

- Values worth pursuing: Loyalty, Love, Responsibility.

CHOOSING LIFE

A young man in Sartre's book *Age of Reason* felt that he had to reject all the values that were part of his culture in order to obtain a true sense of freedom. When he found that he could not steal some money in a given opportunity, he concluded that his efforts to escape from his class were in vain. Freedom eluded him. "I am a bourgeoisie," he said to himself. "I couldn't take Lola's money. I was scared by their taboos." Sartre's idea is that in order to be a free authentic individual, he would have to be able to do anything he desired to do at the moment without feeling any restraint or guilt. Of course, all of us feel restraints and guilts at one time or another, but the pendulum is now swinging towards the idea of Sartre. With the concept that you should do what you please when you please without worrying about the consequences to

others, we are finding a drift in our society towards meaninglessness.

Even though Sartre has many disciples in our growing hedonistic society, there are, in my opinion, some obvious values and truths that are above the whims and wishes of the individual. Unless they become the standards of our lives, we will not be happy people nor will our community be a hopeful place in which to live. The Book of Ruth (in the Old Testament), though a mere four chapters, carries insights concerning these values. It is surrounded in a section of the Old Testament that stresses violence, hate and war, yet like a flower that comes out of the parched field after a rain, Ruth stands as an example of what men work towards. Ruth shows loyalty to her mother-in-law. She forsakes her own blood family, her

own land, and stays by the older woman who needs her. Ruth displays love. When her mother-in-law, Naomi, tries to persuade her to leave for the better life that she might have in her own land, Ruth replies, "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I shall go." A deep analysis of Ruth demonstrates the values that we must seek and live by in our lives. They are **LOYALTY, LOVE,** and **RESPONSIBILITY!** It further demonstrates persons above nationalisms, unity

above racism, with ethical choice instead of aimless drift.

How often have we failed these values in our lives? How frequently have we forgotten that these are changeless? How often have we neglected to emulate them within our family, church and community? Even when times do not seem bright for us, and we tend to think of what we want at the expense perhaps of others, let us decide to go the way of Ruth. With her, let us choose life! — *Rhys Williams in November 8, 1968 CLF letter.*

SADNESS OF AGE

What makes old age so sad is, not that our joys but that our hopes cease. — *Jean Paul Richter*