

**The Slow Fruitfulness of His Heart of Mercy:
L. Brent Bozell, Jr.**

--Epigraph--

“Mercy, which Brent [Bozell] defined as '**an attempt to alleviate the suffering of another, motivated by love,**' now formed the cornerstone of his economic [and gradually enlarging] philosophy. It became the primary subject of his writing. His 1985 article 'The Politics of Mercy' illustrates the way he typically handled the subject. Inspired by John Paul's [1980 Encyclical] *Dives in Misericordia* [“Rich in Mercy” (Ephesians 2:4)], Brent [strove]...to illuminate [and increasingly to live] the message on mercy....” (Daniel Kelly, *Living on Fire: The Life of L. Brent Bozell, Jr.* (2014), p. 206—my emphasis added, my brackets added)

Through the prompt kindness of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, I recently received a gift copy of Daniel Kelly's book that they had just published on L. Brent Bozell, Jr., entitled *Living on Fire*¹ After at once reading the book, whose author died in late 2012, I decided that, instead of writing a fuller book review, I would propose to mention some things about Brent Bozell which might not be so well known, not even, perhaps, to Daniel Kelly himself, although he had generous access to many of Brent's private letters and files.² It is my intention, therefore, to speak especially about Brent's growing understanding and life of the Catholic Faith: his “*Fides quaerens intellectum*” and his living more fully Christ's lengthy and very importantly Self-explicated Parable of the Sower: the cultivation of the soil and thus the soul. For, we either continue to grow in our understanding of the Faith, or we shall lose it.

For, though I had met Brent Bozell briefly (and rather uncomprehendingly then³) on the Feast

1 Daniel Kelly, *Living Fire: The Life of L. Brent Bozell, Jr.* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2014), 253 pages. Brent Bozell was to die on 15 April 1997, and his beloved wife, Patricia (Trish or “Tish”) Bozell died some eleven years later, on 12 July 2008, at 81 years of age. (*N.B.*: Further references to Daniel Kelly's book on Brent Bozell will be found above in parentheses in the main body of this essay. I may often refer to him only as “Brent,” because that is the only name I ever used with him, and always with affection, as well as respect.)

2 At the outset, it should also be gratefully known that it was a member of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Jeffrey Gayner, who first informed me in 1973 about Brent Bozell and even facilitated my meeting of him, through another Weaver Fellow, William Marshner. Moreover, it was Jeff Gayner who first brought Ken Cribb, then a younger undergraduate at Washington and Lee, into ISI; and Ken then joined the ISI staff and eventually became its President. Jeff Gayner, was a graduate student in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill when we met and soon became friends.

3 Brent Bozell, while speaking some words about Christendom and the Vow and the Laws of God as Acts of Love, also

of Saint Thomas Aquinas on 7 March 1962 in New York City when I was a young 19-year-old Cadet at West Point, I came to know him quite deeply only later, both in the U.S. and in Spain, especially during two intervals of his deep and deepening life (1973-1975, 1984-1991); and then less often and somewhat intermittently thereafter, but only because of me, after my own family unexpectedly broke up in 1991.

When Brent Bozell eloquently spoke to a large young audience in that March of 1962 at Madison Square Garden in New York City, he accented the dangers of strategically organized Communism (along with a complicit, often acquiescent, Liberalism) and how both of them were seductive forms of modern transformative (not escapist) Gnosticism, as Eric Voegelin understood it—as Voegelin also so well understood the deeper presence of Hegelianism and its Dialectic, especially among the Intellectuals. These various forms of revolutionary progressivism sought to transform history and thereby aid the purported “maturation” of history (as the alchemists sought the maturation of metals). Some forms of Dialectical Idealism and Dialectical Materialism also sought, more fundamentally, **to transform being, as well as nature, and not only history**. In “DIAMAT” (as Whittaker Chambers and James Burnham also well understood), “Dialectics” meant **the study of the intrinsic contradictions at the heart of reality**—as Lenin and Stalin had blasphemously expressed it.

When Daniel Kelly reviewed and somewhat condescendingly critiqued Brent Bozell's March 1962 “keynote speech” (68)—sponsored by the “Young Americans for Freedom (YAF)” (68)—and in light of Brent's earlier 12 August 1961 essay, “The Strange Drift of Liberal Catholicism,” Kelly wrote the following words:

[According to Brent Bozell] The communists' hatred for the West's “divine commission” drove them to wage their war against the West. Brent next used this theological mode of argument [sic] in March at a rally for World Liberation from Communism....Invited to give the keynote speech..., he flew to

then mentioned the grave, subversive danger of “contraception,” or what G.K. Chesterton called “birth prevention.” He spoke of the mentality of what the desire for “contraception” implied, in relation to the first of the Ten Commandments. Only later did I more adequately understand and intimately appreciate what Brent Bozell saw and meant, and also the ill fruits he so discerningly foresaw if laxity and evasion and equivocation prevailed. That is to say, where the inner logic of that “contraceptive mentality” unmistakably leads, as well as what would likely be practiced, given the sinful propensities of our fallen (*i.e.*, weakened and intellectually darkened) human nature. Although I remember Brent Bozell's also speaking of this matter bravely in his main public talk to a large audience, I might be mistaken here, since I cannot find such words in his essay “To Magnify the West,” which was a month later to be published in *National Review* (24 April 1962), as well as in Brent's much later authorial collection, entitled *Mustard Seeds* (Front Royal, Virginia: Christendom Press, 2001), pages 7-14. When I later knew him more closely, Brent again and again spoke of the pivotal issue of contraception (“birth prevention”) and of its euphemistic and deceptively dangerous new technologies (some of them abortifacient). And he always spoke of “supernatural life,” not only of “natural life,” in his ardently lived Defense of Life, also among the poor.

New York [likely from Spain, where the Bozells had been living since January of 1961] to join fellow speakers Barry Goldwater...and Senator John Tower of Texas in addressing a crowd [sic] of eighteen thousand. Brent's speech, "To Magnify the West," suggested through its sudden shifts of tone **the divergent grounds** [sic] **on which his thinking now rested**. The speech began **conventionally enough**, hailing the growing number of conservatism's successes and protesting liberal charges of "extremism." But then, **almost abruptly**, it put forth an idea of the political philosopher Eric Voegelin as a way of exposing the inner nature of liberalism [not only its drift and slide].... [one of the] **secular versions of what he called "gnosticism"**.... Then came a new shift in topic, a shift from analysis to exhortation. Drawing the audience's attention to the "Christian West" as a civilization founded on Revelation and the Incarnation of Christ, Brent contended [as did Whittaker Chambers] that the outcome of the West's worldwide struggle with communism [and revolutionary socialism] would decide the fate of mankind [not just the West]. The [Christian] West, he declared, must therefore "magnify" itself, carrying its saving truth [Christ's evangelizing Commission to His Apostles?] across the planet both to vanquish communism and to build a global Christendom [?]. (Was this vision a christened version of Brent's bygone World Federalist dream, or **maybe even an unwitting form of gnosticism**, to which **the Manichean notion** of a final, decisive struggle between good and evil had been joined?) This was the [Manichean?] mission that God had **assigned** the West. (68-69—my emphasis and brackets added)

Although Daniel Kelly was himself a professed Catholic, these words—*i.e.*, the content and the diction and the tone—appear to me to be (and to present so unnecessarily, to boot) a supercilious travesty. However, it should be known, that I also had that same—and I think reasonable—response to Daniel Kelly's earlier book on James Burnham,⁴ provoked not only by what Kelly himself says, but also by what he does not say, especially about Burnham's own poignant withdrawal from (or effective loss of) his Catholic Faith while he was in attendance at Oxford University (after Princeton) under the tutelage of Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J. Nor does Kelly say much, or appear to care much, about James Burnham's going to Mass with his son Jim for some two years or so before his death, and his return to the Faith near the end of his life. In any event, as I have been reliably told before—by staff members and by writers of books for the Intercollegiate Studies Institute—some things and some people are "just too Catholic for ISI"—for example, Louis Veillot (1813-1883), Louis-Édouard Pie (1815-1880), or Louis Billot, S.J. (1846-1931). Others, not the Catholics, I have also been told, have a greater final weight and veto now in ISI and they also "have the money—which we keenly need."

4 Daniel Kelly, *James Burnham and the Struggle for the World: A Life* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2002), 443 pages.

To return to Daniel Kelly. Even when commenting upon Brent Bozell's anti-Communist arguments and “recommendations” —and then telling us how, supposedly, “he [Brent] rapped out a list of orders that Washington would issue once it grasped its Cold War responsibilities” (69)—Kelly does not even mention the geopolitical and military context which reasonably prompted Brent Bozell's own articulated convictions in March of 1962. For example: John F. Kennedy was sworn in as a compromising President on 25 January 1961; the Bay of Pigs events and withdrawals soon happened, with the invasion and vacillations starting in 17-20 April 1961; then soon thereafter came the Summit Meeting in Vienna on 4 June 1961 where President Kennedy unwittingly showed his provocative weakness of character also to Nikita Khrushchev; and Khrushchev then acted on that perception and had the Berlin Wall constructed, starting only some two months later, on 13 August 1961; and the dangerous Cuban Missile Crisis (and the unmistakable danger of nuclear war) was soon to follow a little over a year later, on 18-29 October of 1962; and just as the “provocatively weak,” or inordinately conciliatory, Second Vatican Council was also commencing.

Even we callow young Military Academy Cadets knew of those significant military and geopolitical events and considered a few of their likely long-range implications, but we did **not** adequately know of the later and truly treacherous 2 November 1963 (All Souls' Day) assassination in Vietnam of the Catholic President Diem and his brother.

Moreover, we did not yet know much about the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) nor of its likely effects, before the more violent and less ambiguous sequel was to come in the open Secular Revolutions of 1968 in Europe and in Asia, where, even moreso than in the United States, there were many lasting very deep effects. One wonders still whether there would have been those Cultural Revolutions, as in the May 1968 Sorbonne Uprising and its “Dialectics of Liberation,” had there never been a prior liberalizing and innovating Pastoral Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church stressing in the words of Pope Paul VI “the Cult of Man.” Brent Bozell himself was to come to consider both of these momentous events—ecclesiastical and cultural—even when we met again in person briefly, in 1973 in Warrenton, Virginia at the editorial office of *Triumph* Magazine. It was in late summer or early autumn, as I recall, but it was definitely some time after their Christian Commonwealth Institute's summer program in Spain was over for that year, having been again conducted at San Lorenzo de El Escorial in the Guadarrama Mountains 30 miles northwest of Madrid at the Universidad Maria Cristina.

When I first visited the Warrenton office, I was so hospitably received; and I met several remarkable people who, as a group, then vigorously proceeded to ask me many searching questions, especially about Vietnam (and Southeast and East Asia),⁵ where I had been a military officer (and at times on loan to the intelligence community): Brent Bozell, his wife Patricia; Gary Potter; and Warren Carroll, the later founder of Christendom College. In fact, two years later, in the summer of 1975 in Spain and in the presence of his wife in the garden of the Spanish University, Dr. Carroll invited me to be the first Faculty Member of that then-prospective College he intended to found if *Triumph* did not prove any longer sustainable, as he then feared would be the case. (No one else, except for his wife and me, then knew his plan. In the garden that night with his wife, Anne, Dr. Carroll told me that.)

That College itself was nascently founded in 1978, after *Triumph* Magazine had essentially closed down along with the summer programs in Spain of the Christian Commonwealth Institute as well, which happened in the summer of 1975, some three months before General Franco himself died on 20 November 1975 and, thankfully, the feared new, violent Civil War that might follow his death never came to pass. (I had myself attended the last two summer programs in Spain in 1974 and in 1975, and they were a turning point in my own life and in the life of my wife at the time, who was, however, only able to attend the program in 1974.) Because I had been an Army Special Forces Officer, I had been asked earlier in that summer of 1975 to work covertly with the Carlists and their paramilitary arm, the Requeté, so as to help prepare them, especially their sons, for that possible Civil War to come. And I did as was requested, and Brent Bozell himself had encouraged me to do so—although I had my doubts about some of the people involved, including the over-romantic (and even at times delusional) Professor “Fritz” Wilhelmsen. In my view, Wilhelmsen's dreams and encomia of Spain led Brent Bozell somewhat astray and inspired him to be inordinately expectant of things almost intrinsically unfulfillable, or at least unachievable in the short term—such as a return of the Catholic Confessional State and the Social Kingship of Christ the King under Franco or his his chosen Royal Successor. Only

5 They were especially interested in reasons for, and the background of, President Nixon's approved 29 April 1970 military incursion into Cambodia, a seeming widening of the war, conducted soon after Prince Sihanouk had gone to Communist China to visit his sympathetic friend, Chou En-lai, the Premier and Foreign Minister; and after the Cambodian General Lon Nol had then immediately requested our entry, **because the eastern third of his country (on the borders of Laos and South Vietnam) was being overrun and was effectively occupied by the North Vietnamese forces and their Cambodian sympathizers.** Not only strategic sanctuaries, that is, but also arms caches and underground hospitals were to be included! The manifold (and multi-pronged) U.S. incursion into Cambodia is usually said to have continued until 20 July 1970, but the situation was more complicated than that, and we cannot, regrettably, now consider this matter further. Moreover, almost five years later to the day—*i.e.*, from the initial U.S. incursion into Cambodia on 29 April 1970—the North Vietnamese conquerors and their victorious tanks were finally to enter Saigon itself, on 30 April 1975. That was a dark day for some of us. And is still.

in 1984, when Brent visited my home in Front Royal, Virginia, did I tell him the fuller story of my involvement with the Carlists and the Requeté Chief, “Pepe Arturo,”⁶ especially in Navarra in the summer of 1975. Brent admitted that he had learned many sobering things during that nine-year interval and was grateful for my historical reflections and my candor, also about **the Doctrinal Crisis** in the Church, not just in the Morals and Liturgy. (I was then on the Faculty of Christendom College.)

In both the summer of 1974 and the summer of 1975, I remember well the vivid and ardent conversations Brent Bozell, Fritz Wilhelmsen, and I frequently had together in Escorial, especially about the indispensable requirements of a rooted Catholic community and the ambiguous matter of some modern technologies, and whether one could have intimate and enduring “virtual communities” instead, **without** having any physical proximity and mutual sacrifices and assistances as neighbors (as Wilhelmsen himself believed was possible and even desirable). Brent Bozell and I together strongly opposed Fritz' argumentation here, concerning these impersonal, often anonymous, and largely unaccountable applications of mutable technologies and their immediate or gradual effects upon social life. And we opposed him not only on that topic, but also on the Catholic Church in Spain and on the Carlists, also on modern methods of irregular warfare, and on the likely political succession and the quality of Franco's chosen King, after General Franco died. I cherished these moments and extended conversations, which so often manifested the wholeheartedness and warmth of Brent's eloquence, and the acuity of his intellect.

Regrettably, I am not able to say the same about the Philosophy Professor, Frederick Wilhelmsen, who was indeed a gifted Abstract Metaphysician and an expressive Stump Orator who uniquely “knew how to work over a crowd” (in the words of another friend who knew Fritz well and his love for Hilaire Belloc, and who even perilously went sailing with Fritz, and often nearly drowned!). Fritz smoked and drank intensely and abundantly, as he gesticulated and perspired in his voluble argumentations; but Brent had the deeper perspicacity and greater eloquence, in my judgment, and he had heart. One immediately felt his love and admiration and gratitude. He had an empathetic heart for the suffering of others, to include the mental sufferings of men of a keen and deracinated intellect. And for the isolation of an academically shunned and unjustly abused, learned and deeply

6 I intentionally now and henceforth place in quotation marks the name of the Chief of the Carlist Requeté (their Militia or Paramilitary Arm), because I was never certain whether that was his code name or his real name. Many times I sought to discover “Pepe Arturo's” full family name—and had often asked Fritz Wilhelmsen and Warren Carroll to help me here—but they did not know nor seem to care, and, in any case, I was never to learn his authentic name, nor even whether, for security purposes, he had and publicly used only a “code name.”

orthodox Catholic priest such as Father Manuel Miguens, who might even have left the priesthood some time after 1980, and in deep depression. So much true tragedy. With very little mercy shown him in his growing isolation—on many fronts.⁷

During those varied discussions in Spain in the summers of 1974 and 1975, Brent often expressed the tension he felt between being well-rooted and slowly fruitful (like a good vintage of wine) and being a generous missionary. The example of Saint Boniface came up more than one, since this rooted Benedictine monk—a priest and bishop and a papal proconsul—was also the wide-traveling and generous Apostle of Germany (“*der Apostel der Deutschen*”) who died (in 754-755 A.D.) as a blood martyr up in Frisia to the north of Germany, slain while he was vesting for Mass. We therefore discussed this abidingly formidable challenge of being both intensive and extensive. (In the words of Brother Hugh, M.I.C.M., to a mutual friend, Brian Kelly: “You can't be an Aqueduct unless you have (**and are**) first a Reservoir.”) Brent later on felt this tension and this abiding challenge even more deeply when he entered into his difficult and humiliating medical afflictions. When we met again in 1984, together with our mutual friend and gifted sculptor, H. Reed Armstrong, and sat in the sun on the front porch of our Old Farmhouse in Front Royal, we again discussed this deep matter of the centripetal and the centrifugal propensities (and generosity), as it were—especially in the case of a layman in the married state of life (realizing that, by virtue of our very state of life and our marital vows, we could never be a Saint Boniface: a rooted Benedictine Abbot and a Strategic Missionary and also a Papal Proconsul with many missions of a more diplomatic-secular nature—as in Boniface's papally initiated missions to Charles Martel in Gaul with regard to the invading Mohammedans and some other matters, too, more ecclesiastical).

When Brent visited our home with Reed Armstrong in that spring of 1984, we also discussed

⁷ In November of 1999, some two years after the merciful Brent Bozell had died (in April of 1997), the comparably vivid and redoubtable, unmistakably plucky Monsignor George A. Kelly (as President Emeritus of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars) gave a talk at “The Conference on the Bible and the Church,” entitled “A Wayward Turn in Biblical Theory” where, in part, he showed what had happened to Father Miguens and how he was recurrently treated—indeed “abused”—also in the United States even at the Bishops' University (Catholic University) and especially among the reigning Academic Nomenklatura of largely subversive (if not neo-Modernist) Biblical Scholars of the “Historical-Critical Method.” Msgr. Kelly mentions the fact that the modest and discouraged Father Miguens went back home to Spain some time shortly after 1980, but he says no more. (I recommend that Msgr. Kelly's seven-page text be very closely read and reflectively considered. He was a very loyal Catholic Priest whom I met twice at Christendom College, and with whom I had very rich and candid discussions. He even told me what he originally wanted to entitle his 1981 book, *The Battle for the American Church*, which impishly, but meaningfully, included the phrase “*The Invertebrate Primates*”! (It was later rejected by his editor, Msgr. Kelly then told me, for there was a suspicion that he was alluding to Catholic Bishops!)

how he, with the indispensable help of Mike Lawrence (the former Editor of *Triumph*), wanted to write *Mustard Seeds*, his varied collection of writings from the past: his writings before *Triumph* Magazine, in *Triumph*, and after *Triumph*—the sequence of which would show to an attentive reader how he was “a Conservative who became a Catholic.” Once, he even used the phrase that he “grew up—matured—into being a Catholic.” More than once he also said to me—even in the early-mid 1970s—that he had “married the only Catholic in the Buckley family.” (I don't think he ever said that to Trish—at least he never did it in my presence—not even when I lived in his home in Washington, D.C. in late 1988 for almost two months, while I was on a Strategic Commission with the Secretary of Defense, Frank Carlucci.)

Whenever we discussed the matter and meaning of Mercy, Brent always came back to Pope John Paul II's 1980 Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, which had influenced him deeply. For, he saw how John Paul moved from the obligation of Justice, as, in part, our “rendering to each his own due” (“*reddere suum cuique*”), on to an even higher obligation: the obligation of Mercy, which also means a “rendering to each MORE than is his due” in strict justice (or even in the gracious fittingness of equity). Brent saw more clearly then, that a society could not be adequately and gradually built or fruitfully sustained, if it only based its conduct on the “calculating” foundation of strict justice—which would all too easily soon reduce itself also to “litigious sanctions” and further promote “full employment measures for lawyers”—as Aristophanes also unexpectedly understood in Ancient Athens, and not only during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.). For, Aristophanes saw that a civilization that reposed entirely, or even mostly, on Litigious Sanctions was insidiously self-sabotaging and could not for long sustain itself. Nor could it even be able to limit the multiplying eristic factions in society and their discordant and vengeful resentments. That Greek goddess, Eris, once again!

In January of 1985, almost ten years after Spain and the cessation of *Triumph*, Brent Bozell wrote an important essay, entitled “The Politics of Mercy,” a shortened version of which was published in *The Wanderer* Newspaper. The fuller text was later published in his book, *Mustard Seeds*.⁸ In that essay, Brent gave his incisive but inclusive definition of Mercy: “What is mercy? **For God and man**, it can be defined as *an attempt to alleviate the suffering of another, motivated by love.*”⁹ A few pages

8 L. Brent Bozell, *Mustard Seeds: A Conservative Becomes a Catholic* (Front Royal, Virginia: Christendom Press, 2001), 399 pages. This anthology was first published in 1986 by Trinity Communications of Manassas, Virginia, whose editor was Dr. Jeff Mirus, an historian. His 1986 edition also had, as part of his subtitle, the added words “Collected Essays.” The January 1985 essay, “The Politics of Mercy,” will be found on pages 295-314 of the later 2001 edition.

9 *Ibid*, p.296—my bold emphasis added; italics in the original.

later, moreover, Brent adds a comment about the implicit and befitting subtitle of Pope John Paul II's 1980 Encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*: “The Pope could well have subtitled his encyclical 'The Politics of Mercy.’”¹⁰ That is to say, given especially “the works of mercy that cry out to be done in the public order—by nations and persons.”¹¹ It is important to see, once again, that **God's love reaching out to our human misery**—to include the misery of original and personal sin and their sometimes abiding effects—is **also** properly included in Brent Bozell's deep-hearted definition of Mercy. (It was not clear to me that Daniel Kelly saw that, but I may be in error here.)

In this context, it is morally necessary and therefore important to consider in brief what happened with the Carlists and their paramilitary Requeté at Brent Bozell's last Christian Commonwealth Institute gathering in Spain in the summer of 1975. For, it reveals some illusions which were then held—especially by Professor Wilhelmsen and Dr. Warren Carroll—about the vitality and growth and health of Spanish Carlism and about the robust and loyal culture of Traditionalist Catholicism in Spain, as such, even after the innovations and ecumenical effects of Vaticanum II (1962-1965).

Here's the story. At the very beginning of that last *Triumph* Summer School in Spain in 1975, Fritz Wilhelmsen and Warren Carroll asked me whether I would be interested in helping the Carlist leadership and their paramilitary elites to get prepared for the likely contingency of another and terrible civil war, which might well follow after the expected death of General Franco soon. Both Fritz and Warren were aware of how new technologies were used in updated methods of modern war—especially in unjust propaganda and “perception management” (an older C.I.A. shorthand-euphemism for Deception); and also in economic and financial warfare, with the addition of new “International Brigades.” I happily and gratefully agreed to help at once, if they truly believed that I could substantively help—for my Spanish was very poor, and entirely unacceptable in technical military and paramilitary matters. Nonetheless, Fritz and Warren were enthusiastic that I accepted and said that they knew that they could count on me; and they promised to get me at least two simultaneous-interpreter translators (which turned out to be two ardent young men from Cuba). And Fritz Wilhelmsen assured me that he himself would be there to help me, also in my conversations with the Chief of the Requeté himself, “Pepe Arturo,” who wanted to meet me and who would be arriving in Escorial the next day—

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

for further deliberations and planning.

“Pepe Arturo” arrived the next day as anticipated, but he came quite considerably later than expected and then appeared to be rushed and restive; and he said he could not remain with us for long, after all. I told him what I thought we essentially needed at the outset, and the kind of strategic and tactical intelligence we should reliably acquire, before we could begin some disciplined things in training and even, though inchoately, in covert operations. But, first of all, I needed to know how many would be in the cadre and operators we were to train, and what are their ages and the nature of their military knowledge and prior military or Guardia Civil experience. In addition to their numbers and ages, I also needed to know from which parts of Spain they would be coming, for Wilhelmsen and Carroll assured me that they would be assembling “from all over Spain.”

The whole summer I never heard from “Pepe Arturo” or from any other Carlist young or old, and I again and again asked Fritz Wilhelmsen and Warren Carroll: “What's up?” and “Now what?” They could not answer my questions, nor did they know what to do, but they assured me that there must be a good reason. (The short exchanges I then had with Brent Bozell certainly made him wonder just how professionally serious and morally trustworthy this Spanish apparatus was, for they had already and manifoldly broken their word.) Then, some time into August 1975—I am unsure of the date, but it was approaching the Feast of the Assumption—“Pepe Arturo” suddenly shows up in Escorial in the early evening (1900 hours or so) and says that we all have got to get moving, so that we can be in Navarra in the early morning—at a certain Trappist monastery. (It is not necessary that I give its specific name.) “To get moving” meant that we had to drive all night. I asked “Pepe Arturo” sternly—through the Spanish-speaking Wilhelmsen—where he had been all summer. His answers were evasive and unconvincing. I told Warren Carroll that I would not be going north with them—and gave him many reasons for my decision and resolve—and it was not only because my German Mentor, Josef Pieper, would be coming to Escorial for lectures and a longer visit with us in a few days (and that was a heartfelt factor, for sure); but because this whole operation now appeared to me to be a travesty, slipshod and feckless and sad. After telling Wilhelmsen of my decision, Warren Carroll then came and knocked on my bedroom door at the Universidad Maria Cristina and entered, in order to plead with me to re-consider my position. He begged me and begged me, and he even knelt down like a Greek Suppliant and clutched the back of my knees and legs. I relented.

I drove all night with “Pepe Arturo” at the wheel and Fritz Wilhelmsen in the back seat translating for me in the front, right passenger-seat. There were just three of us in the car, but there were four or five other cars, and they were larger models. But I do not know how large a group we were, because it was already quite dark. “Pepe Arturo” and Wilhelmsen and I talked all night, though I was tired—and became more tired—as we drove and spoke, and part of my weariness was my sense of the futility of the conversation. Its lack of trustworthy specificity, which has for many years been an important criterion for me of the *veritas rerum* (“the truth of things”).

We arrived at the Trappist monastery in Navarra early in the morning (0530-0600 hours, I think) and had strong black coffee and a little bread. I do not even remember whether we snatched a siesta or siestasita, but we met the assembly of participants about 0800 hours, and there were very few youths—perhaps 5-10. I am not underestimating the number. Many of the men, fifty or so at the time, were quite elderly and noble and dignified in bearing. Most of them had fought in combat in the Spanish Civil War, and especially in the valorous Carlist *Tercios*. The two Cuban youths loyally remained at my side the whole time I was there with them in Navarra, and they helped me exchange and share many intimate memories of war and of their coming of age as young men in defense of their Faith and their Patria and their own families.

When I realized that no more youths would be arriving from all over Spain, as reasonably expected and as unqualifiedly promised, I decided that the preconditions were not yet there—not at all—for the training in irregular warfare which “Pepe Arturo” had especially requested me to provide. Moreover, the whole atmosphere in Navarra was elegiac and incipiently demoralized—and also demoralizing to me.

Two of the older Carlist combatants from the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War, who were so memorably noble in character and in bearing and gesture, soon said to me with great courtesy that they well understood why I was disinclined to remain longer in Navarra. They even recommended that I return to Escorial to be with Professor Josef Pieper, and then return when the promised “critical mass” of Spanish youth and young men had arrived, after all, in a week or so, perhaps; and after Josef Pieper had returned to Germany. These fine men even offered to take me to the train station with my two Cuban translators, and to buy our tickets for us as a gift. Which they did.

Moreover, one of the men said to me as we were about to depart for Escorial on the train that he wished that he had had a son like me; and he then gave me as a gift—which I still carry in my wallet—a *Detente* he had himself always worn in combat in the Spanish Civil War—a beautiful little and well-embroidered patch of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—and it was firmly attached by a pin to a much-fingered little Crucifix. What a cherished combination and gift. The Spanish inscription on the back of the *Detente* said: “O Sacred Heart of Jesus be with me” (“*El Corazón de Jesus está conmigo*”). This admirable man, whom I never saw again, then also poignantly said to me: “Roberto, we fathers in Spain are now not even able to pass the Faith on to our own children.” How could I ever forget such things—I told them all to Brent Bozell when he visited me at home in 1984, almost nine years later.

And I added, for Brent's further reflection, what had transpired **after** Warren Carroll and Fritz Wilhelmsen and Brad Evans arrived back to El Escorial from Navarra, approximately four days later. The honorable Brad Evans (himself a close friend of Brent, with whom Brent later traveled in Central America—and to Ireland, too, I believe) came to my room at once upon his return, and told me all that had happened. In his deep and inimitably resonant voice (perhaps the most beautiful speaking voice I have ever heard), Brad said that there was, in truth, very little training conducted up in Navarra, but that Fritz Wilhelmsen at the final Banquet had given a stirring talk in Spanish on Christ the King (“*Viva Cristo Rey!*”—“Long Live Christ the King”), and he was vociferously acclaimed and cheered; and then “Pepe Arturo” stood up and denounced me. He said, in effect, according to Brad (and confirmed later by others, but never otherwise apologized for), that I was a short-range crusader with no stamina to stay loyally in the fight, but they would go on without me; and he (“Pepe Arturo”) was glad that I had shown my true colors. I then asked Brad whether Fritz or Warren said anything then or later to defend me—or even to “explain” me—and Brad said: “Not at all. Not a word.”

When I shortly afterwards presented this report and knowledge to Warren Carroll in person, he merely said: “It is regrettable that Brad told you of this. I wish he hadn't told you.” Nothing else. Never apologized. Not even years later, when he still wanted me to be at Christendom College as a Literature and Latin Professor, and Head of the Department, and he even (more than once) had asked me to succeed him as President of the College (which I declined).

I never saw “Pepe Arturo” again. And Frederick Wilhelmsen never had anything to say to me about our belated journey to Navarra and the meeting there with the sadly thinning ranks of the

Carlists, and with so few of their own children present there, or even then loyally carrying on the Carlist traditions, so many of which are also intimately bound up with the integral, traditional Faith.

Nor did I ever see Brad again, but I do not—cannot—forget him. Brad Evans, whom I greatly honored and admired, was, as you may not know, about 6' 6" and of large stature, with a big smile and a manly candor of expressive and honest articulation; and he often had a Viking beard, which went well with his adventurous spirit and with his deep resonant voice. Brad's death broke Brent Bozell's heart, I remember, although I am not yet sure where and when that happened. But, a mutual friend, Gary Potter, reluctantly and very painfully told me that Brad had died of an overdose of drugs. I do not know what ever happened afterwards to his wife, or where she is even now. But, I can still see Brad with his wife (Paula, as I recall) in San Lorenzo de El Escorial in 1974 and 1975 where at least one of their children was born in the early 1970s—almost five years before Brad was to start his varied travels and missions abroad with Brent in 1975 or 1976. I remember that, mercifully, Brad also saw Frederick Wilhelmsen's misleading counter-revolutionary romanticism, and, yet, also his sincerity, as Fritz had likewise had in his earlier vigor, especially during the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and the Heroic Resistance against the Hungarian Communists and the invading Soviets Forces (with their Mongol troops).

Two Catholic Priests—one Spaniard (already mentioned) and one Frenchman—were also very formative, memorable, and morally and doctrinally important during those two Summer Institutes in 1974 and 1975, when Brent Bozell was also vividly present: Father Manuel Miguens, OFM (a Franciscan and a learned, very modest Biblical Scholar¹² who combated the tendentiously Naturalistic and Neo-Modernist Historical-Critical Method and especially Father Raymond Brown, SS, himself a learned and much praised Sulpician priest); and Father Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., a theologian of the Sacred Heart,¹³ as well, who knew Pope Paul VI personally.¹⁴ We shall also come to see how Father de Margerie was, like, Brent Bozell, very attentive to the question of “contraception” and very thorough in his reasoning, and always prompt with searching questions to his audience, even in the Interior Forum during Sacramental Confession.

12 See, for example, Manuel Miguens, OFM, *The Virgin Birth: An Evaluation of Scriptural Evidence* (1975), 169 pages; and *The Infancy Narratives and Critical Biblical Method* (1980)—available in *Communio*, Vol. 07.1—Spring 1980).

13 See, for example, Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., *The Heart of the Lamb* (1972).

14 In 1974, Father de Margerie memorably told me that, in his recent private audience with Pope Paul VI, the Pope had wept, and said that he prayed to be taken by Our Lord, for he could no longer bear the strains of the Papacy and his growing realization of what disorders he had likely set in motion. Paul VI did not propose the alternative of abdication or retirement.

For example, in 1974, he asked me in Confession. “Why do you not yet have children, since you have been married since mid-1971, now three years ago?” Moreover, he would not give me absolution in Confession until he first spoke **to both my wife and me together**, in private in his room.

During “The *Triumph Years*”—in “October-December 1972”—Brent Bozell wrote an extended essay entitled “Stop the Death Merchants,” in which he has some important words on “contraception” and on “what Cardinal Wright has called ‘the contraceptive mentality’” in relation to the First Commandment.¹⁵ Not long before the Supreme Court's Roe versus Wade Decision (22 January 1973) and during the George McGovern-Richard Nixon Presidential campaign, Brent wrote:

What has happened is that the movement we have come to call “anti-life,” but which can be more clearly understood as **the Death Force**, has achieved a new ascendancy in American politics: a position of maneuver and power from which it is poised to lay waste all that remains in this country of the natural garden of life. (207—my emphasis added)

Moreover, he says a few pages later:

In urging resistance to the Death Force, I did not single out for special attention any one of the dirty wares....I mean **the whole mindset** (what Cardinal Wright has called the “contraceptive **mentality**”) on which the Death Force rests and relies—and takes as a given except among the unwashed—and without which [mentality] it would fall apart tomorrow. (210—my emphasis)

Were there “less embarrassment” amongst Catholics about all of this, Catholics would:

Go on to point out that there is a uniquely Catholic, or Christian, teaching about Life [to include the Supernatural Life of Grace], and that it is the whole mission of men informed by the Incarnation to bring this teaching to the world. It is a teaching that is concerned only derivatively and therefore secondarily about the preservation of [natural] human life, for it is concerned directly and therefore primarily with the creation of human life [and *Vita Aeterna*]. And while this truth about this creation, like the truth about preservation, is supported by the natural [moral] law, it cannot begin to be understood except through the Christian revelation. (211)

It is of worth to understand Brent Bozell's further reasoning here, since the ecumenical pro-life movement has tended to elide over the matter of “birth prevention” (“contraception”) as well as to

¹⁵ L. Brent Bozell, *Mustard Seeds* (2001), p. 210. The essay in its entirety is to be found on pages 207-215. By the First Commandment, Brent Bozell means “**The first and greatest Commandment: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.'**” (211)

understand human life in light of the Rights of God, too, and thus the indispensability of the Church and the supernatural life of Grace *ad Salutem Aeternam*:

What the Christian knows, and knows **in the clarity of revealed mystery**, is that human love is **a refraction** [and proportionate analogy] of divine love. All human life is brought into being by God and sustained by him for his glory, but human life, a human soul, is brought into being to glorify him in a radically imitative—and anticipatory—way. It is an ineffable, yet frighteningly precise way...Human life is called to glorify him actively, in the freedom of love, so that by returning in kind **the informing principle** of the divine act, which is love, the soul **may** be brought to him in the beatitude and glory of union....and when [a married couple] come together, a man and his woman are given the supreme opportunity of their union—to love Him openly in trinity, to accept the invitation to act as co-creators of **a new life that can be raised up to Life by Him**. That is why contraception is an infinitely greater **affront** [to God]...than abortion or euthanasia or any other form of murder. Contraception is the willful prevention of human life, a deliberate No-saying to the highest expression of God's love, his offer of Life in himself; and so it is proscribed by the first and greatest Commandment...Contraception blocks the very entrance of Life; it refuses to cooperate with God in making a being be; **it denies Him the love of a new son**. Is there a greater evil that men can do? Is there a greater horror, as mirrored now [in 1972] in explicit public policy and almost universal private practice, that a nation can embrace? I have a few words remaining **for the waffling clerical establishment**, and then move on to the only realistic hope **for a nation fallen in love with Death**. (211-212—my bold emphasis added; italics in the original)

Brent shows his own docility and humility, when he quotes and then comments upon the words of a young colleague, “Mr. Ronald Lamb,” who had just recently said to him that:

The great sadness of *Humanae Vitae* [Paul VI's 1968 Encyclical on Human Life] is that it had to be written **instead of** another encyclical, *Divinae Vitae*. I [Brent] have thought about that some, and will now go a little further, **letting out the intuition that you cannot, even if you are Pope, teach *Humanae Vitae*** [or John Paul II's later 25 March 1995 Encyclical on **Natural** Life, *Evangelium Vitae*] **successfully without first teaching *Divinae Vitae***. (213—my bold emphasis added; italics in the original)

These last two sets of words not only remind me of what I often heard in our conversations which began in the late summer of 1973, but also of what I heard as a cadet back on 7 March 1962. Brent even came to consider and incorporate an insight of “Mr. Cyrus Brewster,” his son-in law, I believe, and he leads us gradually to this further intuition:

I wrote last month that **contraception is a sin against the First Commandment**, and shortly after he read the manuscript, Mr. Cyrus Brewster...gave me a note to the effect that he thought that **there is a sense in which contraception is the sin against the Holy Spirit**. He couldn't quite say why, and I can't quite do so either, but he is right, **and if you have any doubts about it, I refer you to the Nicene Creed which says: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life."** (213—my emphasis added)

Further incorporating and using Cy Brewster's own words of insight, Brent then adds:

Now of course a society cannot "commit" sin, but [like the Gnostics] it can "stand for" **the knowing rejection of faith, by affirming a rejection of creation** [as in "cultural contraception" (213)]. And this is why a society despises saints...."The saint is the reed upon which the [Holy] Spirit plays the tune. (Whether it is the shepherd's flute or the pipes of war.)...But they ["the saints"] will have **only one mission: to live love; to break their hearts on the rock of the world.**" (213—my emphasis)

We may now better understand why Brent Bozell touched the hearts of so many, as he more and more lived out in his practical charity both the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

I wish to conclude these reflections upon his life with a few things I glimpsed in the years 1986-1991, which were very difficult years for me. Having worked with Father John A. Hardon, S.J. in several of his missions with Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her sisters, I told Brent about the Queen of Peace in Washington, D.C. which was run by her Missionaries of Charity Sisters to alleviate the suffering of those diagnosed with AIDS or similar afflictions. Soon I discovered that Brent and Trish were going there voluntarily and quietly. There were other places, too, that Brent regularly went to, and Daniel Kelly has well described most of them, especially the soup kitchens among the Hispanic poor.

There is one ecumenical-charismatic community (lead by a laywoman, named "Edith," or "Edie," I recall) that Brent visited briefly in Gaithersburg, Maryland, after I told him about the enthusiasm and warmth William (and Connie) Marshner's had experienced there in their new home, near their well-established friends Steve (and Diane) Galebach. Brent went and almost immediately turned around and left. Since Brent knew Bill Marshner personally, I asked what made him depart so soon. He said acutely and with great discernment: "It's called the Mother of God Community, but there was no sign of the Mother of God." He was referring, not only to the atmosphere, but to the conspicuous absence of any statues or pictures of the Blessed Mother, he told me. He also asked some

of the ecumenical members there, what version of the Bible they considered authoritative, and why?

Even though Brent Bozell deepened his understanding and vivid life of mercy—and often very emotionally wrote or spoke in his manliness, ardently begging forgiveness from his ten children and “Tish” for all the disruption and suffering he had caused them—he never expressed what the earlier Popes called “religious indifferentism.” He knew that the Dogmas of the Catholic Church were not only “irreformable doctrines,” but also “exegetical facts” when reading and interpreting the Catholic Canon of Holy Scripture. Moreover, I never saw any manifestations of “Sentimental Theology” in Brent, as if the Principle of Non-Contradiction did not apply. Nor did I ever see any inclination to ecumenical syncretism, though he had such a warm, big heart of inclusive mercy. For him, “truth mattered” and he believed that truth was the basis of unity, to include the unity in love.

CODA

When Brent Bozell died on 15 April 1997, I was on my way to teach at the Air Force Academy. I did not know. Not even after I arrived in Colorado. After I suddenly discovered that I had completely missed the obsequies, I telephoned their home in Washington and was able to speak with Brent's daughter, Maureen, and briefly with Trish.

As I reflected on these things and the longer history of my knowing Brent and some of his friends and sorrows, I especially remembered—and have always cherished—a Letter he wrote on 29 January 1988 on the stationery of his “Misión Guadalupe.” It was a Letter written on my behalf to the Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Major General John Knapp, with the hope that I would soon be a professor there. Brent knew that I soon would no longer be welcome at Christendom College after eight years. His Letter—with its content and resonant tone—was for me like the Detente and Crucifix that the combatant Carlist officer had given me in Spain in the summer of 1975 as a gift, along with his words.¹⁶ May both men now rest in peace and have come now once again to be together.

--Finis--

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¹⁶ Without the Carlist Uprising in Navarra in 1936—after its resourceful 1931-1936 preparations—General Franco could **not** have won the Spanish Civil War. See especially, the *Memoirs* of the indispensable leader of that Carlist Uprising: Antonio de Lizarza, *Memorias De La Conspiracion (1931-1936)* (Madrid: Ediciones Drysa, 1986)—the fifth edition (Quinta edición)—edited by his son, who is a friend of Miguel Ayuso y Torres (who introduced us), and, with that son's own memorable inscription, given to me by him in 1987 as a gift, another precious gift.