analysis. David Clark finds a useful analytical tool in Peter Rudge's book *Ministry and Management*. He uses four of Rudge's five 'organisational models' to probe the underlying—and often unconscious—dynamic and self-definition of a group. (And if it seems odd to talk of unconscious self-definition, that may be a reflection of the failure of the more enthusiastic groups to go in for self-scrutiny.) The four models are, in Clark's reporting of Rudge: "The

*traditional* model based on the faithful maintenance of a common heritage; the *charismatic* linked to the pursuit of an over-riding intuition; the *classical* model (one which describes the bureaucratic organisation) which he talks of as running a machine; and the *human relations* model associated with self-determining small groups and with fellowship."

But the value of the book is probably to be found more in its descriptive content than its analytical acuity. It introduces us to a number of interesting features of a number of interesting experiments in community-building: none of the experiments may be all that significant individually. It remains to be seen whether taken as a whole they constitute a significant challenge to our society, or an avoidance of the real issues. The book is expensive and lacks an index, unless the Annotated List of Basic Communities is supposed to do.

COLIN CARR O.P.

**THE MAN FROM PLAINS: THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF JIMMY CARTER, by David Kucharsky, Collins, £2.95**

'Ethics', notes Mr. Kucharsky in this remarkable study of President Carter, 'has been a terribly neglected discipline. Most people never have a course in it unless they go to college'. It is fortunate then for the Free World that Jimmy Carter went to college, and has since lived out with deep conviction what he learnt there. In a moving scene depicted at the very beginning of this book, Carter returns to his hometown bible class only two weeks before the Democratic National Convention which was to nominate him for President. There is nothing false, showy or flamboyant in this homely tableau: 'The men, all neatly attired, well mannered, and gracious to the hilt, referred to one another as Brother Clarence, Brother Jimmy, and so on. With the room comfortably air-conditioned, they even kept on their suit jackets throughout the class'. Now there will always be cynics, not least among the self-styled 'intellectuals' of the so-called 'Left' with their *soi-disant* 'revolutionism', who will ask what those thirteen pressmen and photographers were doing there if Jimmy was merely sustaining his Sunday routine. But one cannot convince men for

whom the Sermon on the Mount itself was a publicity stunt.

What one can do, perhaps, is to show them that Jimmy Carter is no plaster saint, no tight-lipped long-faced kill-joy. Like every young kid with a bit of zest and kick in him, he dated girls—indeed he had his first date when he was thirteen, for which, Mr. Kucharsky tells us, he was allowed to use for the first time 'the family pickup truck'. Jimmy comes, as we all know, from Plains, Georgia, a town which 'is a perfect circle' (is it fanciful to regard this as more than mere coincidence?) and markets about twelve thousand tons of peanuts a year. Plains is an Evangelical stronghold, and Jimmy did not remain unaffected: as he grew to manhood he began to expand his personal service to the church, and 'to search more diligently for a closer relationship with God among (his) various business, professional and political interests'. Between God and American politics there exists, one might speculate, a certain fine tension; but it is a tension which I have rarely seen so shrewdly and sensitively managed as in the portentous words addressed to Carter (then Governor of

Georgia) by one Nathan Bailey, president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, after Jimmy had made a militant declaration of his faith at their international General Council. 'I'm sure none of us want to mix politics with this occasion', said Mr. Bailey, 'but regardless of our party affiliation, Governor, I hope if the Lord carries, that all of us will have an opportunity to vote for you for some national office sometime in the future'.

Perhaps it is a sign of the spiritual advancement of the United States that there, somehow, 'religious' and 'secular' languages do not collide in mere mutual embarrassment—that the 'this-worldly' and the 'other-worldly' seem to sit easily together, with none of that absurd dualism so rife in traditional theology. The very language of this book itself reflects such a felicitous blending: Mr. Kucharsky writes fluently of Evangelicals 'giving thanks to God for past occurrences and asking prayer support for upcoming opportunities and problems'. He himself is certainly no stiff-necked bigot with a smug monopoly on truth, as one of his more probing theological insights reveals: 'Was Jesus Christ really resurrected? At these junctures many great intellects balk'. A refreshing humility indeed—and one echoed in the figure of President Carter himself, who with his characteristically sensitive discernment of the many-sidedness of situations, 'has won wide recognition as an evangelical without making any extensive statement that reproduces accurately what evangelicals would regard as an absolutely authentic testimony of regeneration'. But, Mr. Kucharsky concludes, he has come 'close enough' to satisfy many Evangelicals that he is one of them.

**A PRIEST'S PSYCHIC DIARY**, by J. Dover Wellman. *SPCK*. 1977, pp. 156 £1.95

The main section of this book is a collection of autobiographical anecdotes concerning psychic phenomena, ranging from demons to dead cats. They are presented simply and, at least if one is prepared to entertain such possibilities at all, convincingly. Most of them could fairly easily be paralleled from elsewhere. The author, who is an Anglican priest, concludes with a few not very exciting reflections on the soul, trance, Jesus, demonic possession and

It is this book's belief that the election of Jimmy Carter to the Presidency might herald a tide of spiritual regeneration in the United States. Perhaps, so far, it can only be a matter of isolated examples—the well-nigh miraculous rebirth of Charles Colson, for instance, who 'invited Christ into his mind and heart early one Friday morning when he sat alone staring out at the ocean'; or the testimony of that 'pair of clean-cut Mormon teen-agers, Donny and Marie Osmond', who are surely one straw in the wind blowing us back to the early church. Above all, there is the eloquent witness of Jimmy Carter himself, whose 'own forgiving spirit was manifested in employing press secretary Jody Powell, who was evicted from the Air Force Academy for cheating'. Or think again of Martin Luther King Senior's stirring 'benediction' to the 1976 Democratic Convention, with its slogan of 'Bring back America to where she belongs'—a benediction which, probing the very soul of the States, was (as Mr. Kucharsky emphasises) televised on all three major networks.

Small things, some will say. But out of peanuts grew a President, and who knows what can happen next? Certainly Carter will prove no fuzzy-minded libertarian: Mr. Kucharsky tells us that 'The one recorded instance of applied anarchism (see Judg. 17:6) is reliably reported to have ended in failure'. Carter has promised us that, if ever his religion and politics come into conflict, he will resign. My own faith in Jimmy Carter may be best expressed by saying that I cannot believe for an instant that any such conflict will arise.

TERRY EAGLETON

spiritual healing.

The author's aim is, it seems, twofold: first, he is concerned that the church should not be too negative about the psychic dimension of human experience. As he rightly says, this is part of our humanity, and the church must be concerned with humanity as a whole. Secondly, he reckons that psychic experience confirms faith, giving a kind of experiential evidence to modern doubting Thomases. This