

# PRIORITIES

1977

1977

Christian Life

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Nashville, Tennessee

\$2.50



## Foreword

The Christian Life Commission's 1977 annual seminar had PRIORITIES as its theme. From the perspective of Christian morality, the seminar considered the most important priority issues to which the people of God ought to be devoting their individual and corporate attention.

The PRIORITIES theme served as a kind of umbrella under which some 595 registrants from some twenty-five states heard and then entered into dialogue with nationally known program personalities dealing with such vital matters as church, preaching, evangelism, family, male and female roles, race, human rights, justice, citizenship, the mass media, world hunger, and moral decision making.

The addresses from this seminar are provided in this printed form primarily as a reportorial service to seminar registrants. The speakers prepared these addresses for oral presentation to a live audience. Therefore this material should not be viewed as if it had been carefully written for formal publication in book form.

It is hoped, nevertheless, that these printed addresses will enable both those who were present for the seminar and many who were not present to profit from these able and exciting speakers who addressed themselves to some of the important PRIORITIES of our time.

Special acknowledgement and thanks are due to the Christian Life Commission staff persons who worked long and hard to make this seminar a particularly good one: Floyd A. Craig, Mrs. Gaye Eichler, Mrs. Jean Elledge, C. Welton Gaddy, Mrs. Annette Hayward, Harry N. Hollis, Jr., Mrs. Faye Russell, David Sapp, Mary Elizabeth Tyler, and John A. Wood.

We hope these *Proceedings* may substantially enlarge the impact of the 1977 seminar on PRIORITIES.

FOY VALENTINE, Executive Secretary  
The Christian Life Commission of  
The Southern Baptist Convention



# Table of Contents

## **Proceedings of the 1977 Christian Life Commission Seminar on PRIORITIES Held in the Holiday Inn Downtown Jackson, Mississippi March 21-23, 1977**

SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>"Priorities: Program Orientation"</b> C. Welton Gaddy, Pastor Broadway Baptist Church Fort Worth, Texas .....	7
<b>"The Saga of Life"</b> John R. Claypool, Pastor Northminster Baptist Church Jackson, Mississippi .....	7
<b>"The Saga of Life: Childhood"</b> John R. Claypool .....	9
<b>"The Saga of Life: Adolescence"</b> John R. Claypool .....	12
<b>"The Saga of Life: Young Adulthood"</b> John R. Claypool .....	15
<b>"The Saga of Life: Median Adulthood"</b> John R. Claypool .....	19
<b>"The Saga of Life: Senior Adulthood"</b> John R. Claypool .....	22
<b>"Christian Conversion and Moral Responsibility"</b> Kenneth L. Chafin, Pastor South Main Baptist Church Houston, Texas .....	25
<b>"The Priority of Moral Decision Making"</b> Roger L. Shinn, Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics Union Theological Seminary New York, New York .....	29
<b>"Character, Values, and Education in Moral Decision Making"</b> Wayne E. Oates, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences University of Louisville School of Medicine Louisville, Kentucky .....	33
<b>"Contemporary Priorities in Race Relations"</b> Benjamin L. Hooks, Commissioner Federal Communications Commission Washington, D. C. ....	37
<b>"Economic Priorities"</b> Dale Bumpers United States Senator Arkansas .....	42

SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>"The Priority of Morally Responsible Media"</b> Hal Wingo, News Editor <i>People Weekly</i> New York, New York .....	44
<b>"Priorities in Preaching"</b> John Killinger, Professor of Preaching, Worship, and Literature Divinity School of Vanderbilt University Nashville, Tennessee .....	48
<b>"The Priority of the Church"</b> Krister Stendahl, Dean Harvard Divinity School Cambridge, Massachusetts .....	55
<b>"The Priority of Feeding the Hungry"</b> Arthur Simon, Executive Director Bread for the World New York, New York .....	57
<b>"The Priority of Nurturing Christian Families," Part I</b> John H. Scanzoni, Professor Department of Sociology Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana .....	60
<b>"The Priority of Nurturing Christian Families," Part II</b> Letha Scanzoni, Author, Lecturer Bloomington, Indiana .....	62
<b>"Issues in Human Rights"</b> Datus Proper Officer-In-Charge ARA/Policy Planning Section Department of State Washington, D. C. ....	65
<b>"The Priority of Understanding Female Roles in a Changing Society"</b> Letha Scanzoni .....	68
<b>"The Priority of Understanding Male Roles in a Changing Society"</b> John H. Scanzoni .....	73
<b>"Priorities in the Christian Life"</b> Jerry Clower, Country Humorist Yazoo City, Mississippi .....	74
<b>"Priorities and Christian Faith"</b> Clyde E. Fant, Jr., Pastor First Baptist Church Richardson, Texas .....	78

## PRIORITIES: PROGRAM ORIENTATION

### C. Welton Gaddy

"Prioritize" is an abominable word fashioned by bureaucrats seeking to expand the vocabulary of a governmental language known as "Washingtonese." Conscientiously to set priorities is an invaluable exercise compliant with the basic instructions of the Bible. In both exhaustive interaction with the multitudes and prayerful reflection in solitude, Jesus exemplified commitment to carefully-ordered priorities. Consequently, he alerted his followers to the importance of focus and instructed his disciples to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

We have not come to this seminar to set priorities. All of us arrived here with priorities—the most obvious of which is to participate in this meeting rather than in some other activity for the next several hours. Differences characterize each of us; differences in backgrounds, positions, interests, and expectations. Yet, we at the Christian Life Commission sincerely hope that while we are together our pursuit of truth can be shared in common and our deliberations in community. Program leaders will discuss issues which rightfully vie for high priority status in our lives. Please listen carefully and critically. Quite possibly some matters will receive too much attention while other matters are too briefly discussed or ignored altogether. Your own sharing of value judgments based upon biblical truth, sociological data, political realities, family responsibilities, and personal abilities will be helpful. Consensus on priorities is not our goal. Informed conversation on priorities is our goal.

Careful thought is in order regarding the priorities which shape our individual lives, our corporate life in society, and our ministry together as Southern Baptists.

On a personal level, consider your answers to questions such as: What in life is most important to me? What is more important than life itself? What relationships need to be initiated or nurtured? How do I make compatible responsibilities to my family, my church, and my community? Do my actual expenditures of time reflect my philosophical ideas about the way time should be used? What do I really want in terms of ministry—to gain or to give? Am I making the best use of my God-given abilities? What are the moral minimums for me—the points beyond which I will not go? Do my calendar of activities, financial arrangements, and interpersonal relationships reflect my commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

On the social level, ponder your responses to inquiries such as: Who or what is the source of your social conscience? Do we take seriously enough the places in which we live to seek involvement in their institutions and influence on their character? Do our welfare programs help or hurt, encourage or discourage, humanize or dehumanize recipients? Do our social policies indicate a preoccupation with the symptoms of strain in human relations and a benign neglect of the major causes of fragmentation? Can we continue to foster a boastful spirit of independence in our nation at the expense of nurturing responsible citizenship in an interdependent world? Are we willing to alter our present life-style in order to cease from wallowing in "too much" while multitudes are writhing in "too little"? Does the commitment to end racism

and sexism evidenced in our noble pronouncements extend as well into our daily language, monthly payrolls, and occasional jokes? Are we still committed to liberty—even for those with whom we disagree—and to justice—even for those whom we suspect of wrongdoing? Do we see the development of new sources of energy to combat growing energy shortages, the creation of job opportunities to alleviate unemployment, and arms control, if not disarmament, to correct the proliferation of weapons as merely economic issues which test our political savvy or as moral issues which test the very fiber of our faith?

On the denominational level, think through your ideas regarding requests for information such as: What is the church? Do our ecclesiastical publications, programs, and buildings reflect our theological convictions regarding the body of Christ? Is our fellowship strong enough to sustain the tension required for spiritual maturation? How do we reconcile our desires to grow numerically, our commitment to preach prophetically, and our resolve to minister effectively? Is our devotion to the Bible to all of it or only to a part of it? Have we confused calling the name of Jesus with living the life of Jesus? Are we more Southern Baptist or more Baptist than Christian or is our allegiance more to Christ than to any region or denomination? How do we measure success?

Priorities are born as a result of intercourse between our commitment to Jesus Christ and our obedience to divine leadership, between the breadth of need around us and the depth of a desire to help within us, between the numerous demands which are made on our time and the amount of time available, between the call for expertise in Christian ministry and an awareness of our personal gifts for ministry, between the profundity of our theological doctrines and the practicality of behaving as we believe, between the challenge to go in new directions and our willingness to change. As in most births, both pain and joy are present.

Those who know the nature of the gospel, the dynamics of social change, the demands of the political process, and the limitations of personal involvement know too the significance of priorities. When we come to the end of this seminar and depart from each other hopefully we will all share a sense of the importance of priorities and we will all be engaged in affirming, adjusting, or changing completely the priorities with which we came together. The aim of this meeting even as the prayer of the Christian Life Commission is for Southern Baptists, individually and collectively, to give themselves to priorities which facilitate justice, a love of kindness, and an humble walk with God. After all, that is what the Lord expects from us. What we may legitimately expect from each other regarding these priorities is not success but faithfulness, and that is enough.

May these be days in which together we redeem the time.

## THE SAGA OF LIFE

John R. Claypool

Back in 1971, not long after I went to Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, I recall saying to my

colleagues on the religious education staff that I wished we could pool our insight and draw up a "road map" for the whole human saga from womb to tomb. I was fully aware that each individual has his or her own unique experiences along the way. However, at the same time there is much commonality in this journey we are taking. The stages of our lives all follow the same sequential pattern—infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle adulthood, and senior adulthood—and there are many predictable crises and growth challenges that every human being faces despite his individuality. I suggested that it would be of great benefit to the church at the programing level to have such an overview, because it would enable us to identify not only the particular challenges people should expect but also the resources that the Christian gospel can make available to us.

This idea was greeted with warm enthusiasm, but as is so often the case in an overly active church, nothing specific was done about it. Four years later in a winter planning retreat, someone remembered the idea and put it back on the table, and this time it "became flesh and dwelt among us." We decided to use "The Saga of Life" as a theme for the month of September the following year as everyone was convening back from vacation. I was given the responsibility of preaching four sermons on Sunday morning about the basic stages of this pilgrimage. In the evening hour we decided to invite experts on these particular phases to share with me and the congregation in a dialogical setting and then following that we proposed workshops for the various age group workers in our Church School. When the fall rolled around, this emphasis proved to be a very great success, and very frankly, it whetted my appetite to do more work in this whole area. I found great insight in the biblical materials on King David and tried to augment this with the best I could find in what is generally called "the behavioral sciences." I continued to do reading in the field and on subsequent occasions worked with a group from St. John The Divine Episcopal Church in Houston at Laity Lodge and the adult retreat group from Second Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, and each time had my own insight heightened by this interaction. Thus, when Welton Caddy and Foy Valentine talked to me about doing the opening section of each of these sessions in the "Priorities" seminar, we agreed that this kind of emphasis would be helpful. What I would like to do is to continue the learning process that I have already outlined and attempt to sensitize all of us to this many-faceted human saga in which all of us are set and in the midst of which we are called to minister. I propose in subsequent sessions to take each segment of the life cycle and ask: "What are the priorities—that is, the compelling needs and resources—that pertain to this particular moment in life?"

You may well ask why this sort of emphasis should be a part of this kind of program. It seems to me that there are several answers. The first is that a genuine vacuum does exist among us in terms of understanding all of the stages of life. Many years ago, C. J. Jung pointed out in his book *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* that the afternoon and evening of life are lived very differently from the morning. "However, where," he asks, "are the universities to prepare

us for the challenges after forty?" He rightly pointed out that almost all of our educational resources have been invested in the morning of life. Think of the research that has been done on early childhood and adolescent development. Think of the tremendous investments we have made trying to get people ready to firm up their identity, select a vocation, pick a mate, come to some kind of moral outlook, but then, once the rite of passage into adulthood has been negotiated, we have left folk pretty much on their own to cope with the rest of life. The tremendous popular response to Gail Sheehy's book *Passages* is a good indication of how hungry people are to know more about the longest single stage of our human existence, and I look on this volume as a signpost to the increased research that is going to be done on the predictable crises of the adult segment of life.

There is no question that this lack of knowledge about so many of the pivotal challenges of life has proved devastating to many folk. Contrary to the ancient cliché, *what we don't know most assuredly can hurt us!* The challenges that slip up on us or explode under our feet unexpectedly are rarely handled as well as those for which we have had some preparation. Some time ago, I heard a state Senator in Texas tell a Rotary Club meeting about the famous Mexican bank robber, Jorge Rodriguez, who was operating back and forth across the border around the turn of this century. He was so successful in stealing money that the Texas Rangers finally assigned a whole posse to watch the border and put a stop to it. One morning a Ranger spotted Jorge stealthily slipping into the United States and followed him as he robbed yet another bank and fled back to Mexico. He trailed him into the cantina where he went to relax and got the drop on him, put a gun to his head, and said: "I know who you are, Jorge Rodriguez, and unless you give me back all the money you have stolen from the Texas banks, I am going to blow your brains out." Unfortunately, Jorge did not speak English and the Texas Ranger did not speak Spanish, and there the two of them were at a total verbal impasse. About that time, a little Mexican came up and said, "I can speak both languages. I'll translate for you," and proceeded to put the Ranger's proposal into words that Jorge could understand. He immediately answered, "Please tell the big Texas Ranger that I have not spent any of the money. If he will go to the town well, face north, and count down five stones, he will find a loose one there, and behind it is all the money that I have taken. I have not spent a cent. Please tell him." With that the little Mexican got a wry smile on his face and said to the Ranger, "Jorge Rodriguez is a brave man. He says he is ready to die." The point of that story? Again, what we don't know can hurt us. Had Jorge Rodriguez only known English or the Ranger Spanish!

At a much more serious level, however, is the truth that ignorance is a liability, not an asset, when it comes to coping with the stages of life. Years ago when I was a pastor in Kentucky, I received a packet containing a book entitled *On Becoming a Woman*, and one of the most poignant letters that I have ever read. It seems that a couple in northern Kentucky had been married for several years when finally a child was born to them. She was a little girl and these parents proceeded to shower upon her every advantage

that they could think of—beautiful clothes, piano lessons, ballet lessons, and all the rest. They thought hers to be an idyllic existence, but just as she turned thirteen, she put a gun in her mouth one night, pulled the trigger, and took her life. It was only then that her parents discovered her diary and the fact that she was deeply troubled about some of the things that were happening to her body and personality as she moved out of childhood into adolescence. The letter stated that the parents had decided to take the money that they had set aside for this child's college education and send this book to every clergyman in Kentucky. It ended by saying, "Please read this book and pass it on to the young people with whom you come in contact. If we had known some of the things that are taught in this book and had been able to convey them to our daughter, in all probability she would be with us yet." When I put down that letter, I could not help but think of Jesus' prayer from the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." So much of the suffering of this world does not originate in human badness but rather human blindness. What we don't know about ourselves and others can be of devastating consequence. Therefore, it seems to me that anything we can do to increase our awareness of what life is like at the various junctures—what kinds of temptations and problems we can expect, and what kind of resources are available in the gospel, so much the better. There is, then, a crying vacuum at the point of fully understanding this pilgrimage from womb to tomb, and trying to speak to that is one reason for including this kind of emphasis in such a program.

The other reason is that the church is one of the few institutions left in society that has an opportunity to deal effectively with this problem. If you stop and think about it, our society is not only divided along racial and social class and ideological lines, but increasingly we are being divided now along generational lines. The church is about the only institution left that still has some form of contact with all of the ages of the human family. If a university became concerned about this problem, there is relatively little they could do about it, for their main contact is only with one age of human beings. The church still has some touch with children, adolescents, young adults, middle adults, and the aged. It still has a chance to impart insight to the whole family. Therefore, in a unique sense we have a responsibility growing out of this position to do something at this point.

I trust you will recognize that what I shall be doing makes no pretense at being definitive or exhaustive statements about any segment of the saga. At best, I will be giving hasty, descriptive sketches. Those of you who are well versed in the disciplines of behavioral sciences will quickly recognize what I have and have not read. I make no claim to be handing down final answers. However, if I can make you more aware of the road you have travelled and the road that still lies ahead and give you some "handles of understanding" better to perceive what is going on in the lives of those who are touching your life, then I will feel that I have accomplished my purpose. Sam Keene once described a wise person as one "who knew what time it was in his or her life." It is my hope that at the beginning of each session I can con-

tribute one tiny iota to the building up of that sort of wisdom.

[This address and the subsequent addresses by Dr. Claypool are copyrighted and all rights are reserved.]

## THE SAGA OF LIFE: CHILDHOOD

John R. Claypool

This is the third time that it's been my good fortune to share the platform with Ken Medema and on the other times that I have been with him, he has taught me vast amounts of what it means to see and what it means to receive reality through apertures other than one's eyes. He will astonish you again and again as he has me with his creativity, with what he hears, how it processes through him, and what he is able to give back. And so I am most delighted that his plane finally landed and he was able to get here and that we can share these times of theme interpretation.

God has providentially prepared me to have this kind of assignment where many seats are empty. My first church when I went to Southern Seminary was out on Poosie Ridge. It was a church that had been part of the old traveling church of Orange and Culpeper counties, Virginia, back in the 1700s. It had come across the mountains, had once been a very thriving enterprise, but the things that happened to open-country churches in Kentucky had happened to the Gilead church. The congregation was dwindling away. The older folk were dying. The younger people who finished high school would always follow their older kinspersons to Illinois to work. One Sunday morning when Sunday School started there were fewer there than there are here tonight. The man who was superintendent of Sunday School and had been for fifty years and remembered when it was full like it was this afternoon stood up and said, "Oh Brother John, I just don't know. There's so few. It looks like everybody's died and gone to Illinois." I don't think that kind of fate has befallen the empty chairs that are here but I understand the shortness of time and I also understand how hard it is to mesh in so quickly after you've had so much richness.

If you were here this afternoon when I began, I suggested that my part each time at the beginning of each session would be to try to raise your sensitivity about the different segments of the saga of life. Each one of us moves through a variety of growth challenges and what I'm going to try to do is a kind of pastoral overview that will be a bracket to the many other concerns of priority that we will deal with. I will try to float with you down the stream of life and try to suggest what each one of these stages has to offer us in the way of challenge. What are the priorities of growth? What are the resources of the Gospel that we have and that as a church we shall try to mediate?

Tonight I would like to focus on the place where we all began, namely, our infancy and childhood. For all of our individual diversities, each one of us begins life in exactly the same way. We are abruptly separated from that source, that mother's body where we have been warm and secure and, suddenly, we have to begin to deal with life as a freestanding individual. We begin this in a state of almost total helplessness

and dependency, but as our little personhood begins to emerge, there are two growth challenges that can either be handled positively or negatively.

The first of these has to do with the issue of personal worth. Now I realize that the child at the time of coming into this world is certainly not at the conceptual level. However, I am convinced of the fact that as the little organism comes into this new arena, it begins to send out all kind of questions and signals. It begins to ask, "What is this new place in which I find myself? What kind of context will it prove to be? Is it going to give me the kind of resource, the kind of support, the kind of nourishment that I once enjoyed in my mother's body?" And then it gets to even more crucial questions. "How is it that I am here? How does this new context regard me? Is it well that I be here? Am I welcomed or am I an intruder? Is my presence here something that is cherished or is it something that is resented?"

These are the questions that the little organism is sending out into the brand new context, and in that kind of back-and-forth interaction between the big people and this tiny beginning life, the issue of self-worth begins to form. Here is where the construction of self-image begins and one starts answering either positively or negatively whether it is good that we be here and whether our individuality has positive significance. At this point, I suppose, everything has importance—the way the child is held and how often, the very kinds of words that are used in communicating and responding, the kinds of emotions, the way the child is made to feel about his or her presence. Everything that the big people do to the little people really does have significance, and it's from that data that they begin to draw some kind of conclusion: Either "I am of worth; it's good to be here; I can trust this new context," or "I'm an intruder. My presence here represents something that the big people resent. I must not have worth. I must not have a right to be here." And so there is the beginning of all kinds of self-despising.

Fortunate is the child who, as he or she begins to send out the signals, finds that what comes back is something warm, something accepting, and something positive. Sam Keene was such a child. He writes in one of his books that as his father was about to die and he knew it, he went out to be with him during those last days and one afternoon just the two of them sat down and looked back over their life together. Sam found himself saying to his father, "I don't know how you feel about everything that you've done with your life, but I want to affirm you in terms of what you did as a parent." He said, "You gave to all of us children the best single gift that any parent could give to a child. You took delight in us. You let us know in a hundred different ways that you were glad we had been born. You made us feel in all kinds of fashions that you thought we had worth and value. You gave us a sense of delight, and for that, father, I shall always be grateful to you."

When I read that, I thought about something that Gordon Cosby once said that at the time shocked me very much. He said that the first, in fact, the primal responsibility that any parent owes to a child is to enjoy him or her. With my Puritan background, I found it unusual that the word "enjoy" and the word

"responsibility" would ever be found in the same sentence. But the more I reflect upon it, the more profoundly true I think the insight is. If we can enjoy our children, that is, if we can surround those children with that positive sense of delight, if we can really make them feel that we are glad that they were born, that they are a part of history, that what they are is something that we cherish, then that is the foundation stone of positive self-esteem.

A sense of delight is what Genesis says God has in relation to that which he has just birthed. You are as familiar as I am with the Genesis poems. God here is pictured not as having to create the world, but wanting to, freely. In my own judgment, I think that God must have found the fact of his own aliveness so joyful that he said one day, "This is too good to keep. This is too good a thing to hold to myself. I want to let others in on what I'm enjoying." And so, not because he had to but because he wanted to, not in order to acquire something but in order to give something, God out of the freedom of his joy called into being a world and then persons. According to the first chapter of Genesis, when he had come to the end of that first week of creating, he looked back on what he had just birthed and the image is almost that of a child rubbing his hands together in delight, jumping up and down and saying, "It's good! It's good! It's very, very good!" This sense of delight is that which surrounds creation, and fortunate is the child who has the big people beaming messages to him or her at the beginning: "It's good that you're here. I am glad that you're a part of history. I take delight in the very fact of your existence." And because I think this delight is so primal, so absolutely essential to positive self-esteem, I need to pause and say several things about it.

First of all, it is something highly personal and, therefore, it has to be received as well as given. What I am saying is that you can't inject delight into a person the way you can take penicillin and put it into a person's veins and it works mechanistically. This delight that I'm talking about, this sparkle in the eye, this sense of "Aha!", this wonder is something that has to be given by the parent but it is also something that has to be received by the child and there is no failsafe solution here.

Jesus tells us about a father who had two sons. One son internalized his sense of delight or else he wouldn't have had the freedom to ask for his inheritance, to go off and waste it, and then dare to come back and join the party that his return created. Delight had gotten into that boy. But here is the other lad who stood out there in the dark scowling, never knowing why his father was sorry when the prodigal had left, not understanding why he was delighted because the prodigal had come back. He stood out there and said, "You never gave me anything."

That's a sobering reminder that delight is not something that we can inject into our children automatically. I say that because I want to take a burden off some people. I have known parents who have really, as best they knew how, surrounded their children by delight. They have given the best that they knew how to give, and for some strange, distorted reason, the child has refused to accept that gift of delight. Therefore, we need to say to those parents, "Listen,

you're just playing one hand in the game of parenting. You don't have all the cards in your hands to do it automatically. This delight that I'm talking about that has to be given also has to be received existentially."

I also think it needs to be said that the gift of delight can be conveyed by persons other than the natural parents. Now I believe it was God's original intention that those who conceived and birthed children and had the first contact with them were the natural channels through which this sense of delight ought to be given. But you know from the very way that our bodies are put together—with two eyes, two kidneys, two lungs—that the Creator has built in some back-up facilities when the primary instruments fail. He has ways of getting his work done even when the original intention is not actualized. Therefore, it seems to me that the gift of delight, though it ought to go naturally through the parents, doesn't necessarily have to. Sometimes when the natural parent either cannot give delight, or will not give delight, or for some reason is cut off from the life of the child and separated by a myriad number of circumstances, it is my faith that this God who has this delight in his heart for every one of us is going to find a way to get it to a child. I don't think any child will move through this formative time of structuring self-image without being touched at some point in some way by the gift of delight. Maybe it will come through an aunt and uncle, maybe through a Sunday School teacher, or someone who takes an interest in the child.

As I was doing these sermons several years ago for the series that I mentioned, I took the life of King David in the Old Testament as a kind of biblical model to try to study the way that human personality develops. One of the things that I came to a conclusion about in David's early formation was that he did get the gift of delight but he did not get it probably through his natural parents. We don't know a great deal about his early beginnings except he was the baby in a large family. He had seven other brothers and two sisters.

Yahweh said to Samuel, "Saul is no longer capable of being king. I have called forth another to take his place. Go to a man named Jesse for one of his sons. He is the one that I have selected for this place." Samuel went to Jesse and told him that one of his sons had been set apart for kingship. Jesse never even thought of David because he had other sons who were bigger, other sons that evidently had more of the sense of favor in the father's heart. He paraded all these other boys before Samuel, but Yahweh did not give approval and then Samuel said to Jesse, "Do you have any other children?" And it was only then that Jesse remembered the ruddy baby of the family out in the field. He was brought into the presence of Samuel and immediately God said, "He is the one." The Scriptures say that Samuel anointed David and that the spirit of delight—that sense of cosmic wonder that had called him out of nothing into being—seized David mightily and it became the basis of David's becoming a legendary leader. David was flexible enough to take the gift of delight wherever he could get it!

If you approach this concept of delight the way I am trying to describe it, it follows that we have a responsibility as parents to give it. But it also means

that nobody can eat himself up in self-pity and say, "Because my mother didn't give me delight, then I am forever cut off from it." Because it just could be that the mother, whoever she was, for lots of different reasons, was not able to do that. If we are flexible enough, there should be a Samuel somewhere who can give compensatory delight when natural parents can't. It also says to the church, I think, that we have to be very, very sensitive to where we can move and fill in the gaps when the natural family units have broken down. One of the ways I like to think about "church" is to think of it as a compensatory family, to think of it as taking seriously a whole group of people and discerning who is not getting what they should in the natural processes and then, in the role of the servant, being willing to move toward that one and try to do in the name of Christ what the natural parent was not able to perform.

While I was serving in Fort Worth I had some very disagreeable encounters with Marguerite Oswald, the mother of Lee Harvey Oswald. In these encounters I think I came to a little deeper insight as to why that tragic figure was what he was in history. Many times after I hung up the phone, after she had gone through all kinds of diatribes against everybody, I found myself saying, "If that was all that little boy grew up hearing and thinking and feeling, it's no wonder he had trouble thinking that he had any worth or any positive destiny. Then I couldn't help but let myself fantasize and say, "What if some Boy Scout leader or if some junior Sunday School class teacher had sensed that here was a lad who wasn't getting delight through the natural sources and had dared to try to be a Samuel to that little David and had anointed him with the delight he wasn't getting in the usual ways? The whole course of modern history could have been different if somebody had practiced compensatory delight!"

Therefore, what I'm suggesting is that the first thing that childhood presents in the way of a priority of challenge is that the little person is asking, "Who am I? What is my place in this universe? Is it good that I be here?" Here is the opportunity for the gift of delight, this thing that God has for each one of us. I am utterly convinced that if each one of you could know tonight how God feels about you, you would find it to be the same thing that Jesus discovered as he came up out of the waters of baptism and the heavens opened and he heard this incredible affirmation: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. This is my boy in whom I take delight. This is the child of my creation and I look on him with incredible favor and wonder."

That's the emotional message that God is trying to get through to every one of us, and, therefore, it is something that has to be given, it has to be received. It can come through all kinds of channels. I wonder if we ought to take more seriously the little folk that we come in contact with both in our homes and wherever else it is that we touch them. Could it be that what Samuel did to David is what God would call us to do with this crucial gift of delight?

The other growth challenge I perceive is at the point of gifts and powers; that is, the individual not only must find out some answer to, "Is it good that I be here? Do I have worth?" But there is also the

question of destiny and purpose. "Why am I here and what am I here to do?"

The second thing that I think we have to bequeath to our children is that they have been given power, that something is expected of them, that they are to become part of the drama that does have some substance to it. Therefore, if we can lead them to take what I would call a "Christmas tree" mentality to themselves, if they could look at "all that is within them," like the many different packages that are under a Christmas tree, and if we could cause them to begin to unwrap those packages and to sense that the gifts they have been given would make good presents for somebody else, that what they have been given graciously is needed by the history in which they find themselves, then we would cause them to become alive to a sense of responsibility that is just as crucial as the sense of delight.

Now it would appear that David's family did a better job at this point than in giving him delight. As a very young child he was out in the field working. Something was being asked of him. He was being made to feel that he had a part in the family enterprise. I think that that was just as crucial to his becoming the gifted and useful person that he became as being mightily anointed by the spirit of delight.

Now I realize that there are many, many children in our world who are abused. There are many, many children in our world who are neglected. But as I have worked most of my ministry with middle-class and upper-middle-class families, I have to say that the great problem is not neglect or abuse but rather that we don't really ask enough of our children. We are so intent on doing for them, surrounding them with the things maybe that we didn't have as children that they lose that sense of expectation. I don't mean expectation that says, "Unless you do this I won't love you." I mean this: "Because I love you and see that you have so much good in you that is needed by the world, every gift you have would make a good present to somebody else." Getting across this sense of destiny and purpose in the world, I think, is one of the great deficiencies in modern middle-class family life.

Dr. James Dobson has written an excellent little book called *Hide Or Seek* on the point of building self-esteem in our children. He deplores the fact that we are a super-star culture, that we tend to give our affirmation only to the super-talented, the unusually beautiful, the extremely bright. He says that though this is deplorable, it is not likely to change. Therefore, in addition to making our children feel like they are something unique because they exist, we owe it to our children to help them develop confidence, to show them things they can learn to do so they won't go into a competitive society not having any way in the world to give themselves in ways that the culture will affirm.

James Dobson said that he himself as a young child was very slight of build. It was clear to his father that he wasn't going to be a football or basketball player just by virtue of his physique. But his father sensed that he was quick and had good coordination. So as a little boy he began to teach him to play tennis. Dobson said he deeply resented being snatched up from the sand pile and having to go out on a hot asphalt court and hit balls back and forth across a net.

That didn't make any sense to him. But a gift began to emerge. He began to develop some skills. When he got to junior high school and athletic prowess became a crucial issue of how much worth he had, he had developed competence in another sport to compensate for not being able to play contact sports. He said that we do our children a tremendous disservice if all we do is lavish affirmation upon them and don't make them see that they have gifts and powers that history needs and call them to the discipline of developing and giving those gifts away.

These, then, are the two growth challenges of the first stage of life: the issue of worth and the issue of gifts. May God enable us to be "delight givers" and "gift evokers" to all the little ones we touch.

## THE SAGA OF LIFE: ADOLESCENCE

John R. Claypool

I want to thank Ken for what he brings, which I feel is a tremendously needed dimension to these meetings. I have been coming for some time to the seminars and they can be so cerebral and so serious and so heavy that what we have needed, I feel, is the kind of emotion and the kind of release that Ken enables us to have so beautifully. My friend Bill Hull went up to an evangelism conference in Ohio once and when he got there, he asked the man who was in charge, "What do you want me to do?" He said, "Brother Bill, clear off a wide place and have a fit." We probably don't need that kind of excess at these meetings. But we do need to know how to feel as well as to think and to resolve and you really do bring a very, very important and needed dimension to our program.

My part in the theme interpretation, as I suggested yesterday, was to try to sketch out a road map of this whole human saga from womb to tomb. I am trying to suggest that at each point in the journey there are growth tasks, priorities that need to be faced, but there are also special resources in the Christian gospel. This morning what I would like to do—what Ken has already alluded to—is to focus on that second phase of our becoming, namely the phase that is called adolescence.

James Dobson has said that this is "a time of indigestion, heartburn, and trauma." It is hard to know for whom adolescence is most difficult—the adolescent himself or herself, who is going through the emotional, physical, relational upheavals that take place as he or she moves out of childhood and into the larger world, or the parent and the significant others who suddenly realize that their little child is not a baby any longer, that this one is going to have to venture out into the world unaccompanied by them. Therefore, Dobson says this is the time of life that has something painful for everybody.

I believe that that is correct. Every stage of life has its own particular traumas and challenges, but perhaps adolescence represents the most intense trauma that we face. That's why it is so important that the things that are inherent in adolescence not slip up on us. My thesis is that what we don't know can hurt us!

The things we come upon that we are unprepared for can be that much worse. It is very, very important, then, no matter how we are involved in the adolescent crisis, that we have a sense of what it is, what is required, and what resources are available.

It's important, I think, to realize exactly what we're talking about when we use the term "adolescence." This does not refer to the awakening of sexual powers and awareness. The technical term for that is puberty. Adolescence is that in-between stage when one is no longer a child and no longer lives in dependency and no longer has all the playful privileges that go with childhood. At the same time, one is not yet a fully functioning, autonomous adult. One is still dependent on others for support, is still in large measure under other people's control. Therefore, it is an in-between stage. You are denied the privileges of childhood but you don't yet have the full powers and autonomy of adulthood either.

The period of adolescence has varied in length in different cultures. Back in primitive tribal times there was no adolescence. A child one day would be playing around the village and then that night, if he were a male he would be sent on the mythic hunt. If he survived, then the next day he was a part of the adult community with its responsibilities. There was no in-between period. In our industrial civilizations, however, we have devised the longest adolescence in history. In our times, it can last upwards from fifteen to twenty years in extreme cases. I have known graduate students twenty-eight, thirty, thirty-two, who were physically and emotionally mature but they were still economically dependent on their parents to put them through school or help them go through all kinds of extensive training. Therefore, they were still in that in-between stage. In terms of power and autonomy, they were not completely free. So adolescence is that transitional period. It can last for a great length of time.

The essence of adolescence can be described as "growing pains." Here is a relationship that has existed for upwards to a decade in one form now being faced with the challenge of stretching and expanding without bursting altogether. The trauma of adolescence is taking the kind of intimacy that has been appropriate for a parent and a child and transforming that into a relationship of intimacy appropriate to adults; that is, of freestanding openness, with interactions, no longer over-under, but as shoulder-to-shoulder adults. How to stretch the relationship without breaking it, how to take something that has existed in one form and let it learn to live in another form—this is the delicate challenge of adolescence and it assumes a different shape for the different people who are involved in the drama.

For example, for the parent it seems to me that the challenge of adolescence is learning how to "let up" on the relationship without "letting go" altogether, how to step back from an intense kind of supervision of life without walking away from the adolescent altogether. It is a learning how to distance oneself gradually. What the adolescent most needs is some space and some room to begin to do the things that were once done by the parent: to make decisions, to begin to provide support, to begin to move undirected and on his or her own into the larger world.

It is very difficult sometimes for overly-protective parents to realize that this time has come. A fifteen-year-old said one time, "My mother hovers over me like a helicopter. I'm fifteen years old but if I'm in the basement and I sneeze and she's up in the attic, she turns into a distance runner. The next thing I know, she's standing by my side panting and saying, 'Are you catching cold? Here's some Vitamin C. Don't you think you'd better lie down and get some rest?'" He deeply resents that kind of hovering. What that adolescent doesn't realize is that there was a time in his life when that kind of attentiveness was absolutely crucial to his survival. If the mother had not hovered, if she had not stayed close, then his needs could not have been met and he could not have survived. Having related in one way to a child when the needs were absolute and you were the main one on whom they depended is one thing, but now it is just as essential that one step back and give that person room to grow and begin to do for himself or herself the things that once the parent did for them. For the adolescent, the challenge is also a "distancing" one, but it is a different one. This is the challenge of picking up what the parents are laying down, assuming responsibility as the parents gradually hand this over, and learning how to walk into the larger world of relationships without walking away from one's sources. This is firming up identity; this is beginning to sense what your gifts and powers are; this is learning for yourself how the world works out there in terms of reality. It means, then, learning to walk with courage out there by yourself and yet not walking away from the sources that have been your foundation, that are your reservoir of insight, that can teach you so much that you have to learn otherwise by your own tragic suffering.

Therefore, it seems to me like the challenge of adolescence is twofold: for the parents and the significant others, the challenge is how to step back without walking out on a relationship, how to let up without letting go. For the adolescent, the challenge is to pick up what is being laid down, to assume from another what has been their role before, to walk out into the world without walking away from the wisdom that has brought you into existence.

I have never known a family to handle it perfectly. This is certainly not the case in relation to our biblical model, the legendary King of Israel, David. The seventeenth chapter of First Samuel is a classic description of the adolescent crisis as a young man comes out of childhood and begins to do the things that I have just talked about. David obviously is strong and big enough to carry much responsibility at this point, but he is still under the authority of his father. Remember, adolescence is when you are no longer free to be a child, but you are not yet ready to be a fully functioning adult.

His father tells him, "I want you to go up where your older brothers are fighting the Philistines, take them some food, and bring me back a word on how things are going." And so David sets out on the mission he has been given. He is separated from his father, he's going out to do something under the direction of this one. But when he gets to the place of battle, he is absolutely astonished. He went there with all kinds of adolescent idealism, and to his great dismay, he sees the vaunted king whom he has wor-

shipped, King Saul, quaking with fear. He finds his brothers and all the army of the Hebrews being unmanned with terror because there across the ravine is this mountain of a man called Goliath, the Philistine who proposed to come out and do battle one-on-one. He said to the Hebrews: "Send out your best man. We'll do the fighting, just the two of us, and we'll decide the issue without involving all the armies." And to David's absolute dismay, there was nobody on the Hebrew side to pick up the challenge.

Now there was a time when Saul would have risen to such a challenge with relish, but his courage had left him, his sense of security was gone, and he was no longer capable of answering such a call for his people. But here comes David, fresh from the fields and with all of the idealism of an adolescent! When he sees what is happening, he is outraged, and he says, "The hosts of Israel must not be treated like this. I'll go and fight Goliath."

This is one of the great things that adolescence brings to the saga of life, that is, they haven't been everywhere, they haven't done everything. They are not so fatigued by problems that they no longer think nothing can be done. They don't waste their time asking why, but rather ask why not, willing to throw themselves into the fray. If it wasn't for this infusion of idealism, our society really would run down.

So here comes David, unjaded by life and not fatigued, saying, "I will do what all of the older people have felt is an impossible task." Nobody in the Hebrew camp had been making that kind of offer for several days, and so the word quickly got to Saul that somebody was willing! He said, "Send him here as quickly as possible." However when David walked in, you have exactly what usually happens when a parent figure sees a child "come of age" and they can't believe that the little child who used to be playing around the sandpile has suddenly emerged into adulthood.

We parents in our sentimentality freeze our children at the baby stage and we can't believe that they have grown up. You know that poignant song from "Fiddler on the Roof." It is the night of the marriage, and the fiddler is thinking: "The little girl and the little boy that used to be playing here—how did they grow up so fast?" This is simply because sentimentality doesn't know how to deal with time.

Saul, therefore, is astonished. Maybe he had known David as a child and couldn't believe that this baby was making "man noises," saying that he could go out and do something that Saul himself was afraid to do. But David said what I have heard adolescents say again and again, "Look, I'm not a baby anymore. Why, I've been out there in the fields where I've had to fight lions and bears. I do have adult strengths and powers." He convinced Saul that the time had come when he could do more than in his sentimentality he might have thought.

So when it became obvious that David could handle this kind of assignment, then Saul did what I have done so many times as a parent and what is so easy for us to do when we realize that our children are about to go out to fight the world by themselves. We dress them up in our own armor. We give them crash courses on "the birds and the bees." We begin to tell them quickly all these things that we feel like we

haven't told them before. When Saul realized that David was serious, he called for his armor, the implements that had been forged out to meet the needs of his particular era, and he dressed David up in this and it must have been a comical sight, because Saul was an oversized Hebrew. You know, most Jewish folk are very short, but Saul stood a head taller than most of his contemporaries. There's no indication that David was that tall. I can imagine that David couldn't even move, much less fight, clanking around in all of this over-sized stuff that was forged for another person.

I remember the first time my son came in and said that he was going to have a date. I could hardly believe that my son was going to be out there by himself with a girl, and all kinds of uneasiness began to come up and I began to think back, "Now what did I do on my first date?" I remembered that I had lain awake a whole week trying to think, "What will I do if I run out of things to say?" So I began to think up questions like, "What's your favorite color?" and all these kinds of inane things. So I began to give Rowan all these things that were my armor forged out to meet that particular crisis. He let me know right quick what David had to let Saul know—and that is everybody has to forge their own armor for themselves, that everybody has to go out and fight his or her battle with the kinds of instruments that they have developed out of their own uniqueness and also out of the uniqueness of the time in which they live.

You see, the truth of the matter is that we can "tradition" our children, we can give them "a feel for life," we can pass on to them the best insights that we have, but we can't come to conclusions for them. We can't do their believing for them. We can't paste our particular conclusions on their foreheads. To "train up a child in the way that he should go" is to point that one in the right direction. It is not saying, "Here, I'm going to mimeograph the things that have worked for me and you take them and they will work for you." For the truth is, life moves on. It is not a treadmill. The era in which my son is going to have to fight his battles is different than the era in which I fought my adolescent battles. He's going to have to forge his slingshot and rocks over against the challenges of his own day. To realize this, to let them go, and to aid them in the forming of their own weapons is a very crucial task of adolescence.

Gibran in *The Prophet* says to parents about children: "You may give them your love, but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies, but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, even in your dreams. You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward, nor tarries with yesterday. You are the bow from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. The Archer seeks the mark upon the path of the infinite. He bends you with his might that his arrows might go swift and far. Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness. For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves the bow that is stable."

The bending of ourselves so that we can send our children out, not with our armor but with their own slingshots, the rocks of their own choosing—this is the

great challenge of the parent. The great challenge of the adolescent is to do his homework well, that is, to go deep into himself and find out the gifts that are there, the things that he can use that are appropriate to his powers. Then I am sure, with fear and trembling, every one of us goes out to do battle with the Goliaths that we face with the beliefs, with the traditions, with the wisdom that have been given to us out of the past, but we do it in our own way and in our own particular style.

And so it was, in that crisis moment, Saul was finally willing to take back his armor and to trust David, though he didn't understand him. I'm sure there was incredible anxiety all the way around as David, with that which he had chosen, ventured out into the ravine against Goliath, taking with him the traditions of the past. He walked into the future, but he didn't walk completely away from that which had been given to him. He obviously had taken the faith of his fathers and made it his own faith. He obviously had come to terms with what his gifts and powers were. He did not walk completely away from his sources, and that is something that is very, very easy for an adolescent to do.

Several years ago I went out to Golden Gate Seminary for some lectures and I was taken down to the Haight-Asbury district in San Francisco. This was at the height of the Flower Children day. We walked around with some of the students who were doing street ministries there. I didn't meet a single adolescent that afternoon who gave me anything but their first name in introduction. "I'm Bill, George, Jo Ann." I noted to one of the seminary students, "Do none of these people ever use their family names anymore?" He said, "That's the whole point of this culture. They are so turned off by their past and by their sources that they don't want to have anything to do with that which brought them into history. They have severed themselves completely." I think I realized right then that that was a cut-flower phenomenon, that it couldn't last for very long, because nothing without roots is going to survive.

Alex Haley has taught us something about humanness that is absolutely essential, and that is that the roots which support us and birth us are significant. You can't cut yourself off from that without withering up. Those folk reminded me of people I have worked with pastorally who are suffering from amnesia. They have a past but they've lost touch with it, and so they are forced to live in the present without the benefit of all that had gone on before. As David went down into the ravine, he walked away from his sources but he didn't leave them completely. He took with him the faith and the great reservoir of traditions which were behind him. Those who stood at the top and watched it happen, how their hearts must have almost stopped. Because to see your child walk into a future you don't understand with the slingshot that he has devised, it takes a tremendous amount of courage to let them go, to step back and risk them against the great encounter with whatever Goliaths are there. Yet there is no way around the valley of the shadow of adolescence. If we don't let them go, if we keep them tied to us then they remain emotional cripples all their lives. If they're not willing to pick up what's being laid down and move on their own, they can never be-

come the fully functioning adults that they were intended to be.

There is tremendous agony and trauma for everybody in taking the intimacy that is appropriate for childhood and letting it grow and expand to the kind of intimacy that is appropriate for adulthood. But if we don't risk the valley of the shadow of adolescence, if we parents don't learn how to let up and step back, and if the children don't learn how to make it on their own against Goliath, then the kinds of persons that we see in King David's adulthood could never come to be.

Alan Paton, best known, as you know, for *Cry, the Beloved Country*, has written in another place about his own experience as a parent. It is a beautiful summary to what we feel as we stand on the ravine and see young David venture down toward the Goliaths of this world. This is what he wrote in relation to his son: "I see my son now wearing long trousers and I tremble at this. I see he goes forward confidently. He does not fully know his own gentleness. Go forward, eager and reverent child. See here, I begin to take my hands away from you. I see you walk carelessly on the edge of the precipice. But if you wish, you shall hear no word coming out of me. My whole soul will be sick with apprehension, but I will not disobey you. Life sees you coming. She sees you coming with assurance toward her. She lies in wait for you. She cannot but hurt you. Yet go forward, go forward. I hold the bandage and the ointments ready. If you should go elsewhere and lie alone with your wounds, I shall not intrude upon you. If you should seek the help of some other person, I will not come forcing myself upon you. And if you should fall into sin, O innocent one, remember that is the way of this pilgrimage. Struggle against it, not for one fraction of a moment concede its dominion. It will occasion you grief and sorrow. It will torment you. But hate not God nor turn from him in shame. For out of this tribulation can come a peace, deep in the soul and surer than any dream."

The agony of adolescence is the tribulation of venturing out into the valley of the shadows, of taking a relationship that was one thing and letting it grow into something else. It is a challenge we cannot well avoid, and for it, courage is the finest resource.

## THE SAGA OF LIFE: YOUNG ADULTHOOD

John R. Claypool

My part of the program is to try to sensitize us to the saga of life, to the things that come as growth challenges to us, to the different places we find ourselves as we float down this stream from womb to tomb. This afternoon we come to that segment of the journey that I have chosen to call young adulthood. I am dividing, actually, the adult section into three parts: young adulthood, median adulthood, and then agedness. This afternoon is that part that comes to us after we have negotiated the rite of passage out of adolescence into the beginning of adulthood.

You know, sometimes I wish that I had never heard the formula that comes at the climax of most of the

fairy tales that I grew up hearing my mother read. You are familiar with the words, "and they lived happily ever after." Usually everything that led up to this formula was filled with conflict and struggle. There were dragons to be killed. There were maidens to be rescued. Everything was very tense and turbulent. And then, suddenly, Prince Charming would find Sleeping Beauty, there would be this electric moment of discovery, and then would come the formula and you had the feeling that everything smoothed out and there was no more trauma and no more hassle and no more conflict. It was as if you had been on a choppy sea and, suddenly you had come into a quiet port where everything was smooth.

The reason I'm sorry I heard that so often is because I think it created the illusion in me that there was some point in life beyond which we didn't have to struggle, anymore—that all the dilemmas, the agonies, the turbulence was characteristic of one stage of life, but then after that they were over. I suppose, as a child, I thought that that magic point was the rite of passage out of adolescence into adulthood. That is, if I could ever find myself, if I could ever form a sense of values, if I could decide what I wanted to do vocationally, if I could find an appropriate mate, if I could get all of these growth tasks in place, then life would smooth out, and I wouldn't have to struggle, and go through so much uncertainty anymore. Of course, as I lived on out of adolescence and into adulthood I found out that if there is a "fairy tale" in the literal sense, it is these words. There is no point beyond which the struggle ceases! Certainly moving out of adolescence does not deliver one into some kind of revisited paradise where no more dilemmas are to be faced and no more agonies have to be lived through. In fact, I find that there is in adulthood just as much trauma and just as many growth challenges as any time in my adolescence. Therefore, I fear that the disillusionment I see in so many adults is, perhaps grounded on an illusion; namely, that they didn't think adulthood was going to be as rough and as difficult as it has proven to be.

I would have been a lot better off if I had gotten my feel for life from the Bible instead of from fairy tales, because this book never does give us the hope that there is going to come a time when it's going to get easy and all of the struggles are eliminated. In fact, Jesus says it very clearly, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." He doesn't say, "As long as you are a child you will have tribulation," or "While you are an adolescent you will have tribulation." He says, "Man, in this world buckle your seat belt. You're going to face struggle as long as you're here." There is no release from the challenge to grow, to struggle, to have to deal with the ambiguous and the difficult. This is not to say, however, that the Bible is pessimistic in the way it interprets our existence. In addition to saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," Jesus goes on to say: "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, RSV). That is not to be interpreted that he's going to lift us out of the struggle. It's rather to say that he is making available his experience to us as a resource of coping with the struggle.

I'll never forget when Dr. Charles Boddie preached at the Kentucky Baptist Convention many years ago on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The point of

the sermon was that they were not delivered *from* the flames, but rather *in* the flames! That's the only kind of hope the Bible ever offers us—not that we're going to be taken out of tribulation, but that we're going to be given the resources to cope creatively with it. That's something we need to hear as we move into adulthood, because life doesn't suddenly shift into easy gear and put all of the dilemmas behind us. But the challenges escalate, the challenges continue to exist. They change their forms. Unless you realize this, you may spend lots of energy lamenting because it's not the way you thought it was going to be rather than getting on with the business of dealing with the challenges of adulthood. Therefore, I want to suggest that we have to keep on struggling even after we move out of adolescence into adulthood.

But what is the nature of the challenge as we move into this longest segment of our lives. You see, in a quantitative sense, adulthood is so much longer than adolescence or childhood. Today, with prolonged life, up to sixty years can exist between when you finally "leave father and mother," and I mean by that no longer depending on them for support, until you finally have to go under somebody else's care again. It could last as long as sixty years, which is an enormous period of time. I guess if adolescence is the most *intense* time of our lives, you could say that adulthood is the most *demanding*, because the pressures, the expectations, all the things that are being asked of us are truly tremendous during our adulthood.

Robert Rains says, "They tell me I'm in the prime of life but what I feel like is a piece of prime roast beef—everybody wanting a piece of me, everybody needing something that I've got—wife, children, community, church—everybody pulling at me." Therefore, this is an exceedingly demanding time of our human existence.

Gail Sheehy has written an enormously popular book called *Passages* which I would recommend that all of you work with. Not that you'll agree with all of it. In many places it is very frightening to me. But she does very significantly define this adult segment of life and its predictable crisis points. She has coined the phrase "concomitant growth" to describe the growth challenge of adulthood. What she means by this is the challenge to keep on growing simultaneously on the three basic frontiers of personality.

One of these is the frontier of work or vocation; that is, whatever you do with your creativity you make a contribution to history. The second is the world of relationships. This can be family, spouse, children, or it can be work relationships or significant others. It is not necessarily confined to family. It is whatever you do in the realm of intimacy in building authentic relationships with others. The third realm is the development of genuine inwardness or uniqueness, what Abraham Maslow calls "self-actualization," that cultivating of the unique thing that is you and you alone and letting that flourish and come to flower.

As she says, the great challenge of this forty-to-sixty-year segment of life is "concomitant growth," to be growing simultaneously on all three of these fronts at once. This is exceedingly difficult to do. The great temptation is always to imbalance; that is, to be putting all your energies in one to the neglect of the other. I want to suggest this afternoon that young

adulthood, that time say from twenty-one or twenty-five on to forty or forty-five, that's the time of life when it is the hardest to be balanced. It's the time of life when you think you can get away with imbalance, when for a while it appears that by devoting most of your energies to only one side, everything is going well. It's only when you get to the mid-adult crisis that the neglected parts begin to cry out for attention. You hear the words that are the epitome of the mid-adult crisis, "Is this all? You mean after I have made all of this investment, have I nothing more to look forward to? Do you mean the rest of my life is going to have to be spent going through these same routines with these same old people over and over again?" In young adulthood it is easier not to give attention to balance, to put most of your energies in one place or another and think you are getting by with it. But the classic crisis of the mid-adult point is when that which has been neglected refuses to be ignored any longer and cries out for attention.

Gail Sheehy has many case histories of this in her book. One of them is an interview she did with a forty-six-year-old television newscaster who had really made it professionally. He was the anchor man on an evening news program for one of the networks. His face was known in every household in this country. His income was into six digits. He had climbed the mountain of success to which he had set himself as a young man. But as she interviewed him, she found him strangely wistful. He was forty-six and she found him saying, "You know, the view from up here on top of the mountain is nothing like what I thought it was going to be when I was down there straining every muscle to get ahead." He said, "I realize now that I've climbed up here to what I thought was going to be snow, but it has turned out largely to be salt." She said she found him talking about loneliness, and a sense of emptiness, and asking "Is this all there is to this human existence?"

Then he began to reflect on how he had come to that place. He said that most of the successful people he knew had "made it" at the expense of other people in their lives and also at the expense of their own inwardness. He said: "Beginning at about twelve or fourteen, we let those parts of our lives atrophy because all energies were focused on that great male American dream: Coming out number one man, being king of the mountain, making it!" In fact, Gail Sheehy says that most American men although they have wives, and sometimes mistresses, have only one love affair up until they're forty, and that is with their jobs. "Making it" is the obsession, getting to the place where you're king of the mountain, climbing over everybody's back until at last you are acclaimed.

This is so given to us American males in the very milk that we take in from our culture that we hardly even realize it. Nothing else seems quite as important as becoming known, becoming successful, making it to the top. This man said, "Now that I have made it to the top and now that I have drunk deep of this, why is it that I find myself saying, 'How am I going to get down from the mountain? Where are the navigational charts for descent? You don't come down the mountain of life the same way you climb up.'" Then he said, "Where are the people to make that

journey with me? I have this great sense of loneliness, and on the weekends when I don't have my work to structure my time, I feel like going up the wall."

Here is the classic American male dilemma. It comes from the imbalance of putting too much of self into this side of life and not enough of self into those other crucial parts of our personhood. There comes a time when that which has been neglected will no longer be ignored. It cries out in the night and asks: "Is this all? Is there nothing left? Is there not something, some persons that I can touch and relate to, some sense of doing something because I want to do it and not because culture is demanding it?"

Do you realize that more people in America commit suicide on Saturday and Sunday than all the rest of the days of the week put together? They call it the "weekend psychosis." The explanation lies in the fact that our lives are so structured for us during the work week. We know what to do because there is somebody telling us what to do. But take that pressure off, and we are so little in touch with that unique thing that is within us, that self that is crying out to be actualized, that we cannot stand the vacuum and it becomes so painful that some people are driven to suicide.

I have often wondered what the prodigal son really thought the first morning he woke up in the far country. He felt that all of his problems rooted in his father, who was forever telling him when to get up, when to go to bed, when to do this, and when to do that. If he could ever get away from all that demand, then life would flower and be wonderful. He finally got the courage to break away, to take his inheritance, to separate himself spacially. At last he didn't have to listen to the thousand "oughts" and "shoulds" that were coming from somewhere else. Then that first morning, when he woke up and there was nobody to tell him anything and he was absolutely free to do "his own thing," my hunch is that he was absolutely dismayed because he didn't have any earthly idea of what he wanted to do. He had so seldom listened to his innermost self that he did not know what to do with freedom. Thus, the more he did what he pleased, the less pleased he became with the things that he did.

Now this newscaster would have said much the same thing, that there was a loneliness because he had never given much of himself to any kind of relationship. He had what sociologists would call a pattern of "serial monogamy." That is, he was married to only one woman at a time, but he moved from person to person. Any time he ran into difficulty, instead of using that as the occasion to go deeper, he slid off to the side and found another superficial relationship, like a billiard ball touching many other billiard balls down the table, with no genuine intimacy developed with anybody. So here he was, tremendously extended at the point of what he did workwise but tremendously underdeveloped at the intimacy relation level and also in terms of his own inwardness.

Now does that sound utterly contemporary, the kind of thing that could only happen in the last quarter of the twentieth century? Not so. The challenge of growing in a balanced way has been everybody's problem who has lived on this earth. I found it was certainly King David's problem as I looked back and

studied the adult segment of his life. David, like this newscaster, really made it big in the work dimension of his life. In five short decades he rose from the obscurity of being a shepherd boy to being the undisputed ruler between the Nile and the Euphrates. That whole Mediterranean basin was under his power.

This was an incredible rise to the top, and David did it because he was so good at kinging, so good at the things you had to do to make it in that profession. He had all kinds of natural capacities and he developed them all—musician, poet, warrior, athlete. He could do so many things so well. For the people that are super-competent and really know how to make it happen, there is that great temptation to become a workaholic, to pour all of their energies into it. While you're a young adult, you think you can get away with it. David must have thought so and there was no way to argue with the fact that he really succeeded professionally. He had that shrewd sense of knowing what was strategic to do.

For example, when King Saul was treating him so terribly, he didn't buy into the kinds of injustice that Saul was doing to him and, therefore, when Saul died, he didn't celebrate. He lamented. He wept like everybody else in Israel and the followers of Saul were so impressed by David's magnanimous spirit that (just like the North came down and asked Jimmy Carter to be their President) they came down and asked him if he would be the leader of the whole country. He accepted and then he realized, "You know, if I make Hebron, which has been my territorial center, the capital of Israel, that'll grind it into those Northerners." So he did a very shrewd thing. He took a Jebusite stronghold that had never been conquered before by the sons of Jacob and he made Jerusalem—a neutral site—the center of his new kingdom. David really was shrewd in knowing how to succeed in his work. Yet when he got to his middle forties, as we all are going to if we continue to live, lo and behold, all of the successes of kinging, all of the tremendous power that went with ruling from the Nile to the Euphrates, began to feel like ashes in his mouth and what happened? He began to feel lonely and he began to sense that there must be something else. The clue to this was that one spring, when the armies went out to fight, for the first time in decades, David was not interested in going. His work was no longer as interesting or as compelling as it once had been.

And while he was lolling around the palace trying to decide what to do, the loneliness that grew out of a neglected part of himself began to clamor, and this set in motion his disastrous relationship with Bathsheba that were to shadow the rest of his life.

I see that happening all the time as a pastor to highly competent, successful people who, at forty or forty-five, throw marriages overboard and toss careers completely out the window. They have developed tremendous competencies, only to pitch them out and start in a brand new direction. I find myself saying, "Why on earth, if you've lived together twenty-five years, why now?" And yet, if we knew more of what middle adulthood is all about, and if we realized that "concomitant growth" is exceedingly difficult, most of us in young adulthood would realize that we have put all of our energies into one phase and have neglected the other. So what happens to us in the middle of

our forties is that we are suddenly overtaken by our neglected parts, and some of the solutions that people are driven to under the agony of saying, "Is this all?" are exorbitantly expensive in terms of relationships and old commitments, and in terms of the kind of work competence that is needed for the rest of life.

Now I realize that up to this point I have been describing the experience of the American male. Gail Sheehy has taught me, and I think it's a very important insight, that the American female today is under the same kind of pressures of "concomitant growth" and yet hers, as a rule, is beginning to take a very different form. Just as boys have programmed into them that "making it" is the way to really be a man, so the typical American girl has ground into her that she must be the servant rather than the achiever, that she must attach herself to a husband and express herself through a family because this is the way her highest fulfillment can come into being. So while the father is intent on "making it" and putting in eighteen hours a day on getting to the top, as a rule, the American female has been giving herself to the relational side of life, giving herself to the children, giving herself to her husband. She has been putting into this side of her personhood the same kind of overload that the male has been putting into his work.

So what happens at about age forty? Gail Sheehy says that what she is seeing now is that the male and the female tend to cross. In other words, the man begins to say, "I realize now that work is not everything. People are important." So he begins to turn for some tenderness, begins to want to become aware of his wife and his children at the very moment when she says, "Hey, I've had about all of this relating that I want. I'm interested in some achieving. I'm interested in seeing what my gifts can do in history." So she wants to go back to school or get a job. At the precise moment when he has at last got some time for her, she says, "Where were you when I needed you, when the children were little and I wanted you to be there and you were off working somewhere?" So he comes home ready to be tender and finds a note: "I've gone to night school." And then he says, "Where were you when I needed you?" There is potential tragedy here unless we realize what is happening. This "crossing" of mid-adulthood does present new challenges, but there can be renegotiation rather than rupture. Tossing twenty-five years of marriage overboard is not the only alternative here.

I have heard it said that the American male needs more pastoral care from forty to fifty than at any time in his life and is least likely to ask for it or to get it. I am not trying to be one-sided here. I believe the Women's Movement has much to give and much to offer; in fact I think the Feminist Movement is going to make the race revolution look like a firecracker, because it is so much more pervasive and has so many more ramifications. But I do think that the American male today is in a very tenuous position because there is no cultural sanction yet for the achiever to turn humane, to want to go home and to relate to his wife, whereas there is a growing cultural sanction for the woman to begin to exercise the work side of her personality.

What I'm arguing for is that we've simply got to realize that human beings have three facets to their

personhood and that adulthood is the time when your work capacity, your relation capacity, and your capacity to grow inwardly and to actualize your uniqueness all need attention. If we put most of our energies in one and neglect the other, there is going to come a time of reckoning. I guess what I'm saying is that what we need to do is be aware of how we have spent our past so we can make the renegotiations that are needed for the present and the future. I'm saying in relation to marriage that it is time to be understanding, for the male to realize that the woman has given most of her energies relationally, and that it is time for her to try to express herself vocationally and men must bless that and help it. It is also a great time for the woman to extend some mercy, and allow a reformed "workaholic" that opportunity to grow in new ways. To say: "Because you blew it back then I will not give you a chance to be different now," would be tragic. Mid-adulthood is a time for mercy, for functional forgiveness, and an important time to understand what is happening. There is no way to avoid paying the price for our imbalance, but as we honestly try to renegotiate and get in touch with the parts of our lives that are neglected, we can find in the future a way to grow all of ourselves up to their fullness.

In the world of adulthood, you will have tribulation, but with the resources of Christ, you can overcome!

## THE SAGA OF LIFE: MEDIAN ADULTHOOD

John R. Claypool

I must express my astonishment at what Ken Medema has done. He and I talked for just about two minutes in the aisle this afternoon when the session was over. It's just overwhelming—the depth, the prophetic and the poetic insight he brings to the images he cannot see the way that we can, yet he sees in a way that we cannot. And he has very powerfully and very suggestively told you what happens when "concomitant growth," which is the challenge of all adulthood, is not given careful attention to in that first phase of adulthood.

As I tried to suggest this afternoon, three things comprise the perennial, simultaneous challenges of adulthood: (1) to grow on the work-vocation-creative front—whatever it is you do to contribute to history; (2) to grow on the relational front with the significant others establishing authentic intimacy either with family or with those with whom you work, or whoever is of crucial importance; and, (3) to grow in one's inward uniqueness, the self-actualizing process of taking that flower that has been placed uniquely in you and letting that come into its fullness.

I tried to suggest earlier, and used David's experience with Bathsheba, to say that young adulthood is when we most often are not balanced in the way we are distributing our energies; and this imbalance usually leads to the kind of crisis that Ken has just sung of and made so powerfully vivid to us. It was when David lost interest in his "kinging," that is, in the things that he spent most of his energies in doing, it was when the loneliness and the emptiness of his

neglected parts began to call and clamor, that this disastrous relationship with Bathsheba began and set in motion a chain of circumstances that shadowed the rest of David's life.

However, the thing that Ken did at the end is utterly crucial for what I want to talk about tonight, which is "middlescence" or the median adult phase of life. This is the time when you have probably had a collision with reality, when you realize that your imbalances have to be paid for, when you realize that the way you have lived your life is not the way you can keep on doing it, lest existence comes to utter emptiness. It is at that moment, when you face the crucial task of renegotiating life, renegotiating covenants, that you begin through the mercy of forgiveness to search for a new future in better relationship to the realities of existence.

I heard Carlyle Marney say once about this period of life that "it's too late to worry about innocence." This is what David found out. It is too late to worry any more about being perfect, because now it is abundantly clear that we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have hurt other people. We have sinned against our own uniqueness. We have wasted our substance in a riotous kind of "making it" and trying to "get ahead" at all costs. Or if female, we have spent most of our energies on the relational side and, therefore are wondering if the life of achievement is not passing us by.

"Are there things in me that history needs, that have been buried around the dishwasher, that need somehow now to be brought to fruition?" It is in these moments when it's too late to worry about innocence, too late to be concerned anymore with perfectionism, that we make the crucial decisions about whether the second part of our adulthood will be characterized by what Eric Erikson calls "generativity," or its polar opposite, what he calls "stagnation."

In the morning of life, David had concentrated mainly on his work, only to collide head on with reality. Tillich speaks of reality as "that which we come up against, that which we have to adjust to because we find that it will not adjust to us, that which will not bend, that to which we have to finally bow down and say, 'It has a rigidity of strength and otherness that I cannot alter.'" When David collided with reality, he then had a very crucial choice to make. Would he be eaten up with guilt and dissolve in despair? Would he decide that the mess he made of his life would be the measure of all he ever could be and thus give up? That is one way of going into stagnation. Or would he learn to take the lessons that had come out of his collisions with reality, out of recognizing and facing up to what imbalance can do to an individual, and use this wisdom to renegotiate for the next stage of life?

Now the secret, as I understand it, of generativity as over against stagnation, is that the middle adult does not give up hope on the future, but embraces the kind of mercy that Ken was singing about, the kind of mercy that says, "I will give you a new future on the same basis that I gave you your first chance at life; namely, apart from your deserving." None of us was born into this world because we had done something wonderful and therefore, God was rewarding us. We were given our first chance to live utterly beyond

our deserving. If I understand biblical mercy, it is that coming again of primal grace that dares to say, "I will give you yet another chance at life on the same terms as I gave you the first chance. I will give you the future out of the same sheer graciousness that I gave you the past."

Now that is when it becomes possible to believe there is a tomorrow, there is a future, there still is something to work toward. It's too late to worry about innocence, but it's not too late to learn how to be a responsible steward of one's gifts and opportunities and thus achieve "generativity."

The great challenge of the 'middlescence' is finding the courage to repent, the courage to admit that one has made drastic mistakes, the courage to claim hope, to renegotiate with reality and with significant other people and with oneself. It is to begin to live more realistically, more intentionally, to get in touch with the true gifts that have been placed there by the gracious Creator.

Then we can become what Erikson calls a "mentor" and a "parent figure." In the earlier part of our lives, we tend to be obsessed with what the parent figures can do for us, and there is so much blame and demand in that. But when we have passed through the fires of having come to terms with our failures and also our gifts, then there is born the desire, not to be concerned about what the parent figures can do for us, but the question: "How can I be a parent figure, not in the oppressive sense, but in the nurturing, life-giving, traditioning sense? How can I pass on the gifts that I have been given, the truths that I have learned? How can I be a mentor? How can I bless the generations that come after me?"

Therefore, the key to this stage of life, the priority of challenge it seems to me, is to have the courage to renegotiate on the basis of more clearly perceived realities, out of a profound sense of mercy and grace that one is being given another chance beyond one's deserving. When King David came out of his sense of collision with reality, out of his great experience with mercy, he said, "I will teach sinners to return. I will take what has been brought home to me through the agony of my own wounds, and make this available to other people." This is generativity! This is doing the work of a mentor! This is coming back with the renewed sense of those two things that I mentioned last night, the crucial issues of the first stage, namely, getting in touch with your worth as a person and also getting in touch with your destiny. Generativity is asking: "What are the powers within me that have been placed there by God? What are my gifts?" And having identified these powers asking: "How can I do that which is most appropriate with a gift, namely, give it away, invest it, become mentor, traditioner, passing on the blessing that I now realize has touched my life?" Such generativity is the kind of thing we see Jesus doing at the time he was beginning his adult existence.

The first woman I ever worked closely with on a church staff was Anne Davis. She is a fantastic lay theologian, and was the first person to point out to me that the temptation experiences of Jesus were really a struggle between fantasy and the reality of the world as it is. She said that every one of the things the tempter said to Jesus grew out of the kind of things

every child has fantasized in wishing that the world was some way other than it is. For example, take the turning of stones into bread. Didn't you as a child go out in the backyard and wish you could snap your fingers and there would be an ice cream cone on every tree, that all you had to do was to want it and you got it? That was the kind of temptation that was presented to Jesus. "Don't go through all this process of having to plant, and wait and cultivate and harvest before you get a loaf of bread. If you want it, tell God to give it to you without any effort."

Or then there was the suggestion to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. When I had to walk to catch the school bus as a child, I used to wish that space would disappear and I could just get up out of bed and the next minute I'd be standing at the bus stop. Having to walk was a real inconvenience. Jumping off the pinnacle of the temple would have been the same kind of childish fantasy. Or take that third one, "Lie flat on your back, open your mouth, and it'll all be dropped in without any effort whatsoever." Who of us has not dreamed of that kind of world in which we don't have to do anything and some "Big Mama" or some "Big Daddy" comes and gives us what we want without asking? The point is that Jesus opted for reality over against that kind of fantasy-world. He came to terms with the world as it is, the world of seedtime and harvest, the world of gravity, the world where effort is involved in the collaborations between humanity and divinity and, therefore, in opting for reality, he was beginning the process of generativity.

I want to suggest tonight that the thing we have to do is come home to reality, come home to the way it really is rather than the way in childhood or adolescence we might have wished that it would be. We have to come home to the real gifts that are within us. This means that I may have to recognize that some of the dreams that I had as a child were utterly unrealistic. They never did have a chance at being fulfilled. Therefore, in "middlescence," when I find that I am never going to achieve those dreams, instead of giving away to despair, I need to come home to the way it is and begin to work with the gifts that are there. This means that I must begin to simplify my life. This means that I become more realistic in what I see that I can do and cannot do. This means that I stop beating my head against utterly unrealistic possibilities and come home to the things that I *can* do.

Generativity, then, is renegotiating a contract with the gifts that are there. It is also renegotiating a contract with time, because usually in "middlescence" one of the things that happens is that we begin to be aware of what John Killinger quoted Gail Sheehy as saying, namely, "The dark at the end of the tunnel," the reverse of that image used so often about Vietnam. What this means is that in "middlescence" it finally begins to dawn on us we do not have forever, that our lives are not an unending saga. When I was young, it seemed as if there were a beginning but no end. It didn't seem to me that there was a terminal point out there. Death was simply an abstract concept and, yet, "middlescence" is a time when we have begun to realize that we don't have forever, and if we're ever going to get on with doing some things that are within us, then we better get on with it now, because life doesn't go on forever.

Do you remember in "Fiddler on the Roof," when the first child is getting married and the father is so reflective on this very pivotal and significant "middlescent" event? This is when he began to sing, "Sunrise, sunset, swiftly move the days." It was seeing his child grow up that made him aware that there was a point out there where it ended just as there was a point over here where it began. So "middlescence" is coming home to the realistic gifts that I have and waking up to the fact that I don't have forever, and generativity is the beginning of saying, "I want to take what is in reach, what I really can do, what I think the world needs from me in light of my gifts, and get on with the free and intentional recognizing and celebrating of my gifts and giving those away as wisely as I can." This means, then, that compulsiveness has begun to spin itself out and instead of doing what we do because somebody is telling us we have to, we begin to do the things that are at the depth of our being that we want to do, the things we sense we can do, the things we are drawn to, rather than things we are driven to.

I heard Howard Butt say one time that the older he grows, the more suspicious he becomes of the things that drive him and the more sensitive he becomes to things that draw him. Because the things that draw us are the things that come out of our freedom and our joy, it is with these that we are most likely to be creative and will really strike fire with somebody else. We don't have to do it. Rather, we are to the place where we say: This is what I had rather do with my set of gifts than anything else in the world." This kind of intentionality is the very essence of creativity.

A model of what I see as the maturing personality—generative instead of stagnant—is that magnificent poem in the first chapter of Genesis where God is pictured as deciding, out of all the possibilities available to him, that he wanted to create the world. I am reflecting these days on what for me is a stupendous theological insight, and that is *that God didn't have to create*. God did it out of freedom and joy. Out of all the possibilities that were before him, he chose to create! It was within his power. In pagan creation myths, there is all kinds of struggle between the divinity and the recalcitrant matter. But in the first chapter of Genesis, God is clearly able to do what he wants to do. He picked out something that was within reach and then after he had done it, he had the power to look back and enjoy what he had done.

Now, this is a picture of true generativity. It is born of the freedom to act because you want to. It is something you can do. And it is the kind of thing that when you've done it, regardless of what anybody else says about it, you rub your hands together in relish, and say, "I'm really glad I did it. I wanted to. I could. And now that I've done it, I'm glad." This is the high mark of generativity and it's usually born out of a collision with reality. It's usually born out of the pain of having to say, "I'm not innocent anymore." It is usually born of the willingness to admit that one is guilty, that one has sinned against the gifts that God has given, against the people one has covenanted with, and, yet, in spite of all that, there is still a future on the same basis as life was given in the beginning.

We begin to see that the real challenge is to renegotiate with reality, renegotiate with time, and renegotiate with this uniqueness that's within us. It's

when I let in the people with whom I am in touch and listening to my *inwardness* begin to form my work and my vocation. I no longer am compulsively having to "make it" and spending all my energies there. I rather ask: "Is this something that significant others help me to discern as my gifts? Is this something that is drawn out of me by positive desire, rather than struck out of me by some kind of external coercion?"

Do you suppose there is some correlation between the fact that Abraham and Moses—those great ancient patriarchs—were old men before the Promise ever got through to them? Does the frenzy of compulsiveness have to spend itself before one can really get in touch with wholeness? I am beginning to think so.

Generativity then, is responding to the promise of what is within us and to the fact that we don't have forever. It is responding out of intentionality to the thing we are or to the thing that is needed in history. And yet I must close by saying again, even this comes out of struggle. It doesn't get easier, as I understand from people who have lived through it. The struggles of life change their shapes and forms but they do not disappear.

Frederick Buechner preached a very stirring sermon once called "The Two Battles," based on Ephesians chapter six which talks about "putting on the whole armor of God," and struggling "not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers." He starts out by saying that most of us do struggle with flesh and blood at the beginning. That's what I talked about earlier—the struggle with other people—competition. Our struggle with flesh and blood is for a place in the sun. When I was young the thought that I would be obscure, that I would be invisible, that I would live my whole life and nobody would know about me, was hideous. We do struggle against flesh and blood to get our place in the sun, our visibility. This is our struggle to "make it," but after that has shown itself to be what it is in middle adulthood we begin to realize that there has to be more than making it to the top of the mountain, that there is the intimacy challenge and the self-challenge.

It is at that point that Buechner says another kind of struggle sets in, no longer "against flesh and blood," but "against principalities and powers, the spiritual darkness in high places." What is that? It is the primordial hatred of creation, that demonic power that for some reason does not like what God has made and is trying to unmake it. I don't understand it. I don't know where it comes from. In fact, I don't even know how to speak about it. Call it Satan; call it the Devil; call it the demonic—whatever you will. There is a power of inertia, and destruction warring against us, and the battle of "middlescence," after the battle with flesh and blood, is the battle against whatever it is that is trying to keep that great and good thing that God wants you to be from being completed. And only by the power of God against that darkness can we break through and become the generative folk that he meant for us to become.

In his book *Report to Greco*, Nikos Kazantzakis tells of an earnest young seeker who went to Mount Athos, that monastic community off the coast of Greece, where no woman can still set foot, where the hermits still live trying to find their way to God. He went there to learn the ultimate secrets. He found an old hermit

one day who had been living by himself for forty years. He said, "Tell me, Father, do you still struggle with the devil?" He answered, "Oh no, my son, my flesh is too old for that. I no longer struggle with the devil. I struggle now with God." And the young man's eyes opened wide and he said, "With God, Father? Do you hope to win?" He replied, "Oh no, my son, I hope to lose."

That's the battle all of us must try to lose. The battle against what it is that God wants us to be. That's the battle, paradoxical as it may sound, where God must join us in our fight against him, that he might ultimately win, and we, hopefully, will lose!

## THE SAGA OF LIFE: SENIOR ADULTHOOD

John R. Claypool

Let me just take one word to define the last stage, what I would call "the evening of life." It is that stage when if you have lived long enough, you begin to lose your strength physically, and the circle of the people you know begins to narrow because the folk that you love have passed on into the Mystery. If you live long enough, you'll probably get back into the kind of dependency in which you started your pilgrimage. You have to turn much of the care of your personhood and affairs over to other people. It is the evening of life; it is the last stage. It is that which lies before what I would call "The Great Relinquishment"—the final act of trust; the negotiating of the last great challenge; namely, that "free fall" we call death.

What then are the priorities, the growth challenges, and the resources that are available to us in the last stage, the evening of life?

In his classic essay "The Eight Ages of Man," Eric Erikson defines this last challenge in this way: "It is the challenge of developing ego-integrity versus despair." I'll be the first one to admit that this term "ego-integrity" is by no means self-evident. I am very glad that Erikson gave its polar opposite, because I think we can tell what he's talking about by looking at what he sets it over against. I would say, in trying to read what Erikson and other people have written, that "ego-integrity" consists of coming to a positive and hopeful attitude about three realities: about your personhood, about your past, and about your future. I would say that "ego-integrity" is coming to have a positive feeling about your being—the sheer fact of your existence. It's coming to have a grateful attitude toward all the experiences you have had across the years. It is coming to have a sense of hope about that which lies in the future. The reason I say this is that I sense that despair would be a very negative view of self, a feeling that you had no worth whatsoever as a being. Despair would be looking back over the past and seeing nothing but bleak, purposeless failure. Despair would be looking ahead and seeing that there is no future, no promise that beckons, no purpose out there to which one could be drawn. Therefore "ego-integrity" is finding a way to feel positively about yourself, your being, a way to feel positively about your past and a way to feel positively about your future.

Erikson says that "ego-integrity" is the ability of a person "to bless himself," that is, to look down into the naked essence of being and to bless that reality. It is the ability to look back at the past, and in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld say, "For all that has been, thanks." And it is the ability to look into the future, and again in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, to say, "For all that will be, *yes*." And the question is, Where do we find the resources to come to those kinds of momentous conclusions about this time in life?

Well, obviously you don't do it in a day. You don't do it by a simple act of will. I would have to say that we spend all our lives in building a foundation, a preparation for these kinds of attitudes. You don't wait until you're seventy-five to begin to work on this whole matter of "ego-integrity." It is the capstone to a wholesome "numbering of our days" so that at last we gain a heart of wisdom. So it is an accumulative process, something we can be involved in right now, which is why thinking about it does have value although most of us are not there yet.

And what are the resources of the Christian gospel that can help us? Well, I think we have tremendous powers to offer people here, because the church speaks of grace, of providence, and of final hope. As I see it, these resources correspond to the great growth challenges and out of these resources we can find a way to come to positive attitudes at each of these points.

Now what do I mean? Well, first of all, what the church has to say about the grace of God speaks, I think, very profoundly and more directly to the whole issue of worth, to the question about how you feel about your being as a naked entity. Grace speaks to this more powerfully than anything else that I know.

Now those of you who have heard me speak often or have been around me much have heard me tell over and over again the story of how grace finally became existentially real to me when I was thirty-five years old. Someone asked me one time why the conversion of Paul on the Damascus road is told *in toto* three times in the book of Acts. I answered back, "My guess is it's there three times because Paul must have told it 3,000 times." I'm guessing that every time he went to a new place the first thing he would say was, "Let me tell you how I got into this. Let me tell you what happened that became the foundation of all that I am sharing with you." And therefore, I have but one story. It's the way grace came to me. And therefore without any apologies, I have told it again and again and again because this is how that great resource became existentially active in my life, and it's the hope that I have laid at the base of my being against the "ego-integrity" task of coming to feel positively about myself. Like most human beings, I started out with a very negative feeling about myself. It seemed to me that I was a nothing, a nobody as I came into the world by the hand of God. And the messages that I used to get were, "If you're ever going to amount to anything, you've got to make something of yourself." Now whatever they intended to convey—I take it those were motivational words—what came through to me was, "As you are, John Claypool, you don't amount to anything. You are presently an emptiness, a zero, something that has got to be filled up with something from somewhere else if you're ever going to

amount to anything.” And so I bought that completely. I assumed that the density, the significance was somewhere “out there,” to be gotten inside by achieving, by doing. And so I became what I talked about yesterday, what most American males become: “Homo competitus.” I was “a man on the make,” the person who was trying to climb to the top of the mountain, the person who felt that unless you won the prizes of pre-eminence and success, there was an emptiness about your being that had no significance at all.

I lived that way with all of the strain that went with it for thirty-five years. And I was just like Saul of Tarsus in his zealotry to keep the law. You see, back in his day he was trying to “make it” in terms of fulfilling all of the requirements of God’s law, just like today in our culture we try to “make it” by succeeding in the eyes of our peers. And the strained-taut competitiveness of Saul the persecutor was a mirror image of the way my early years were spent. You remember how Martin Luther, the young priest, was utterly ridiculous in how scrupulously he tried to do everything in the monastery, desperately trying to earn an approval that he didn’t feel like he already possessed? Those were the ways that I remember the first thirty-five years of my life. My great love affair, as Gail Sheehy says, was with my job—with “making it,” coming out Number One, succeeding, having the kind of affirmation that comes from doing it better than anybody else. And all the strain, all the fatigue, all the loneliness that are endemic to that kind of way of life were mine and began to wear me out. I felt that I was cut off from people. I never did find any lasting satisfaction. Win one bout and there was another mountain yet to climb.

And then at the age of thirty-five I got a call one morning from a Presbyterian minister friend who said with some urgency, “I’m in trouble. I’ve got to have some help. Where does the pastor go to find a pastor? I’m giving, giving, giving always to others. But I’ve got some troubles that somebody’s got to help me with. Therefore, I’m calling five of you whom I trust. Would you be willing to meet with me for a series of weeks on Tuesday morning? Our only covenant will be that we’ll be present with each other. We’ll take off our masks. We’ll try to show where it hurts and simply share each other’s burdens.” Well, part of me jumped with anticipation because I said to myself, “Friend, *you* need it? You have no idea how lonely I feel.” Yet other parts of me were very apprehensive because he named off the other ministers in town with whom I really felt myself in competition. I wasn’t very anxious for those men to see me as anything but a winner, anything but the man who had his star hitched to something that was really going high in the universe. Therefore I had some real apprehension about going and letting weakness be seen by those men.

But you know, if you hurt badly enough, you’ll do almost anything. And so the next Tuesday morning need overcame pride and fear and I went and I was amazed at two points. First, I was astonished that the men, who from a distance I thought had it all put together, were having the same kinds of problems I had, and that some of them opened up and confessed what was going on in their lives. Men who preached

so well, but just like me, had trouble living it out. The Word can become words—that’s one thing; but for the Word to become flesh and dwell among us—that’s something utterly different. And these men whom I had known as great preachers, I couldn’t believe they were struggling in many of the ways I was struggling. But my second astonishment was even greater. And that was that *honesty evokes compassion*. Being a competitor, I had assumed if you ever let anybody see your weakness, it would be used against you. Let somebody see where you have a flaw and they’ll exploit you. But there was something about the way that group began to live out its life that was utterly different. The more honest a man was—the more he took off his mask and let himself really be seen—the more understanding, compassion, and support it seemed to evoke. It was my first real encounter with what genuine Christian fellowship ought to be: not stomping somebody when they’re down and weak, but using the occasion of acknowledged needfulness as the opportunity to offer help and strength.

Well, one Tuesday morning, with fear and trembling I finally took off my mask, and for the first time put into words to other human beings what I had always felt about myself, the sense of “nobodyness” that needed to succeed, all the ways that I used people, used jobs, used everything to try to enhance this sagging ego, I spilled out all of the loneliness, the frustration, all the pain—though from the outside at that time, I’m sure, I would have looked very different to the people who only saw me at the performance level. But I really let what had been going on in the darkness of my own being out into words; and I’ll never forget the guy in the group with whom I had the least affinity—he was an Episcopal priest and he represented the epitome of everything that my mother would have called ungodly. I grew up in a home where the theme song was “Keep Yourself Unspotted from the World.” By those standards this man was absolutely checkered. He had all kinds of spots. He drank whiskey. He smoked. He cursed. He went to the Kentucky Derby. He did all the kinds of things that our kind of piety says is the opposite of godliness; but yet would you believe, in God’s surprising and humorous way, he was the one that was to be the bearer of our incredible revealing word to me? It was this man who responded, “John, I hear you. I know what you’re talking about. I have been there before.” And then he said, “Do you know what we need [he said not “you,” but “we”]? We need to hear the gospel with our guts.” He said, “You know there in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said, ‘Ye are the light of the world?’ He doesn’t say you have to be Number One in order to get light, or you’ve got to out-achieve everybody in order to earn light. He said, ‘Man, you are light!’ If we could ever really hear this and believe it and internalize it, then we could do what Jesus said. We could let our light shine so people could see the good thing God has already made of you and give glory to the Father in heaven.” He said, “You have been wrong about yourself all your life. There has been worth in you from the very moment that you were born, not by virtue of what you have made of yourself, but by virtue of what God has made of you. The worth has come with the territory. It’s been there all along. You *are* the light of the world. Oh, if

we could only experience it, believe it, claim it, and live it out!" Now I can't tell you why I had never heard that gospel before in my gut. Lord knows, I had read it before, even in the original Greek. Many, many times I had gone over that passage. All I can report to you is that in that moment, sitting in a Presbyterian minister's office, something like fire moved from the top of my head to the bottom of my heart. And for the first time in my life, *I experienced grace!* I experienced what it is to feel that there is worth in you because of what God has done in creating you. It dawned on me that the first thing God ever did for me was an act of grace, just as much as all the redemptive events—that in the act of creation, the calling me out of nothing, he had placed a worth in existence that was there because of what he had done, not because of what I had done. It was an incredible discovery—a transformation of consciousness. I do not mean to say that everything after that totally changed and no more hassles were involved, but I do say that I walked out that day with a new sense of who I was and of where my worth came from. Greatness was not something that I had to get from the outside inside by achieving; but worth was on the inside by the grace of God and life became more of a process of getting what is inside outside and giving it away rather than trying to get what is outside inside by achieving.

Sam Keene writes about how he spent his early years trying to make it in academia, get a doctorate, get a teaching position. Finally as I did, he realized that there's no way by straining that you can ever feel good about yourself. And one night alone in a hotel room he found himself asking, "What must I do to be saved? What, what, what must I do? He said that suddenly the answer began to dance up and down before his eyes—"Nothing. Nothing. Nothing at all. It comes with the territory, or it doesn't come at all. It is grace that saves us, not our own achievement, not what we make of ourselves, but what he has made of us." Sam says, in looking back over that part of his life before that experience, he realized that he was like a man "riding on an ox, looking for an ox." Here he was, trying to find it everywhere out there and it had been right there underneath him all along and he had really never known it!

What I am saying is that this sense of grace—which I think is at the heart of what the Christian faith is trying to get across to people—is the final answer when we come to the end of our days and we no longer have strength to do anything that people can affirm and it is no longer significant to us what we have possession-wise. Paul Tournier writes, "When life comes to an end, it narrows down again to the issue of *being*." It's not what you do, because you may not be able to do anything. It's not what you have, because what is a Jaguar in relation to the impending death which is about to happen? It's not what you do. It's not what you have. It's what you are. And what is the essence of what you are? It is what God has made you to be, not what you have made of yourself—in other words, what Saint Paul said, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." This is the gospel resource for the issue of *being*. And friends, when we come to the place where we are *nothing* except a withered body and there's nothing we

can do anymore that pleases people, and it makes no difference what we possess, to be able to look down at our naked being and say, "I'm something, because when God created me, he jumped up and down for joy and said, 'It's good, it's good; it's very, very good.'" And coming to feel about the event of my creation the way God felt about it in the beginning, is part of what it means to achieve "ego-integrity." It is allowing grace to speak to being and say, "You are of worth. Not because you've done great things or possessed great wealth, but because you have been made by the joyous God, and the fact that you are is what brings joy to him."

Grace, then, is what speaks to the issue of being; and to know grace, says Erikson, is to be able to "bless yourself" because you know you have been graced by the blessings of the Creator.

And what does the gospel have to say to the past? It speaks of providence, it speaks of a God who has not done everything in history but a God who in everything has been at work for good. It wouldn't be hard to look back over any of our past and say: "For some of what has happened, thanks." We have all had good fortune, moments of triumph. It would not be hard to look back and say, "For those sunny, bright moments, thank you, God." But I think it calls for a profound sense of providence to be able to look back and say, "For all that has been, thanks, thanks, many, many thanks." How can we ever come to that? I think we can come to it when we realize that this great God who has given us the gift of life has not promised to deliver us out of hardship, out of anxiety, but he does say, "I will not abandon you." He does say that in everything that happens, "I have the power to bring forth something good and purposeful. What happens may hurt you tremendously. You may grieve. You may walk the rest of your life with a limp [as I do because of my grief.] But nonetheless, what happens cannot break the bond of being that exists between us and I can bring good things out of bad things. I can take the tragic and still make them the servants of destiny and purpose." We must come to sense that God is not just out *ahead* of us, though that is certainly true—drawing us into the future. God is not just *up above* us, though that is true—he is transcendent in his wisdom and power. God is not just *beneath* us, though that is true—he is the ground of our being. He is not just *within* us, though that is true—he is our companion. But in addition to all these things, God is also *around* us. Helmut Thielicke taught me this. God is surrounding your existence which means that nothing can touch your life unless it passes under his fatherly eye, passes through his hand, and you can count on the fact that if it passes through him, though it may hurt you it cannot destroy you, and he would not let it pass through him unless he realizes that there is some way he can bring good out of this experience. Potentially, you can be blessed. This is the doctrine of providence, a doctrine that says God is not responsible for everything that happens. He doesn't originate all acts but in everything that happens he has an awareness and he won't let it touch us if it would destroy us. He does see ways of turning pain into blessing. Some of the things that have happened to me seemed so bad at the time, yet in the great providence of God, mysterious good has come of

them. Thus, I can say with Hammarskjöld, "For *all* that has been, thanks." I have seen God bring good out of evil, blessing out of blight. As Joseph of the Old Testament looked back over the past with his brothers, he said, "You meant it for evil, but God used it for good." This is what I mean by providence—that God can do incredible things with almost anything. Thus, we can finally look back and say, "Surely, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Surely, there has been a mysterious hand of blessing in all that has occurred." Thus, I can say, "For the light and for the darkness, many, many thanks." That's the way that past becomes the source of thanksgiving and we say, "I wouldn't change it. I wouldn't take away the darkness now that I see it in the perspective of what He did with it. Not for just some of the things that happened, but for *all* that has happened, thanks!" That is what providence does to our past.

What does the gospel say to that third need, to how we feel about that which lies ahead at the end of life? Here it speaks of a tremendous final hope: a hope that says to us that there is no abandonment, that there is always something beyond that God stands ready to give, that there is always a future no matter where you are in your physical pilgrimage, that the goodness and mercy that have followed you all the days of your life become the basis of believing that there is yet more in the mysterious goodness of God.

Ruel Howe was called one day by the wife of one of his closest friends and she said, "I think you had better come see Bill. The battle with cancer is about over." Howe loved this man deeply, so it pained him to go and see what he was going through. But as he sat down to talk with him, he was amazed that Bill said, "I know what's happening. I know I'm about to die. I know why Martha called you to come." He said, "Ruel, I want to tell you something. All my life I've wondered what it was going to be like to die. When I was young I didn't think much about it but as I've gotten older I could not evade it. And now that I've been an invalid, I've had to live with this before me for a long time." And he said, "You know, I have made an incredible discovery—death is an old acquaintance in a new garb." He said, "You know, all my life I've had to give up the things that I had in order to get something that I didn't have. I still remember the morning I started to the first grade. I so hated to leave the world of the sandpile and Mother who was always around to give me cookies. I hated to leave that little world at home. But, lo and behold, when I got to school, it opened up the whole new vista of being—things to learn, things to know, people to relate to. It was an incredible transition from a little world to a big world. It was the same way when I left for college, same way when I took my first job, same way every time I've had to let go of what I had in order to get something that I didn't have. You know, I've learned something in all this, Ruel. Every *exit* is also an *entrance*. Every time you leave something, lo and behold, you find you're being given something else. Every time you walk out of something you walk into something and find yourself being graced with a bigger experience. That's what I have come to feel about death. It is simply an old acquaintance in a new garb, just as originally I had to give up the

world of my mother's womb and die to that in order to be born into history. So in a few days, I'm going to make the great relinquishment and I'm going to die to the little world, which means entrance to the great everlasting Mystery."

A few days later the phone rang and it was Martha, saying to come, and would Ruel hold the service? He did, and as the service was over, he came down out of the pulpit and started leading the casket out the long aisle. When he looked up and saw over the door the letters "E-X-I-T," it hit him: "Every exit is also an entrance." Now this is authentic hope. That's saying that whatever ends also signals beginning, that every death is also the backside of birth, that when we are willing to relinquish in faith and willing to move forward in courage, there is something to meet us on the other side of the door.

Therefore, the evening of life, the climax of our human pilgrimage calls on us to assume the posture of ego-integrity versus despair. And what does that mean? It means finally coming to have a positive feeling about self, about past, and about the future. It is the ability finally to bless ourselves—our very being, our lives, our death. How can we do this? Gospel speaks of grace and providence and hope. They are the secrets, not just of good living, but of good dying as well!

## CHRISTIAN CONVERSION AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Kenneth Chafin

I love the theme priorities. It is a good theme. I need to reset some priorities in my life. It is a great need in our nation right now. It certainly is a need for our churches and our denomination. It means precedents established in order of importance or urgency. It would be interesting if we could take the thirteen or fourteen different emphases of this program and have you list the priorities that you think they have for you, even better to have you write the basis on which you decided what was most important and most urgent and what was least important and least urgent.

My plan is to give a brief talk on what all of you already believe. My subject is conversion and moral responsibility. I honestly try to be a morally responsible person, husband, father, friend, and leader. I probably will not get into the areas that you are most interested in. So in the discussion period, if there is something about me you wish to ask, or some interest of mine you wish to explore, that will be the time to do it. I want us to read some passages of Scripture that serve as sort of a backdrop for our thinking. They are very, very familiar; but they talk about so many things and you will recognize them.

"While he was in Jerusalem for Passover many gave their allegiance to him when they saw the signs that he performed. But Jesus for his part would not trust himself to them. He knew men so well, all of them, that he needed no evidence from others about a man, for he himself could tell what was in a man."

"There was one of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council, who came to Jesus

by night. 'Rabbi,' he said, 'we know that you are a teacher sent by God; no one could perform these signs of yours unless God were with him.' Jesus answered, 'In truth, in very truth I tell you, unless a man has been born over again he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 2:23-3:3, NEB). "For the love of Christ leaves us no choice, when once we have reached the conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all mankind has died. His purpose in dying for all was that men, while still in life, should cease to live for themselves, and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life. With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer. When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun" (II Corinthians 5:14-17, NEB).

Although Paul has many pivotal verses where he moves from the profoundly theological part of the book to the intensely ethical and practical part of the book, I chose Ephesians 4:1 (NEB). It is not as familiar as Romans 12:1. "I entreat you, then—I, a prisoner for the Lord's sake: as God has called you, live up to your calling."

I also chose one passage from Acts that relates not to personal faith but to the community of faith. "They met constantly to hear the apostles teach, and to share the common life, to break bread, and to pray. A sense of awe was everywhere, and many marvels and signs were brought about through the apostles. All whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common: they would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required. With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the temple, and, breaking bread in private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy [oh, I like that], as they praised God and enjoyed the favour of the whole people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those whom he was saving" Acts 2:42-47 (NEB).

I see to a very large degree, the whole emphasis of the Christian Life Commission undergirding the idea which you have given me as a subject, "Conversion and Moral Responsibility."

I think my responsibility in this brief talk is to articulate these things which those who have already spoken and those who will speak during the week will assume but will not discuss a great deal. But the truth is, I am not saying something to you that you need to hear. I am saying something for us that we must always remind ourselves of. It's a mistake if you're dealing with a church staff, it's a mistake in dealing with your children not to verbalize your "givens." It's an interesting thing in rearing children not to verbalize your givens—the things that you are building on but not talking about all the time.

How easy it was for my wife and me not to realize that our children didn't understand the bases from which we were making certain decisions. It wasn't until our oldest daughter and I began to have some serious discussions over where she would go to college that it suddenly began to dawn upon me that we have never really explained adequately to our children why our family lives in certain places, why we drive a certain kind of car, or why we do certain things. It

is a painful experience to realize that your children don't automatically understand your "givens."

I think that maybe we should never gather for anything without discussing some of the things that we are going to be assuming. A couple of years ago, I was invited to the meeting of Dr. Billy Graham's staff from all the phases of his ministry from all over the world. They met in Chicago. I had a small part on the program relating to the part I have played in the schools of evangelism. Then Dr. Graham came in, and I thought it is going to be exciting to see what he did with his staff. He surely will tell some behind-the-scenes things that the rest of us didn't get in on, or some conversation that he had had with some world figure, or something that was about to break that we didn't know about. You know what he did? He told them why he is an evangelist and discussed with them the goals of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. It was interesting that this man would not assume that his own staff members would remember and know what their goals were.

We at South Main Baptist Church have noticed this occasionally as people have talked to us about things we are doing. We have talked with a lot of people who were interested in getting involved with a ministry to singles or the formerly married. John Killinger and his wife were doing a little book and they wanted to put in a chapter about our ministry with singles. We sent them all the articles, the awards, the nominations, and promotional material. They sent a draft of the chapter back. We read through the chapter and realized that we had sent them everything but the main thing we do. The main thing we do with singles is Bible study, ministry, and worship. We had assumed they knew that.

One of my staff members came back from a meeting at New Orleans Seminary a few days ago and said, "You know, it is an amazing thing, but when you begin to tell a Baptist crowd what your roots are in worship and what the trunk of the tree is—Bible study—they are bored stiff. Baptists are more interested in leaves." There is an enormous temptation on the part of those of us who appear on these programs to come with bigger and better and brighter leaves every time. But we are dealing here with what we assume.

On August 1, 1977, I will start my sixth year as pastor at South Main Baptist Church. The church peaked in 1954 and went downhill for seventeen successive years. Pastoring that church has been the best thing that has ever happened to me. For one thing, it has forced me to deal with the whole of life, and that's good. When you are a professor, you teach in one department. You're sort of "Johnny-one-note." Even in supplying pulpits instead of changing sermons every week, you change congregations. The other thing that has happened is that I have had to call on all the resources of the gospel. That has been such a wonderful experience. I have been able to observe the dynamic of the gospel in the lives of people and in the lives of the community of faith. And it has helped me.

Let me share with you some burdens of my heart. *I suppose number one would be the family.* In the past three and one-half years, I and the members of my staff have done thirteen seminars for the formerly married in the city of Houston. Over 1500 formerly

married persons have enrolled in these seminars. Out of this has grown for me an enormous agony about the family. We are deeply involved in helping the young marrieds with their families. But when I sit down to discuss a wedding with a young couple, I feel like I am sending little lambs out into the world of wolves. Society is the enemy of our families. I am delighted that two of your speakers are going to deal with this. One of the most helpful books that I have ever used is one Letha Scanzoni co-authored, *All We're Meant To Be*.

I am deeply concerned about the plight of the poor. I have not always been concerned. I grew up poor but that did not create in me a compassion for the poor. But during this past year I have had an experience that has sort of made my soul more sensitive. I have served for the past ninety days on a Blue Ribbon Task Force appointed by the Governor in Texas to study the crisis in Medicaid. The truth is it is a committee put together to legitimize cutting the benefits. It was essentially a cost-containment committee. In the process of the hearings with citizens, doctors, and welfare people, I became increasingly aware of the fact that I live in a society of people who by and large have enormous contempt for the poor, that many of the churches unconsciously reflect this contempt by the myths they pass on and the stereotypes that they believe. It has been an interesting and traumatic experience.

I am troubled by the arrogant materialism of our society, and am beginning to be troubled by its effect on my life and on my family's life. I am beginning to be bothered by an easy capitulation to an essentially materialistic society.

I am troubled by hedonism, which I think is the source of our violence and pornography.

I am troubled by the effect of a bureaucratized society.

Of course, I am interested in that perennial question down in Texas—that of pari-mutuel betting. We are trying to box up a local option pari-mutuel bill in committee.

How can you relate the concerns that you have in these areas to conversion? Simple—that is where my concern started. It is as simple as that. If I had to sort of summarize it, I would do so by saying that *conversion creates the new person. The church is the new kind of community in which the new person develops.* The kind of confrontation I am beginning to experience in society is a sort of natural outgrowth of that. I will spend just a few moments on these points which are rather obvious.

We are evangelicals. We are people who believe there was significance in what God did in Jesus Christ, that he is the one a person can relate to and respond to and be made whole.

There is here a basic assumption that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only word that speaks to the deepest and most profound needs of man. The only word! It is the word that speaks to the whole person, that speaks to the totality of his experiences and his relationships and calls for a radical response to repent and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. I guess if there is anything that has made me rejoice in my being a pastor, it is my pilgrimage toward a more holistic approach to life and to the gospel.

You know there are lots of things I do as a pastor that I just never did as a professor or as a programmer for the Home Mission Board. For instance, during the fifteen years that I wasn't a pastor, I never did a wedding. And I never did a funeral.

I can still remember just sitting in the room with one of my members who had been told she had just a little while to live. I was nervous. It seemed that seminar I had on "Rational Arguments for Immortality" was so inappropriate. I went in. Some of the women were in there. She sent them all away and took my hand and said, "Pastor, I sense that you're nervous." She said, "Listen, I know what is going to happen and I want you to know that in my family, my relationship with Jesus Christ, and the support I feel from South Main Baptist Church, there is not anything I am going to face that I don't have the resources for." It suddenly began to dawn on me that I knew something about life, that I knew something about meaning, that I knew something about hope. So that as this gospel is preached, I have seen, week by week, people change.

It really frustrates people to come down and try to figure out why our church grows. We don't have Training Union. We don't have an organized visitation program. We don't have a minister of evangelism. We don't have a bus. We haven't had a high attendance day or a pastor's anniversary. Yet in a period of about four-and-a-half years we have experienced over a 100 percent growth in Bible Study and worship. Last Sunday we had 2183 in Bible Study. But most of the adults that come down that aisle have to sit for about six months and be deprogrammed because they have a vocabularly and memory bank of inadequate experiences. But when they begin to ultimately see what Christ is creating in the fellowship of the church, what I am preaching suddenly begins to make sense. Yesterday, in every one of the ethnic churches, there were adults who were converted—in the Chinese Church, the Spanish Church, the Korean Church, and the Anglo church. There are numbers of significant adults for whom that conversion represents a whole new center for their lives, a whole new absolute for their lives, a whole new set of values for their lives. They will become more morally responsible.

I had a young girl bring a young man to church about three years ago. He was an agnostic. He came several months. We went to lunch. I came to love the guy. He was so brilliant. He couldn't believe. But he came for about a year-and-a-half and then he could believe. He took me to lunch and we talked about everything under the sun and when he got out of the car he said, "I am ready to commit my life to Jesus Christ. Sunday morning I will come." And he did. A year later he was engaged. I went to the rehearsal dinner. All of the people at this dinner were either relatives, Marine Corps buddies, or University of Texas buddies. He got up and said, "There are two things that I want. I want you to enjoy the wedding because weddings ought to be enjoyed. The other thing is I want you to know that my wife and I have decided that we are going to make Jesus Christ the center of this family." Here very simply was a conversion and a sense of moral responsibility. That young man is going to be a teacher. I've got a feeling that there will flow through the classes in that prep school many generations of young men whose gifts will be called

forth by a man with a sense of his own uniqueness and his gifts, called forth out of his conversion and the church.

I see a very comfortable relationship between conversion and moral responsibility. I see a very comfortable relationship between the church and moral responsibility. I see the church as a morally responsible community. We ought not to underestimate man's needs for community. I guess this is one of the things that I am having to come to. Baptists talk so much about autonomy that we think autonomy and indifference are synonyms. We are so intensely individualistic that we somehow fail to understand what Christ has done when he has given us this earthly family. It is built into man's needs.

I was coming home from an Executive Committee meeting in Dallas on a Wednesday. I had been doing the Bible study and I didn't have all my studying done so I had taken my small commentaries and had them stacked in my lap. I was in the middle seat in the coach section of the plane. If I had been reading *Playboy* or one of those girlie magazines, there wouldn't have been any problem, but it can intimidate a business man to have someone study the Bible next to him on an airplane. This old boy said, "You believe all that junk?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You believe in life after death?" I said, "Yes." He went through a bunch of questions and got a yes on all of them.

I'm not much of a lapel grabber anyway but the truth is sometimes they grab my lapels. He wanted to talk, so I started to tell him what I was studying. He said, "Don't tell me about Christianity. There are a lot of religions." I said, "All right, let's just take what they all have in common, worship." He said, "Yeah." I said, "Prayer." He said, "Yeah." I said, "Community." He said, "What's that?" I said, "You need some people who know what you are like, who love you, who care for you, and that you know and love and care for. If you died today, these people would love and support and minister to your family." He said, "That's the thing I haven't worked out. Tell me about it." You know, a guy who is willing to write everything else off still feels this need. This is why Christ creates the church where we nourish people toward moral responsibility.

Now I realize those years in seminary I had some outstanding students. But those were pretty painful years. A lot of the men came to seminary and hated the church. And I figured out why they hated it. They were mad. They felt God had called them to minister in an institution that they considered over the hill. I would be mad too if God did that to me. I've just got this one life, and if he called me to give it to an institution that has had it, I would resent that. And, of course, Keith Miller came along, and Ben Johnson, and all those people with the underground church and the new church. The whole renewal movement is essentially anti-church. Keith and I used to get together and I would say, "Hey pal, the church is going to make it."

I did my thesis on Elton Trueblood's apologetic method and I remember at the time, he was all into finding some alternate for the church. My church's address is 4100 South Main. When the Quakers had their big meeting in Dallas last year, I had several meals with Dr. Trueblood. We got to talking about

the renewal movement and it has sort of had it. He was reminiscing about some of his boys and the problems they were having. Finally, he said, "Kenneth, I want to tell you something. I am about to believe that the only church there is is at 4100 South Main," which is an enormous turnaround. I want to urge us not to underestimate the potential of the congregation in developing moral responsibility.

It has enormous healing powers. I have come to see this in dealing with the most wounded group that joins our church—the formerly married. We decided a long time ago we wouldn't hunt out the guilty and crochet an "A" for them or hunt out the innocent and give them a halo to wear, but we would just take the hurt and love them. And that's what we've done. When they come down the aisle, they have failed in one of life's most primary relationships. They don't ever intend to trust anybody again, or be vulnerable again, or get hurt, or enter into any deep and meaningful relationship. Our people love them. And you can see it happening across the months. They begin to open up like a flower to the sun. All the psychiatrists' couches in America cannot do what one group of people can do who know how to love.

I am coming to a whole new feeling about interpreting the scriptures. I think one of the reasons we have been so slow to come to a certain understanding is that we have tried to interpret scriptures in a school house when they were written to a church. Maybe they will be best understood in the church and preached in the church.

And I am seeing that here is where gifts are discovered, accepted, developed, and dedicated. I think this is where morally responsible people come from. So here is conversion and here is the church.

Let me mention just one other thing. I grew up in a little church and I went to college and I went to seminary. Not many people challenged the idea that what was good for the country and for business and for church was by and large the same thing. I was taught this in Boy Scouts and Sunday School and a lot of my professors in seminary left it unchallenged. I have begun to realize as I have grown as a Christian and as I have tried to give leadership to the church, that's not true. That some of the goals I have as a Christian are not the same as some of the goals my country has and some of the values that I have as a Christian are not the same as the values of the corporations.

More and more in my Bible study has arisen Paul's idea of the "present age" and "the age to come." I always thought when I read that as a child that this present age would be until I die and the age to come would be after I die. That's not right. "This present age" is his way of describing a world that is under the judgment of God, that is very temporary in its values. The "age to come" is the age which is initiated in the coming of Jesus Christ and actualized in the faith we exercise. They are overlapping. To some degree, then, a person who is converted is a person who has decided that the world in which he lives has had it: that its goals, its values, its life-styles, are all under the judgment of God. He has turned in repentance and faith to a commitment to Jesus Christ and there begins a new age in him.

I see more and more tension. A lot of the tensions we have created in our social action have been way

off from home. But I am coming more and more to see that where people are being converted and coming to discover what the will of God is, that there is beginning to radiate out from that a kind of moral responsibility that is different.

Don Langford is a surgeon. He is a missionary to Hong Kong. He was a fellow in M. D. Anderson Clinic last year and a member of our church. He did surgery month by month in all of those areas and was so good. In spite of all the people they could choose from, they asked him to come on their staff. He turned them down for two reasons. He told me both of them: He told them that he wasn't going to come because God had called him to be a missionary and share his skills in Hong Kong. He told me the other reason he didn't want to work at M. D. Anderson was that he had discovered many were more interested in cancer than in people.

Now, don't get all defensive if you're a doctor, because what is true here is true of practically every bureaucratic structure there is. But this is what he told me. He said, "Here is an old man seventy-two years old who has cancer in the facial area. If I operate on him, it will disfigure him. He won't even like to see himself in the mirror. It is going to cost him a ton of money. It is not going to lengthen his life one day. So I said, 'Old man, go home. Enjoy your children, enjoy your grandchildren, get things right with God, prepare to die.' My supervisor comes in and says, 'Langford, you shouldn't have done that. A chance to cut is a chance to learn.'" So here is this great institution in tension with this great Christian.

Or take my Medicaid subcommittee, for example. Interestingly one is a rabbi and six are Christians and everybody on there had a concern for people. Our committee went before the hearing where the doctors had said their thing, the insurance committee had given theirs, the nursing homes had given theirs, the hospital committees and the medical services had given theirs. We went before that forty-seven member committee and said, "We have asked the wrong question. The question we should have asked is: How can we afford to turn our backs on the poor of Texas?" Our subcommittee to some degree became the conscience of the forty-seven member committee! They voted last Tuesday night unanimously to recommend a medically-needed program for the state of Texas.

Day after day, I am confronted by people who, because they are followers of Jesus Christ, and because of the fellowship of the church, are becoming increasingly aware of moral responsibility and are making a change.

I think if you had come to someone about our President, and said, "Explain this man to me" I am sure you would get a variety of explanations. I am sure Jody Powell would have a very interesting explanation because Jody Powell would probably not like to admit that one of the ways of explaining him is that he has been converted. His life has been shaped to a very large degree by the community of faith in which he has been reared, and as a result of that, he is moving as a morally responsible person. You say, "Oh, he is the President and he has a lot of programs I don't like." Okay, but what about you? Explain you to me. Explain me. I think quite frankly, with all the things we are interested in, we would start with, "Let me

tell you about the lady who first told me about Jesus Christ. Let me tell you about the church that has nurtured me." Because to tell you the truth, there is no way to explain my concerns for this world apart from God's concern for me, and the church's concern for me.

## THE PRIORITY OF MORAL DECISION MAKING

Roger Shinn

### I.

The theme of your seminar is "Priorities." Among many priorities, you have asked me to talk about "the priority of moral decision making." As I understand it, this is not a priority that competes with the others. Rather it is part of all the others. It cuts through the many topics you have chosen for emphasis: race relations, economic issues, feeding the hungry, preaching, global justice, understanding male and female roles, and all the rest.

That fact tells us something about the nature of moral decisions. Morality is not a box. People often pretend that it is. All of life lies before them, requiring decisions every day. Now and then they enter the box of morality and make a decision there. Then they come back out and go about the work of their lives, making decisions about business, politics, marriage and family relations, career choices, and the things that really matter. Then every once in a while they reenter the box and make moral decisions. Maybe, like Howard Hunt, recently lamenting his imprisonment after Watergate, some of them say: I wasn't hired to make moral decisions. To decide that is, of course, to make a pretty fundamental moral decision.

Actually there are few of life's major decisions that are not moral. There are, of course, matters of taste that are not moral issues. To prefer strawberry to chocolate ice cream is not a moral choice. But to decide to fill my stomach when much of the world is hungry is a moral decision, maybe not a simple one but still a decision crammed with moral meaning. Again, some decisions are simply technical: that red lights mean stop and green lights mean go is probably not in itself a moral decision. But to put public money into traffic lights, for the sake of safety and something like equal opportunity for all people to get across the street, is a moral issue.

Most of us make most of our moral decisions when we are not thinking about morality. We are thinking about the family budget or the U.S. Government budget, about choices of jobs and careers, about people we like and don't like, about places to live and educational opportunities for our children. In decisions like these we may discover our real moral values and commitments.

After saying that few of life's major decisions are not moral, I quickly add: few decisions are solely moral. To love my neighbor is, in a very general way, a moral act. But to make that love meaningful in any specific way requires more than morality. Effective love of a sick neighbor requires knowledge about medicine, about institutions that deliver health ser-

vices, about economic and political systems that help or get in the way of health. Effective love of hungry neighbors—in these days when the road from Jerusalem to Jericho goes around the world—takes us into highly technical issues of diet, hybridization and growth of miracle crops, education of populations, and economic and political systems that keep some from getting food while others eat more than is good for them.

Put together the two theses: (1) Few of life's major decisions are not moral. (2) Few decisions are solely moral. These two theses account for much of ethical confusion. I say much, not all. Sometimes we are ethically confused because it is more pleasant to be confused than to recognize our clear obligations and find the courage to carry them out. But often we are honestly confused. An inherited ethic, although it can be a wonderful resource, often does not tell us the answers to new problems requiring new decisions. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount do not in themselves tell us whether to let the SST land in America, how to come to an agreement in the SALT talks and then get the Senate to ratify it, how to get more food to Bangladesh, or whether to permit research in gene-splicing (recombinant DNA). Many of the tough decisions come at the point of interaction between value commitments and technical knowledge. That is why it is easy to dodge some ethical issues and to get lost on others. That is why seminars like this one are important.

## II.

I suppose most people these days feel that our society and many of the world's societies are in the midst of a moral crisis. And in a way this situation takes the world by surprise. This is a world that for a long time tended to put moral problems rather low on its agenda. In a retaliatory strike the moral problems came back to seize the attention of humanity.

For a while it seems that the amazing achievements of technology were leading people into the expectation that technology would solve most human problems. It did solve many. No longer do civilized peoples feel the dependence, so common in past ages, upon capricious gods and demons. They feel dependent upon wizards who can or cannot seize nuclear and solar energy or bring off another success in the Green Revolution. Oswald Spengler put it all in a prescient phrase, "the priest of the machine."

It is usually a happy situation for everybody when a stubborn ethical problem yields to a technical solution. Offhand, that may seem improbable. But notice how well it often worked. Look at one of the most elemental ethical problems in human history. What do people do when there is not enough food for everybody? What are justice and mercy in such a situation? How do power, equality, and special needs enter into the solution? Are there ways of resolving conflicts of interest? How is freedom related to coercion? Such questions have engaged humanity in centuries of debate and struggle.

But if the food supplies can be increased enough, the problems are solved or reduced to manageable proportions. Here is the ideal answer. A technical solution has resolved an ethical problem.

Modern history has shown many a successful technical solution to ethical problems. The formula has

worked so beautifully that persons and societies are jolted by its increasing failures. Those failures are likely to produce a sense of betrayal. The trusted god has let us down. That, I think, accounts for the undercurrent of revulsion against technology that our culture sometimes feels. The response of many young people to Jacques Ellul or Theodore Roszak or to their own experience of disappointed expectation is a case in point. The savior turned out to be a fake, maybe a demon.

Now the word is circulating, with increasing force, that *some problems have no technical solutions*. Perhaps its most eloquent spokesman has been Garrett Hardin. In "The Tragedy of the Commons," an essay of 1968 that quickly became famous, he defined a class of problems that he called "no technical solution problems." He recalled that Jerome Wiesner and H. F. York had pointed out that there was no technical solution to the dilemma of increasing nuclear armaments and decreasing national security. Can anybody imagine any technique that will solve that problem? President Carter in a speech at the UN said: "The Soviet Union and the United States have accumulated thousands of nuclear weapons. Our two nations have almost five times as many missile warheads today as we had eight years ago. Yet we are not five times more secure. On the contrary, the arms race has only increased the risk of conflict."

To come back to Garrett Hardin, he broadened the conception of Wiesner and York to show that many human problems today have no technical solutions. The first book in the series of reports to the Club of Rome, *The Limits to Growth*, quoted Hardin with agreement. Hardin's theme is that whatever help may come from scientific techniques, many contemporary problems require changes in human values and morality.

If you have been reading Hardin's writings, you may be surprised that I am quoting him with approval. Christians are likely to argue strenuously with some of the specific changes of value that Hardin advocates, and many have done so. I have and I will continue. But I welcome his insistence on attention to questions of values and ethics. When he says, "It is time we turn our attention from the things of mankind to man himself," he puts the action on the turf that the church claims as its concern.

But are the churches capable of clear and prophetic thinking about the contemporary crisis of humanity, or are they so compromised in existing systems that they cannot find freedom for fresh thoughts and acts? That question will not get any final answer in this seminar. It is a question of commitments and deeds for today and years to come.

So for the moment let us notice that we are now often hearing from the heart of the scientific establishment a call to concern for moral questions. If we affirm the priority of moral decision making, we are not lonely voices. Other powerful voices in our society are affirming the message as firmly as we.

## III.

In order to get at the concrete problems of moral decision making, I am going to turn to one of the major moral decisions facing our society and the world

today. It is the problem of finding enough energy to keep the world's economies functioning.

I have recently returned from a study trip around the world, visiting twelve countries, most of them in Asia, and ending at an international conference on the energy problem. Everywhere I found societies making their plans on the basis of expectations of increasing consumption of energy, specifically petroleum. Everywhere I asked the question: What are you going to do when, before long, the petroleum runs out? Nowhere did I get a clear answer.

As I said earlier, few questions are solely moral questions. Questions about energy are partly technical questions, to be answered by scientists and engineers. But they are partly moral questions, in which every person and every society has a stake.

The first ethical issue in the energy crisis—the utterly obvious, painfully simple, and plainly inescapable one—is the old one: Who gets the goodies when there aren't enough to satisfy everybody? If you want a more dignified way of putting it, it is the question of distributive justice. Most civilizations throughout most of the world have met this by organizing society hierarchically. There have been masters and slaves, castes and social classes. Such systems have relied on many differentia: physical strength, mental guile, noble birth, charisma, military power, priestly incantations, or just plain money. Some criterion has operated to give some what they wanted and to leave the rest to endure or die with what was life.

But the world is inspired or tormented by a different idea: the idea of a human dignity equally inherent in all people. The world doesn't quite accept it but cannot quite shake it off. And the idea of economic growth seemed for a while to make it possible. Both capitalism (in its more optimistic forms) and communism cultivated the idea that a properly organized society could create abundance. The American dream has been a dream of liberty, justice, and plenty. Since the goal of plenty has always been a few steps beyond realization, distribution has been governed by the market subject to various interventions of many kinds. In general, people could have what they could pay for.

There are ethical virtues in the market system. In some ways it respects freedom. Most of us, given a moderately adequate income, would rather decide for ourselves where we want to splurge and where we want to scrimp rather than have a bureaucracy decide for us. There are also technical virtues in the system. It operates to draw investment and production into the areas that meet human wants.

But there are also difficulties in the market system. It is always hard on poor people. It means that some can always splurge and some must always scrimp. And it makes special problems in a time of shortages. It helps and hurts people capriciously. The petroleum shortage in the winter of 1973-74 and the consequent price rises have hurt some people not at all. But some businesses have failed, some colleges have gone broke, some people have lost jobs. If future consumption is restricted solely by the operation of the market, some will suffer and others will not notice.

Even a slowdown in growth points up the problem. Economist Henry C. Wallich, appointed by President

Nixon to the President's Council of Economic Advisers, once wrote: "Growth is a substitute for equality of income. So long as there is growth, there is hope, and that makes large income differentials tolerable." Those *large* differentials are ethically problematic in any case; when the hope of general affluence fades, they become socially explosive.

If we extend our view from America to the world, the same issue becomes overwhelming. In some moods I think that OPEC did the world a favor in raising petroleum prices; it forced the world to pay attention to a problem while there is still some lead time for meeting it. But OPEC's action, while merely inconvenient for our national economy, was disastrous to some nations. It caused starvation. Crops depend on fertilizers. Most synthetic nitrogen fertilizers are made from petroleum or natural gas. The cost of urea rose from \$50 a ton in 1972 to \$250 a ton in 1974. India, unable to pay the higher costs, lost perhaps a million tons of fertilizer, which means something like ten million tons of crops. One estimate is that the price rise contributed to twenty million deaths in one year.

So stupendous is this world problem that it is easy to give up on it. In fact, some people are arguing that we ought to give up on it. There is the reasoning of Garrett Hardin's "lifeboat ethic." He sees our society as the passengers in a lifeboat on the sea. Our moral duty is to protect those on board. If we try to help the drowning people in the sea by pulling them on board, we overload the lifeboat and everybody drowns. So we have a right, even a moral duty, to steel ourselves, protect what we have, and let others go down.

The argument can easily be an ethical rationalization for doing what we want to do for non-ethical reasons. But before dismissing it entirely, I want to grant Hardin two points. First, this country cannot handle all the world's troubles. Second, some of our efforts to set right the problems of the world, whether by military or economic interventions, have done more harm than good. Nevertheless, we can do *some* things to help the community of mankind at a minimum to compensate for some of the wrongs we have done and at a maximum to do a little better. So I find ethically offensive the desire to keep what we have and let the world founder.

I also find it impractical and practicality is one factor, though not the only factor, in ethics. I find it impractical for two reasons.

The first is that the rest of the world can strike back. Robert Heilbroner has written about the many ways available, in our world of intricate and dangerous technologies, for poor nations to hurt rich nations. For example, nuclear weapons will become increasingly available. A nation, even a faction within a nation, does not have to be able to win a war against us in order to do us great damage. They may have no hope of winning; but as the world's recent experiences with terrorists show, desperate people who are ready to die can do a lot of damage. Drowning people, if armed, can sink a lifeboat, even if they have no hope of getting aboard.

The second reason is our economic dependence on the rest of the world. According to one study the United States twenty years ago "was virtually self-sufficient in the essential raw materials needed for industrial production." Now we import all our chromite

and tin; more than 90 percent of our aluminum, manganese, and platinum; more than half our asbestos, nickel, and zinc—to mention only a few. Nineteen seventy-seven will be the first year in which we import more petroleum than we produce ourselves. To keep our lifeboat afloat requires some kind of human and economic relations with a lot of people outside it.

I restate the issue: who gets the goodies when there aren't enough to satisfy everybody? The question comes up in a world where scarcity is the normal human situation. For a short time—scarcely a moment in the whole expanse of history—it seemed that scarcity might be overcome by economic growth based on abundant cheap energy. Productivity gave the affluent societies an easy cop-out on the issue of distribution. Now the energy crisis tells us that the question cannot be avoided. It is both a practical question of survival and an ethical question of justice.

In the present debates on energy I find the issue of justice starkly neglected. I find people asking for more energy but not wanting a power plant—whether nuclear or fossil fuel—anywhere near *their* homes. I find enthusiasts for conservation who are not giving up their own cars or air conditioning. Justice requires that we ask of all proposed policies: Who will get the benefits and who will bear the costs?

Another ethical issue involved in the energy crisis has to do with risk. We can start with the assumption that there is no life without risk. Furthermore, acceptance of risk may be an act of courage and generosity. But some risks are immoral, especially when people inflict risks on others without asking their consent.

The history of energy development in this country has seen many cases where the advantage of producers and consumers came at risk to other people. Production of coal has been extremely costly to the health of miners, costly enough to the public who breathed polluted air. When the risks were inflicted in ignorance, they were bad enough; when they are inflicted with full knowledge of the costs, they are vicious.

Up to this date (March 21, 1977) the producers of nuclear energy have a better safety record than the producers of coal. But the statistical base for that judgment is small, and a single major accident could change it overnight. Up to this time we simply do not know how hazardous nuclear reactors are and will be. And public fears are fed by the records of accidents and near disasters. Some of these, in the face of assurances from nuclear experts, have led the public to suspect that the experts either did not know as much as they pretended to know or were not candid with the public.

The principal dangers are of accidents in the reactor itself; radiation from the reactor, which could induce cancer or genetic changes that would affect generations to come; the treatment and disposal of radioactive wastes that remain dangerous for many years; the protection of installations against sabotage; and the diversion of materials to nuclear weapons.

A complicating factor is that the reactors which now produce about 12 percent of the electrical energy in the United States and about 55 percent in a large part of New England have a limited future. High grade uranium ores will be exhausted. So it now appears that nuclear energy is at best a holding action

to tide the society over until something better is available unless we use the breeder reactor, now under development, or nuclear fusion, which may or may not succeed some day.

Hence attention focuses now on the breeder reactor, specifically the liquid metal fast breeder reactor. The technological problems with it are great and their solutions are costly. Its advocates already realize that it will not produce the cheap energy they once hoped for. Its success depends on the production of plutonium, dangerous both for its radioactivity and its potential for weapons. Its risks are great enough that many people are totally opposed to its development.

Last year a committee appointed by the National Council of Churches and chaired by Margaret Mead and René Dubos made a report opposing reliance on nuclear energy and especially the breeder reactor and plutonium. I read one sentence from it: "All who believe that technology should serve human values should join in opposing the plutonium economy and in seeking to divert into safer and more constructive channels the vast resources being devoted to nuclear power." The Governing Board of the NCC came close to adopting that position. But after hearing opposing viewpoints, it decided instead to advocate a two-year moratorium on development of breeder reactors and to engage in a further study process before coming to conclusions.

The World Council of Churches has a similar study group, which refuses to oppose nuclear development, partly because it includes members from nations that have little or no fossil fuel and partly because it has heard testimony from some scientists who thought the risks of nuclear power were manageable. But it is submitting to the International Atomic Energy Agency this spring a paper calling attention to the unresolved technical and ethical issues in a nuclear energy and asking for participation in decision making by the people who will be affected.

These two differing studies show a familiar phenomenon: two groups of people with similar ethical concerns may come to quite different conclusions on an urgent public problem. That has long been characteristic of ethical discussion; it is likely to become increasingly so as ethical decision enters increasingly complex problems, where technological and ethical judgments interact.

Another ethical issue has to do with the relation of present advantages to future human welfare. Every individual faces it frequently. Shall I do what is most fun today or shall I exercise some discipline today for the sake of a better tomorrow? Shall I spend all my income now or shall I put something into a retirement plan for the future? Shall parents hold back to give opportunities to their children? Societies face the same issue. Some pesticides increase agricultural production and mean a clear gain if we think only of this year; but they are outlawed because their cumulative effect means trouble for years to come.

Conceivably all of us over fifty might devise an energy program that would see us through our life expectancy, but would portend disaster shortly after. Young people would have reasons for opposing any such plan. So do those of us over fifty, if our commitments include some concern for those who come after us.

A society, a world might adopt the slogan, "After us, the deluge." If the future does not matter, why not exhaust fossil fuels in this generation? Why worry about disposal of nuclear wastes? If the future does matter to us, we must change our way of reckoning.

Most of us, when we make ethical decisions, give some priority to the present. It is here; we know about it directly. The future is problematic: our best plans may go askew, our worst mistakes may be rectified by new achievements. At the same time most of us have some sense of responsibility for the future. We are concerned about our children and grandchildren, perhaps about children yet unborn. In many parts of the world we see natural and human devastation today because past generations heedlessly destroyed forests. We would rather not leave a legacy of destruction to our heirs.

The writers of *The Limits to Growth*, the first report to the Club of Rome, put great emphasis on responsibility to future generations. In one writing—not in that specific book—they especially asked the churches to cultivate a concern for future generations as they already had (at their best) cultivated a concern for people around the world. They sometimes expressed a worry that political leaders, by vocational habit, rarely think beyond the next election.

My own belief is that some concern for the future is inherent in any profound ethic. That of itself may not tell us directly what to do. As I have already said, it does not tell us whether we do greater harm to those who come after us by using up the fossil fuels or by leaving them our nuclear wastes. It does suggest that a wasteful life-style in a world of scarcity is morally wrong, both in its immediate effects and in its long-term consequences.

#### IV.

I conclude with a theological issue underlying all the ethical issues. Whenever people go very deep into moral questions, they confront the metaphysical visions, the faiths, the commitments, the symbols that influence persons and societies when they make decisions. It is worth noting that much of the recent literature on ecology and human survival reaches into this area.

Robert Heilbroner, for example in this book, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*, concludes on this note. The great symbolic figure of our Western culture, he says, has been Prometheus. That's something to think about. Not Moses, not Jesus, but Prometheus—the daring innovator, the ambitious achiever, the Titan who stole fire from the gods in heaven in order to liberate human beings. And Heilbroner expresses some admiration for that Promethean spirit. Perhaps you remember that Karl Marx had also exulted in the figure of Prometheus. Many a pioneer of Western culture, whether thinking about Prometheus or not, has shown something of that dedication, that willingness to accept risk and suffering, in order to advance the horizons of geography, science, industry, or art.

The work of the Promethean spirit, Heilbroner suggests, is not entirely done. But the time has come, he proposes, when we must give attention to another figure. It is Atlas, the burden bearer, who holds up the heavens, patiently suffering under his load, wearily enduring, with no expectation of ever winning any dramatic success. Atlas is increasingly the appropriate

myth figure, the needed sensitizer for our age.

I want to add two comments to Heilbroner's statement. The first is to point out that both Prometheus and Atlas were sufferers. Both did their job at cost to themselves. Much of the modern ethical vision has sought to remove pain—at least greatly diminish it—from the world. I too want to diminish pain. But maybe our time needs to learn again from the traditions that find some redeeming qualities in suffering.

The second comment is that Prometheus and Atlas are not our only models. There are other suffering servants in our tradition. There is the heritage of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, with their theme that mankind, though given dominion over the earth, is not its owner but a steward entrusted with its care. And when our culture has corrupted this tradition and turned it into a license to plunder the earth, we may be reminded by Buddhist and Taoist traditions of possibilities of relating human appreciation to the natural world.

I am talking not so much about the formal beliefs people profess as about the spirit that really guides their lives. The two may be quite different. But every culture, every community, every person has words and symbols, habits and cultic acts that help people relate their needs to the needs of their neighbors and human needs to the natural world.

Most profound ethical and religious traditions recognize that there are times to struggle, to take charge, to control fate. And there are times to accept what is given, to acknowledge what we did not create, to live with what we cannot change. There are times to struggle for life, times to know how to die. There are times to exult in mastery, times to be reverent before mystery. There are times for ingenuity in devising new uses of energy, times to be glad for the joys people knew before the industrial revolution and can still know today.

We might recall a notable paradox in both the Jewish and Christian religions. In both cases the eating of bread, whether at the passover or the holy communion, is a sacramental act; yet both faiths have transmitted to us the saying, "Man does not live by bread alone." Appropriating that insight, we might say that humanity needs energy, both for survival and for the acts that make survival worthwhile. Yet humanity does not live by energy alone.

To know that does not itself give us all the complicated technological and social skills that we shall need to get through the energy crisis that is present and coming. It does sharpen our perceptions and give us some guidance for the perilous course that we must travel in the years to come.

#### CHARACTER, VALUES, AND EDUCATION IN MORAL DECISION MAKING

Wayne E. Oates

Moral decision making is a form of action. (B. F. Skinner has said that.) Decision making or "deciding is not the execution of the act decided upon but the preliminary behavior responsible for it." (B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: The Free

Press, 1953, p. 243.) Decision making is premonitory behavior. We can accurately call moral decision making "temptation" as opposed to either an act of faith before God or an act of sin before God. This would be using the word "temptation" in its New Testament "good" sense. It would be seeing faith as the opposite of sin, not the opposite of virtue. "Who-soever is not of faith is sin." Paul states this well in II Corinthians 13:5 (RSV): "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" Thus, the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness can well be thought of as decision making. If we develop this kind of approach to decision making, we can articulate a theological rationale of temptation. Then we can put away our ungodly equation of temptation with sin. To the contrary, we can begin to see temptation as the battleground of character.

The ground gained or lost on the battleground of character is the values we voluntarily grapple to ourselves. We affirm these values being congruent with the kind of person we perceive ourselves to be. We reject them as being non-congruent with the kind of person we perceive ourselves to be. Gordon Allport said this more clearly when he said that "a value is a belief upon which a person acts by preference." (Gordon Allport, *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, New York: Holt Rinehart, 1961, p. 454.) Or, Milton Rokeach has said: "When we say a person has a value, we may have in mind either his/her beliefs concerning *desirable modes of conduct* or *desirable end-states of existence*." He calls these two kinds of values, first, *instrumental* values, and, second, *terminal* values. Instrumental values are of two kinds, moral values, the violation of which produces guilt, and competence values which produce a sense of inadequacy, shame, and/or failure. They hurt the same way, but they are not caused by the same thing. (Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values*. New York: Free Press, 1973, pp. 7-9). We are more heavy-handed with oughtness for moral values. We seem to be much more nonchalant about desirable end states of existence in terminal values. It is much easier to tithe mint, anise, and cummin than it is to consider the essence of justice, mercy, and teachableness in moral decision. Short-term decision making looks at moral utility. Long-term decision making looks at interpersonal consequences of human behavior. In a situation such as the termination of a pregnancy by a medical means the situation may engulf the person. Also, propaganda of the "fors" and the "againsts" of abortion confuse the person. The interpersonal involvements of the father of the child, of the parents of both the man and the woman, and of the impact of the event upon the longer history of the mother deserve the most desirable end-state of existence for the parents and child. Modes of conduct cannot be easily disjointed from values concerning the end states of one's existence. Therefore, moral decision making concerning values considers the "end of the conversation" of the person, to use the quaint Elizabethan phrase of the King James translation of Hebrews 13:7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

The Revised Standard Version translates it: "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider *the outcome of their life*, and imitate their faith." Instrumental values are often the sole basis of moral decision making. Terminal values are discovered only on reflective consideration of the possible outcomes of the whole life in terms of any given set of values.

Being in an act at a given time is held in best perspective by looking at it in terms of the process of becoming a certain kind of character. This process is moving at all times. Character-formation is an educational process; it moves and moves. As Heraclitus said, "You cannot put your foot in the same river twice." Or, as the laconic Koheleth, Omar Khayyam says:

The moving finger writes and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Character, then, is always in process of formation.

When we state this process-education view of character, we can restate it in biblical terms. The Apostle Paul states it in this way; "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (II Corinthians 3:17-18, RSV). Moral decision-making is not done in a spiritual vacuum. The source of freedom is the Spirit. We know that the Spirit gives life whereas the law kills. The word character is used very seldom in the New Testament. The prologue to the Letter to the Hebrews says: "He (Jesus) reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power" (Hebrews 1:3, RSV). The words "the very stamp of his nature" are the words which translate the Koine use of the word "character." If we were to set this discussion into the sermon form, then these two texts—II Corinthians 3:17-18 and Hebrews 1:3—would be the basis we would use. Character is formed and that process is known as education. Education often is confused with what goes on in the classroom of elementary, secondary, and higher institutions of education. Character formation may indeed happen, but is more often found in the hidden curriculum of the school than in the formal, stated curriculum. The hidden curriculum is what "each student figures (to be) the actually expected as opposed to what is formally required." Universities and other kinds of schools are not the only institutions in which this double kind of system of a formal and a hidden curriculum is found. "Certainly it is present in most groups and organizations—corporations, families, and governments. The reality of formal and informal rules is not the important thing. The rub comes when these stated and implied messages are double messages. The ethical dissonance in the double message of employers to employees, faculty and administration to students, parents to children, etc., causes the trouble. My contention is that character formation takes place in terms of the consonance and dissonance that exists between what leadership *says*, on the one hand, and what they *mean* and *do*, on the other hand.

The ethical dissonance between the formal and the hidden curriculum is a major cause of disrest among students, parishioners, and citizens. Thus says Benson R. Snyder, M.D., a psychiatrist who is also a dean at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (*The Hidden Curriculum*, New York: A. A. Knopf, 1970). Lawrence Kohlberg sharpens and clarifies the distinctions about the hidden curriculum by saying that there are three approaches to education in values and moral decision making.

First, the hidden curriculum approach is one in which parents, teachers, pastors, etc., actually function as moral educators whether they know it or not. They tell children what to do; they evaluate their behavior; they monitor their social behavior; they do all this in the name of a larger institution "known as going to school." Yet, they have been taught that they are being "neutral" about moral education. "The term 'hidden curriculum,' then refers to the fact that teachers and schools are engaged in moral education without explicitly and philosophically discussing or formulating its goals and methods." (Lawrence Kohlberg, *Moral Education*.) In other words, education in morals is done without thinking, without reasoning, and without explicit decision making. The home and the school throw their minds out of gear and let them go where they are pushed by the pressure of circumstance.

Kohlberg says that the second approach to moral education is what he calls "the bag of virtues approach." The "bag of virtues approach" chooses such virtues as honesty, unselfishness, patriotism, and others of which "it-goes-without-saying" that they are good. Yet this calls for no assessment of the moral development of persons in these virtues. No assessment of the source of authority, whether it is extrinsic or intrinsic to the values that are being explicitly taught, is made. No philosophizing is done by the deciders. This explicit approach to moral education was set forth by Ernest Ligon in the forties and fifties with much vigor. What *should* Ronnie answer to the teacher as to what is the honest thing to do when someone leaves a new BMW sports car in front of his house for three days? As a sixteen-year-old, he has the driver's license with which to drive, the money with which to pay for the gasoline; and no one is using or "needing" the car. Obviously no one would be hurt if he responded to the urge to use his skill in electricity to start the car without keys and ride around in it. What should he do? The bag of virtues would say that it is always wrong to use, appropriate, scrounge, or otherwise profit by the property of others. This is tantamount to stealing, if not stealing itself. One of the Ten Commandments is solidly against that. However, the plot thickens when one adds one piece of data to the just stated temptation of Ronnie. What if we also said that Ronnie's next door neighbor does not have any transportation at all. He has just been hurt by a power saw. His hand is seriously damaged and bleeding. No one is at home with Ronnie and none of the family fleet of cars is on the premises. Would it, then, be wrong for a noble purpose, helping one's neighbor whom one does know, by commandeering an unknown neighbor's car? (Kohlberg's Stage 6 will be needed here.)

To answer, Kohlberg would suggest a third approach to moral education, i.e., education in reflective, dynamic

or developmental, moral decision making. Rather than to depend upon the hidden curriculum or to resort to instilling a bag of virtues, moral education is properly done in learning the levels at which one makes moral decisions and the process whereby one goes about making decisions. This would help in the clinical assessment of each arena of moral decision making through a progressively developed ethical awareness. Following this hypothesis, Kohlberg engages a given person's moral philosophy at whatever level he or she has chosen to live quite on their own Kohlberg assumes that a child has a morality of his or her own. "Adults are so busy trying to instill in children their own morality they seldom listen to the children's moralizing." When we listen to any of the moral philosophies of children or adults we can classify their own internal philosophies on a definable developmental scale somewhat as follows:

## KOHLBERG'S DEFINITIONS OF MORAL STAGES

### I. THE PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL

1. PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE: Avoidance of Punishment-Obedience of Power.
2. INSTRUMENTAL RELATIVISM: "I will use you to scratch my back. Then you may use me to scratch yours."

### II. THE CONVENTIONAL LIFE

3. INTERPERSONAL CONCORDANCE or "Good Boy-Nice Girl": Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them.
4. LAW-AND-ORDER ORIENTATION. Rules are rules; rules are fixed; I go by the book; get it in writing; maintain social order for its own sake.

### III. POST-CONVENTIONAL AUTONOMOUS, OR PRINCIPLE LEVEL

5. SOCIAL CONTRACTS. Contracts are the moral expression of intent in action. They are not, like Stage 4, frozen and unchangeable. The contract can be challenged and changed through due process and deliberation. Social contracts are renegotiable. They embody the inalienable and the earned rights of persons.
6. UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLE ORIENTATION. Right or wrong is decided by the decision of conscience in accordance with self-chosen ethical principles, i.e. The Golden Rule, The Categorical Imperative, The Dignity of Human Life, The Unconditionality of Agape.

The value of the above level and stage approach to the development of conscience is that we can identify readily the basic philosophy of even a child who talks with us about his or her philosophy of morals.

For example, I talked with a forty-year-old man who had two mistresses in addition to his wife. His query after the fourth interview was: "What makes my wife so unhappy? She kicks me out of my own house and calls the law on me. After all I have done for her—nice house, nice clothes, nice car, nice private school for our son—what more can she ask?" This is a forty-year-old person with a Stage 1 level of avoiding punishment and trying to stay on the good side of the authority of his wife. He had simply been caught in his hanky-panky. He had little or no remorse other than that he had been caught. More understandable is the eight-year-old boy who was

caught shoplifting although he did not really need the things he stole. He was a recently adopted eight-year-old who had the moral philosophy from the street culture: "Don't feel guilty about anything you can get away with. Feel ashamed of yourself if you are stupid enough to get caught.

However, Kohlberg's developmental scheme of moral decision making can be enriched without negating its helpfulness in thinking and acting according to a holistic philosophy of morality. The categories of the human mind and heart seem to be time, space, and information or facts. A community in which to share risk and forsake safety and a capacity for loneliness when a decision isolates one from even those who are supposed to be his or her community. Let me briefly explain what I mean when I say that these decisions are made within categories of time. No decision highlights this more than the decision for or against an abortion for whatever reasons and at whatever level. Other less crucial decisions are in time frames. One principle of decision making is that if one cannot decide what to do he or she can decide *when* and/or by when one *will* decide. A calm assessment of the push of time on us makes time our servant and not us time's slave. Decisions about the use of extraordinary means to extend life are made on frequencies of time.

Decisions are made within the categories of space. Also, the decision about the use of highly sophisticated technology to extend the life of a person dying of terminal cancer is a *different* decision according to *where* the patient is. If he or she is at home, the issue is not even raised. If the patient is in the hospital, the very presence of artificial resuscitation techniques, oxygen, heart monitors, etc., is added to the medico-legal responsibility of doctors and nurses in a hospital. The locale of the hospital calls for settling the issue of Kohlberg's Stage 4 Law-and-Order level and stage. Rules are rules. Medical and military authority are our nearest approaches to absolute power, however frail they are with humanity in themselves. However, if the decisions are made in the home itself, then the decision can be made on Kohlberg's Stage 5 of social contracts that are negotiable and renegotiable. Or, the decision can be settled on the basis of Kohlberg's Stage 6 of the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative, etc. These decisions, at whatever level of making, are shaped by the actual piece of geography on which they were made. For example, to decide that an eighteen-month-old baby be taken off artificial oxygen when pronounced to have an inoperable tumor on the brain is a decision easy to make in a classroom or a forum room like this at 4:30 p.m. To make the same decision with the physicians present, the parents and grandparents present, and a chaplain present in a hospital intensive care unit at 11:00 p.m. causes sweat to pop out all over us.

The amount and quality of data or information a person has also imprints shaping effects on the level at which decisions are made. Data collection is the first stage of decision making. The decision as to whether to commit a person to a psychiatric hospital has to be made on more than one of Kohlberg's levels. Demonstrable evidence that this person is dangerous to himself or herself must be documented with data. This is the Law-and-Order stage. Even if these things

are true, a Stage 6 question of ethics still remains: What degree of lethality accompanies his or her decision to commit suicide? Even if it is the most lethal degree possible, does this person have a right to kill himself or herself anyway? This would have to be settled on Stage 6 by reason of some universal ethical principle orientation. But, once again, the time and place at which this person is being a "decider" shapes the stage at which he or she has the possibility of a choice in decision making.

Not only the factor of available information, the factor of space, and the factor of time affect the level and stage of decision making. The element of risk taking is a powerful dynamic in decision making. A book by Ward Edwards and Amos Tversky entitled *Decision Making* is a timely surprise to the reader. It deals with statistical possibility in making business decisions involving money and commodities. It includes risk probability for airline pilots and paratroopers, and gambling decisions in games of chance. (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967.) In the prediction of hereditary birth defects in children, tables of statistical probability are used to give advice and counsel to prospective parents as they make decisions concerning having children. Also, the chances and risks of surgery are a subtly powerful force in the decision to operate or not. One patient called me to his bedside prior to open heart surgery. He was intensely anxious. He said that his nurses had assured him that his surgeon had operated on over a hundred persons with his kind of disorder and had not lost one by death. Instead of comforting him, this had a paradoxical effect. He said to me: "The odds are against me. He—the surgeon—can't keep on winning forever. He's got to lose sometime: After this many successes I'm bound to be the first patient he loses." Neither Kohlberg's stages of decision-making ethics nor our formal curriculum of faith in God, take the factor of chances taken riskily into consideration.

In an article entitled "Psychiatry—A High Risk Profession," John Spiegel, President of the American Psychiatric Association, says that decisions of risk taking done within a community of deciders are more likely to be less foolhardy decisions than those done in isolation. In fact in a group discussion, even more risky choices are made than would be true of the decision made in isolation from others. (American Journal of Psychiatry, 152:7, July, 1975, pp. 693 ff.) I would add that the size of the group has something vital to do with it. A mob may make more foolhardy decisions than a small face-to-face discussion group. Then, too, the factor of drop-outs from the group when decisions get more and more risky was portrayed by Harvey Cox's neighborhood group discussing a neighborhood cooperative in the development of a family-oriented community of the Christian faith. All went well until the group decided to make their individual incomes known to the whole group. Several dropped out because they did not want to risk their investments in this way.

When we discuss risk taking in decision making as an element indispensable for education in decision making, this demands the element of trust, basic trust, which being translated ultimately means faith in God in the decision making we do. If we insist on having the power to control all the variables in the future in

our decision making, we will not make choices. We will let circumstances decide for us. Sometimes an individual has to make decisions that involve risks that he or she—because of love for the community—decides to make alone before God in behalf of the community that does not have all the data, the place in time and space, etc., that he or she does. This is the kind of decider we find in Jesus Christ our Lord. Hebrews 13:11-12 (RSV) speaks of him thus: "The bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood." He took thirty-three years of reflection in the small confines of Palestine and in the company of his small band of disciples to make that decision. He decided to take the risk alone.

How, at what stage, and with what information, and with what risk do you and I make decisions in which *we* take alone the responsibility for the risk. The book of Hebrews adds a suggestion for us: "Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, bearing abuse for him. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (13:13-14, RSV).

Paul Tournier, in his book *A Place For You*, which has a subtitle in the French edition, "A Psychology of Faith," says that in spiritual growth we are always at one and the same time finding a place and quitting a place. This double action requires courage in the face of risk. His parable of the trapeze artist sums the idea up.

We are faced with the necessity for a leap of faith to be added to any moral decision before it can be validated. If we live on a morality of pure safety, we will not grow beyond that level where we feel most secure. We will always avoid anything but the surest move. However, if you and I live on a morality of risk, then adventure, crises, and dangers, will be ahead of us.

## CONTEMPORARY PRIORITIES IN RACE RELATIONS

Benjamin Hooks

You have suggested that the theme of my speech should be, "Contemporary Priorities in Race Relations." In that vein I want to talk about goals, timetables, quotas. These are mighty words today in our field of affirmative action. You know, one of the things that concerns me is that so often those of us who are committed to social and racial justice and who are concerned with the fulfillment of the American dream find that we get run off of the best positions by our critics. The strange thing is that most of the time our critics don't want to see anything happen; but we are a little afraid of our own ground or the loss of social prestige and sometimes even the loss of our pulpits and jobs and so we tend to compromise. So the word "quota" has come to have a bad meaning and people don't like to talk about it. We say it is un-American to have quotas. Goals and timetables have become known now as reverse discrimination.

It seems to me that the most outstanding priority that faces us as a nation and particularly those of us who are minority people is to deal with this whole question of goals and timetables and quotas. I hope I can say something helpful about it tonight. Some of you have misgivings, or feel it's un-American, or somehow that it's not right, that we establish these kinds of quotas for women to be members of boards of directors, or for minority groups to have participation in the mainstream of American life.

Sometimes I use a little biblical text, even for my secular speeches. They don't always fit, but I have a way of making them fit! I looked one up tonight and I may not quote it correctly, but you'll get the point: "So teach us to number our days" . . . , establish some goals, timetables, and quotas for us that we might have some idea of how to apply our heart unto wisdom, for we know that thine anger and wrath are great. We have a suspicion from all that we've seen and heard that time is not infinite for us, that in this present state we only have a limited time. Since we only have a limited time, perhaps it would be well if we sort of learned from you, Father, how we should number our days that we might know how to properly apply the life that we have to live—the years, the days, the months, the weeks. How much time is needed for study, how much is needed for preparation? We want to establish some categorical quotas. We want to have some goals and timetables for our lives because we are afraid that without it, our lives will become a mass of nothingness. "So teach us to number our days" (Psalm 90:12).

When we think of the fact that this is the 201st year of the Declaration of Independence, we realize that for 200 years this nation of ours has been embarked on a marvelous adventure. Even today, when I re-read those words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," I still have enough love and patriotism for my country to experience a thrill, to know that they are great words, and they still send a little tingle down my spine. I recognize today that it doesn't pay to show any emotion when the institutions of motherhood, the worship of God, and even praise for our country are sort of outmoded. I recognize also all the warts and pimples on the body politic of the country of America more than most of you here.

I was born and raised in Memphis. I can remember having to ride on the back of the streetcars. I remember working in the great state of Mississippi when every acre was a drop of blood and every step was a tear. I can remember walking by those water fountains that said "Colored" and "White." I can remember the humiliation, discrimination, and segregation of libraries that said "Public" but didn't really mean it. But because I have lived to see those things change, I have faith and hope and confidence that this nation will finally bring to fruition, hopefully in our lifetime, the concept that was enunciated and pronounced and sent out into the world: "We hold these truths to be self-evident." They are not necessarily susceptible to any human proof, they do not need any mathematical equation, they stand for themselves. They are not endowed by the Magna Charta, not by Parliament, not by Commissions of the FCC, not by governors of states, not by Presidents or sena-

tors, but by God himself. And, therefore, since they come from God, nobody has the right to abridge them.

In 1977 I need not say to an intelligent and articulate audience that America has yet to live up to this dream, that we didn't really mean it then, for if you have thought of the deliberations of that group of people who met when they dealt with the question of slavery in the body of that document somehow they went back and invisibly rubbed out the word "all" and said "some" men are created equal. There was hope that the word "men" was used in its genetic sense meaning "humankind." We know they didn't mean that because women didn't receive the right to vote in this country until the 1920s. But the fact of the matter is, they printed it, they published it, they proclaimed it. When you stop to think about 1776 and recognize that we were still talking all over this world about the divine right of kings, and while slavery might have been abolished in much of the world, serfdom was still in flower, and men and women were chained to the land as peons and serfs, the whole concept of participatory democracy was new and untried. For those of us who sometimes become impatient and talk about a revolution to destroy this form of government, I say to you and to all of us that there is something basically good about this nation of ours that needs preserving. Oh yes, it needs to have some salt applied from time to time. We need not be so concerned about its goodness that we forget about its badness, its faults, and failures. I think there is something good at the heart of this country that we need to strive to preserve. For these men who wrote these words were dealing with a new and untried concept. I sometimes think when I read the life of Thomas Jefferson and read his viewpoints on God, his rather strange ideas, that in some peculiar way, if I may say so, God intervened in human history and took the pen that Jefferson held, and while he trembled on the brink of not knowing just what to say, he wrote those words: "Endowed by God, with these rights." And so it went out, and all over this world people heard it and were stirred strangely and we have been involved in this great venture for over 200 years trying to make these words come true. Langston Hughes said, "O America that never has been and yet must be." And it seems to me that the great opportunity that we have today is to make those words really become true in our lifetime and in our nation.

I think it is possible when men and women of goodwill, Jew and Gentile, educated and uneducated, male and female, white and black, come together and dedicate themselves to that task. We have gone through a long and dreary history. We remember all of the challenges that this nation has faced, for even in the War of Independence, there were perhaps more people who were not concerned or who were against it than were for it. But those who believed in independence prevailed. It was not long after that that we suffered all kinds of problems. And you remember the second Battle of New Orleans in 1835, and before that the War of 1812 when the British came back into this nation. You remember that great holocaust, the Civil War, when brother was turned against brother and households were divided and millions of people

were killed and maimed and the whole nation went through a bloodbath in order that we might reaffirm our commitment to the concept that "all men are created equal." Every now and then I can still hear the gallant words of that woman who has cried down through the centuries, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. His feet are trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. Glory, glory, hallelujah!"

We had the financial panics of the 1890s, World War I, and World War II. We have spoken about and talked about the four freedoms, the engagement in Korea, and the Vietnamese conflict that tore this nation asunder and caused some of the best of our young people to feel that this nation was not worth preserving. Yet somehow, in spite of all of this, we have persevered and have continued as a nation. I believe with all my heart, all my soul, and all the strength of my intellectual being, that God is calling upon us now to make true the dream of the words of that Declaration, of that Preamble, "All are created equal."

In the 1960s, after John Kennedy was assassinated and Lyndon Johnson became President, we sort of went through what I call a period of euphoria and joy. I can remember walking with Martin Luther King and others through that year when people who should have known better said, "Here comes that wolf in sheep's clothing," when the respectable authors of communication talked about him, when many churches turned their backs on him—this prophet of social justice whom I believe was raised up just as surely as Moses was raised up to speak to Pharaoh in Egypt. Martin Luther King, Jr. went walking through this country and this land, not just for black folks, but for white folks, because he understood that slavery demeans both the oppressor and the oppressed. I am sure that many of you have had guilt feelings since then because you did not really join with him but since that time you have seen that here was a man, saintly in his character and deportment, who tried to tell us and who believed that there was a conscience in this country that could be reached. He was willing to create a climate of tension, even at the risk of physical imprisonment and bodily harm, to say to this nation that we have to fulfill the pledge of that Preamble.

In the 1960s we passed the Civil Rights laws and all of us rejoiced. I can remember when Lyndon Johnson took to the television and ended up one of his great speeches by saying, "We shall overcome"—that song which has become the battle hymn of the civil rights so-called revolution. But you know, it has now been twelve years since then and already we see assaults being made and people supposedly of goodwill and great intelligence now saying that the concept of trying to get women and blacks and Hispanics and other classes of people whom the Congress recognized needed certain protection, that this is reverse discrimination, and the Bakke and Defunis cases are winding their way up to the Supreme Court, particularly the Bakke case and we are trying to decide now whether to give disadvantaged people an opportunity is in effect reverse discrimination.

This is strange, because America has the ability, and I want to talk with you about that tonight, to do what-

ever societally she thinks is necessary. Since the Civil War we have had a system that gave to every returning veteran some preference in civil service. I am a veteran of World War II, and when I went to the post office in Chicago and took the Civil Service examination and they found out I was a veteran, they automatically added five points to my score. Why? Because I was a veteran. Society had decided that those who had gone to the front to fight were entitled (although some of us didn't go to the front to fight, some of us stayed here and had plush jobs in certain places) to this compensation. Then, if you had a Purple Heart, if you were wounded, it didn't make much difference if you got the wound in the front or the rear. You got special treatment.

I put a little humor in because when you start talking about race relations, people get rather stern. They start reading their pamphlets and folding their arms and closing their hearts and nobody is so blind as those who have eyes and will not see. So many times we don't want to hear the truth: I have been in a lot of meetings where people get cold as ice. It doesn't bother me because I bring a little fire with me, you know, and a round-trip ticket so I can get back! I think preachers and prophets are not always called on to be popular, but to tell the truth as they perceive it. Whether the world receives, accepts it, or rejects it doesn't really matter. What does matter is not Israel repenting, but Jacob telling the truth.

So we went through that period, and now we are faced with that. I think about all the things at the end of World War II when we had conquered the war machines of both Germany and Japan, and when President Truman decided to have the Berlin airlift and millions of dollars were spent on that and I don't begrudge it. But anybody could have filed a taxpayer's suit and said, "When you spend my tax money to rebuild Berlin, you are taking something from the streams and ponds and roads of America," or "When you use my tax money to rebuild the cities of Japan you are somehow demeaning me."

But it was society's purpose in this country to rebuild Berlin. It was society's purpose to combat Communism, which we thought was a great danger to our way of life, and so we spent billions of dollars on the Marshall Plan. Yet we say that there needs to be a domestic Marshall Plan to help black people who went through the agony of slavery, who worked 244 years without a payday, who had to hear the Supreme Court say that black folks have no rights which white folks are bound to respect. After the Civil War and after the great, triumphant period from 1865 to 1876, the compromise between Tilden and Hayes was effected and the federal troops were withdrawn, so by 1901 every right that blacks thought they had was wiped off the books. The grandfather clause was enacted, the Jim Crow laws were put into effect, and the whole thing rolled backward. And a curtain darker than a thousand midnights dropped. Yet somehow black folks did not lose their faith in this country, but kept on working and giving their blood, their sweat, their toil, and their tears to see this dream come true.

And when we talk about a domestic Marshall Plan to redress some of the inequities, there are people

who say it will never happen—that you'll not spend their taxpayers' money like that. But there is in this world a concept of divine and social justice; and law and order without the presence of justice is a mockery. I call on you tonight to think seriously about the implementation of the number one priority—economic justice.

Well, in the teeming ghettos of America they tell me the unemployment rate among young black teenagers exceeds 40 percent. Is there any wonder then that we have a time bomb ticking in the very hearts of our communities? I understand white flight. I understand the move to the suburbs, the decline in school enrollment; and I understand all of the problems about busing. It doesn't really matter that 80 percent of the busing in this country is for nonracial purposes. The only thing we see is the 20 percent that is designed to implement integration. I understand the problem that you have. I shall never forget talking to a distinguished white Baptist pastor in my town about two or three years ago. He said, "Brother Ben, in the height of the civil disturbances here in Memphis I know that you have probably wondered why I didn't take a more active role and I have agonized over it. But I pastor one of the largest churches in this community, and if you had known how much prejudice and hatred there was in that church, you might have appreciated my position—and, then, maybe you would not have."

He said, "I made a decision and whether it was right or wrong I had to live with it, that I would remain in that pulpit and try to educate the people as best I could. And had I taken the kinds of positions that you were calling on me to take, I would not have lasted two weeks. I think I have accomplished some good."

I'm not a judge, I'm not God, I don't always know what is right and what is wrong, but I can understand the agony of some of you who have had to face those kinds of tough decisions. Now preaching in the black churches has become a little more difficult than in the days when we could simply talk about what white folks had done to us. It was very easy. Everybody just said, "Amen!", but now we have to talk about black-on-black crime. We have to talk about the rape and robbery and murder that goes on in any city every day. We have to deal with the fact that if white folk had mistreated black youngsters, it would be a relief to me if they would go out there and raise hell with you and stop tearing up our neighborhood, but that isn't the way it's happening and we have to deal with that. It is a very difficult and sticky subject. It's not easy now. Maybe, in a belated way, God has caused me to recognize some of the concerns that you have had. The thing that really counts, though, as I see it is: where shall we go from here?

You know when I think about Harvard (I read the other day where they were educating people of the world), and you think about the four billion people in this world, two-thirds of whom are colored, wouldn't it be a ludicrous, stupid, silly, ignorant thing to regulate that school so only white folk could attend? How in a lily-white environment can you prepare people to cope with the problems of the world when two-thirds of its people are colored?

We've got to have some special way to get dis-

advantaged youth into our schools, and you can't fool me; I read; and they have never used the Scholastic Aptitude Test or rating in the class as the only criterion by which they have admitted people. They look at other things: Are you the son of an alumnus? How much did your father give? Do you play football or sing well? There are many ways that we try to balance a student body because we have found out that to have a student body too imbalanced produces imbalance in the students who come, and that the best way to train and to learn is in an environment that is heterogeneous. So we understand that and I have always felt, as I talk with the NAACP lawyers now about the Bakke case in California, that school administrators have known for years how to get a better balanced student body. I wondered why they drew such crude and rudimentary lines. When you admit blacks and Hispanics and other disadvantaged people to your white schools, you are not really helping us as much as you are helping yourself, because you are preparing yourself to live with the world that is.

And one day America is going to have to face the fact that 10 percent of this world cannot continue to consume 60 percent of all of the goods. We've got to recognize that there is a social gospel. I understand the great argument you are having and Southern Baptists, particularly, are rebelling. I used to be on a panel on "What Is Your Faith?" for years and years in Memphis, and we'd get letters talking about individual salvation. Well, you can't prove to me you're saved unless you act like it! The Bible says if any man says he loves God whom he has never seen, and hates his brother whom he sees daily, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. You believe in social gospel and I think that's great. You wouldn't have a Baptist Hospital in Memphis if you just believed in individual salvation. You know that being saved doesn't qualify you to heal me or to perform a delicate brain operation. I don't care how many times you've been born again, when I get ready to have my brain operated on, I want to go to a surgeon who knows something about it.

Sometimes I go for counseling, and I need counseling from time to time. I appreciate your homiletic studies, but I hope you have had some courses in pastoral counseling so you will recognize a crazy man when you see one. I think we recognize the social gospel because we have built these great institutions of higher learning. We recognize that when we send our sword to the Philistines to be sharpened, we cannot be sure of the temper of the steel. We recognize that.

We recognize it in prohibition. Most of you don't believe in drinking. You think that will send you to hell quicker than anything; well, I know it won't. Hating folks will send you to hell faster than anything in this world. But you put up that bottle, you won't smoke, and you walk around like some of the Holy Ghost folks I used to know, with long dresses sweeping the floor and saying, "I'm free from sin." You haven't sinned all day because you haven't had a chance. You say you have never smoked, or drunk, or played cards, or checkers. That's a lot of foolishness! You have enough to do without adding all that. I think the time has come when you ought to love your neighbor as yourself. When people are hungry, you ought to feed them. When they are in jail, you ought

to see about them. That's the Judgment test: "I was hungry and you didn't feed me. I was in jail and you didn't come see me. I was out of doors and you wouldn't take me in." I can see a lot of Baptist preachers, black and white, with their long robes on saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or naked, or in jail and failed to see about you?" I think I can hear the words of the Master saying, "Inasmuch as you failed to do it to the least of these my little ones, you failed to do it also even unto me."

And so these are pragmatic concerns. We are concerned about jobs, and we understand that black youth won't have jobs unless there are jobs available for everybody, and whether they come from the private sector or whether they shall be make-work jobs, or another Civilian Conservation Corps, or PWA, doesn't really concern me. I know that a country as rich as this can afford jobs for all those who want to work.

We're concerned about the welfare mess. That's the second problem. I used to go around to a few churches in Memphis or to pastors who have a little social concern. They wouldn't let me preach, but they would let me talk to their Sunday Schools, but I preached anyway at the Sunday School! They would talk about all of the money wasted on welfare. And I would say, "Well, you ought to look at the breakdown." I remember one day when they took sixteen of us around. There were fifteen white and one black. I was the black. We went around into welfare homes and looked at people who were poor and almost starving. At that time, in Shelby County in 1965, the maximum that an elderly person could draw on welfare in the city of Memphis and in the state of Tennessee was \$60 a month, out of which they had to pay their rent, lights, gas, water, phone, and medicine. I saw overstuffed people like I was and am, going around and wondering how in the world people could live and be happy and singing and joyful on \$60 a month—folks who were not lazy. They were not people who had refused to work. They had been working in kitchens, tending to babies, getting up before dawn in the morning and getting home after the sun had gone down. They were people who were not covered by Social Security. All the rich promises of America had evaded them; yet in the twilight of their lives, they were called on to live on \$60 a month. The thing that really shocked those folks was how clean and how neat they were. Then we went to homes where people had four and five children. I could see the unease coming across their minds, because you know when you talk about cutting off Aid to Dependent Children you are talking about taking babies in effect and doing what Pharaoh did. You kill the first-born, or you let the first-born live and kill the second-born. You are talking about starvation.

We talk about the criminal justice system where it costs \$20,000 a year to keep a man in prison against about \$720 to take care of people on welfare. When we came back from that trip and got back to the headquarters they had a big steak dinner for us; and one of the things that really struck me was that nobody was able to eat that dinner that day. Because they had come to realize firsthand that there are people who are not lazy, who have not refused jobs as we quite often hear it said; but who have grown

old and are not able to work; who suffer from heart disease and high blood pressure. They are stroke victims, children who did not ask to be brought into this world, but who are here. I used to ask the question, Do you just want to take all the children after they are born and drown them? It would be just as humane or perhaps more humane than to underfeed them, to make a permanent sub-class in this country that would always be pulling down the system we are trying to build. If we are not Christian, even if we do not have any Judeo-Christian heritage, just pragmatically, we cannot afford to do that. So our second concern after jobs would be a cleaning up of the welfare mess that we have in our country.

The third thing I want to speak about is the criminal justice system. I came in from Detroit this morning and I was reading about Jackson prison. It is the largest in the world with over 7,000 inmates in a prison that was built for less than 4,000. I used to be in the Public Defender's office. I used to be a criminal court judge. I saw people come back year after year. We don't really know how to deal with that. We don't want to see it. We hide it like we do our cemeteries on the outskirts of town. Nobody wants a prison built near them. And yet we spend more and more and accomplish less and less. Mind you, I'm not one who says we don't need prisons, because we do; but I think prisons have to be humane. I recognize that in this country today almost 60 percent of the prison population is black, and we have a problem. We are concerned about simple, elementary justice. We are concerned about black-on-black crime. We are concerned about children who, in this land of plenty, still go to bed hungry, and I call on you to look at legislation that has been passed and try to give life and vitality to it.

I understand the complaints that will come. During the little economic upturn that we had, under the prodding of the federal court in Detroit, where they had refused to hire black policemen, they began to hire women and blacks on the police force. Then we had a recession and they had to cut back on the police force and the question was, how? Historically black folk have said we are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. It seemed that that pattern was going to be in effect, and yet I also recognized the rights of seniority and union members who said, "Well, it's not our fault that a recession has come and I think you ought to fire on the basis of seniority." Which means that those who were hired last will be fired first. Somehow there has to be a way to work out that dilemma so we can treat fairly those who have never been hired.

Now the courts have talked about it. They said, "If you can prove, Ben Hooks, that you went down to the Highway Patrol in 1967 and applied for a job and they wouldn't hire you because of your color, then individually we will take care of you." But what about all the hundreds of other young black men who wouldn't go because they knew there was no use? Now you have to deal with that.

We have to deal with that. We have to deal with the whole concept of whether or not there is a way station. Carl Rowan gave a beautiful example in his column the other day. In the state of Alabama, where they had never hired any blacks on the Highway

Patrol, Judge Johnson, who was the presiding federal judge in that case, had wrestled with that question for five years. They came back with the same answer and said, "We can't find anybody that is qualified." So Judge Johnson as a remedial measure set up a timetable and said, "You *will* find somebody, or you will go to jail for contempt, and next year, we want you to have X number of blacks employed." And they did have X number of blacks employed.

Now some people say, "That's wrong. We can't do that." Well, a law that cannot be enforced is not a law. And somehow in America, we've got to face up to that. So I call on you to think in terms of positive action, to help redress some of the many wrongs that have gone on in this country. I have already said to you that I am not one who advocates the overthrow of this government, and I believe there is so much worthy to be saved, and I think we have come far, but it gives hope to me to think that we can go the remaining distance. I have faith and confidence in men and women of goodwill across this country, that we can build the kind of country that we ought to have. And I think it ought to start with the church. I think the church ought not to be the last to catch up with this great march to human progress. I think those of us who have been called by God to preach, those of us who profess to believe in Jesus Christ and social justice, those of us who have seen His light, those of us who have known firsthand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, those of us who have committed our lives to his way ought to be in the forefront of those who are seeking social justice in this country. I think we owe it to ourselves and to our posterity.

I want to remind you of something that Lyndon Johnson said just about a month before he died. I'm glad that a white man said this which I can repeat to you. At a symposium of civil rights leaders there was a great argument about the application of the civil rights laws. Johnson had a heart condition and on his way to the podium he had to put a nitroglycerin tablet under his tongue to get enough strength to give his speech. It is called "The Twelfth Man on the Field." Some day you ought to read it. I was glad it was said not only by a white man but by a white Southerner. He said that he had been born in the South, he had been afflicted with the cancer of racial hatred, he had believed because he had been taught that somehow blacks and Mexicans were inferior, but he thanked God that he had come in contact with the truth and knew that that was not the case. I think he spoke to America that day for he said that to be born white in this country is to live on history's mountaintop, but to be born black is to live in history's valleys. He said to America that unless the rights that some of us have become the rights that all of us have, then soon none of us will have those rights. If I had had the chance to talk to Mr. Johnson, I would have said, "That was a great speech, but let me tell you that long before your time a black man said that. Booker T. Washington in 1895 at the Atlanta exposition stood before a group of white people just thirty years after the end of the Civil War and said to the white South that black folk will either be one-tenth of your shame, your despair, your degradation, your ignorance, or they will be one-tenth of your

triumph, your victories, and your glories. And he said, "If you try to keep us in the ditch by keeping one foot on our necks, remember that you circumscribe your own freedom of movement, because you can't get very far from the ditch if you have to keep one foot in the ditch."

My brothers and sisters, I say to you in closing, because I believe that not only is there a priority in race relations, I believe there is a priority in this country of bringing all of us together, that when we look out on this world and we see other nations growing strong, that we ought to recognize that we are inexplicably bound up as one in this nation and that we shall either rise together or fall separately. The story is told of two men who were fishing one day in a fairly large boat. One end of the boat developed a leak and the man at that end of the boat threw his fishing gear and bait overboard and began bailing the water out of his end of the boat. The other man just kept fishing. Finally he said, "Sam, why don't you help me get the water out of this boat?" Sam said, "My end of the boat is doing all right." Let me remind you that if my end of the boat goes down, yours won't be far behind.

When the tumult and the shouting dies:  
The Captains and the Kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

We are called on as soldiers of God to hold up his bloodstained banner. We get tired, discouraged, and we feel sometimes that the fight is in vain. When you go back to your communities, I am sure that you will meet with more discouragement than encouragement, and in my own life, I have gotten weary. Sometimes I feel like giving up the battle, but something deep down within says, "Fight on. Remember, the race has not been promised to the swift, nor the victory to the strong, but to him who endures and holds on to the end." So I have decided to go on with the NAACP and help fight this battle. You will hear from me from time to time. Sometimes you may think I have lost my mind. I may have to escalate the rhetoric, but I am determined that as far as any one man can do it, I will do what I can do to make this country what it ought to be. If that requires sacrifice on my part, so be it. On sleepless nights and long, hard, and cold days we are going to be fighting to establish social justice in this country. When I get tired, I will remember that God is still on the throne. It seems to me, if I can put it in my own terminology, that God had to go down and touch the hand, the eye, and the ear of the prophet, and say, "Come out now and look at Israel, not at how it is, but at how Israel can be when the covenant people of God walk with their God. I would like to show you a vision of America when folks who call themselves Christians put on the whole armor of faith and are willing to dare to take great adventures to personify in their own lives their belief that God still lives and that he calls on us to do our best. For if we do our best, then we can jump and shout in ringing tones that we can see the day coming when every hill and mountain shall be brought low, when every valley shall be exalted, when the crooked shall be made

straight, and the rough places shall be made smooth, and the lamb and the lion shall lie down together. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh, black and white, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, young and old shall see it together—peace and power."

## ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

Dale Bumpers

First of all, I'm not going to talk about economic priorities. I want to talk to you about something a little more topical than your subject matter and I may touch briefly on economics. But I wanted to talk to you on the relationship between you and your government and the government's responsiveness to you and our responsibilities to each other.

I've been reading a very fine book called *Spandau* written by Albert Speer who was one of the top Nazis in Hitler's Germany. He was a brilliant engineer and architect and he became the Minister of Armaments during that terrible period in the history of the world. For reasons not entirely clear, during the Nuremberg trials, Albert Speer's life was spared. But he was sentenced to spend twenty years in prison. He wrote two books, one called *Inside the Third Reich*, and the one I am reading now is called *Spandau*, which was the name of the prison where he served just on the outskirts of Berlin. Now Albert Speer was not a bad man but the power of his position blinded him or, at least, it made him insensitive, unaware, or oblivious to the things that were going on around him. As he wrote in prison, and it is essentially a diary, he remembered the parades, the cheering crowds, and the exhilaration of it all. He remembered the anti-Semitic streamers hanging across the streets which at the time evoked neither hostility nor empathy toward Jews.

He wrote:

And yet—I drove with Hitler under those streamers and did not feel the baseness of the slogans being publicly displayed and sanctioned by the Government. I suppose I didn't even see the streamers—sometimes it seems that my own "purity," my indolence, makes me *guiltier*. Passion, whether springing from *hatred* or *resentment*, is still a motivation. Lukewarmness is nothing.

Albert Speer has pinpointed the two characteristics which seem to increasingly afflict us all. (1) He was simultaneously intense—totally dedicated to his task as armaments minister—and (2) either insensitive or at best "lukewarm" as he says to what was going on around him.

This is certainly a popular perception of Congress—that political survival becomes the end, and the means are whatever is necessary to ensure that survival. That perception is not without merit. When one seeks office, he or she always seeks to identify the problems that are plaguing the greatest number of people and then develop or attract a coalition of the disenchanting and the disenfranchised without alienating a significant number of the more powerful—or to put it in the ver-

nacular—the “haves.” Once success is achieved, and political survival becomes the principal goal, responses become political and we start cutting corners. It isn’t that there is a total lack of concern, it’s just that there is a turning inward—a concern for narrow goals, a selfishness, or as we used to say in the Marine Corps, “Pull up the ladder, Jack, I’m on board.”

As people have become more aware that Congress, for example, is really more concerned with itself than with those who do the electing, their hostilities have become so intense that Congress has become the focal point of blame for every adversity they experience. So those who indulge themselves in the luxury of finding a scapegoat for every untoward event, fall into a trap not too dissimilar to the Albert Speer trap—that by not being a party to the sins of the world, they absolve themselves of any responsibility for them.

I was pleased to hear the Methodist bishop who delivered the opening prayer at Jimmy Carter’s inaugural implore the American people to quit blaming Congress for every inconvenience they suffer. Implicit is the admonition that we be more tolerant—to remember that we have all been guilty of putting our rights before our duties, our desires before our needs.

Billy Graham has often said that people constantly ask him, “What would Jesus say if He came again?” And he always answers, “Exactly what He said before. Things like, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself; blessed are the poor, the hungry, the meek, and the merciful.’”

Jimmy Carter has been forceful and unequivocal in speaking out about human rights, and the indignities millions of people suffer. It is an issue not widely understood, but put in its simplest terms, the vast majority of this world’s population dare not criticize their authorities for fear of imprisonment. I admire Jimmy Carter for his stand and applaud his refusal to be intimidated on the issue. Literally millions of people are in prison because they have, by word or deed, dared to express their very natural yearning to be free. The United States is about the only beacon of hope for these helpless people, and while the chances are slim that our public pronouncements will be effective in alleviating the terrible yoke of oppression, our assertion of moral leadership will have a hollow ring if human rights here are not zealously guarded. Some of my colleagues have demonstrated considerably more concern for the Solzhenitzens, the Bukosvkys, the Sakharovs, and the Ginsbergs than they have for the poor, the downtrodden, and especially the black people in this country. Christ, in his demonstrated concern for the poor, the helpless, the oppressed, left not only a great moral lesson, but a social and political lesson as well. Teddy Roosevelt said it first, that “this nation isn’t going to be a good place for any of us to live until it’s a good place for everybody to live.” You can extend that to the world.

I sit on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I can tell you it’s a mind-boggling experience to hear our military planners describe the various war scenarios under which, for example, we lose 120 million people and still have the retaliatory capability of killing 100 million to 150 million Russians and vice versa. The figures vary with each possibility, but I keep asking myself, “Who wins in such a holocaust?” The answer has to be, “Nobody.” But we’re still producing two or four warheads a week to add to our arsenal, and we

can be confident the Soviets are doing the same. We now have thirty-eight warheads for each of the 219 Russian cities of over 100 thousand people, and still adding. Unless some sensible agreement is reached to control this race, there can be little question that one of the scenarios will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I do not, nor does any sensible person I know, suggest that we do anything except be assured that our defenses are such that they will always be a deterrent to the other side’s starting anything. But the economic strength of this nation can be dissipated if we bankrupt ourselves with larger and larger deficits. And we can certainly dissipate the greatest of all our strengths with an indifferent attitude toward our institutions, or a very volatile and passionate plea to abolish the ones that occasionally displease us.

- (1) Our Supreme Court has been wrong on occasion, but this is no justification for abolishing the Court.
- (2) Congress is often wrong, but representative government is the only method of correcting those wrongs—not abolition of Congress.
- (3) Welfare and unemployment programs have been fraught with fraud, but this is no justification for turning our backs on the unemployed and the poor.
- (4) Medicare and Medicaid have often unjustly enriched doctors and hospitals, but this should in no way diminish our hopes for providing health care for all people.

The list is unending.

I am a paid lobbyist. The only paid lobbyist most people in my state have. They want me to help provide them with opportunities—not gifts—but opportunities for jobs, to own homes, to educate their children, for access to decent health care, to secure and enhance a political system that satisfies the inherent longing for freedom that fills the hearts of all men.

The repression of the people of Eastern Europe, maintained by the presence, or threatened presence of the Red Army, is a canker in the side of the Soviet Union. Their disdain for their rules, and their resentment of their repression, constitutes a volatile and potentially explosive problem for the Soviets.

I’ll tell you a very interesting story. In 1971 the State Department called me and asked me if I would go to the Soviet Union with a group of governors. I didn’t think the state of Arkansas would take too kindly to me walking off on one of those tax-paying, rip-off trips nine months after I got to be governor. But I finally agreed to go. Incidentally, there was a little town out to the north of Little Rock called Cabot. They were doing a little radio show on the street one day asking people, “What do you think about Governor Bumpers going to Russia?” One old man said, “I don’t know what he wants to go to Russia fer. He ain’t been to Cabot yet.”

But I took that trip to the Soviet Union and on a flight from Moscow to Bucharest, Rumania, I was seated by a man who obviously wanted to visit with me. He apparently discerned that I was a westerner. He didn’t speak any English and I certainly didn’t speak Rumanian but he spoke fluent French and I spoke lousy French and we communicated. Shortly after I got home, I received some little trinkets—a little scarf for my daughter and some Rumanian crafts.

About six months after that, I got a long, eloquently-written letter in English mailed from Switzerland saying, "Please help my family and me get out of Rumania."

So in 1972 I went to work and issued a very formal invitation, and told him (he told me not to refer to his letter, incidentally) how much Betty and I would enjoy having him and his family visit us at the Governor's Mansion. I didn't hear from him and he obviously didn't get the letter. In 1975 he wrote again, pleading with me. He said he'd seen in the Bucharest papers that I had been elected to the Senate. So I wrote him another letter and told him 1976 was our Bicentennial year and how exhilarating a time it was going to be in the United States and how much Betty and I would enjoy having him and his family if they could come and help us celebrate this great period in our history. He wrote back and told me, finally, that they were not going to let him out.

It was his son who was studying biophysics who was writing these beautiful letters in English. He also savored the kind of freedom and nurtured the same kind of yearnings in his heart for freedom that his father did. Last October 8 he went down to a small city on the Danube River and plotted his escape for four days. On the fourth day at 2:00 in the morning he dived into the Danube and started swimming toward Yugoslavia. He got to a sand bar in the middle of the river which was about a kilometer wide. The ducks and the other wildlife there flew and attracted the attention of the Rumanian guards. They started firing at him, he dived back in the water, and they got patrol boats after him. But because he was an excellent swimmer, he finally made it to Yugoslavia and hid in a haystack until the next morning. The Yugoslavian police picked him up and put him in jail for fifteen days for being an illegal alien. Finally, they took him to Trieste, which is now a part of Italy, and he worked his way to Milan. He went to the American Embassy and they urged him to give up to the Italian authorities, which he did. They took him to a refugee camp in Latina which is just outside Rome. They took all his documented history. He told them he was trying to get to the United States and the only person he knew there was Senator Dale Bumpers.

Then I got a letter from the Executive Committee of the Episcopal Church. I must confess to you that, as a devout Methodist who has always contributed a lot of money to missions, I have had strong reservations about the mission service until I received that letter. The service that the Episcopal Church performed then was absolutely gratifying to me. But to make a still longer story shorter, he came to the United States last week and we had a tearful reunion in my office. He now has a job and will enroll in advanced studies and get an advanced degree in biophysics at Rutgers University next summer.

I tell you that story because as long as the normal yearning for freedom of expression and movement is forcibly thwarted, as long as the Berlin Wall stands, not to keep us out but to keep them in, the Soviet system will be a graphic, open, and abject manifestation of failure for all the world to see. Our danger lies in the oft-held comforting belief that their failures somehow strengthen us. Nothing could be more wrong. Nor can a passionate anti-communist zeal cor-

rect our shortcomings. On the contrary, it often masks some of the most insidious perpetrations of wrongs in this country.

Yesterday morning the pastor of my church spoke about "The Looking Glass of Lent." Simply put, the question is, whose life has been enriched because they knew you?

James Baldwin wrote a great novel called *Go Tell It On the Mountain*. In the story they were having one of those dinners on the ground before the week's revival started. All the preachers, one of whom was going to preach each night, were standing around the table, most of them very much overweight from over-eating. A young man, the main character, just going into the ministry and full of verve, energy, excitement, and dedication, listened to these well-dressed men talking about how many souls they had saved the preceding year, just like you and I would talk about how many ears of corn are on the stalk. As he listened to them, he was repulsed. He said that never would he take the gift of God so lightly. But if you read the novel, you know that he did indeed take it too lightly. He did and we all do because we're all lukewarm about perpetuating God's gift and lukewarmness is nothing.

## THE PRIORITY OF MORALLY RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

Hal Wingo

My first and only previous opportunity to speak to this austere gathering of movers and shakers among Southern Baptists was in Louisville at the 1975 meeting. The theme of the meeting that year was "integrity" and my turn on the program came about thirty hours after having had my mind bent in all kinds of new directions by the speakers who had already expounded on the meaning and implications of that word. I can still remember how helpless I felt about having heard all that went before me.

And I have no doubt that the personal situation for me would be the same today had I been around since yesterday morning. But unfortunately for me and for my own educational process, I arrived late last night and must return to New York this afternoon. Therefore, I come to you today in a state of rather thorough, but comfortable, ignorance—unaffected by the wisdom which has preceded me and that which will surely succeed me on the subject of priorities.

But it does seem fitting and proper that my moment of truth here does follow John Claypool's remarks on "adolescence," because that's about as far as I go, John.

I do think I feel a little more at home with this year's theme, or Valentine buzz word, as I like to think of the topics of these seminars. Don't you just love the way he pulls them out of the air and says, "Now speak to this." Frankly, on integrity, I'm still a little bit vague, but priorities I know! People in my trade shuffle priorities every day like a blackjack dealer in Vegas. (That may be the wrong kind of simile to use but in any case they shuffle them.) Every

daily newspaper you read or television news program you watch is a reflection of what *somebody* thought was the proper order of things in that particular context.

But those priorities, of course, are shaped by the *personal* priorities of the people making those journalistic decisions. Stories do not automatically appear on page one or jump into lead space. And my priorities as a journalist are irrevocably tied to the more personal level of priorities that help me define myself as an individual. What comes first with me anyway?

This is not an easy question to try and answer: What is it that we treasure first and above all else about ourselves? I am reminded here of one of the most revealing things that I think Lyndon Johnson ever said. In the course of a speech he listed the ways in which he wished to be known. He said, "I am a freeman, an American, a United States Senator, and a Democrat, in that order." Four things: freeman, American, senator, and Democrat. If we played a little mental game with ourselves this morning and could choose only four words to describe ourselves, to establish our identity in every way in the order of what we treasure most, what would we say? Probably there would be great unanimity among a gathering such as this that we would first call ourselves Christian (without allowing for any arguments about what that may mean). But if I had to surrender other things about myself in order to protect the truth that I wish to maintain that I am a Christian, I wonder would I choose to be a Christian woman of Vietnamese nationality rather than a non-Christian white man in America (assuming I had to give up other things to maintain what I count most dear)? I hope the answer would be *yes*, but I am more than a little grateful that I do not have to make that kind of choice.

So I can only start with my personal priorities saying that what matters most to me is to retain my religious faith and then cop out on steps two, three, and four. It is much easier to state the priority than it is to stake one's life on it. Everything after the big Number One gets confusing and subjective and open to all kinds of interpretations. We even have differences of views down the line which can be amusing.

I am sure you know of the personal friendship that exists between two very well known Americans—William F. Buckley, the conservative writer, and John Kenneth Galbraith, the Harvard professor and liberal economist. Their friendship somehow manages to transcend their complete ideological differences. And I don't think either man has ever been known to have a kind word for anything the other has had to say in print. Both men happen to own chalets in the tiny Swiss Alps resort village of Gstaad, and a few years ago Buckley's chalet burned to the ground during a winter visit when the Buckylys were in residence. The story goes that the only thing Buckley managed to escape from the house with was his typewriter, prompting Galbraith to remark, "What a terrible sense of priorities."

I hope you will not feel the same way about me before I sit down. But, if in the course of the next few minutes I seem to commit any heresies, please just raise your hand and I will try to pause at least long enough to reflect on the possible error of my ways. But please don't everybody do it at once, because my fragile psyche couldn't take it

My stated topic presupposes that moral responsibility is a priority, or should be a priority, for the press in our society. Few would argue that point though we could certainly have a lively discussion about where that might fall on a list of one, two, three, four, and five. I personally would not put it first. I wouldn't even put the truth first, but more on that later. Moral responsibility for the press is a condition to be desired. It is a goal to be strived for, and it is a quality which the public has a right to expect. And maybe we are only dealing with a question of semantics here in trying to determine what moral responsibility for the press really is.

My own bias is that the first priority of journalistic communication in a society such as ours is the *uncompromising defense of its own constitutionally guaranteed freedom*. I simply cannot talk about my trade without harking back to this theme. And two or three recent incidents related to the press come to mind in dealing with this principle.

The first I want to mention is the most difficult to talk about (especially in a setting like this), and it is the most troublesome.

Now we are going to talk dirty and if someone will keep the motor running I am going to skate here on some very, very thin ice. I refer to a recent court decision in Cincinnati, Ohio, in which a man named Larry Flynt, the publisher of *Hustler* magazine was sentenced to from seven to twenty-five years in prison for pandering obscenity in Cincinnati—that is for selling his magazine. *Hustler*, you may know—or perhaps you *do* know—is a real piece of smut. It often makes the *Playboy* of Jimmy Carter fame look like the teacher's quarterly from the Sunday School Board by comparison.

But the critical issue in this case is not Larry Flynt or *Hustler* magazine, neither of which are worthy of much serious consideration on a scale of any journalistic value. Larry Flynt is an embarrassment and irritant to the body of responsible publishers in this country. And I wouldn't walk across the street to do anything for him personally or for his magazine. That may sound a little uncharitable, but I am talking about aligning myself with the quality and character of the man's work. But we must look at the case in which he is only an element. We should also remember that the decisions which have established the principles of freedom of expression in this country have not been fought over the rights of the virtuous. There is, in fact, little virtue in leaping to the defense of admirable publications.

Justice Felix Frankfurter said it best in these words many years ago: "The safeguards of liberty have been forged in controversies involving not very nice people." Flynt qualifies in my book as "not very nice people" and what he is guilty of is *poor taste*. No, make that *bad taste*, *gross taste!* No question about it! But when taste becomes a criminal offense, punishable by imprisonment as reflected by the court decision in Cincinnati, the wagons of censorship will start being drawn in an ever tighter circle from which none of us can be sure we will escape. Were that to be true, I believe that the time could come when some people could take offense—with legal recourse—at the manner in which even certain elements of the Christian faith choose to express their witness. The bottom line here

has got to be whether anyone should have the authority in Cincinnati or anywhere else to suppress what others may wish to read or see. Jailing a publisher of a national magazine because we don't approve of his work certainly has the effect of jeopardizing that publication far beyond the limits of Cincinnati.

This lowest common denominator test of obscenity was abandoned by the United States courts in 1933 when James Joyce's novel, *Ulysses*, was found not obscene. But since that time the test for obscenity has been revised several times. Four years ago the Supreme Court laid down its current test which allows each community to decide for itself its own standards of obscenity.

So what communities clearly have the right to do is to prevent the distribution or sale of material which they deem to be obscene in their own communities. While even this step leans in the direction of state ordered regimentation of our minds, I believe that a reasonably intelligent, thoughtful society can find suitable means short of prior restraint of publication, restraining publishers, if you will, to control access to unsavory material without denying its right to exist. I certainly do not want the courts of Cincinnati telling me what I can read in New York, or Jackson, Mississippi, or anywhere else!

And that puts me in the somewhat uneasy position of standing before a group like this today to say that there must be room for the Larry Flynt and the *Hustler* magazines of this world in a free society. He has as much right to print his filth as I have the right to ignore it and to use my influence against its proliferation in my community. And if we don't like the sound of that, perhaps it is true that Mr. Flynt is working harder at exercising his rights than I am at mine. I can't blame *him* for that. End of dirty talk!

The second incident related to the defense of a free press—that first priority—is a much easier matter for me to talk about. This has to do with the right of a journalist to pursue his work without fear of physical interference. Of course danger exists in some form of the work—in covering war, public acts of violence, natural disasters, the freedom marches of some years ago. What I am talking about is not killing people just because they are getting snoopy in the pursuit of their work. Last year an investigative reporter in Phoenix, Arizona, Don Bolles, was murdered when a bomb exploded in his car while he was working on a story related to alleged Mafia connections in the state of Arizona. And that does seem to me just like putting up a neon sign saying, "You're right. We are in charge here." But nonetheless, Bolles lived long enough to indicate to police authorities *who* might have wanted him killed and the accused was soon brought to trial and subsequently convicted. However, his death could have been the end of one man's work as a free journalist.

But in an unprecedented response to this heinous crime, a group of thirty-six reporters voluntarily assembled in Arizona within a few months to make a very important statement that even the mob could understand. They wanted to show that Bolles, even by his death, could not be silenced. Those reporters took up his rightful work and the results of their investigations have been making news all this past

week around the country.

Those men and women also dramatically reminded us that in the case of Don Bolles freedom of the press is sometimes paid for at a very high price even in this country. Those men and women understand better than I can say it today that there is no greater priority than defending the freedom Don Bolles was denied.

And against that certainly I think I can move on to the second priority for responsible journalists, which is: Understanding the public's right *and its need* to be well informed, that is, trusting the people to be the final judge and jury of the events that shape their lives. Now I am beginning to sound like Jimmy Carter, aren't I? I'm certainly *not* sounding like the subject of our main interview in last week's issue of *People* magazine. We published a rather remarkably candid conversation with Fidel Castro and in the course of the interview we asked him why he felt it was necessary in his society to deny something as essential as freedom of the press. His answer was somewhat vague and condemnatory about the suppression of information even in the United States. "But," we said, "how many newspapers do you have in Cuba?" He responded, "Only two, and we still think we are wasting too much paper."

The public's right to know is obviously not a very big factor in the life of the government of Cuba. Nor, in fact, is it in many other societies of this world, certainly not to the extent of the journalistic show and tell which exists in our country.

For the first time in quite a long time we have a situation—at least for the moment—where the national government and the nation's press are in reasonable accord on the subject of openness as opposed to secrecy in the government's handling of its own business. In an interview just last week, Mrs. Carter reiterated the President's position that he feels we have conducted our doings in private, in secret, far too long, and that he really feels after a couple of months on the inside of the White House that the people need to know what's going on. This spirit of openness was a trademark of his campaign and I am inclined to give him good marks to date for his willingness to tolerate the dissemination of information to the public which sometimes may not be favorable to his own administration.

And interestingly, according to the latest Harris Poll, the majority of Americans asked said they feel journalists should be protected from any prosecution for releasing information which has been given to them in confidence. The Poll also showed that most Americans feel the government should be more open in its dealings and should be required to give a public accounting for the decisions it makes.

Our recent history has been a study of what happens when someone in power decrees that the public cannot be trusted with the knowledge of how its government is conducting its business. Watergate showed so graphically that almost anything can be hidden behind the romantic and deceptive cloak of national security.

And rather than stretch that cloak to absurd lengths again, President Carter has just recently taken the position that he wants to minimize the use of any criminal penalties for the disclosure of information in

government. And he did this at a time when the Senate Intelligence Committee is now considering legislation to impose criminal penalties on those who leak information to the press. In opposing such legislation the President, I think, is making the wise choice of refusing to support a proposed law that would realize *not* those who abuse their power, but those who seek to make that abuse known so that it can be stopped. The consequence of any such legislation would be to make it easier for government graft, waste, and even spying to be concealed and continued.

There will inevitably be differences of opinion between the press and the President on just how much information and what kind should be made known, but it is the press' responsibility to keep on revealing and informing and it is the government's responsibility to deal with those revelations as honestly as it can.

Now I would like to throw in a parenthesis here just to say that I am absolutely fascinated with this Southern Baptist peanut farmer we have in the White House. The election year was unusually intriguing for me, living as I do in the Northeast and listening to my peers trying to come to grips with the religion that Jimmy Carter professed in the early days of the campaign. It was at times amusing and confounding to read some of the interpretations put on his faith. Perhaps you saw one magazine cover story which said that Jimmy Carter had been *thrice* born—not twice born, but *thrice* born.

During the summer and fall we saw that rockbed Baptist doctrine of spiritual rebirth take on all kinds of new connotations—something akin to pop slang—until a friend of mine actually suggested that it would be a great idea to start a magazine called "Born Again" which would have all kinds of limitless editorial possibilities: born again with a new career, born again with a new hairdo, born again with a new wardrobe, born again with a new mate, et cetera, et cetera. Somewhere along the way the theological implications may have been blurred a bit, but for those of us living outside the Baptist Bible Belt, it certainly became easier to claim Southern Baptist identity without having to start from square one in talking about what that means, and I'm grateful for that.

I guess you realize that for the first time in the history of this republic, or any other republic for that matter, the President of the United States, the Attorney General of the United States, the majority leader of the United States Senate, the press secretary to the President, to name only a few at the top, are all Southern "stripe" Baptists. It is enough to give one pause! And if they lead the country to rack and ruin now, it will be snowing on the floor of Death Valley before such a miracle will ever come to pass again.

But I am not about to predict rack and ruin, however, and I don't think many of my brothers in the press are either. James Reston, who is *one* of the most, some would say *the most* respected political columnist in America, was so impressed with Mr. Carter's inaugural remarks that he likened them to something right out of a revival meeting which Washington had not seen anything like since Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan. "It would be unwise to make too much of these theological points," Reston said of Carter's religious tone, "but it would

also be dangerous to ignore or to mock them" (referring to Carter's religious theme).

As to his press relations, President Carter has said he expects to be called to task regularly by the press and welcomes the debate on issues which his press conferences will invite. So far he seems to be enjoying that exchange, and I trust he will continue to feel that way.

Late in the campaign in a rare burst of sarcastic humor, he told the assembled newsmen who were with him at Plains, "If we can have a government that is as good and honest and decent and truthful and as fair as the news media next year, I'll be satisfied." That was supposed to be a joke, which may give you some idea of the level of humor we can expect from this administration. But whatever the President may think about the press and its eventual relationship to him, the testing, questioning, and probing is going to keep right on occurring, because that too is a critical priority for responsible media.

Now the press has its own problems in relation to how much information it should release quite apart from government activities and government information. One of the most critical things, I think, affecting particularly the television networks at this time is how to deal with the problem of terrorism in this country. It does seem that all the cuckoos of this world have united and decided to express themselves as terrorists—where hostages are involved, where there's danger to public life and public property. I can tell you there is very serious discussion going on these days among the executives of the networks in trying to determine what their rightful role is in this. It's been pointed out that the press itself must start thinking about ways in which to handle these events because they—the journalists—have become a part of the story. As you know, what happens is that the terrorists often make demands that newsmen or television crews give them access to air time in order to make their demands known. To deny these demands is to invite harm to hostages, and to give in to them is to encourage the terrorists. While no one is trying to suggest that complete legal censorship on events like this is in any way the kind of action needed, newsmen are faced with finding a way to report this bizzare news without becoming a party to it.

Now, I said in the beginning that I would not even put the truth at the top of my list of priorities, certainly when viewed through the lens of moral responsibility. I meant by that that the truth is not the ultimate justification for its own use. Truth in and of itself can be as ugly as it is delightful, and as damaging as it is helpful. I think I mentioned in my previous incarnation in Louisville that despite all you may think, journalists usually know a great deal more about people than they put into print. And to know something to be true is only one consideration for its use.

What journalists are really involved in is *choosing among the truths* which they know to exist in order to give a fair treatment to any subject. And here, perhaps more than elsewhere, the burden of moral responsibility falls heaviest. And here my personal priorities as a Christian, not just as a journalist, come to bear on the way I look at things.

So the third priority has to be the proper, caring

use of the truth within whatever context the material is presented. Different forms of the media have different functions, of course. The newspapers and news-magazines are intended primarily to inform—their most important function being to keep us all aware of what we need to know to be responsible citizens of a democracy. And, of course, they may try to shape our thinking and attitudes in the process.

The magazine I happen to work for has a somewhat different slant. At this moment we believe we have discovered some yearning among the American people for a celebration of the individual. The 1960s was a decade of mass movements—largely *against* social conditions: against the war in Vietnam, against racial injustice in our own country, against abuses of the environment. And in the process, individual identity was virtually lost in the good of the greater cause.

Those problems have not all been solved, though progress has been made. And now we think we see a return to a fascination with the achievements, failures, glories, tragedies, joys, and even simple silliness of single human beings. In our own modest way, each week we try to find extraordinary people, leaders, celebrities, achievers, and ordinary people doing uncommon things, and then reveal what it is that makes these people what they are. It is a tribute to the individual—to you, me, us. We are looking for them in our pages because America, we think, is looking for them in its heart.

The caring, careful use of truth for us is essential because we get very close to the lives of the people we are talking about. It is not our purpose to glorify or destroy anyone although we do try to give a clear and true picture of personalities we write about.

There are publications, we know, which seem to have little regard for the truth: fan magazines and their madeup stories, scandal sheets, all sorts of publishing outlets for whom moral responsibility is an alien thought—*Hustler* magazine, come to think about it!

Finally, the untouched question in all of this rambling is what duty the media has to feel a moral responsibility in matters of its own behavior. In short, where is the press's responsibility to emphasize the good and minimize the bad in our lives? There is a duty, I think, to promote and recognize those elements of the community that work to enhance the quality of life among us, simply because the press is the most common means of communication we have with each other.

One good example I can think of is the annual drive called the Fund for the Neediest, sponsored by the *New York Times*. Each year around Christmas, the *Times* prints detailed accounts of what it calls the one hundred neediest cases in New York City. And you have never known despair until you have read the lives of some of these people. The organization solicits funds from various people in the community for social agencies who work with the needy in New York. This year the Fund collected well over a million dollars, mostly in very modest contributions from readers of the newspaper. I don't know that the *New York Times* would care to call this campaign its moral responsibility, but it is clearly something they do out of a sense of proper involvement with the community.

I have tried to answer the responsibility question

in ways I think most serious journalists would express their feelings, but we haven't even touched here on violence or sexual promiscuity in television programing, for instance. That's a whole discussion for another time, and I will only take time to say that while I might wish for more restraint in these areas, the public pretty much gets what it is willing to buy the most of—from corn flakes to literature. Isn't that the wonderful way of capitalism and free enterprise? The moral barometer for television, you can be sure, is shaped every week by the Nielsen ratings office.

My moral barometer, and yours, must be something quite different. If we can agree that our first commitment, our first priority, is to view life through the best Christian lens we can forge for ourselves, then whatever it is we do—preach, write, teach, sell, sing, or dance—must be subject to that view. That makes me, therefore, a Christian who happens to be a journalist, and not the other way around. God help me to start from that view always, and to remain grateful for such a priority in dealing with every other condition of my life.

## PRIORITIES IN PREACHING

John Killinger

I have been trying to recall when it was I first heard the word "priority." I believe it was during World War II. Certain activities had priority for the war effort. The military had priority on civilian transport. My father had a "C" sticker on his automobile, which gave him priority at the gas pumps. Certain foods were given priority to be sent to the soldiers overseas. Boxes standing on ramps at freight depots were clearly stenciled "priority," or even, in some cases, "top priority." The redundancy was permissible, I suppose, to distinguish levels within levels, the way Ezekiel discerned wheels within wheels and the Chinese build boxes within boxes.

It is an ugly word when you look at it straight-on. *Priority*. It has an angularity right in the middle of it—priORity—and then a weak little ending. And it has given rise to a perfectly horrible verb, "prioritize," which could have been invented only in Washington. It has about it the unmistakable crudity of *Pentagonese*—another horrible word, this time invented by Eastern media pundits, though probably in Washington, where the linguistic fallout from the Pentagon and the White House has its most outrageous effects.

Yet the word "priority" has a certain appropriateness for a gathering such as this one, for a prior is the first-in-command at a priory, a religious community sometimes adjunct to an abbey, in which case the abbot is first-in-command and the prior, anomalously, is second. Most of you are priors of a sort—religious leaders—even though someone else may be in charge. And you are here to discuss your priorities—those things you must count first in your lives, as having primary command upon your attention, your time, and your energy. And I, in no prior position, am to talk to you about priorities in your preaching, which may or may not hold some primacy in the order in which you view your work.

I am humbled by the charge. No, that is not the right word. I am *dismayed* by it. For I am aware of the myriad priorities already beckoning for your time. I have tried to put myself in your place, those of you who are pastors and preachers, to sit behind your desk on a Monday morning and listen to the pressing voices of all the causes and themes begging to be given wing next Sunday in your pulpit. It is like sitting in a den of octopuses (*octopagi*, if you are a grammarian) and being courted by a hundred tentacles all at once. There are WORLD HUNGER, THE ENVIRONMENT (especially if the smog is heavy on this particular Monday morning), THE ENERGY SHORTAGE (who can forbear talking about that in a high-vaulted sanctuary that has gone unheated all week?), MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, SUICIDE (Lee Phillips has recently written a provocative article about this), LONELINESS, THE MID-LIFE CRISIS (what did Gail Sheehy call it, "the dark at the end of the tunnel"?), AGING AND DYING, POLITICS AND MORALITY, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDIA, THE PERSONAL NEED FOR RITUAL, THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDLIKENESS AND PLAYFULNESS IN A TECHNOLOGICAL CULTURE (what part did the culture play in turning Wayne Oates into a workaholic?), THE PLACE OF MONEY IN OUR LIVES AND THE WORLD ECONOMY, THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE FORMATION OF THE SOUL, THE MEANING OF PRAYER IN A SCIENTIFIC AGE, and on and on it goes. The list is virtually endless, especially if one opens it to all the biblical doctrines and motifs that reach out to us from our seminary training and continued study. Nor must I forget, as you are mostly Baptists, the imperative of preaching occasionally on SUNBEAMS, R.A.'S., and LOTTIE MOON.

You see why I am dismayed. There are so many priorities already clamoring for your attention, all of them valuable, that for me to say, "Here, these are the ones you must give your energies to, these four and no more, 1-2-3-4," would be unforgivably presumptuous. You know better than I, if you are at all given to reflection, what you should be preaching about. For me to try to give you advice about particular preaching emphases would be like trying to sell suspenders at a convention of nudists—you don't need it. The voices are already shouting at you.

What you may need, on the other hand, is a reminder of some of the priorities *about* preaching that underlie your attempts to deal with all the other priorities. Maybe they are the *top* priorities—the matters whose importance goes beyond the choice of subject or text for preaching, matters which are the foundation, the pre-condition, for the consideration of any topic from the pulpit.

It is to these first things about preaching that I turn, then, no less humbled if somewhat less dismayed, to try to say something that may in the end reflect even on our judgment about which topics ought to have the priority in our speaking.

The first priority I would like to talk about is *the priority of getting away from something*. Who was it, Franz Kafka, who spoke of the man who jumped on his horse and rode off in every direction at once? Well, that is what I would like us to do in this case. I cannot overemphasize the urgency of our doing so.

We must, somehow, get away from the *cliche preaching* we do so easily.

Let me expand on the phrase. Every professional develops a cliche mentality toward his or her work, at least in some part of the work. Travel agents have cliche tours on which they dispatch undiscerning tourists. Lawyers develop cliche attitudes toward certain kinds of cases. Doctors acquire similar attitudes toward certain configurations of symptoms in their patients. Social workers develop them towards patterns of response in the people they deal with. Psychiatrists, psychologists, systems analysts, engineers, mechanics—all do the same. It is a matter of developing routines that do not require so much energy for facing the emergent occasions of the working day.

It is perhaps easier for us to see in these cases than our own the dangers and shortcomings of the cliche mentality. The travel agent who has it sends his or her clients along paths worn smooth by thousands of other tourists, and leaves untouched the exquisite little hotel, the jewel-like temple, the breathtaking scene of natural wonder that might have made the trip worthwhile. The doctor who has treated hundreds of patients for mononucleosis sees mononucleosis in any set of symptoms that remotely resemble it, and so fails to execute the tests that might have identified signs in the patient pointing to a rarer case of histoplasmosis that entered the bloodstream and nearly killed the patient. The auto mechanic who—but you get the picture. We are talking about developing a pattern of response to a situation that often precludes our dealing with it directly and effectively, as we would if we could only elude the pattern.

Now I call on you to reflect on how the same patterning responses work in you as a preacher. You have been producing sermons for years now, many of you, and, on the surface of it, it is much less painful for you now than when you began. You have acquired the knack. You can take a text and draw off a sermon from it in twenty minutes flat, if need be. Some of you do it every Saturday night. Or, even if you work more assiduously at your preaching, spending the requisite hours at the commentaries and in reflection and writing, you nevertheless have developed certain habits of mind for making it come easier, and your thoughts almost invariably flow along these routine channels.

Moreover, the patterns are larger than you. In most instances, that is, they derive from a certain template or patterning endemic in whole denominations of preachers. Because of the models you have emulated, the heroes you have worshipped, the sermons you have heard or read, you tend unconsciously to cast your own sermonic efforts in the mold made common by others. Our fears and insecurities early on in our careers, our failure to achieve a measurable self-identity as persons first of all and then as preachers, often betray us into an unrecognized desire, even a passion, to preach like other preachers, to use the texts they use, to develop the sermons the way they develop them, to employ the illustrations they employ, to aim at the same points and conclusions, even to *sound* the way they sound.

I see this in my students. If they have been preaching for even a year before I get them, their patterns are already established. Some of them are nearly incorrigible.

One of them preached a sermon for me just the other day. He came between two novices in our preaching schedule. The one before him was a girl—a tall, lovely, willowy creature with dark hair falling straight down over her shoulders. She was scared and read most of her manuscript word for word. But the substance was there. She was preaching from Second Corinthians—a passage about our being transformed in the image of Christ. And her words had a freshness about them, for she was filtering the old Apostle through her nimble young mind, raising questions about what he said, trying to listen to him, to let him speak again in the hearing of the congregation. The last of the three was a thin, bespectacled boy who had never preached before. He was struggling with the transfiguration text from Luke. He really made the trip up that mountain with Jesus and the disciples. He sat there in the dark of the early morning hours and was as startled as Peter and James and John at what he saw. We could tell, and we visited the mountain too.

But the other one—the one who had been preaching for two or three years—he was too cocky, too confident, even though he was scared. He was nervous about preaching in class, but you could tell he also relished this chance to show the others how a real champ does it. He, too, had chosen the transfiguration text. (We are using the ABC lectionary.) But he didn't really make the trip up the mountain. He had been too many times before, or had heard it described by others who had. He talked about it, but you could tell it wasn't fresh with him. He tried to "do" us—to do us with his voice, his gestures, his cadences, his organization, his illustrations. It was all there, the whole bit, just the way you would expect it to be.

Afterwards, one of the students said to him, "Bob, that was a great job. It reminded me of all the sermons I used to hear in the church where I grew up. It sounded just like them, in fact. They never meant much to me either." We talked about the criticism and I tried to set it in perspective for Bob. Bob was not listening to the text. He was not listening to God. He was not listening to the needs and hurts and feelings of the congregation. All he was listening to was a sermonic tradition for dealing with the transfiguration story. "I know," said Bob, "I hear what you are saying, and it's true. I guess I've let the sound of a sermon substitute for really having something to say."

What Bob had done—what nine out of ten preachers here have done—was to simply fall for the tradition. He would know he was a preacher because he sounded like a preacher. His people would know too, and, while some might be disappointed down inside, nobody would ever vote against a raise in pay for a minister who was so obviously a preacher.

Tradition works the same way in almost everything. There is a tradition in the novel that keeps mediocre writers turning out formula novels. They may never win a Nobel Prize for literature or change the technique of the modern novel, but they will continue to sell as long as they are reasonably good craftsmen within the guidelines of the trade. There is a tradition in drama. The greatest dramatists expand it, defy it, transform it. But most writers for the theater defer to it, preferring success to integrity. *Theatre de boulevard* it is called in France—the theater of the

boulevard, where the patrons will never be taxed by new techniques or by thoughts too deep to follow. There is tradition in music. I read a book about Nashville music. It said that the young writer aspiring to become a successful writer of Nashville music should first of all listen, listen, listen to Nashville music, until he or she picks up the knack of it, the way the chords are done, the way the words and music go together, the way the melody rises and falls—in short, until he or she can produce another piece of music like all the ones he or she has listened to.

This is not to sell tradition short. Tradition establishes audiences and allows them to feel a sense of kinship and identity within the boundaries of those audiences; then it helps to perpetuate the kind of thing it does best. But tradition is also cumbersome, and makes for a lack of sensitivity to whatever falls outside of it. Tradition normally cannot respond to new situations with full integrity, for it must nourish its own history and carry its own weight. At the same time that it provides a forum for new talent, it tends to stifle the talent that is too original, that does not pay deference to "the way things are done."

Shall we look at the effect of tradition in preaching? We can see it in the interpretation of scripture, in the form and substance of the sermon, and in the style of expression and delivery of the sermon.

(1) *First, in the interpretation of scripture.* Our traditions of preaching have inculcated in us certain ways of reading and hearing the scriptures, so that we tend to preach from them in almost stereotypical manner without encountering the strangeness and freshness of the spirit in them each time. For example, most of us, when we consider preaching on one of the Feeding in the Wilderness passages, tend immediately to think of the small boy who is reported by the Fourth Gospel to have provided the loaves and fishes from which the multitudes were fed, and to generate some kind of moral homily about letting Jesus use our limited means to bless large crowds of people. This is almost automatic with many preachers—feeding in the Wilderness-small boy-sermon on giving what we have to Jesus. But what remarkable texts the feeding stories are! How rich with mystery they are! Did you know that the Fourth Gospel is the only one that includes the reference to the small boy? What a trifle that was in the original tradition of the scriptures! Read the Marcan texts sometime. In the sixth chapter is the story of the feeding of five thousand. In the eighth chapter is the story of the feeding of four thousand. A doublet account? No, not really. The numerology of the sixth chapter—five thousand, five loaves, twelve baskets full of leftovers—suggests a Jewish crowd, while the numbers in the second account—four thousand people, seven loaves, seven baskets full of leftovers—represent the Gentile nations. A feeding miracle for each. Christ for the Jews, Christ for the nations. And in between, what riches! Like the story of the Syrophenician woman who argued Jesus down like a rabbi, and won a concession from him in the healing of her child. Again, bread is the central issue. Jesus says, "You don't throw the children's bread to the dogs." "No," agrees the clever woman, "but the little house dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the children's plates." Bread, bread. It is all related, you see. And what early

Christian community, meeting in secret under pain of death, broke the bread of communion without remembering these stories, without thinking, "It is true! Christ does feed us in the wilderness!" And we piddle around with the detail of the small boy and his lunch-pail, quite missing the larger dimensions of the passages.

Or take the well-known parable of the talents, as found, say, in Matthew 25. Nine sermons out of ten preached on that exciting passage will convert it, in the usual preaching tradition, into a Sunday School morality tale about the proper use of our God-given talents of "time, money, and artistic inclinations." This is the channel, the groove, that has been cut for the passage in our minds; the dozens of sermons and devotional talks we have heard on it have worn a path we cannot avoid. Yet how this prattling little usage traduces the great, caustic depths of the passage! Consider: The stories of Matthew 25 are almost all filled with invective against the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus' archenemies throughout the gospel. They are set here, smack in the middle of the Passion narrative, to underline their rancor, their fury, their potency. It was the scribes and Pharisees who were the one-talent fellows. God had given them the Law, the priceless treasure of his revelation, and what had they done with it? Gone into the marketplace of nations and traded with it, using their wit and imagination to increase its effectiveness in the world two-fold, ten-fold, a hundred-fold? Not on your life, they hadn't. They were afraid of losing it. So they had taken it out and buried it. They had dug a hole and hidden it. They had piled stones and sticks on the hole. They had built a fence around it. They had guarded it with their lives. And all the while they had missed the point, had misunderstood the Master. They had lost life by trying to keep it instead of sharing it, instead of giving it away. Do you see how biting the story is, how big it is? Oh, of course we are the one-talent man. But only secondarily, at one remove. First we are the scribes and Pharisees, and that is much worse. Like them, we have not learned to live dangerously, adventurously, in the marketplace. We hoard and guard our lives as they did. And therefore, we are unworthy of the Kingdom. It will be taken away from us. Do you see how much bigger news that is than any little story about how we ought to tithe our time and talents for God? God wants it all!

One more: That story of the transfiguration my student tried preach on. He had it just the way tradition says it should be preached on: Simon Peter saying, "Lord, it is good to be here; let us build three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." Bingo! A sermon on the beauty of mountain-top experiences. Yes and no. It took place on the mountain, all right, because of the tradition of mountains as holy places in the Old Testament—Moses had brought the Law down from the mountainside. But there is a lot more to it than that. Jesus' face was aglow and his garments were white as snow. It was a resurrection appearance—Jesus as the early church knew him after the crucifixion. And these booths—they weren't temples to live in, as my young preacher friend tried to insinuate ("Building Temples" was the title of his sermon). They were the make-shift shelters erected by the Jews during the Feast of Tabernacles,

remembering the days when God "tabernacled" or dwelt in earthly tents with his people during the sojourn in the wilderness. Here, on the eve of their going to Jerusalem and Jesus' being put to a violent death, the disciples were given a preview of the exaltation of Christ and reminded that he would dwell among them, even as God was with their fathers in the wilderness years. This isn't a Glorieta of Ridgecrest text—it's a Buchenwald text or an Auschwitz text or a Hell's Kitchen text. "Lo, I am with you, even to the end of the world."

But you see how the preaching tradition betrays us. We are no better than Pavlov's dog. When we see a text, we automatically leap to conclusions about what is in it to be preached. We don't listen. We don't wait upon it. We don't enter it like a dark wood to see what mystery lies within. And consequently few are moved when we preach. They too know the stories and how they work. They too have become part of the conspiracy to silence the Bible, to emasculate it and devalue its message.

(2) *If tradition leads us astray at the point of interpreting scripture, it also does much to predetermine the form and substance of the sermon.* I see and hear quite enough sermons to feel authoritative about this. Think of the way most sermons inevitably proceed: They begin with a clever allusion, a play upon words, or some other ploy designed to fetch attention, then plunge almost immediately out of the cleverness and into a dismal retelling of the scriptural setting or narrative that was read earlier; then there are explanations of the scripture, usually aimed at third-grade intelligences, followed by whatever petty moralizations the scriptural references will afford; the whole is interlaced with as many pious and laborious illustrations as the preacher could discover, often as not drawn from the lives of Albert Schweitzer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and John Wesley, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Mother Theresa, depending on whether the minister is a Methodist, a black, or a woman; and finally there is a "rousing" conclusion, done up in such a way as to assure us that if the preacher could not entice us into his house of cards with sweet reason and a spot of honey, he would in the end run us down by main force. Some of you are blushing and think I have been into your files. But I haven't. This is simply the form of almost all the preaching there is in the United States today, at least in the mainline Protestant churches.

It is not a bad form. In fact, it is essentially the same form that has been used in literate pulpits ever since the Middle Ages, and the reason it has been favored so consistently is that it is an extremely serviceable form. But form, I am sure you know, exerts a nearly inestimable influence on the substance within it. There is proof of this in every art form in the world. The painter who chooses acrylics over water colors inevitably produces a different result from the one he would have produced had he chosen the opposite. The poet who writes a haiku comes out with a product quite unlike what he would have done with a sonnet. The composer who favors a motet will not write the same music he would have written in an opera. And the preacher who gives total rein to traditional form in the sermon, having already given himself over to a traditional interpretation of the scrip-

ture, is early obliged to an outcome that is usually predictable and much duller than if he had remained uncommitted through the listening stages of preparation.

3) *Finally, I said that the tradition stunts us at the point of the style in which we express ourselves and then deliver the sermon.* There is a certain "sound" which we have come to expect of a sermon—a kind of rhetorical unctuousness, a hollow, reverberating quality as if the words were being spoken in a rotunda or a burial crypt, as if we thought to impart thus an aura of holiness to them befitting the ineffability of our real subject and the mystification of our hearers' minds. My student who preached about "Building Temples" had it. We knew he had it before he had said five words. It was apparent at once in the way he seemed to project his voice onto the bare walls behind our heads. There wasn't anything natural about him. We knew he was a "preacher." Anybody would have known. His congregation would doubtless recognize it, and feel right in paying him a salary to be a preacher; they would have no reservations about it; he was most obviously a preacher you could tell it in the way he talked, the way he rounded out his voice.

Now I will say that this manner of expression and projection, stilted as it may seem, served a very useful purpose once, when there were no electronic amplification systems in churches or out-of-doors. Whitefield and the Wesleys would never have launched a great popular revival on either side of the Atlantic without such a gift. But the gift may be detrimental now that we live in the age of Marantz and Philco and whatever the other great names in sound projection are. Now we are accustomed to the intimacy of the TV screen by the fireside in the den—what McLuhan called a "cool" medium—and there seems to be something hopelessly out of touch about pulpit oratory. However true it may be in what it says, it must inevitably sound false. We are simply not tuned to that sound anymore. We want the voice that singles us out, that talks to us honestly and naturally, that says by its sincere, colloquial manner, "Here, I want to talk to you about this, it concerns you." The tradition that so easily beguiles us with the promise of serving us thus fails us at the very moment we succeed in following it.

You see why, then, I said that our very first priority in preaching is to get away from something. It is to free ourselves from old habits of mind, from routines that have worked well in the past, so that we may respond keenly and effectively to the spirit in our own times. Our real priorities—beyond talking about hunger and ecology and energy and human potential and all the rest—our real priorities are set by this one. They are to discover a new and more existential intimacy with the scriptures than we have generally shown in our preaching, to expand creatively into new forms and substance for our sermons, and to adjust to a style of expression and delivery that will serve the real needs of communication in our time instead of honoring the needs of another day while allowing our own to go unheaded.

(1) On the matter of the scriptures: I am talking about reimmersing ourselves in them, disciplining ourselves to them, until we have experienced again the

overpowering mystery of them, until we have been swept away once more by what Barth called "the strange, new world within the Bible." Sometimes we remember Barth as a madman, a wild man, because he had such passion for the scriptures. But, if he was, he was made mad by something he saw in the scriptures. The vision did it to him. It is a unique book. It has that capacity. It did similar things in the Reformation. As John Broadus once said, the Reformation was simply a revival of preaching based on the Bible. It was, and it would not have happened—could not—without the recovery of the spirit within the Bible.

It should be a priority for us to get back into the Bible, to breathe its wild, intoxicating air again, to go mad over it again, to dream its dreams and see its visions again, this time in twentieth century dress. Until we do, our puny attacks upon the hunger problem, the morality problem, the loneliness factor, and all the rest will amount to only so many flea bites on the dragon's thick hide. It is Christ who slays the dragon, and Christ alone. I believe in the social gospel. There isn't any other kind. But it is the social GOSPEL we are talking about, not the SOCIAL gospel, and that means Christ. And Christ will not be real to us in our century until we meet him again—daily—in the pages of the ancient story.

This means that we must stop reading the Bible in bits and pieces to find texts for sermons that have materialized out of the preaching tradition, and start reading it for itself, for the floodtide that washes us away, for the voice that arrests us and compels us to follow. Our sermons must not be built on the splinters and splatters we tear away as textual pegs for hanging up homilies, they must spring naturally and forcefully from our having been gripped by the whole business of the faithful and faithless community, of the Messiah and the Kingdom, of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, the tunneling of God through human flesh and history. We have got to learn to listen again, to listen and to risk everything on what we hear.

(2) When we have listened and heard, there will be new content in our preaching, our substance will be an enthusiasm, an exhalation of spirit, dominating human problems the way a magnet dominates a force field; and it will override traditional sermonic form the way a cyclonic storm overrides a windbreak of dry wood. There's a priority for you, to let the wind of the Spirit rise in your heart and mind and inner being until it has quite demolished the very molds and forms into which you had previously poured the stuff of your preaching! I do not mean that the old three-points-and-a-deathbed-story formula must be thrown away forever. It has served faithfully in many an instance. But I mean that it must no longer tyrannize in the preparation of the sermon, that it should be used only when the rising of the Spirit dictates that that is the form it requires on a particular occasion, and that at other times it give way to informal witness or a two-point sermon or a biographical narrative or whatever the Spirit asks.

It must be the sense of the witness that becomes compulsive once more, not the necessity of getting something up for Sunday morning. We must feel the imperative of preaching this gospel again or of dying, of bringing texts and the human situation together in sermons that exist for that purpose alone, not for

meeting a job requirement or having something to print in a volume of "best sermons" or justifying the investment of some old homiletics professor. We have got to feel the seriousness of our charge again, the mystery of it, the overpowering presence of it. And, when we do, it will run roughshod over the traditions of form and substance that have served mainly to keep something in place when the inspiration wasn't there.

There is an illustration here, I think, in a remarkable review that appeared a few months ago in the British journal *Books and Bookmen*. It was a double review, acknowledging the appearance of a collection of letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury entitled *Dear Archbishop* and of another collection called *Dear Marje*, of letters sent to Miss Marjorie Proops, a love-lorn columnist for the *London Mirror*. The review is quite singular—and blistering—in its denunciation of the Archbishop's book in favor of Miss Proops's. The letters to the Archbishop, says Mr. Auberon Waugh, the reviewer, like the Archbishop's "Call to the Nation" which evoked them, are invariably hollow, pretentious, and unreal, while Miss Proops's letters, and her answers to them, are sound and earnest, wrestling with real problems felt by real people.

The Archbishop's whole posture and approach to life, says Mr. Waugh, is so much trumpery, something dictated by his position in the church and not by genuine human feeling or concern. He quotes the Archbishop: "I wanted to break through to ordinary people and make them feel that they matter."

But he knows perfectly well [continues Mr. Waugh] that they don't matter, whatever they might feel about it, or he wouldn't think of them as "ordinary people." As a Christian, he should know that there are no ordinary people. There are fools, bloody fools, unpleasant fools, clever people, clever, ignorant people, clever, unpleasant people and one or two people out of whose lower, posterior region Jesus may be said to shine, but there are no ordinary people.

Miss Proops does not make the same mistake, he says; she deals daily with sexual deviants, wife-beaters, child-beaters, people who are scared, hateful, revengeful, stupid, and deranged, yet is never shocked by them and invariably deals with them with heart and sympathy and even love. She is real, Waugh is saying, whereas the Archbishop is not. To a person not of the Church of England, says Waugh (he is a Roman Catholic), there is something "rather terrifying" in the way the Archbishop's "drivelling platitudes can be presented as if they represented deep and earnest thought; how bumbling ineffectuality can pass itself off for holiness and Christian humility." "Sometimes," he concludes, "in the dark hours of the soul, I am tempted to join the Church of England and turn my back on the squabbling, niggling, novelty-mad fanatics of Rome forever. From now on I shall sleep with this repulsive book by my bedside in case I am ever tempted in the night."

I told you it was blistering. But you see why I cite it. It is the very thing about form and substance in our preaching. We get out of touch with either the Spirit or the life, with God and with the people, and then we think our piddling sermons will carry the weight of our office. They won't. They are as patently

hollow and platitudinous and repulsive as Mr. Waugh found the Archbishop's book.

(3) The same challenge to let Spirit override form and substance applies to our style of expression and delivery as well. They too must be dictated by the compulsion to speak, not the compulsion to have something to say. The hollowness must go out and the meaning in.

In the new book by von Rad called *Biblical Interpretations in Preaching* (and ably translated by our friend John Steely of Southeastern Seminary), von Rad addresses this need by reference to the modern poets. Unable to support a tradition derived from Goethe and the romantics, he says, they have wrestled constantly with the requirement to forge a new language, a new syntax, a new way of expressing the new realities we all live among. That is true, of course, and as much for the preacher as for the poet. Think of all the things we face our grandfathers in the pulpit never faced: communication by satellite, nuclear proliferation, an astounding divorce rate, international highjacking, computers reducing the need for human labor, the increasing bureaucratization of life, the St. Petersburg culture (of the elderly). Yet my young friend who preached on "Building Temples" reads the sermons of Charles Spurgeon for homiletical edification. He told me so, proudly! He did not understand.

"The task to which we have to do justice," says von Rad, "has been known and recognized for a long time: we must reproduce the utterance of the Bible in our language just as concretely (just as concretely *ad hominem*) as it was meant in the Bible. Going off into unnecessary religious generalities is one of the greatest sins in preaching. And it is worth nothing at all to switch into clever jargon in order to appear up-to-date."

What von Rad is asking for is of course what we need: to abandon the generalities and the jargon and forge the hard, solid words that will speak to a desperate generation of the hope that abides eternally in the Christ who walks among us; words that are punctuated and validated by the silence and the stuttering while we search for them, while we wait for them, while we yield ourselves as their spokespersons.

We are too fearful of the silences, I think, too afraid of the stuttering. We are bred of a tradition of speakers, of sayers, and we think the performance must be clever and full, with every chink stuffed with verbiage, so that our sermons are like spewing fountains of plastic that eventually, in the space of half an hour, cover us like a dome, hermetically sealing us off from fault and accusation. But God does not live in plastic temples made by preachers. He breathes in brokenness and flees from triteness.

I can never forget a postcard I had from Sister Corita, the famous nun, when I had invited her to come and be a worship leader for an annual convocation at Vanderbilt University. It bore a single line: "Dear . . . I am trying to be quiet."

If only we preachers would try to be quiet, would learn to wait upon the Spirit before speaking, would stop thinking we have a ready-made word for every occasion! We are such paupers without realizing it. Our craft is barren because it has become so easy!

I am down to my last priority now. I have spoken of three: to get back to a new adventure with the

scriptures, so that they possess us again instead of our possessing them; to let the freshness of the biblical world break through the crackle-dry bands of our traditional form and substance in preaching, so that it grasps people where they are in the life situation, like the people of Pompeii caught in their poses by the sudden eruption of Vesuvius; and to submit ourselves to the quiet and modest search for new language and manner of delivery that will be real to our times, in place of the hollow-sounding expression of left-over manners of communicating the Word.

All of these are captured in a single priority at the end—the recovery of true spirituality in the preacher. That is the *sine qua non*, the bedrock, the bottom line. It must come first, before anything else. It is the experience of Isaiah: before the prophesying, the red-hot coal from the altar, the seared lips, the devastated heart, the submissive servant.

Our professionalization of preaching, which results in cliché interpretations of the Bible and in cliché forms of conceiving and delivering the sermon, is a sign of the spiritual failure of ministers and of the denominations, the seminaries, and the boards and agencies which shape and nourish them. The Southern Baptist system, like most others, encourages busyness, not spiritual depth; it rewards success in the world far more than honest striving for the faith; it responds more readily to acrobatics on the highwire than to genuflection at the low altar.

Henri Nouwen must have been looking over our shoulders when he wrote this paragraph in his *Genesee Diary*:

In recent years I have become increasingly aware of the dangerous possibility of making the Word of God sensational. Just as people can watch spellbound a circus artist tumbling through the air in a phosphorized costume, so they can listen to a preacher who uses the Word of God to draw attention to himself. But a sensational preacher stimulates the senses and leaves the spirit untouched. Instead of being the way to God, his "being different" gets in the way.

Nouwen's book of course comes from his self-enforced period in a Trappist monastery, where he had to come soul-to-soul with silence in his own life. Perhaps that is what Southern Baptists need—monasteries—places where there is a moratorium on talk and even on action—places where God can be heard because no one else is chattering or trying to promote a denominational program. It is an idea worth entertaining.

Only by nourishing the devotional life shall we come out anywhere else in our preaching. It is our one chance. It is the one priority.

Will you believe Robert Browne in his meaty little book *The Ministry of the Word*, that was re-released by Fortress Press last year?

There can be no conclusive definition of the vocation of a minister of the Word. Who could sum up the meaning of his manifold activity in the pulpit and the confessional, in teaching and interviews, in conversation with the godly and the

ungodly, in dealing with those he fears and those who fear him? Every attempted definition would have to include clear indications that he is called to be a man of prayer.

That first: he is called to be a man of prayer. And we are reminded that when the Book of Acts describes the calling of the first deacons of the church, it says that they are to wait at table in order to free the leaders to "prayer and the ministry of the Word."

Hunger, energy, divorce, loneliness, and all the other priorities for our speaking? Here is where we become aware of them—really aware. And here is whence we have some word for coping with them, some vision of an answer, some sword for slaying the dragon.

Do we wonder why the Word of God is not heard in the land any more, or why God does not speak aloud to us as he did to his ministers in other times? It is because we don't listen. He is present but we are not. We have lost the gift of being there. We try to preach out of the shallow waters, out of the rushing shoals, but he is of the deep; the mystery is of the deep. It is that simple and that difficult.

I share the story of a friend: He was a professor of church history and is now an intercollegiate administrator. Recently he passed through a difficult period in which his job was being phased out. He had a wife and two small daughters and did not know how he would support them. He feared having to move from their modest home with no place to go. He brooded by day and tossed restlessly at night. What would they do? In desperation, he remembered his experiences in prayer. He began practicing various kinds of meditation, hoping to hear an answer from God about his dilemma. In one such meditation, he imagined himself standing on a cliff above the seashore, feeling the sunshine on his back and smelling the good salt air. He could hear the waves breaking on the rocks below, the gulls screeching overhead. He climbed down the cliff to the waters edge, and saw a bottle washing in with the tide. It had a message rolled up inside it. Eagerly he stepped out into the water to rescue the bottle. He knew the message was for him. It was God's word in his extremity. Hastily he extracted the roll of paper. He rolled it open and read what was written. It was in Latin: *Hodie Christus natus est*. "Today Christ is born."

At first he was disappointed. What kind of message was that? He wanted something specific, some particular word to counter the distress he was feeling. But then the word began to wriggle around and become alive in him. *Hodie Christus natus est*. "Today Christ is born." Of course! It was the word he needed all the time. Nothing could be more related to what he was experiencing. If he knew that, everything else fell into place. It was his word from God! His pain fell away. The world glowed with beauty again.

It is the same with our preaching. We are anxious to be contemporary, to have a word in season, to preach the matters that are pressing and particular. But first we must listen. First we must hear again *Christus natus est*. And then we can speak. Then we have something to say.

## THE PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH

Krister Stendahl

I am to speak about the priority of the church. I must say that the program of this conference reminds me a little of what pastors and preachers plague their congregations with. Every Sunday there is a new thing which is "the most important thing." And, there are, to be sure, fifty-two priorities! You have put them into certain bunches so there aren't quite fifty-two because the format is another.

One wonders a little what the fellow will say who speaks about the priorities of the church. His assignment doesn't seem to be quite coterminous with the concerns that are listed in the rest of the program. I perhaps would have preferred the last one best because that's going to be given by a humorist. Humor seems to me to be important because Jesus taught all his basic teaching with humor. That's often forgotten in the church because in the western Christian tradition things were getting terribly serious. But all the parables of Jesus are humorous, if you haven't noticed that. He speaks about this farmer who went out and sowed the seed and some fell on the ground, some fell on the road, some fell among the thistles, or on the rocks. You know, even in those days, no farmer was that dumb! And the shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep to the wolves and went out after the one lost sheep would have been fired if he had been found out.

We should always remember that Jesus told these Jewish humorous stories as the Jewish tradition has done—and still does—all its theological teaching in telling funny stories, because it would be a sin against the First Commandment to speak about God so as to pretend that we could say how it really was.

Therefore, we need the buffers of the humor and of the story, and that's how Jesus taught. So, I guess the priority of humor is, as you've rightly structured the program, the first and the last priority. Because without that, the work of the church and even the acts of theology in preaching might be an infringement on the First Commandment. Nothing else is absolute but God and not even the teachings of the Southern Baptists or even the Lutherans quite participate in that absoluteness. So we need a little humor.

Now, the priority of church came to be a very important message for Paul at a specific point in his apostolic ministry.

He had in one of his congregations such an exuberant, bubbling amount of spiritual life, styles of teaching, and ministries, glossalalia (the speaking with tongues), healings, and everything. You know that that was the Corinthian church, the church that had all the problems that the churches have had through the ages except the one which plagues us most! It was never dull!

Paul sits and thinks about what to do with all this bubbling, happy, exuberance, with all these priorities going in all kinds of directions. Everybody, of course, felt that his or her priority was "the gospel." So the whole thing was almost going apart not because it was bad but because there were so many good things.

Then Paul says, "Let's talk about the church." By the spirit he was given a mighty image that has stayed with the church—I hope it has stayed with us—

through the ages: the Church is the body of Christ. The Church is a body with many members which all need one another, and which have to be held together by some organic blood circulation system. The priority of the church, as the body of Christ, as God's temple of our members, and we being members of one another—that is the vision which the letter to the Colossians expresses after having listed a lot of virtues—you know some people are very good at listing virtues, and they are all wonderful virtues, one after another. Then it says, "But over all these virtues, put on the belt of love that holds all the virtues together" (Colossians 3:14). And the image is that all these virtues can become such a fancy robe that unless you tie it together and pull it up a little, you'll trip on your virtues. Without love, it won't work. We all know that Paul was great in speaking about love. And love is very popular. No word in Christian language has suffered as much inflation as this one. Who can be against it?

Paul wrote a wonderful song in First Corinthians, chapter thirteen, to love. Some people even have the idea that it is suitable for weddings. You know it's often read at such occasions in many churches, and I guess there's nothing wrong in that. But I don't think Paul ever thought that that was what he was talking about when he said speaking with tongues shall come to an end, and prophecy shall come to an end. I guess he had another problem. And what was the problem he was addressing? Of course, it was the different competing priorities and gifts in the church in Corinth. Some people were wild for glossalalia, others for healing, and others for administration. Now that is rather encouraging for a dean! Paul considered the gift of the Spirit for administration just as spiritual as the gift of healing. And that's important. It might even cause us to think that we should perhaps pray just as much before we go to committee meetings as before we preach or do these more spiritually-looking things. But Paul's problem is the question of the different priorities. He says the answer to that is love, because the many gifts had caused tension.

In First Corinthians, chapter eight, Paul says, "Knowledge puffs up but love builds up." And the knowledge that Paul speaks about here, *gnosis* as it is called in Greek, doesn't mean university knowledge, it means people who understand their Christian faith or the fruit of their Christian faith as some kind of superior insight, being on the inside of the truth so that somehow "we have it." And Paul says "that puffs up." And we all know by experience that that is so. They who know better—though by the help of God, of course, by the help of God—the ones who always know, "They are puffed up," says Paul, "but love builds up."

What then is this love that Paul is speaking about? It surely is not a feeling, a palpitation in the heart. I don't mind that feeling; it's wonderful. But my experience is that it seems to be a by-product of other things rather than something that one can seek. It happens. And when does it happen?

Paul's image of love is very realistic and very sound. He measures love by how much tension it can take. How much diversity it can stand. That was his problem in Corinth, wasn't it? There were all these people who had the first priorities clear, and the

whole church was about to blow apart and Paul sees this. They really have masses of gifts. How are we going to get it together? They have to be given that gift of love which allows one to accept tensions because love is never an ego trip, or as Paul says, "Love does not seek its own," but it seeks the joy and vitality and richness of the other and of the whole community. So my sisters and brothers, the Christian church, the priority of the church, the necessity of the church has to do with whether our practice of Christian love is able to hold together what not even the world can hold together. How much tension can it take?

To some extent, we know that this is true about marriage. A home is the place where we dare to be ourselves. Most of us are a little nicer on the job than at home, because there should be some place in the world where we can let our attempts at pretending go and just rest. And that is why God so organized the world that there should be a place where there was enough love for us to be just as nasty as we are, where one can let one's hair down, where one can be oneself.

The church is meant to be some of that. But is it? Isn't in some cases the church the chief place where people pretend—especially to have love? Oh, gee, it is dripping of love—brotherhood and sisterhood in the jargon, and I guess that is why the Lord finally had to send Bell and Edison and the others to invent the telephone so that all of the ugly gossip could go on underground, so to speak, and not surface in the meetings of the church because "they know we are Christians by our love." Why is that song so tiresome? You know, the first time, the second time, perhaps the twentieth time you sing it, it is sort of fun, but it wears off, because it is very shallow theology. Or perhaps we should reinterpret that love. Because the easiest way for a church to pretend that it has love is for it to narrow its constituency socially, racially, economically, theologically, biblically so that there is a maximum chance for as little tension as possible. The ultimate solution is the church with only one member—but that is not a church.

You know that famous sect which finally consisted only of the man and wife and the pastor went to them and said, "Are you quite sure that you are the only two in the eyes of God who are true Christians?" The man took the pastor aside in the corner and said, "To be quite honest, I am not really sure about her."

Well, the safest church is of course the smallest, or the most homogeneous, because it is easier to feel love because there is less tension to overcome. Or we can pretend that one is the loving church and, hence, never allow conflict to be part of the life of the church because we are a loving community. But, you see, if we were a loving community, we should be able to stand much more conflict than the world can stand and still hang together in Jesus Christ. That is love—that is not romantic love, that is not self-made sugar love—with Christian rhetoric of loving language. Love, says Paul, is measured by how much tension and diversity it can absorb in the divine elasticity of the love of Christ. That is Paul's first reason why there was a priority of church so that one understood that Christianity or the church is not a society for promotion of Christianity, but it is a community, a body of Christ, and a temple of God.

And, in chapter eleven, when Paul is discussing this body of Christ, he gives us a funny window into the life of the church of Corinth. The problem seems to be that those who had it a little better came to the communion service—which was also a real meal in those days—and brought their food because it was a potluck principle, but they finished the food they had brought before the poor folks and the slaves came in later on at night so there was no food left. You remember the story. There was no food left because for the slaves to bring food would have been stealing and how could they have left until the master had been fully served. So when the disenfranchised and poor came to the church there was no food and Paul gets furious. I mean, he could have said, "You should really be a little more considerate. Although we have long-lasting traditions and patterns we should try slowly to overcome them." No! He says, "This is the sacrilege of sacrileges because you don't remember that every time Christians eat together in memory of Jesus Christ, it is the holy communion and you are performing sacrilege on the body of Christ."

That little misbehavior of discrimination at the table on social grounds was to Paul the sacrilege of sacrileges. Why was it so? Because he said "When you behave that way, you do not discern the body" (I Corinthians 11:29). You don't understand that the church is the church, not a club. However spiritual a club, it is not a club. And he ends this heavily serious passage by saying, this misbehavior of yours may be the reason some of you have gotten sick and some have even died. Test, therefore, your conscience; mend your ways. But do you know how that whole passage ends, the last words of the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians? "And if you are that hungry, take a sandwich before you go." That is the last thing Paul says. To make sure that it is this so-called misbehavior that has caused Paul to see that thereby these people have secularized the church. They do not understand that the church is the body of Christ.

Another good window into the priority of the church is about the priority of the church in relation to the Scriptures. We find in chapter seven where Paul speaks about how the community and he should search for new answers to new questions. It is a very difficult thing for a believing Bible reader to read in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians because when Paul comes to certain questions in regard to marriage relations and marriage patterns, he says that on many of these questions he has no word from the Lord. He says he will try to give them the best advice he can and he hopes that the Spirit is assisting him, but he warns them that this is not the word from the Lord. I have always wondered, what does that do to a Bible reader? When the word of the Lord says now this is not the word of the Lord. Of course, Paul didn't know that he was going to make the Bible—especially his letter to Philemon which he considered privileged and private correspondence. My mother told me that one shouldn't read other people's mail. Now that is a serious question, that the church in Corinth, the community, the church, which to Paul has to have priority because otherwise all the other priorities pull the church apart, that is a community in which Paul thinks it is very important to say: I do not have a word from the Lord.

I think he is almost the last preacher in Christendom to have the guts to say so. Now I am saying that with some seriousness. He says, now I will give you advice, and let's counsel together about how to face new problems. You see, it is very difficult with the question of new problems because there is a type of piety in all segments and denominations in Christendom which thinks, somehow, together with the historians of the world that have studied history or the Scriptures so long it should pay off and, hence, one can never recognize a new problem. It is always the new phase of an old problem. We always have difficulty in perceiving new questions. But Paul perceived new questions. Go home and read First Corinthians, chapter seven, you will see how he did it.

There is also a temptation for the church to know too much. That is really what the Reformation was about. The hunger for knowing more and more about Mary and God and the Trinity and everything had made the Catholic tradition grow by leaps and bounds so that we sons and daughters of the Reformation say that it is dangerous to claim to know too much. What the Scriptures say is "sufficient unto salvation." You know the preacher who preached about the gnashing of teeth in hell and there was somebody in the congregation who had no teeth. So he said, "But what about those of us who have no teeth?" The preacher answered, "Of course, teeth will be provided."

Now why did he have to say that? Because he didn't want to let the word of God down. If the Bible said there would be gnashing of teeth and this man didn't have any teeth, what else could he say? Now he could have said that on this one, "I don't have a word from the Lord."

But let's be careful lest we secularize the scriptures to make them into some kind of religious slot machine where we put in our questions and out come the answers. Paul recognized in Corinth that if he was going to live with all the different gifts and glories of the church in Corinth, he would have to say: "Not beyond what is written" (I Corinthians 4:6). Make it always clear, perhaps even in a minimalistic way, what really is the word of God and what are those matters where we must counsel together asking for the guidance of the Spirit.

A few times I have used the term "secularizing the church." I happen to believe that is what Paul was about when he was facing all these tensions in the church at Corinth. He starts his first solution chapter in chapter three in the following manner, "Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as spiritual persons, but as persons of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk not with solid food for you were not ready for it and even yet you are not ready for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and *behaving like ordinary people* for when you say, I belong to Paul, and another, I belong to Apollos, are you not *merely human?*"

What Paul is after here is that the church had come to think about the different opinions and teachings as that period in history thought about various philosophical schools, competing philosophies, and they were arguing the case out as reasonable men and women do when the issue is an issue of opinions. Paul says the same thing in Romans, chapter fourteen, when he says,

"Let the stronger among you accept the weaker, but *not for the purpose of argument.*" Now the church has always been in the danger of understanding itself in secular terms, as a society for the promotion of certain knowledge, for example, instead of being the mysterious body of Christ. And that is what Paul fights in First Corinthians. It is the secularization of the church that Paul is fighting with his slogan so glorious in its richness: the church is the body of Christ.

We Christians openly deplore the secularization of our culture and we are pretty smart at detecting and analyzing the signs of worldliness and the decline of spiritual values in our culture, but in the process of Christian witness, we are far less perceptive in detecting the secularization within the church, the inroads of worldly techniques in evangelism, and in ordering the affairs of the church. If Paul spoke our language, he would have rephrased those words I just read perhaps something like this: "Remember that you cannot sell Jesus as the world sells toothpaste with the latest Madison Avenue techniques, and you cannot run a church as the world runs a corporation with graduates from Harvard Business School. For the church is different and the very point is that the church is different."

The church is the very witness in the world for that Kingdom of God which is drastically different from anything that this world knows. For the first are to be the last and the last are to be the first—and that is not corporation style. Paul learned that when he was at his weakest then God could work better through him, which is a principle usually not applied when you get the consultants from Madison Avenue for evangelism into your churches. The church is a mystery with a spirit that runs through the veins of the body of Christ. Thus, I would suggest to you, to put it in capsule form and with a slogan that may be misunderstood but I think is important for us to consider, that when Paul came to grips with the inner competition of the priorities in the people of God and in the church, he coined the term: the church is the body of Christ. This takes us into another realm, to something more akin to the spirit of Him who announced the kingdom different from anything that the world knows in terms of success, be it even ecclesiastical success.

And the love that makes that possible cannot be used as a means to an end. Any Christian who thinks that he can love somebody else into something else carries out something very close to spiritual rape. It will not succeed, thanks be to God! Because love can never be used for a purpose. We know that from our personal experience. But it is true in general. The church is the body of Christ, and there are so many images that have encroached upon us and upon our very way of acting and operating which are deeply secular, but we don't see it because we are so sure that it is from the Lord. And that is why Paul attacked the secularization of the church.

## THE PRIORITY OF FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Arthur Simon

I'm delighted to be here with you. I feel very close to your work and deeply grateful to many of you who have been instrumental in pushing the cause

of Bread for the World, including Foy Valentine, who has given me good advice on any number of occasions; Welton Gaddy, who attended our January Board meeting in New York; and the Christian Life Commission people in Texas, three of whom just came out with a first-rate introduction to world hunger. Every one of you here ought to buy it and read it. I refer to *Endangered Species* by James Dunn, Ben Loring, and Phil Strickland. Tony Martin, a colleague of theirs in the Texas office, is Bread for the World's Texas State Coordinator. I am especially indebted to Owen Cooper, who serves on our Board of Directors, and to many others. I thank God for all of you.

Hunger has many faces.

It is a child with shrivelled limbs and a swollen belly.

It is the grief of parents.

It is a person gone blind for lack of vitamin A.

It is a country like India with about 630 million people, but an annual budget not much bigger than that of New York City.

It represents at least a half-billion people around the world, many in our own country, who are victims of malnutrition. I can't fathom a statistic like that emotionally—until I begin to imagine how I would feel if my son Nathan, age six, or Peter, age four, were among the victims. Then it begins to tear at my guts.

Hunger is the population growth rate that has exploded in much of the world. It began as a white, western phenomenon, but we exported it to the poor countries, where it has become part of the landscape of hunger.

Hunger is the affluence explosion, and the additional demand which that places on a limited supply of food.

Hunger is all of this and much, much more. But whatever else it is, hunger is above all and preeminently a public policy issue. That is to say, unless we come to terms with the way that public policies affect hungry people, we will not reduce hunger. Do everything else but neglect public policy, and you have a formula for failure.

Therefore I am going to ask for an offering today—not the offering of money, but the offering of your time and your energy as citizens to help bring about public policies that are more responsible to hungry people.

Hunger is a public policy issue. Let me illustrate that.

I am a Lutheran. There are about nine million Lutherans in this country—most of them north of Jackson, Mississippi. Last year those nine million Lutherans contributed about seven or eight million dollars for Lutheran World Relief or its counterpart agencies. Those eight million dollars really helped, let me tell you. But do you know that last year in one vote—the vote on appropriations for development assistance to poor countries—Congress slashed \$230 million from an amount that it had previously authorized for such assistance? Most of it was targeted for rural development and programs aimed at improved nutrition. That's about thirty times the amount that Lutherans contributed. In church we gave to relieve hunger. But by our silence on public policy we locked people more deeply into hunger.

When we measure development assistance as a percentage of GNP, the United States ranks second among

seventeen nations in voluntary contributions. But when government assistance is included, we rank fourteenth among seventeen donor countries, with only one-fourth of one percent of our GNP going to the poor countries.

Or take food stamps. We don't know what the new food stamp legislation will look like when it emerges as part of the farm bill, but it is going to directly affect the diets of millions of hungry people in this country. It will have more effect on their diets than all the voluntary programs of all the churches combined—which is not to downgrade the programs of the churches at all, but to say that while increasing such efforts we should not ignore the even more critical area of public policy.

Other examples that could be cited include trade, military spending, unemployment—issues that are not perceived by the public as hunger issues, but that have a vital bearing on the question of hunger.

Or take the issue of food reserves. One of the major goals that emerged from the 1974 World Food Conference was the need for a world food reserve program—really a network of national reserves internationally coordinated. As all the nations gathered there agreed, including representatives of our own country, such a reserve is essential to world food security. The United States has a special responsibility in this regard because we control more than half of the world's grain exports. Yet so far we've done nothing but talk about it, and we haven't even done much of that. Without an adequate program of reserves we are gambling away the future for millions of persons—statistics, perhaps, to us; but each one of them dear to the heart of God, dear enough for God to offer his only begotten Son for them.

Well, what are we going to do about food reserves? Bread for the World has made this our major legislative target for 1977. I am happy to say that last week two Southern Baptists—Foy Valentine and Billy Graham—with about thirty other nationally prominent religious leaders, issued an appeal to Congress and to the President to take action on food reserves. That helps. But what we need even more is the support of ordinary citizens at the grass roots. And that leads me to my next point.

It is not enough for us to agree that public policies play a critical role with regard to hunger. We've got to commit ourselves to do something about it. And we've got to enlist our people back home to do something about it, too.

Let me tell you a story—a true story.

Back in 1967 or 1968 Barbara Ward, a distinguished British development economist and a Christian, attended a consultation of church leaders and professional persons to discuss the responsibility of Christians in a world of hunger and poverty. Well, as so often happens at these top-level conferences—and probably this one, too—all the right things were decided. So Barbara Ward came over to this country afterward and was meeting informally with a handful of senators in Washington. She told them enthusiastically that the churches in this country were about to build broad public support for a new global effort against hunger and poverty. There was a moment of silence. Then Senator Mondale said quietly, "Barbara, I'll call you when I get the first letter."

## Where are the Christians?

Mondale was emphasizing what I call a "citizenship gap"—the failure of people like ourselves, who really *do* care when others go hungry, to express our concern in a way that makes a difference to our leaders in Washington who make decisions for the country. And as a result too many wrong decisions are made. Or decisions that should be made are pushed aside.

You can help to change that.

Bread for the World began just about three years ago to fill the citizenship gap, to recruit Christians from every congressional district and—some day, we hope—from every congregation across the land to offer their citizenship to the Lord for the sake of hungry people, and to work to bring about public policies that are much more compassionate and just toward children of God who hunger.

Thanks to many Southern Baptists, we've gotten a good start. I think we have made a difference on a number of issues, but let me single out one.

Last year Bread for the World drafted a right-to-food resolution that was subsequently introduced in Congress. It said, in short, that every person on earth has the right to a nutritionally adequate diet, and that the struggle against hunger should become a fundamental point of reference in the formation of U.S. policy. Then it went on to spell out some of the main implications, and it did so not in terms of increased food aid, but in terms of encouraging self-help development and increased food production in the poor countries.

When that resolution was first introduced, I don't think a single member of Congress thought it was going to go anywhere, including Senator Hatfield, the chief Senate sponsor, who is a member of our Board of Directors. But then we began to organize support through our members and through churches across the country, and the letters began to pour in. We estimate that a quarter of a million letters went to members of Congress in support of that resolution, and as a result last September the House and the Senate did pass almost identical right-to-food resolutions. These resolutions constitute the most far-reaching declaration of intent on hunger ever made by Congress. They give us a platform to build on. But now, of course, we've got to go back and see to it that Congress and the new Administration begin to implement those resolutions.

Let me make another point in that connection. Our 16,500 members represent an average of thirty-eight members per congressional district. That's not many people. But a small number of persons can often change a vote in Congress, and they can be crucial votes. We saw that happen again and again on the right-to-food resolutions. *What you do makes a difference.* Don't say, and don't let your people say, "What difference will my efforts make?" The truth is that simple efforts of ordinary citizens can and often do make an enormous difference. A letter or other contact with a member of Congress can carry weight far out of proportion to the voting power of one citizen. The payoff is big. How much was each one of those 250,000 letters to Congress on the right-to-food resolution worth? If you'd give me \$1,000 per letter, I wouldn't trade, because I think that in the long run those letters will translate into a value much higher than that.

I've been stressing the crucial role that public policy plays regarding world hunger; and I've said how important it is that each one of us help to bring about public policies that are much more responsive to the needs of hungry people.

Now I would like to add a word about hope, because people often ask me, "What reason do we have for hope?" My answer is that despair is unbelief. Christians everywhere and Southern Baptists do not root their hope in the latest UN projections, or in economic forecasts. We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and *He* is our reason for hope. I don't have any way of knowing what the world hunger situation will be like ten or twenty years down the road. But I do know that the future is with God, and when we take up the cause of the hungry, we celebrate His Kingdom. And no effort consistent with that kind of celebration is ever wasted. So it is a work of joy, not one of despair.

I say that because I know that we are asking Christians and Southern Baptists particularly today to respond in a way in which they are not conditioned to respond. We're a little afraid of public policy. Our people say, "The church should stay out of politics," and they often add that the way to change the world is for Christians to bring their influence to bear as individuals. Well, Bread for the World is taking up that challenge. We are not asking the church, the Southern Baptist Convention to enter politics. We are inviting Christians to use their influence as citizens on behalf of hungry people.

I am persuaded that people in every one of the 35,000 Southern Baptist congregations will respond, provided two conditions are met:

First, they must become convinced that in order to deal effectively with the causes of hunger we must bring about changes in public policy. That case is increasingly easy to make.

Second, they must know that such a response is not alien to the Gospel, but an authentic expression of it.

You can do many things about hunger.

(1) You can give to the World Hunger Fund of your Foreign Mission Board.

(2) You can examine your buying habits: consume less, share more.

(3) You can become better informed. The better informed you are, the more effective you can be.

(4) You can put the topic of hunger on your family supper agenda.

(5) You can find out who the hungry people are in the area where you live, and then join with others in helping them.

(6) But above all, you can be a voice for the hungry and help persuade the decision makers to reach for a more just world.

I said near the outset that I was going to ask for an offering from you, not the offering of money, but the offering of your citizenship to the Lord on behalf of hungry people. So join Bread for the World, please. But may I pass the hat again? I want to get a commitment from Southern Baptists as well. When you go back home tell them what *you've* done and invite them to offer *their* citizenship to the Lord.

## THE PRIORITY OF NURTURING CHRISTIAN FAMILIES, PART I

John H. Scanzoni

We are happy to be with you tonight and tomorrow morning. Our strategy will be for me to try and take most of the time tonight and then for Letha to do the same in the morning. That is, she will follow me this evening and I will follow her tomorrow morning. However, we'll try in both sessions to leave time for questions.

The topic as you note is the nurture or the benefits that we as Christians can generate for the family. Clearly, we have a limited amount of time and we'll try and do what we can in the time that we have.

Mr. Gaddy, when he wrote to us some months ago, asked that we specifically speak especially tonight in regard to nurture to the question of hierarchy and its relationship to the family because he suggested, not to name names (but he did name names), a variety of people who travel about the country and write books to indicate that healthy families are families based on the principle of hierarchy. Other terms could be used: chain of command, and so forth. There are a number of names associated with this perspective and I don't want to identify any one person or any one particular set of ideas. But the point is that it is alleged that there is something particularly beneficial about a hierarchy or a chain of command out of which healthy, strong families can come.

Now the viewpoint of this perspective is something like this. God is sovereign and infallible and he ordains order, harmony, and beauty in the universe. This is true in the solar system and it is true in the anatomy and physiology of plants and animals. And it is said that God wants the same order in society. Indeed it is argued that if there is order of this sort, it is out of this kind of order that God is most glorified and that individuals find themselves most satisfied and that the church itself will be most effective in its mission. So it appears by this line of thought that life, society, the world, all of its various parts, will benefit greatly if there is this kind of hierarchy or chain of command. The application extends through all the institutional areas of society.

So, for example, citizens are supposed to be obedient to their government. The government is over the people. The government rules the people. The people obey the government and then there is a healthy and happy society. Likewise, employees are to be subject to their employers. Employers rule employees. They tell them what to do. Employees obey and there are profits made. Employees receive salaries and there is health, benefit, happiness, and so forth. Likewise in the family the same principle applies. Men rule over women and children and if there is that kind of order, if there is that kind of pattern, then there is happiness, there is nurture. The idea is that regardless of whether it is government, business, family, or the church, God speaks to his leaders who in turn filter his message to those who should obey, and then they filter it down to whoever happens to be below them. Out of this arrangement, out of this hierarchy like an organizational chart for General Motors or whatever it happens to be, there is order, harmony, stability, beauty, and happiness.

Now it is vital to note, of course, that these ideas are not new and these people have not suddenly come up with some bright notions that are unique to them. Philosophers for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years since ancient times have argued along these same lines about transcendental goals; that is, the good of the whole is accomplished through obedience to the established order. In other words, if there is going to be the larger, the collective good, then there needs to be obedience on the part of all the parts within that whole. Certainly it is apparent that the Middle Ages is a prime example of this. Prior to the Reformation and to the Renaissance, there was a place for everyone and everyone knew his or her place. There was very little ambiguity in the Middle Ages. Ambiguity was a thing that was very rarely known.

Now over against this ancient argument there is another argument which is not necessarily contradictory to this argument and indeed I will suggest that it subsumes the first. The argument is simply this: there can be no healthy social arrangement without justice, whether that arrangement be a whole society or a government; whether it be a business organization, a church, or a family, the basis for social order is justice. In other words, you may say to me, "Obey me. I am your superior. I am your rightful authority." But I may say to you, "Are your commands fair? Are they just? Are they right? Are they reasonable?" If I do not think that they are fair, I have the right, indeed I have the obligation to say to you, "Let us negotiate a fair arrangement."

In the message we just heard, we heard a great deal about negotiation, and the principle of negotiation is the principle of what we are talking about right here. That is, a fair arrangement is one that we can both live with. That is, if you tell me to obey, you may be able to live with that but I may not be able to live with that. Justice demands that we both be able to live with that. And the point then is this: that order, stability, comes out of negotiation. It comes out of participatory democracy. That kind of order is based on, as I suggested, negotiation rather than one part exercising the right to command regardless of justice. The assumption behind this ancient argument is that the best and healthiest situation is where there is maximum justice, because where there is maximum justice all parties are satisfied. That is what maximum justice means. Out of satisfaction comes order, not out of arbitrary authority, not out of somebody simply saying, "These are the rules. Obey them."

Now the historical applications of this argument are obvious. For example, there are many Christians who for many centuries believed in the divine right of kings. They used passages such as Romans, chapter thirteen, to support that notion. The divine right of kings made for a very orderly and stable kind of society. But it did not make for a just society. So beginning as far back at least as the Magna Charta people began to say to the kings and to royalty, "Look, you may have orders that you think you want us to obey, but we don't think they're fair. We want to sit down and negotiate with you and establish a fair arrangement, a fair government." For hundreds and hundreds of years since the Magna Charta, the history of politics, the history of government has been a struggle to arrive at fair and just and equitable ar-

rangements. Today there are hardly any Christians in the world who would interpret Romans 13 to support the divine right of kings. Most Christians, I suspect, hold to some form of democratic or republican government and the reason they do is because of this underlying notion of justice, fairness, satisfaction being the base for order.

The same principle, of course, has been applied to slavery. For hundreds of years there were many Christians who believed in slavery and argued very eloquently that indeed this was the basis of orderly society. God ordained it so. To the slave owners, it was a very fair, and they thought, an equitable arrangement. But nobody bothered to ask the slaves if it was fair or equitable. When they did, they found out that the slaves did not think it was fair or equitable. Consequently negotiation began and took place again for a long, long time. Today there are hardly any Christians (there are some) who still interpret Ephesians, chapter six, as saying that God does still permit slavery, and that is why one Christian told me he wouldn't mind being a slave if that were God's role for him. Well, in any case, the point was that slavery was an imposed order that did not come out of negotiation. It was inherently unstable and, of course, erupted in great violence, as we all know. So the idea of slavery today by and large is anathema. A similar pattern applies to business and labor, labor and management. At one time it was the case, if you were a Christian, an orthodox Christian, you certainly looked with suspicion on the union movement. I am talking about the last century. Because after all, did not the employer have the right to govern his employee? But it became clear that often employers treated their employees unfairly and so employees had to negotiate for fairness, justice, and equity. Today most Christians, if grudgingly, accept the idea of the union movement and are willing to say, "Yes, unions have their place because after all, they do ultimately argue and struggle for justice and equity in labor-management relations."

Applications can also be seen in terms of the church. The church prior to the Reformation was the epitome of hierarchy: the Pope, cardinals, bishops, and so forth. Beginning with the Reformation and the Calvinist and Lutheran traditions, some of that hierarchy broke down. Why? Because it was felt by the reformers that the church was unfair, that the demands they were making were not right. Of course, in your own tradition, in the congregational tradition, you carry this to the extreme; that is, the rejection of hierarchy by saying that each church is its own authority, its own sovereign in deciding what should or should not be in terms of religious matters. Clearly there is great variation of opinion on this matter but, regardless of one's church polity, the basic point remains that fairness, justice, equity, these are the things that must reign rather than someone from on high simply imposing some kind of arbitrary orders.

Now, along with the notion of justice and subsumed by it is the element of accountability. Any leader or group is accountable on three levels. He is accountable to his superiors, he is accountable to his peers, and he is accountable to his subordinates. On what basis is he accountable? He is accountable to make wise or correct decisions. It is at the point when persons make poor decisions that we say they have lost

the right to rule because poor decisions are inherently unfair. They are unfair because we all suffer. That is, if we are in a situation where there are people over us who make bad decisions, we suffer. Therefore, we begin to think that the situation is unfair. Therefore, we begin to think about negotiating, if necessary, with that person and perhaps even removing that person from a position of authority. That holds in business. The business executive who makes poor decisions is not an executive very long. That is true in the church; that is, the minister or the executive presbyter (whatever the church polity happens to be), the church official who makes poor decisions finds that his or her authority becomes questioned. That is true in government. We've lived through the nightmare of Watergate where a President thought that he was responsible to no one, that he need answer to no one, that he was not accountable. Americans learned that unchecked authority was intolerable. Of course, even in the military where we usually think of the chain of command as being very strong, every officer knows that if he or she is finally going to be able to lead soldiers into combat, that officer has to earn the respect of his followers. He's not going to go into combat with people who don't trust him, who don't really believe that that officer has the *right* to lead.

John Milton, way back in the seventeenth century far ahead of his time, made the same point in regard to marriage. Milton said that if a woman exceeds her husband in prudence and dexterity, she might become the marital leader because, Milton argues, "for then a superior and more natural God-given law comes in: that the wiser should govern the less wise, whether male or female."

Now the result of these forces, of course, can be seen in many ways. The Western democracies, for all their faults, are, at least in my judgment, the most robust and the healthiest societies that have ever existed in recorded history. There is more justice with accountability than ever before for more people. There has been a great deal of change but it has been orderly change and there is stability. There are certain Christians who tell us that we should go back to the good old days when they said people knew their place and there wasn't any change at all. But what they're really telling us is, "Let us go back to the days when there was less justice than there is today and when there was stagnation rather than the orderly, dynamic change that is occurring today." Now what these persons generally overlook is the fact that a great theme of the Bible is the freedom to have justice. Certainly the theme of the Old Testament prophets continually again and again was justice. Both Christ and the apostles when they walked and talked on the earth taught justice, the need to treat people with respect and dignity and fairness and equity. In the book of Revelation itself, we find that one of the great themes is ultimate justice, that God is a God of justice. That brings us then specifically to the contemporary family.

These same forces that have been influencing business and government have also been influencing the family for at least 200 years and they are continuing today and they are going to continue no matter what the prophets of stagnation might say. In other words, we are really talking about inexorable social forces. The aspirations, for example, of women for family

justice and equality with men can no more be stopped than it would be possible to stop black aspirations for equality with whites, or Third World aspirations for equality with the modern world. These are inexorable forces. So that it isn't a matter of saying, "Can we save the family by going back to the good old days?" The point is, we can't go back to the good old days. It's not possible. And in fact the good old days were not so good after all.

The challenge is to recognize and deal with the changes creatively from a Christian perspective and to integrate these changes into our theology. The hierarchy people say, "Keep the family as the one last bastion of nonaccountability," because what they argue is that the husband should not have to negotiate with his wife. The husband should not have to defer to his wife if she considers his decisions unwise or unfair. While all the rest of society is moving in the direction of justice and equity, we have this one last tiny enclave (the family) where it is said that questions of justice and equity are irrelevant. All that matters is obedience. Added to this anachronism is the idea that unattached women (unmarried) should somehow need a mediator between themselves and God and should somehow seek out a man, an elder, someone in the church to whom they should go, and when they have spiritual problems, go to that person rather than go directly to God because that person will then interpret for them God's will.

So what we are suggesting tonight is that the proper nurture of the family, the healthiest kind of family, is a situation in which husband and wife are coequals in all things, including power, including authority, a situation in which husband and wife have equal options to pursue their individual interests as well as their group interests. In other words, participatory democracy between spouses will produce stronger marriages, healthier adults and children, and a sounder society than hierarchy.

Now as regards children, they, of course, by definition are not equals of adults, and parents must sometimes pull rank though that is regretful but necessary. However, the thrust of our child training should not be to hammer into the child that somehow you have to obey and obey and obey, but rather to train them, by their late adolescence, and bring them to the point where they can negotiate skillfully with parents, with peers, with others so that they know and understand and appreciate what fair arrangements are, so that if and when God leads them into marriage they themselves will be able to negotiate, will be able to understand, to perceive, to communicate. It is out of that kind of situation that healthier families and healthier children become a generational phenomenon.

Now as regards men and women, spouses, the same kind of reinterpretation of scriptural passages has to be done for families as was done for government, as was done for business, as was done for church government or polity, as was done for slavery. In other words, we have to look very closely at those passages and realize very often that they spoke to a particular situation under a particular set of conditions. We need to argue very strongly that many of today's family problems, after all, come out of a situation of hierarchy. They come out of a situation where most men still think that somehow God has given them a situation

where they need to be accountable to no one except God (they say) for their authority and for their power. They cannot understand the aspirations of women for equality and justice and fairness. Men tend to exercise unjust and arbitrary power over women. Women have not been trained to respond by contending for justice and yet that is what they are groping for so that the major problem in today's family or the basic issue is an unawareness of these kinds of situations, of these kinds of struggles. What we need to do to nurture the family is to present a whole new pattern, a whole new evolution, so to speak, of family structure, family patterns in which adolescents are trained in the kinds of things I have been talking about tonight and in which adults are retrained to accept these new patterns, these new ground rules. These new ground rules are based on the skills of negotiating fair and equitable arrangements. But as we all know, to negotiate one has to have resources. In the past the game has been rigged in favor of males because men have had access to the larger society, the occupational world. They have been out earning the family bread. They have been out engaged in work, work which is a sacred and holy calling from God, a vocation. Women have automatically been excluded from this. In other words, men have moved into the occupational world, women into the family. With these new ground rules, these new marriage patterns which are emerging, the idea that work is a sacred calling is applicable to women as well as to men. Likewise, in terms of the same interchangeability, the idea that children are the province of women is no longer necessarily the case. Men need to see the joy, as well as the responsibilities, of involving themselves far more than they have in the past with child rearing.

As this kind of role interchangeability takes place in which men become more involved with family, and women become more involved with the occupational world, the resources, the bargaining chips, so to speak, become more equal and bargaining and negotiation result in a more equitable and fair arrangement. We have often heard the illustration from the evangelist that the ground is level at the foot of the cross, and we know what that means. But by the same token, level ground—that is, ground upon which men and women stand as equals—is the basis for healthy and for sound marriage. If we are going to begin to cope with the challenges that lie before us in the remainder of this century and into the twenty-first century, we need to grasp that and to work it into our lives and into our churches.

## THE PRIORITY OF NURTURING CHRISTIAN FAMILIES, PART II

Letha Scanzoni

Last year on one of the college campuses where we were speaking one young woman said to us (and you could just see the light bulb popping up in her head), "I get it. What you're saying is that the man I marry has just as much responsibility to fit into my world as I do to fit into his world. That's mindblowing!" Well, I think that it is mindblowing, but I think it's really what the scripture is saying in Genesis and in the

gospels and yes, even in the writings of the Apostle Paul where we see a beautiful picture of mutual submission and mutual affirmation, of fitting into one another's world. It has not been a one-sided picture. That has been the problem in the hierarchical ideas. The hierarchical idea has been one-sided—one-sided in who does the serving and one-sided in who has the privileges. That is what has caused many of the problems, as John just pointed out.

In thinking of the problem of nurturing Christian families, we have to be thinking of fitting into one another's world and then fitting into the world at large and training our children to do so. Now that's where this matter of family nurture comes in because, in a way, the family can be a miniworld in and of itself and, as John has just pointed out, that's where we learn negotiation skills, that's where we learn to get along with people, that's where we learn to communicate, that's where we learn to handle conflict, all of which are going to happen in the world at large all through life and in other relationships. But if you have a stacked jury from the beginning, if you have it arranged so that everybody knows in advance how decisions will be handled, who will have the final word—you know, some people will say, "Well, we do talk everything over together but we know who will make the final decision." Well, if you're doing that, you aren't really talking everything over together, are you really? Because one person's will is going to prevail in the end and it was known from the beginning! So all of this is being challenged with the questions: "What does it mean to mutually submit to each other? What does it mean to mutually serve one another? What does it mean to mutually affirm each other's talents and gifts and interests and goals?"

I'm just going to add a few comments to what John has already said so that we can throw it open to questions, but there are two sides that I thought we should just mention briefly: the hierarchical idea and what it does to *attitudes between the husband and wife relationship*—I might amplify just a little bit there—and then *attitudes toward children*.

In the husband and wife relationship, what I think the hierarchical idea has done, unfortunately, is that it has given us sort of a homosocial world—I didn't say homosexual—a *homosocial* world. I'm using a word coined by two sociologists, Simon and Gagnon. They are saying (and we see it at gatherings): Men cluster on one side, the women on another. The women talk about one set of discussion subjects, the men another, and the two are often not communicating, and what is sad is that's what's true in the home, too. Oh, you communicate that Susie needs new shoes or Johnny has to go to the orthodontist or whatever—some of those things—but I am talking about deep, interpersonal communication. I'm finding everywhere we go this is what couples are saying. "This is what we want. We want to really get into each other. We want to be able to have this full self-disclosure, knowing each other all the way through." One of the problems with Marabel Morgan's method, I think, is that she's saying, "Let's relate on one level with gimmicks and so on." But not enough is being stressed about how you get deep within to what really matters. Because surface things may work and help and feel fine for a while, but what does it mean to really know

one another all the way through, not just physically, but *every way*?

Now let's look at this sex-segregated, homosocial world of boys finding the most interesting things to do with other boys, and girls with other girls—the sexes living in virtually two separate worlds. It starts early in childhood. I know that one scholar in New York state at one of the universities found that by age six, girls were already aware of "the inflated need for status and power on the part of their male contemporaries." At six years old you had to worry about a male ego already, who wins the game and so on. Now a lot of this is changing because all of this is being questioned, but it is still a problem because this study was done just last year. What comes out is the idea that the boys are thought to do the interesting things in life. I remember reading a writer's manual one time that said, "If you're going to write children's stories, always make the protagonist, the hero, a boy. Because if you write stories about a boy, both girls and boys will buy the book. But if you write a story about a girl, the boys won't buy the book and you've missed half the market." Boys do the interesting things.

That continues into adulthood. Men find other men more interesting to be with often than their wives. We were at a restaurant not long ago twice within a period of a month and a group of men came in—there were three or four of them from the church. The second time they stopped at our table and they said, "We can't believe this. Twice this month and you're with your wife again," they said to John. Well, he always is. We have a Saturday night date and it's a special time. But the point is that many people think that the sexes can't find enough to talk about that's really interesting on a deep level. Have you ever noticed in a restaurant a couple will be sitting there and you can tell they're married because they don't talk to each other. They just sit there and eat! This comes about because women and men are taught to have such different interests and goals.

We spoke at a church last Sunday and talked with a young couple, I would say in their thirties now, and the young wife was saying, "When we were first married, we had such a feeling of togetherness. We had the same careers, the same interests, we had the same job (they were both teaching school at that time), and we could talk to each other about that. Now we have separate interests. We live in separate worlds." She's home with the children all day. He has gone into a different branch of work and she said, "I'm finding that what's happening is that we don't really communicate. We don't know how to really talk and it scares me."

In Christ that's all to be broken down, just like the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile, between priest and laity, so it certainly should be between male and female because that's what Paul was saying in Galatians 3:28, that if we are in Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. In other words, racial differences, social differences, and sexual differences should be done away with in Christ. Now that is really basic to nurturing families because if we're going to nurture families, we have to help families see the full personhood of every single member in that family. It will extend, as John was mentioning earlier, to the decision making, to the negotiating, to the communication, to handling conflict.

When we get into the matter of children, I think one of the most damaging things the hierarchy idea has done is that it has affected attitudes toward children. Children are valued according to their sex. Now some surveys are showing a slight change in this in recent years but in general a male baby has been valued more than a female baby. You see it back in the Old Testament because a woman was proclaimed to be unclean for forty days if she had a male child, eighty days if she had a female child. Probably originally it was eighty for each, but there was such joy at having a son that they cut the time in half. That is one interpretation and it's a real possibility.

You still see the same attitude today sometimes. I was at a shopping mall not long ago and I overheard this conversation. A woman had a shopping cart with two small children, a little toddler and a baby in the basket. She called over an acquaintance she happened to see and said, "Hey, Bill, come on over and see my boys." He came over quite eagerly and looked at her two children and said some nice things about them. Very proudly she looked up at him and then she said, "I hear you had your baby recently, too. How come you got a girl?" You could just see the cloud go over his face and he said, "I don't know. I guess I got short-changed."

Now think what that says. When Jesus talked about leaving the disciples, do you remember he said, "It's like having a baby. You will suffer for a while, but just as a woman who has a baby is filled with joy that a human being comes into the world, that's how it will be later for you. You will know joy after hardship." The Greek word that Jesus used there was *anthropos*, "human being," not male child. That's very important. In the Jewish culture most people would have said, "A son is born. Rejoice!" But he said, "A human being is born," because in Jesus' sight women were of equal value. Females and males were valued alike.

On another television documentary I remember watching a young father in a men's consciousness-raising group for factory workers. We usually think of this as an upper middle class type of thing, but it is at all levels. Men and women are beginning to re-question roles because both sides are thinking that they got cheated. We'll be talking a little more about this tomorrow morning. He said at one point, "You know, we just had our second daughter recently and my wife and I had decided we would only have two children." He said, "I had very, very strong feelings when I heard that the second child was another girl, since we were going to stop having children at this point. I got to thinking about all I'd be missing and then I thought, 'Why? Why was it so important to have a boy?'" He said, "I thought, 'Well, the reason I think it's important to have a boy is that boys grow up to do interesting things, to be somebody interesting, and a girl will just get married.'" He went on, "And then I got to thinking, 'Well, does it have to be that way? Why, a girl can do interesting things, too, and she can be just as much anything in life as she wants to be as a man can.'" Then he said his whole attitude changed at that point and he rejoiced at his daughter's birth and looked forward to a wonderful life with her.

I think as we see the equal worth of both sexes in God's sight, the equal responsibilities of both sexes,

we're going to have a different attitude toward our families—toward the husband and wife relationships, toward the children relationships, toward relationships outside the home. And we won't only be fitting into one another's worlds and fitting into the world at large, we'll be wanting to *change* that world for Jesus' sake and see people come to know the joy and the excitement and the dynamic that we can have in Christ. We will be training our young people to cope with life as it is. We won't be saying, "Oh, dear, dear, what's happening to the world and what's going to happen to my children?" We're going to say, "God is sufficient." We can train these children right now by how we discuss and how we handle things in our home. We can train them for whatever questions come up, whatever social issues arise, to handle them wisely and fairly and justly, and in a way that will be pleasing to God.

As John pointed out, the society at large is changing many of its attitudes, and that fits very well with the message we heard earlier. Or do we want to be generative and regenerative in this world? Do we want to reach out and show that we have a liberating message in Christ, not one that is limiting? So for the church to insist on blocked opportunities for women today and a superior-subordinate relationship between males and females I think will just drive thoughtful persons away from the gospel. I've seen it already happen, because the gospel can never be good news if it prevents any group of people from experiencing the freedom that Christ promised—freedom from all that would oppress, and freedom to be all that we possibly can be in him and for him.

I am going to close on a semi-humorous but still serious note of a poem, two poems, actually. In the 1960s when the subject was not quite as hot yet but was just beginning to be, I got into a discussion during a church service with a psychology professor, also a Christian, and after this he sent me a poem through campus mail and said that he had memorized this so I don't have the source. But he said that he saw it in the *New Yorker* magazine sometime around 1958 and it so impressed him that he memorized it. Mind you, he didn't photocopy it, he memorized it! I don't think I could have done that, but he did, and he sent this poem and then I decided to reply to him in a poem of my own. So I'll read both of those because it has to do with this matter of the changing roles of women and what it means with regard to the gospel message. This is the one from the *New Yorker*:

Paul the Apostle cast a chilly eye on women.  
They seem to have caused him much concern.  
Writing those persons newly come to Zion  
Though better, admonished Paul, to marry than  
to burn,  
'Twas best if all would be as he was,  
Single, whole-hearted, ready for the search.  
Let woman be subject. Let her serve when needed  
Humbly but see she holds her tongue in church  
So thundered public Paul. The private fellow  
liked to end  
His letters with some warm message for Priscilla or  
Sister Phoebe, his good friend  
Who, one suspects, on many a dangerous day  
Lent Paul and other saints upon their uppers

Warm-hearted counsel on the Christian way  
Along with hot and hospitable suppers.

And here is my reply:

But how sad Paul's public and private views  
Are not seen in closer combination!  
For throughout the ages appeals have been made  
To the Apostle's writings for quotation  
To argue that women be kept in their place  
And to prevent their liberation  
In everything from pain-free childbirth  
To voting and education.  
In marriage and jobs Paul's views are taught  
As though encouraging deprivation.  
But these are days of protestation  
With cries for women's emancipation  
And is not our message of salvation  
Garbled by the church's continuation  
Of insistence upon female subordination  
And personhood blocked by limitation?  
What a hindrance to evangelization!  
Yet through Jesus Christ comes elevation  
From the curse of the Fall and transformation  
Of male and female, bond and free,  
Jew and Gentile, class and station,  
He has worked a renovation.  
So why not change our presentation  
And end much needless deep frustration,  
Not to mention exasperation,  
By putting a stop to discrimination,  
Stressing instead equalization.  
Thus concludes my lamentation.

## ISSUES IN HUMAN RIGHTS

### Datus Proper

Anybody who has been sitting here since 8:30 this morning listening to heavy topics is having some human rights violated. I will try not to violate them for too much longer. I can listen to myself talk almost any day, and frequently do. But I would like to give you some of the tough issues involving human rights that we are having to cope with in Washington, and then we can get a discussion going.

I am starting from an assumption that those of us in this room do want to do something about saving human lives around the world. That may not be quite an universal assumption in this country, but it is close enough, and if anybody questions it, we can talk about it in the discussion session. I shall take the objective as agreed.

The question boils down to *how* we go about saving human lives, or possibly saving people from being tortured or abused or imprisoned arbitrarily. The question is how you achieve this objective and what other things you give up in order to achieve it. Today there are some pretty tough trade-offs that we have to think about.

To make my experience clear, I should say that although I have spent some time in Africa and a lot of time recently in Ireland, my main experience with the human-rights problem has been in Latin America. I have been following it there off and on for about the

last fifteen years. I am making this point because the situation in Latin America is a little bit different from that in most other places in the world—a lot different from the Soviet Union, for example, or in Uganda, for another publicized example.

In Latin America, the problem tends to be abuses of what we are calling "basic human rights" in Washington these days, for want of a better term: things like torture, murder, arbitrary imprisonment, and similar violations of the sanctity of the person. There have not been publicized instances of mass racial discrimination, genocide, or restrictions on freedom of emigration—all current problems elsewhere.

Another characteristic of Latin America that may or may not have occurred to you, depending on whether or not you have spent some time there, is that the U.S. public tends to have high expectations. Somehow, we expect other people in this hemisphere to perform a little bit better than we would expect people in other parts of the world to perform. This occasionally introduces a psychological element that we don't have, for example, in Africa.

Still another factor in Latin America is that our policies and actions tend to have more effect than they do elsewhere in the world. If you have been following the newspapers for the last few days, you'll have considerable reason to wonder how much we can accomplish in the Soviet Union. I don't write off human rights in the Soviet Union or our ability to affect them. My personal guess—drawing on no direct knowledge—is that we *will* have some effect in the long term, but it is obviously pretty slow going.

In Latin America, we can have a substantial effect and already have—probably a little bit more than you realize, unless you are sitting in the State Department reading a stack of cables every day. The difference is that, in Latin America, economies and military establishments tend to be partly dependent on us, sometimes even largely dependent on us, sometimes not. And we are the historical model for the hemisphere: the example Latin Americans have often had in mind when drawing up constitutions and building great newspapers. Not to exaggerate our influence on other nations' internal affairs, it is slow and usually indirect, but when exerted consistently over a long period of time, our influence is important.

The other side of the coin is that Latin America is the only part of the world where we are the traditional hegemonic power. We are the country in this hemisphere that has most often been accused of being imperialistic, or colonialistic—although such accusations express intentions that most people here in the United States probably do not think we have. The point is that sensitivities are high. Because of historical U.S. interventions, people are afraid in Latin America—more afraid, let's say, than they are in Africa—that we will intervene in their affairs. And in the normal Latin American scale of values, "intervention in the sovereign affairs of states" ranks just about as low as torture in the hierarchy of mortal sins. So we have to be especially careful about how we go about pursuing objectives which we consider entirely legitimate.

Also by way of background, I would like to suggest that attitudes in this country have changed an awful lot in the 1970s. I believe that in 1970 it would have

been difficult to get a group of five hundred people, like this one, together to talk about human rights. You might have been able to get a group together to talk about democracy, because that is what we have traditionally been concerned about, but basic human rights—you just really couldn't get the American public very concerned about them. And because people didn't pay a lot of attention in this country, the Congress didn't pay a lot of attention either, nor did the Executive Branch. If we had time, I could give you some examples of frustrations at the time in trying to get some little action taken regarding human rights.

The level of consciousness is a lot higher now around this country. Some people would contest this. They would say that human rights is a kind of a fad, and this too will pass. Such people could be right, but if we really have a higher level of consciousness—as I believe—then it is not going to pass. We as a country are going to remain interested in human rights. I would like to get this message around the world: that governments who want to have good relations with this country in the future are going to have to be aware that we take human rights seriously.

In 1970, I thought that the thing to do about human rights was just about anything. Practically any action we could have taken at the time would have seemed reasonable to me. It was a little bit like the man who got caught beating his mule over the head with a fence post. When questioned about it, he said, "No, it don't make him go no faster, but it sure gets his attention!" That is about what we needed in 1970. We just needed to get people's attention in regard to human rights. We needed to talk to Latin American governments about them—and we were beginning to do so—and we also needed to get the American public involved.

Now, since the 1970s, we have seen one pretty important development in Washington, if you are interested in human rights, and that is the growth of a so-called human rights lobby. It is closely connected with the churches. I think it has been very influential. Congress, in turn, has been responsive, not just to the lobby but to the fact that the lobby appears to reflect real public opinion around the country. There has also been a substantial turnaround in the Executive Branch—partly because Congress is interested and has forced us to turn around, and partly because there have been a number of people in the Executive Branch who have wanted to turn the situation around.

Finally, another thing that is helping us is that there are some new international organizations, or at least there is rapid growth in some existing organizations like Amnesty International. They have done a generally excellent job in collecting information about abuses in human rights around the world. This is pretty important, because people in authority always conceal things like torture. Very seldom does someone perform torture and go around bragging about it. So to ferret out the information is inherently difficult. We can get some of it, but independent, credible, international sources of information are an important supplement.

So now today, I don't think the problem is just to get attention, just to do something, but to do the *right* thing, to be sure that we don't do things that damage human rights themselves or do excessive damage to other U.S. interests. Because the fact is that

we do have a lot of other interests around the world in addition to human rights.

As a rule, then, we now have to consider the balance between *competing* interests. By way of an example that I happen to be familiar with, we have to consider in Brazil the question of the linkage that the Brazilians, at least, have placed between nuclear proliferation and human rights. There seems to be no doubt that our efforts to push human rights in Brazil (and the Brazilians themselves have already made considerable improvements) to some degree have limited our ability to work against nuclear nonproliferation. We have only so much influence in any single country. I would hate to have to say whether human rights or nonproliferation is the most important in the long run, but I do think it is very important that we not have any more countries getting atom bombs than have them already.

Another example that is more in the news these days is the one in Uganda. I've not been working with the country directly, but clearly we have a situation there where honest condemnation of a really terrible situation could endanger the lives of our missionaries in the country, and it looked a little bit as if this was happening a couple of weeks ago. So a President faced with that kind of problem, I assume, has got to be a little bit more careful than he would otherwise. It is awfully hard to find any place in the world these days where there are not some American interests. I've been through a few remote-sounding countries and it is quite amazing how many Baptist missionaries always turn up. If you know of countries where there aren't any, it is because they aren't let in at all, and there is a high fence around the country!

Now, in the next few minutes, I am going to discuss four of the specific issues that we have to worry about, and I am going to be giving you what I take to be our real options—but only our options concerning human rights specifically. I can't give you the balance between competing interests except by talking about individual countries. That might bore those of you interested in other countries.

I should say also that a lot of our options may not be mutually exclusive. In Brazil, for example, we don't want to give up on human rights and we don't want to give up on nonproliferation.

#### 1) *Economic vs. Political Rights*

The first tough dilemma has to do with what has been known in Washington lately as economic versus political rights. "Political" rights, in this case, means not being tortured or thrown in prison, and "political" isn't a very good word for it, but these are the kinds of rights that we have been most worried about around the world. Now I believe you have also had some discussion here about hunger. It is often pointed out to us, by people around the world in the developing countries, that the right to eat is also a "basic human right." One accusation that hurts a lot—and that we hear from both left-wing governments and from right-wing governments—is that this country is not nearly concerned enough about "economic rights." People will say that we're still consuming, as we have for a good many years, about one-third of the world's resources. I don't know how precise that figure is, but it's close enough. There is not any doubt that we are the world's great resource gluttons, even if Europe and

Japan are catching up fast.

The same accusers say that we are greatly exaggerating the "political" rights issue in order to assuage our liberal consciences, making us feel a little better while we go on gobbling up resources that we should share more equally. Well, this does hurt, because there is the fact that we have not really been willing to share very much. Our annual expenditures on foreign aid are pretty small in proportion to our means. We have done more than any other country in the world in gross terms, but in terms of our ability to help, we have not done nearly as much as others.

I don't know how one balances all this out, and maybe I won't try to balance "political" and "economic" rights. Clearly you don't give up on one or the other. Clearly, you cannot back away from defending basic human rights—like the right to live—and then say that we are just going to keep on moving in the money. Economic aid mostly goes from one government to another. It is pretty hard to give economic aid *directly* to needy people, no matter how hard you try. When you try to give economic aid so that it will *reach* needy people in a country, the aid also helps the government's balance of payments, and it gives the government a feeling of legitimacy, and it may help keep that government in power. So you may have a pretty tough decision. I guess my own feeling is that I would have to see the government being awfully bad before I would like to see us cut off some efforts to reach needy people under it. But there *are* a few governments that bad.

Most of our problems are less dramatic. In the case of Latin America, for example, there is a serious maldistribution of wealth. There is a lot of economic growth, but an extremely unequal distribution of that growth within any given country. A lot of people in a country like Brazil are at roughly the same standard of living as in the United States, and yet another 60 to 70 percent of the people are living very badly indeed. These are the kinds of people, I suppose, that we have got to be thinking about a little harder than we have over the last ten years, with our preoccupation with things like the Vietnam war.

### 2) *Single or Flexible Standard?*

Now, I give you a second dilemma. It has to do with whether we should try to have a single standard for human rights throughout the world, or whether we should go for a flexible standard. And if you have read the newspapers, you have read Senator Moynihan's very good argument for a single standard. This is extremely appealing. The "double standard" sounds lousy. And yet, if you have a single standard, you should hold Haiti and Chile to about the same kind of performance, it doesn't work too well. Chile is the kind of country that is, for practical purposes, a European democracy. Chile knows how to observe human rights and has usually done so over the years, but has not really been doing so recently. Haiti, on the other hand, is extremely poor, and never in its history has been able to achieve an extremely high level of human rights, but has made some recent improvements.

A similar problem under the matter of standards involves Argentina, which now has by far the most active insurgency in this hemisphere. Many people

are being killed in outright violence—guerilla warfare. This is not quite a civil-war situation, but it is close. You would have trouble finding any country with this kind of internal violence where there are not some shaky human-rights practices on both sides. You might even think of circumstances in the United States over the last ten years when we thought we had radical groups that were being difficult, and there was more shooting—in retrospect—than we would have wished to see. Well, the Argentines have a more difficult problem than we have had in this country for something over a hundred years. Their neighbors, the Uruguayans, almost went under in a similar insurgency. Radical guerillas almost beat the government in Uruguay. And in both these countries, there have been major human rights difficulties. I am not suggesting any clear guidelines for balancing these things out. But—and this is a personal thing, I don't give you this as a government position—I think we are going to have to have a fairly flexible standard for human rights throughout the world. There is plenty of room for argument on this subject—and if anyone wants to argue, I would be delighted.

### 3) *Basic Human Rights or Something Broader?*

Now, a third dilemma—also a very controversial one—is whether we should devote our energies mainly to promoting basic human rights, like freedom from torture and arbitrary imprisonment, or whether we should also, or in addition, promote broader political rights: rights like freedom of the press, free elections, that kind of thing. There is not much guidance on which sorts of rights to promote in international law or international treaties. There is no "dividing line" between basic human rights and broader political rights, for example, in things like the Charter of the United Nations, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. A further complication is that—throughout the world—only the democratic regimes really seem to guarantee human rights. There are a few authoritarian regimes that, for a while, manage to do reasonably well and not to be involved in many violations, but such regimes have weak remedies for lapses. It is a great help—if there are human rights violations—to be able to vote the government out of office the next time around.

Historically speaking, in Latin America the United States has promoted democracy rather than the more basic rights. But the problem with promoting broader political rights is that we have been accused of forcing our system of government on other people. And in Latin America, where there are high fears of U.S. intervention, this is a powerful accusation.

What we can do, and we are doing internationally, is to claim that certain basic human rights "*transcend national boundaries.*" That is an important phrase which I would underline for you. The concept of "transcending national boundaries" is obviously giving the Soviets a lot of trouble. And, incidentally, I don't quite know how we in the U.S. are going to like it if there are international investigations of human rights practices in the United States. I would not object. If we say that human rights transcend national boundaries, we are eventually going to have to accept an international inquiry into practices here, and we are going to look pretty good on a world scale, but the

investigators might nevertheless turn up some things that will cause embarrassment.

In practice, then, I am saying that my recommendation—and I *don't* give it to you as a government recommendation—is that we are going to have to use most of our energy in defending “basic” human rights. We are going to have to say: “we don't care what kind of government you have; we know that not everybody in the world has a democratic government; but we are going to ask that you not torture your citizens, or throw them in jail for a long period of time without a fair trial, or murder them.” I suspect this is how it is going to come out. But it may be disappointing to a lot of people who do not want us to change our basic historical emphasis on democracy around the world. I don't want to drop our concern for democracy either, but I guess we are going to have to concern ourselves with political rights and democracy at a somewhat different level. We have no ability to talk to the Soviet Union about its system of internal government, but we will and can talk to it about the basic rights of its citizens.

#### 4) *How to Express our Concern for Human Rights?*

Now there is just one final question I want to talk about, though it is not a dilemma. It concerns our options for expressing our views on human rights, whatever they may be. What kind of leverage should we use? Should we pursue positive or negative measures?

In my view, our response to violations will have to involve a whole range of actions. Positive measures are great, but hard to find. It may well be that, with more ingenuity in the future, we will come up with more positive incentives for improving human rights behavior: things like getting ourselves identified with groups around the world that are concerned about human rights. One thing that we have been able to do is to bring a lot of people to our country and give them some encouragement. A number of churches have been extremely helpful in our cultural and educational exchanges. So I give this to you as a kind of oblique, but very useful, means of doing something with which to help about human rights.

With respect to negative measures, the kind of sanctions we might adopt, we are just going to have to adopt a whole range of measures. In the beginning—for minor infractions of human rights—we are going to have to express concern quite privately and off the record with the government involved: like saying, “Look, we found out what went on in the police barracks last week, and if this kind of thing keeps going on, we will have to say something in public. That is really going to disrupt our relations.” This kind of approach can be quite effective, but you can't prove it, and you can't tell the newspapers about it. If you did, it wouldn't be quiet any more and the people to whom you were talking would have lost face, which is very important. So it can sound like a cop-out—but I don't think it is. In many cases, quiet diplomacy is the most effective thing we can do.

If that doesn't work then we would have to step up to public expressions of concern. When we do this, the situation is probably getting pretty bad and you may even be giving up the chance to make the short-term impact on human rights that you might achieve privately, in favor of helping out over the long

term. Because when you go public, when you condemn a government's human rights practice in the newspapers, you are not going to find it very easy to talk to that government for a while, and you may find it difficult to get to the Prime Minister's office or the Foreign Minister's office and make a fuss about a particular human being in trouble.

At some point in the range of “enforcement” options that we have, clearly we have to get rid of all of our programs that would *identify* us with specific human rights violations. What you may not know is that—at least in Latin America—our military programs are now getting very small indeed. We have about used up all the leverage that may have been available.

I am not sure whether military and police programs did any harm. They may even have done some good. But you couldn't prove it when the same police, a few weeks later, were involved in human-rights abuses.

When you cut a country off from an ongoing program, then you are going to get a strong reaction. You are going to lose out on something else that you might have been able to achieve in that country. But you may have no choice.

I don't know where the end of the list is on the negative measures one might take. I guess you never reach the end. One could cut off diplomatic relations, but that does not and should not happen very often. And probably by the time you got to that point, it wouldn't do much good.

What I have given you is obviously not a tidy set of solutions for the problem of human rights. The problem does not—in my personal view—lend itself to tidy solutions and a tight focus. But we do have the ability to achieve real improvements. Success will require both determination and careful judgment: neither one alone will achieve much.

## THE PRIORITY OF UNDERSTANDING FEMALE ROLES IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

Letha Scanzoni

I should mention that the book just referred to, *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*, was coauthored by myself and Nancy Hardesty. It's published by Word.

As John mentioned last night, we believe in interchangeable roles, and since he spoke first last night and took the longer period, I'm going to be speaking first this morning and taking the longer period. I will be addressing myself to the subject of women and changing gender roles and John will be talking about men and changing gender roles.

The gender roles of a particular society have to do with what boys and men are expected to be like and what girls and women are expected to be like in that society. It has to do with both the *attributes* assigned to the sexes and the *activities* that are assigned to the sexes in that society. There is no universal agreement, however, on the specific attributes or characteristics one is expected to display according to one's sex because when anthropologist Margaret Mead studied three societies in New Guinea, she found that one

group emphasized ruthless, aggressive, competitive behavior as being the ideal for both sexes. In another group, a gentle temperament was considered the ideal for both sexes. A third group considered it ideal for women to be aggressive and dominating while men were expected to be sensitive and emotionally dependent. If we add the traditional pattern in our own society, we have every possible variation.

Similarly, there is no universal consensus on the *activities* side of the sex role question. Just as societies vary in what males and females are expected to be like, there is variation in what males and females are expected to do. In one society basket weaving may be considered women's work while in another society the task may fall primarily or exclusively to men. Anthropologists have found societies where men make and repair all the clothing or do all the cooking. They have found societies where only the women built the houses. Studies of other cultures simply do not support the notion that males are by nature aggressive and women are innately passive and dependent, or the notion that certain jobs belong to men and certain jobs belong to women.

A television documentary on the recently discovered Stone Age tribe in the Philippines showed a gentle, peace-loving people who had no word for war in their vocabulary. The narrator called attention to the fact that there was no division of labor according to sex, no women's work or men's work as such. Everybody pitched in and helped where needed. Men didn't hesitate to cook. Women didn't hesitate to gather the food. The whole tribe worked together looking after the children as though they were one big happy family. The idea of gender roles that are not rigidly fixed but rather are flexible and interchangeable is an idea with great appeal to increasing numbers of women and some men too as we'll see in John's discussion in a little while.

As a woman looks at herself today she is less likely to see herself in terms of an assigned role. Women are coming to realize that they *learn* (and are not born with) characteristics associated with that word called *femininity* just as men learn but are not born with characteristics associated with that word called *masculinity* in our society. These gender-linked characteristics are learned because of the different standards held up for males and females and the different treatment we give them from the time baby boys are wrapped in blue blankets and girls are dressed in pink.

One way to see this, incidentally, is to browse through greeting cards. Look at the baby cards at a greeting card display and notice the different messages for parents of boys and parents of girls or the messages on gift plaques describing how or why God made boys and how or why God made girls. Little girls are described as sweet, cuddly, and ready to wrap their parents around their little fingers. Boys are described as active, adventuresome, out to conquer the world.

But all this is changing. No longer are women willing to be told that they are by nature followers, weak, passive, intuitive, timid, emotional, nurturant, irrational, gentle, unassertive. Individual women may display to some degree and at certain times any or all of these characteristics and some of them are

desirable and some of them are undesirable. But if they do display them, they are *personal* characteristics and not attributes one must display because of having been born female.

Similarly, more and more women realize that strength, courage, boldness, independence, rationality, and leadership—those qualities usually considered masculine in our society—are not qualities that must be labeled for men only. Women are refusing to be limited and new self-image is emerging. "I am strong, I am invincible, I am Woman!" sings Helen Reddy, and an enthusiastic chorus of her sisters are shouting, "Amen!" or at least "Right on!"

But what about the Christian woman in all of this? Is she, too, the Christian woman, forming a new image of herself? Many of us are. I am convinced that this image is much more biblical and in keeping with God's plan than is the stereotypical image of womanhood presented by conventional gender role expectations. Many Christian women are recovering a new awareness of what it means to be made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 5:1-2 make it very clear that both males and females were created equally in God's image. That point cannot be overstressed because there have been questions raised about that, believe it or not, throughout church history. In fact, at one point a church council took a vote to decide whether or not women even had souls. It was decided we do by one vote.

But what does it mean to be made in the image of God? It would seem from the opening chapters of Genesis that bearing God's likeness refers to at least two areas. As we look at the Genesis revelation of what God is like, we find (1) God creates, and (2) God relates. These two aspects of God's image are speaking in a new way to many Christian women today as we shall see as we now move on to our next point. We have already seen woman's image of herself. Let us now look at woman and her work.

Women have been trained traditionally to consider men as the doers in life and to consider themselves as the supporters of the doers. Thus their interests and talents have often been set aside to make sure that life's best opportunities go to the male sex. If family budgets are tight, it is more likely that sons will go to college and not the daughters in the family. After marriage, the traditional expectation has been that women will put aside their own interests and give top priority to the needs of their husbands and children. To question this arrangement is apt to bring charges of selfishness and give rise to guilt feelings. One of the biggest changes going on right now is the rethinking women are doing in this area.

In looking at chapter one of Genesis, the Christian woman discovers that the creation mandate or the creation charge was given equally to both sexes. Both women and men were told by God to be fruitful and multiply. That is, to have responsibility for home and family. That was not a charge just to women. Both women and men were told by God to have dominion over the earth. Again that was not a charge given only to the men. So if women are going to reflect the whole image of God, we have to think in terms of both of these areas. If males have a need to reflect God's image through work, creativity, cultivating, molding, making, controlling, discovering, inventing, and

achieving, so do women. If men are given a variety of talents and abilities suiting them for all kinds of work, so too are women. Some women are immensely talented as creative homemakers and are tremendously gifted in caring for children. Other women have no interests or talents at all along these lines. For them to be forced into that mold on the assumption that this is woman's only work would be as foolish as forcing all men to be farmers or mechanics or physicians. Yet such reasoning has not been uncommon.

The Puritans, for example, told boys that God had a "particular calling" for them and that God would provide spiritual guidance toward that vocation according to the boy's talents and interests. But at the same time, the Puritans told girls that God's particular calling for them was the same for all persons of the female sex. They were expected to grow up to be homemakers and were often apprenticed as domestic workers at an early age to prepare for their adult role. No one seemed to think that God might guide young women through their talents and interests as was expected to be true of young men. Many Christian women today are taking a new look at the notion of calling or vocation or career. Many are taking a serious look at their own lives in order to discover talents and abilities. Many of us see this as a matter of God-given responsibility, a matter of Christian stewardship. Jesus had something to say about hiding lights under bushels or burying talents in napkins.

We cannot ignore the matter of paid employment in discussing the general topic of women and change because the biggest changes of all are related to this matter. As the option to work outside the home has opened to women, economic dependence on men has decreased. It became possible for a woman to be free to develop her own career interests rather than for her to feel that she must settle into a marriage to which she was not suited. It was no longer necessary to have a man support her for the sake of survival. The opening up of job opportunities as well as higher education for women meant that she could support herself. Thus a trend that began in the last century continues today. More and more women are in the labor force. Economists are predicting that within the next three years half the women of the United States who are over sixteen years old will be in the work force or actively seeking work. The figure at present is just under 48 percent. Or look at it another way. Four out of every ten persons in the U.S. labor force are women, a figure that Labor Department officials had not expected to be reached until 1985 but it has already been reached.

Women work for varied reasons: economic needs, added benefits for their families such as to make possible the purchase of a new house or college for their children, a desire to utilize skills, a desire to help others through their knowledge and talents, self-fulfillment, a sense of accomplishment. Sociologist Jean Lipman-Blumen has pointed out that traditionally women have been taught to expect only vicarious achievement in life, to live through the achievements of others, particularly the significant males in their lives—their fathers, their husbands, their sons, the business executive one assists as secretary, and so on. (That's no joke you know—"My son the doctor," that gives a woman meaning in life.) Now that is changing

and more and more women want the rewards of direct rather than vicarious achievement. The phenomenon of growing labor force participation among women may be expected to be noticed among those women in our church congregations as well as those outside. As Christian women are taking a new look at and emulating biblical role models, we may expect to find more and more Lydias, such as in Acts, chapter sixteen, Lydias who are just as much at home in the marketplace as they are in prayer meeting.

That brings us to the second aspect of woman's being made in the image of God: woman and her relationships. We believe in a triune God. We believe that the three persons of the Godhead relate to one another and we believe that God relates to human beings. This capability for relationship is another aspect of the image of God which both women and men created in that image are expected to reflect.

Now women, of course, have always been trained to place great importance on relationships. In fact, they often have been defined in terms of their relationships. The name change traditionally in which a woman becomes Mrs. John Jones, losing her own name entirely is one example. She is henceforth defined in terms of this relationship. Any other women could fill that same thing. If she dies, there will be another Mrs. John Jones. The personal identity is completely wiped out. Women have been trained to be warm, nurturant, supportive, and interested in other people and their needs and problems. That's all to the good. But we might therefore conclude that we don't have to say much about the area of relationships because that's one in which fewer changes will take place for women as compared, say, with the area of work. However, there have been a great many changes here, too. For one thing, large numbers of women have been refusing to be defined in terms of a relationship to a man or the lack of such a relationship. They see themselves as whole persons in their own right, not as appendages to males.

That's one reason for the growing popularity for the title "Ms." for both single and married women. That way it's a direct counterpart to the male title "Mr." which says nothing about marital status but simply tells us that the particular person is a male. That's all it means. The title "Ms." doesn't mean that a woman wants to have nothing to do with men any more than the title "Mr." means a man wants to have nothing to do with women. Now I'm not saying we should and must use the title "Ms." That's a matter of personal preference and is up to individuals. But I only mention it because some Christians seem threatened by it. I know of one Christian woman who refuses to pay a bill if the envelope is addressed to her as "Ms." I've heard of a Christian college where the President issued an order that no mail may go out on college stationery using the title "Ms."

At the same time, in this whole area of relationships, many women are looking for deeper, more open, more honest relationships than ever before. In 1975, at the closing meeting of the first national conference of the Evangelical Women's caucus held in Washington, D.C., one of the handful of men in attendance stood up at the end of this closing meeting that we had and said, "I leave here envious of sisterhood." He said he wished the men had something like this.

He observed the deep friendships among the women there as we shared joys and struggles and common concerns and experienced loving supportiveness.

The biblical model of sisterhood is, of course, Ruth and Naomi. Women are not only discovering the joy of close supportive friendships with one another, they are also learning the joy of real friendship with the opposite sex. The women's movement has challenged the old game playing, the considering of oneself as a sex object, the manipulateness and deception involved in pretending to be less intelligent than one really is in order to impress males. Those old games hurt men as well as women and they hurt the potential for real friendship between two equals. There are encouraging signs of change in this area.

Then there is that area of special relationships called marriage and family. Many Christian women are taking a new look at scripture and are discovering that the one-flesh relationship is one that calls for the deep communication and companionship of two equal partners. The biblical example of Priscilla and Aquilla shows a couple who shared not only the joys of married life but also shared the breadwinning role because both were tentmakers and served together in evangelistic work and church planting. Many Christian women are discovering that the true message of Ephesians, chapter five, is a far cry from a dominance-subordination level. Rather, it is a picture of love on the part of both husband and wife that is self-expending rather than self-expanding, to borrow theologian Arthur McGill's choice wording. The model is one of mutual submissiveness and mutual affirmation, both sides equally supporting, encouraging, serving, building one another up and cheering one another on in the use of God-given talents. Every area of marriage is affected.

The new discovery of female sexuality through the work of Masters and Johnson and others was anticipated thousands of years ago in scripture. For example, the loving and very sexual, very erotic relationship described in the Song of Solomon is primarily presented from the woman's point of view. I have written on this in great detail elsewhere in *Why Wait?* and in *Sex Is A Parent Affair* and *All We're Meant to Be* as well as in the book John and I co-authored, *Men, Women, and Change*. So I'll simply just mention here in passing that sexuality is one more area where changes are taking place very definitely in the relationship side of life. The old idea that sex is a man's right and delight and a woman's duty and drudgery is rapidly changing.

There is also the matter of children. Changes are occurring here, too. For one thing, families are having fewer children and some couples are electing to have none at all. But where there are children, contrary to popular belief, many women in the women's movement seem to appreciate them more than ever before. By having a positive view of themselves and of womanhood, having moved away from the old idea that women are inferior somehow, women are taking great joy in the processes of pregnancy, birth, breast-feeding, and training their children. This is true whether or not they are pursuing careers in addition to motherhood. Many women are finding that by having learned to love themselves they are now free to love their husbands and children more than ever.

No longer living *through* their husbands and children, they are less apt to drain them or smother-love them. Rather, they are finding they have more to give out of their own fulfilled lives. And women are taking great delight in the challenge of the socialization process, working hard to train their daughters and sons in ways that will help them avoid the limitations of gender-role stereotypes.

The next area of change has to do with a woman's role in her church. In many churches that role has been limited and has meant only service behind the scenes in silence. She has been permitted to cook church dinners but not to serve the Lord's Supper. She has been insulted by being told that God only uses women if no man is available regardless of her qualifications or the lack of qualifications on the part of the man who happens along. She has been told that her mind is weaker than a man's and more susceptible to false doctrine. Now all these ideas are being questioned and challenged and changes are occurring.

Christian feminists have taken a new look at scripture and we have noticed what the creation accounts really say about males and females being created equally, equally commissioned to serve, equally bearing God's image. We have taken a new look at Jesus' actions and attitudes toward women. He could have heeded Martha's complaints and sent Mary into the kitchen. After all, wasn't that the woman's place according to traditional notions? Instead he wanted Mary to remain with him and the other men discussing theology. Jesus also discussed theology with the Samaritan woman at the well. In fact, he went so far as to reveal his messiahship to her. It was to women that Jesus gave the commission of proclaiming the tremendous news of his resurrection, this wondrous truth on which the Christian faith rests. Surely he harbored no thoughts of women as being "unsafe repositories of doctrine whose nature makes them unsuited for preaching because they shall easily fall into false teachings and twist God's message," as I heard one Bible teacher say. Jesus entrusted the greatest doctrine of all to women.

Incidentally, it's interesting to note that the message of his birth as well as his resurrection was also proclaimed by a woman, the aged prophetess Anna who served in the temple and "spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem," according to Luke 2:38. Christian feminists have also noticed the pouring of God's spirit on both God's men servants and maid servants in Acts, chapter two, and the message that "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." According to I Corinthians 14:3-4, prophesying has to do with exhortation, encouraging, consoling, upbuilding, and edifying the church. In other words, it has to do with preaching and teaching. Many of us have come to realize that the passages that have been used to keep women from serving in this way have to do with localized situations and were never intended to be used as universal prohibitions on the use of women's gifts. That would have been to disregard the Holy Spirit who, according to First Corinthians, chapter twelve, "apportions gifts to each person individually as the Holy Spirit wills."

There is no indication that spiritual gifts are allocated on the basis of sex with some being wrapped in

blue-gifts like preaching—and some being wrapped in pink-gifts like helping. The changes women are asking for in the church are not indicative of a selfish grasping of power and prestige but rather a recognition of gifts that can be used in the service of Jesus Christ. God has given these gifts to women to be used in the church. The church is all the poorer if it chooses not to recognize those gifts and forces Christian women to find other avenues through which to serve God and humanity.

This brings us to our final point in considering women and change and gender-roles today. With a new awareness of the gifts they have to offer the world today, women want to be part of the areas of life beyond the home. This does not mean they want to ignore or neglect the home but rather they don't want to limit their contributions only to home and family. They want to be part of the world of politics, education, science, the arts, and much more. They don't want to be spectators or cheerleaders urging men on. They want to get into the game themselves and be participants.

One of the passages in scripture that many of us have examined anew is Proverbs, chapter thirty-one. Now many pastors love to use that as a Mother's Day sermon and commend the virtuous woman there because she "looks well to the ways of her household." What they usually fail to mention are all of her other activities. She made independent decisions and evidently had charge of the family finances, including the real estate purchasing. She ran her own garment business and she was involved with the needs of others and actively engaged in helping the poor. No wonder her husband and children were so proud of her. It is this kind of total involvement with life that many women today are seeking.

That brings us to a challenge to caring Christians—if we really care about our world and our people and our church. The question now is, how will the church respond to this issue of women and change? Some women will evade it and avoid it, hoping that by ignoring it the whole question will somehow go away. "It's just a fad, this woman's movement thing," say such Christians. "It'll all blow over. You'll see." Well, I have news for them. It isn't going to blow over. The movement toward recognizing women as full and equal human beings with equal rights and responsibilities is part of an ongoing process of recognizing the worth and dignity of all persons, irrespective of race, sex, ethnic origin, or anything else. Now we have a long way to go in this, to be sure. Think of the plight of native American peoples or those of Spanish origin, not to mention the continuing inequities suffered by black persons in our society. But these are our ideals and goals.

The painful struggles in South Africa over the apartheid policy are an indication that it's futile to try to justify stratification by race in our modern world. The women's movement is showing that it is likewise futile to try to justify stratification by sex. Changes are coming about in society and churches which try to ignore that are acting foolishly and failing in their mission. We must take the matter seriously and here are just a few suggestions of some things we may want to be thinking about.

(1) In our Sunday Schools and youth programs,

we need to help young women to think in terms of life planning, talent discovery, career possibilities, and commitment to goals. Too often, Christian girls have the impression from early childhood that they are somewhat passive in life, waiting for life to happen, that they'll go through school, find a job temporarily and then a man will come along and the rest of life will be filled with marriage and motherhood. Boys are trained quite differently.

(2) We need to help older women in their life planning too, especially those whose children are older or away from home now and they find themselves wondering if it's too late to try something new with their lives—a new career, some humanitarian service. Think of Jimmy Carter's mother who joined the Peace Corps and was sent to India when she was nearly seventy years old. Or think of further education. It's never too late. I have a clipping in my files from the late 1960s that says that Betty Crocker, class of 1926, had just been awarded a Ph.D. Yes, it was the real Betty Crocker, the woman who under the assigned name had promoted General Mills cake mixes and other products for years. Now she had earned a Ph.D. to begin a retirement career in communications. So if Betty Crocker can do it, any of us can do it! An aside on that story: when an interviewer asked Betty Crocker exactly what she planned to do, she replied, "Well, one thing is certain. I'll spend as little time in the kitchen as possible. I hate to cook."

(3) But some women *like* to cook and do all the other things associated with homemaking. The church needs to encourage them, too. Whereas once the working woman used to feel on the defensive, now increasingly the housewife feels that way. Again, we must stress the matter of free choice. Some women choose to devote themselves full-time to homemaking while others choose paid employment outside. At the same time we must be realistic. For too long the church has preached that motherhood is a full-time job and virtually all women should make that their career. Well, motherhood may be a full-time career when there are preschoolers but if a woman continues to try to make motherhood a full-time career when the sons and daughters are twenty-five and thirty-five or forty-five and have homes and families of their own, she's in trouble, or at least her children are in trouble! I think mother-in-law jokes are grossly unfair to some wonderful people. But at the same time, some women, because they have been trained to have no identity but that of a mother, have helped give rise to the unfortunate stereotype of meddling mothers-in-law. How can churches help women find their own identities?

(4) The church needs to be concerned about its single women. Too often they feel cast off, somehow not considered whole persons because they haven't married. The church, of all places, should provide a sense of family for its single women, and I'm pleased that some of your churches are doing this very well. But instead all too often in churches single women are crowded out by programs devoted only to couples and families. Widows and divorcees as well as those who have never married say they have the same feeling of being left out. How can they help but feel that way when some churches even have Sunday School classes called "Pairs and Spares"? It's not hard

to figure out who the "spares" are. My coauthor Nancy Hardesty, who is single, calls it the Noah's ark syndrome. The church expects everyone to come two-by-two.

(5) What kind of day care is being provided for children of working parents? Churches can have a tremendous ministry through day care centers. Dr. Carl Henry, writing in *Christianity Today*, January 3, 1975, has pointed out that while God is calling some women to serve him through a wide range of professions that greatly need their talents and Christian influence, God may also be calling other women who feel called to full-time motherhood to look after the children of the working women and to consider that a ministry for Christ. I would add that the suggestion need not be limited to women. There are men who could serve God in this way, too.

(6) The church needs to be concerned about the political issues surrounding the changes in woman's roles. For example, simple justice should make us see the need for equal pay for equal work. Yet Christian organizations have an unfortunate record when it comes to unequal pay according to one's sex.

(7) And lastly, we need to have a sense of compassion and understanding in view of the struggles many women are undergoing today. Many feel guilty for even questioning traditional ideas. They need our help and they need our love. Thank you.

## THE PRIORITY OF UNDERSTANDING MALE ROLES IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

John Scanzoni

In terms of men's roles and the issue of how men should change in all of this, it would be very easy for men to feel threatened, to feel that the world is collapsing around them, that things are decaying, that there is no certainty, and that there is much less status for men. But rather than look upon these things as being threatening, they ought to be looked upon as creative opportunities for change because long before the women's movement emerged, or before feminism reemerged (because it's not new; it's been around for at least 200 years) in the 1950s and 1960s there was a great deal of talk about the rat race, about men on the treadmill of work and continual striving for empty gain. Certainly the Christian message warns against the idea of simply striving for material well-being or prestige or power for their own sake. What these new options provide, what these new changes provide is an opportunity for a man, for a male, to critically reexamine his life, his opportunities, and his challenges and to consider live and viable options, options that were not there before the reemergence of feminism.

For example, options can be considered in terms of what we call self-concept. A man's self-concept is generally caught up in things like strength and courage and aggressiveness or at least assertiveness. Perhaps Ephesians, chapter six, is a good example of what we're talking about. Paul tell us to put on the whole armor of God and be strong in the power of his

might, and to take on a shield and a helmet and a breastplate and so on and so forth, things that prepare us for war and for battle. Now, Paul undoubtedly was not writing solely to men but clearly those characteristics are the kinds of things men think of when they think of themselves.

If you ask a little boy what is his image of himself, those are the kinds of characteristics that would emerge. Indeed, standard psychological tests, such as the MMPI and others are geared toward defining masculinity in terms of strength and courage and aggressiveness and assertiveness. On the other hand, if you look at a passage like Galatians, chapter five, where we're told that the fruit of the spirit is love, nurture, peace, gentleness, kindness, graciousness, and tenderness: those are the kinds of things that little girls answer, "Yes, that's my self-image. That's my self-esteem." Or in a standard psychological test, those are the kinds of things defined as feminine or femininity.

Now, again, when Paul was writing about those characteristics, he wasn't saying that only women should have them but also that men should have them. What he was suggesting if we put the two passages together, therefore, is that a whole or completely integrated self-concept is one that is both instrumental and expressive and I think those are the words to be preferred rather than masculine or feminine. That is, an instrumental self-image is a self-image geared to a task. You see a task and you do it. You are a task-oriented person. That is how boys and men think of themselves. But on the other hand, expressiveness is being person-oriented. You see a person and you say that person has needs. I want to minister to that person as a person. That's how women see themselves. That's the self-image they grow up with. What I'm suggesting is that the option now for men is to integrate into their self-image this expressive dimension, this person-oriented dimension. No longer is there the overriding necessity to be completely and totally task-oriented so that men find it difficult to be expressive, to share their feelings, their fears, their doubts, their anxieties, their temptations, their uncertainties, their aspirations. That kind of option was more difficult in the past when it was felt that men had to wear the mask of *macho*, the self-image of traditional masculinity. In these days, therefore, it's not necessary to be threatened, but rather to seize upon the creative opportunity of changing self-image or at least enlarging self-image, to have both the instrumental as well as the expressive, the task-oriented as well as the person-oriented notions.

A second creative opportunity where there could be threat but need not be is in the area of work. We mentioned a few moments ago the oft-noted observation that men do tend to get too involved in their work, have gotten too involved in their work. Again, long before the reemergence of feminism, people were aware of how busy a man can get so that he has no time, or he says he has no time for wife or for children. Men are too busy working and that is said to be lamentable. It is said to be unfortunate. But nevertheless they keep up the pattern. By the same token, another unfortunate pattern in relation to work is that the woman tends to absorb herself in her husband's work. Perhaps the most classic example of

that in recent years has been the incident of Dr. Spock and his wife. All of you are familiar, of course, with his famous baby book and his advice to people, women especially, where he told them to submerge themselves in their husbands. But it turns out that Mrs. Spock filed for divorce recently and talked to a *New York Times* reporter. She said that she helped write his famous baby books but he would not allow her to put her name on those books and, indeed, he took all the royalties, he took all the credit, he took all the praise and esteem and prestige. She was allowed none of that. She claimed that all he was interested in was a good dinner on the table, and in no way affirmed her skills and her contributions to the book. She resented that and it finally led to divorce.

Now clearly what these new options present is an opportunity for a man to get away from that extreme busyness that has characterized men in the past. It also allows men to have wives who are not totally and completely absorbed in their husband's work but rather can get involved in interests of their own. As Letha suggested, work is far more than money and it is far more than merely counting up dollars. Rather, work carries with it certain intrinsic gratifications. Work for a person created in the image of God is precisely that—creating. In the past men have very often been locked into jobs which were not creative, which were not fulfilling but they had to stay there to provide for their families. These new options give a man a chance to decide whether or not he wants to stay in an unfulfilling, uncreative job for, if a woman in the family is willing to work and wants to work, wants to pursue a certain career, then the man can take time out to reflect and pursue, perhaps, another occupation, another vocation, or pursue the same one but with renewed vigor and with perhaps a different perspective or a different sense of what he's doing. These options were not present before. They are present now.

A third area where creative opportunity rather than threat is present has to do with the area of relationships, the area specifically of friendship. The Bible talks about the friendship of Jonathan and David. Unfortunately, there are not many men who have friendships like that—the friendship of Jonathan and David. It seems to me that that kind of friendship, that kind of situation, is something that in the past men neglected because they have been so busy achieving that they haven't taken time and it takes an enormous amount of time, to cultivate that kind of friendship. So now deeper same-sex friendships are possible because of greater freedom, greater options.

Likewise, friendships with persons of the opposite sex become possible. In the past it was thought that if a man and a woman became friends that there was something sexual involved, something erotic involved. The idea that they could have deep friendships apart from sex was simply lost. Now this option is available. It is present and men and women can develop friendships quite apart from sexual, erotic overtones. The illustration that was mentioned before regarding Paul's friendship with Priscilla and some of his other women friends is clearly an example of this, where friendships were deep and enriching because they could for-

get about sex. They could forget about erotic game playing and just concentrate on their friendship.

Of course, the idea of a friendship between a man and a woman who are married, has also been lost because in the past it has been difficult to have friendships between unequals. There can be respect between unequals but it is very difficult to establish friendships. When there is equality, there is the basis for marital friendship. So these options can also be present, whereas in the past, it was very, very difficult, very, very unlikely, especially as the marriage progressed. The man went his way, the woman went her way. And by the time ten, fifteen, twenty years had transpired the woman had sort of faded away into her husband, lacking any kind of separate identity. She certainly was not an object of deep friendship.

Finally and summing up the opportunities which are before men today, there is the notion of compassion and love that simply was not there before. That is, we have the examples in scripture of Jesus and his treatment of women which Letha referred to before, Paul and his female coworkers, and then what I consider to be the ideal Christian couple described in the Bible. If you think about it, there are not many biblical examples of healthy, wholesome, marriages. David was certainly not an ideal, not even Abraham.

As you cast about throughout the New Testament looking for the ideal model you come across the lives of Priscilla and Aquilla. Letha has referred to Priscilla but I think a great deal more needs to be said about Aquilla because he was a very unusual man for his day. He was apparently a Jew, he was apparently a convert to Christianity and he apparently felt no threat by Priscilla's activity in tentmaking, in theology, in preaching, and in leading the church. Now while it is more common today for us to have Aquillas, certainly in the first century, in the early church, that was virtually unknown. Here he was, a man who could live with Priscilla and could encourage her gifts and could see her to be an accomplished and talented person. So it seems to me that their marriage, the marriage of Aquilla and Priscilla, ought to be the kind of marriage that's held up as an ideal role model for Christian men and women to follow. Christian men in particular need to consider the behavior of Aquilla as a kind of model which they ought to follow.

With that model in mind, therefore, the idea of threat, the idea of feeling undercut, undermined, can be minimized and the idea of seizing in creative fashion the challenging opportunities before us can be optimized.

## PRIORITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Jerry Clower

My, it is good to be in Jackson, Mississippi, the capitol city of my home state. I appreciate you all inviting me to come, but I assume that my past life qualified me to be here. I once was a bigot, but now I'm a liberal. I have changed!

I've just come off of a tour. January 2 I caught a Delta Airlines in Jackson, Mississippi for Pocketbooks, Simon & Schuster because they bought the paperback

rights to my book, *Ain't God Good!* They somewhat upset me when I found out that more folks would pay \$1.75 for my book than they would \$6.95. They sold 100,000 in hardback at \$6.95 in a year, and sold 500,000 at \$1.75 in a week. So Simon & Schuster are the people who own Pocketbooks, and Simon & Schuster is owned by Gulf Western, and I don't know who owns them; but I flew to Boston, Massachusetts to promote my book.

Marcel Ledbetter, my dearest friend from Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi, said to me, "Jerry, I want to take a trip with you." I said, "You can fly to Boston." So we got on the Delta jet and took off and went up to 41,000 feet. I looked over at Marcel, and said, "How do you like the airplane ride?" He said, "The ride is good but I ain't never getting on another airplane as long as I live." "Why?" He said, "These folks are stupid what built this airplane. Look at 'em, they put a kitchen right across from the toilet!"

We landed in Boston, Massachusetts, beautiful town; snow was everywhere. When we landed at the airport it was zero degrees. We got in the limousine. MCA Records that I record for met me there in the same limousine that Elton John uses when he is in town. Man! Jimmy hadn't been inaugurated yet, but they was making for sure that I might be a friend of his. We drove up to the hotel and got into the hotel and it was zero degrees outside and 100 degrees in that hotel. It ought to be a criminal offense to make a hotel that hot! Marcel Ledbetter said, "I can't get my breath!" The hairs in our nose dried up, got brittle, broke off, and we snorted them out on the floor. We got up to the room and I said, "Marcel, turn all the heat off and come on down to the beautiful dining room and I'll feed you a wonderful supper and maybe your attitude will be better." So me and Marcel walked into the dining room and there was the maitre d' with a velvet bow tie on and a clawhammer tailcoat on. He said, "Oh, Mr. Clower, welcome. I remember you from you doing the theater-in-the-round here. Welcome back to the land of the bean and the cod." That kind of shocked Marcel. I said, "Marcel, up here that is a fish--beans and codfish." He said, "Oh, I would like to have some of that codfish." So we sat down and ate a plate of it, and it was good. They had those big loaves of brown bread and a beautiful supper and we got ready to check out. I took the check and there was a lady sitting on a stool with them gold chains around her neck and diamonds on her fingers. I looked at the check and started to pay it, and Marcel saw a bowl of loose toothpicks sitting there. He reached over to get one of them toothpicks and commenced to picking his teeth. That woman stared right at him, and Marcel put the toothpick back in the bowl. Marcel looked at her and said, "You know, I'll bet you a lot of folks use 'em and walk off with 'em."

Next morning, I sent Marcel Ledbetter home, back to Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi, and I went to New York City and did the Joey Franklin TV show and a radio show on WOR with Barry Farber. Eighteen million folks listen to that radio station. Barry Farber said on WOR in New York City that nobody in the world today was doing any kind of comedy except Jerry Clower and Sam Levenson that you could remember the moral of it the next morning. I didn't

know exactly what he meant by that until the *New York Times* compared me to Thoreau. The *New York Times* said occasionally I tell a beautiful story that is racist in nature, but it is funny and my racist friends laugh at it and I get a lesson over on it. And the illustration they gave was when I backed into show business.

They done sent a fellow from Hollywood to buy my records. He had done heard me speak at the Farm Bureau and he said, "Man, you ought to be a recording artist." They landed in Yazoo City, Mississippi in that little jet airplane. They had that lawyer with them what had that little narrow lapel on his coat. They got off of that airplane, skipping down that ladder, and they had them Hollywood boots on and one of them had on a black leather vest. Both of them looked like they had a hairdo that a milking machine had been sucking on for about an hour. One of 'em had a little goatee. I backed off 'cause I didn't like his looks. Never, ever would I do business with anybody looking that bad! He had two boar hog's teeth hanging on a chain around his neck. They might have been shark's teeth but they looked like boar hog teeth to me. We didn't like their looks. But when he opened that briefcase, and showed me how much cash money he had brought with him, my attitude got a lot more tolerant about them hairdos! I thought he had the prettiest head of hair of anybody I ever saw.

But I left New York and went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to do the Mike Douglas show. I was sitting in the Green Room waiting to go out on national television and in walks a lady. I knowed she was a female as to how her dungarees was fitting her when she walked in the room. And there wasn't a vacant chair. So I stood up and said, "Lady, will you take this chair?" She said, "Sit down." And I was shocked. You know I'm a Christian fellow. I've been saved since I was thirteen years of age. I stand up when an older person walks in the room. If I had of been sitting in that room and Foy Valentine had a-walked in, I would have got up. And I would have said, "Mr. Valentine, you are the most shot-at Baptist in the world. I know you're give out. You come and sit down here."

So I said, "Darlin', you don't understand, there is not a vacant chair, and I am offering you a place to sit down." She said, "Anybody that's got enough talent to be on the Mike Douglas show ought to have enough sense to know what we're doing. Now, I'm telling you to sit down!" I said, "I ain't gonna do it." I said, "Lady, my ancestors would come up out of the grave and get me." Now I didn't know who she was. Now I couldn't have been doing nothing to alarm her being as how I didn't know who she was. Pearl Bailey took me by the arm and said, "Jerry, don't worry about it." And in order to embarrass me, this lady sat down in the middle of the floor, and left me standing by my chair.

I found out who she was and I said, "Darlin', I ain't trying to embarrass you. I don't see why you are trying to embarrass me." And I said, "Now, Gloria, I think you're nit-picking." She said, "Pardon?" I said; "Darlin', I am a women's libber. I have been loving the women ever since I found out I wasn't one. I used to sell fertilizer, and I used to call on giant

corporations to try to sell them some materials. Right away I would find out that the female secretary working for the president of the company had a lot more sense than the president of the company did. If they had put the female secretary in as head of the company and swapped salaries, they would have made a lot more profit." So I said, "Gloria, that is the issue, darlin'. The woman standing at the cashier window of a bank is working and a man's standing by her and he is making twice as much as she is. That's the issue, not who's going to offer who a cotton-pickin' chair."

The night that the federal government flew 35,000 troops and spent sixteen million dollars and killed two human beings to put one qualified student in the law school at the University of Mississippi, I got down in the back room of my house and I bowed my head, and said, "God, please forgive me. I'll never be a bigot again. I'll never be a racist again. Some of them folks are up there killing and burning on account of Jerry Clower popping off, but I ain't never gonna pop off no more, Lord, and I asked you to forgive me for being a bigot." But I said, "Gloria, you are tempting me, darlin'. My Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi, carnal, redneck, racist nature is coming down on me 'cause I ain't done nothing to you and it matters not who offers who a chair or who opens who a door. Get in on the issues. You the main woman that's representing the women." Gloria said, "I intend to liberate some phase of every female in America." I said, "Well, if you gonna liberate my wife, let me tell you about Mama. Mama sleeps every morning until Mama gets ready to get up. And whenever Mama does decide to get up, a lady comes in and says, 'Mrs. Clower, you want your breakfast on the patio, you want it in the breakfast room, or you want me to bring it back here to you now?' Mama tells her how Mama wants it done. Then when Mama gets ready to watch them soap operas in the afternoon, she can watch it in three different locations in the house, lying down, leaning, or propped up, however Mama wants to do it; and whenever Mama gets ready to go to the grocery store or to get her hair fixed, she goes in a brand new gold Lincoln Continental." And I said, "Ms. women's libber, Mama don't want you messing with the deal she's got!"

That's a true story. If you don't like it, fine. I fought a war to give you the right to take sides. I put that on a record and it stayed in the top ten in *Billboard* for thirty-four weeks. So it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and that's the thing that stirred up the studio audience and embarrassed some of the folks that mistreated me on the talk show. You ought to find out whether a fellow is an anti-women's libber before you blast him. I've met very few folks who are in certain movements who ever smile. If you're involved in any kind of cause, and your cause ain't so motivating that you smile occasionally, then you ought to get off in a quiet place and classify yourself to see whose side you're on. Because you see there's just one place where there's not any laughter and that's in hell. I have made arrangements to miss hell! So Ha! Ha! Ha! I won't never have to be nowhere where some folks ain't laughing, and if you're here this morning and you got your lip pooched out and a hump on your back and you ain't gonna laugh,

you ought to go home and look in the mirror and see what all us other folks been laughing at all these many years!

I left the Mike Douglas Show and one of the things that upset them was that everytime I'd tell this lady, "Mama sleeps every morning until she gets ready to get up," Pearl Bailey would say, "Tell her, Jerry, tell her!" I'd say, "Mama drives a gold Lincoln Continental," and Pearl would say, "Tell her, Jerry, tell her!" It ended up she disliked Pearl more than she did me.

I left New York and flew to Little Rock, San Antonio, Abilene, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Hollywood. I got to Hollywood and did the Dinah Shore Show. Sitting in the Green Room again with my feet up on the coffee table and in walked a lady. She had a long dress on and she was a pretty lady. She screamed and pointed at me and I said, "Darlin', what's the matter?" She said, "Your boots—your lizard boots! You have killed some creature to get you a pair of boots." I said, "No ma'm, a Greyhound bus run over this lizard, and I run out in the highway and fought the buzzards off of him." She said, "Well, I have heard your records and you speak of brutally killing a little rat." I said, "Darlin', you ain't serious. You don't have to brutally kill a rat. How can you kill a rat wrong? They was messing up our corn cribs, having them little ole slick baby rats in them nests. Me and my brother, Sonny, used to chunk them little ole, slick baby rats to our bird dog, Andy. Andy would catch them in his mouth and swallow them whole." She went to the dressing room.

Now, I want to show you all how inconsistent some folks are. I ain't here to straighten anybody out. I ain't trying to look down my pious nose at you, but I want to tell you, dear friend, if you ain't consistent, don't be impressing me with your life. If you're one thing on Monday and you're something else Tuesday, dodge me if you will 'cause I won't have no more respect for you than I will nothing. I know some folks who are bigots among their white folks and they are liberals among their colored folks. That shows there ain't a drop of Jerry Clower in God. If there was a drop of me in God, I'd turn every one of 'em black. I ain't talking about Harry Bellafonte black, I'm talking about Pearl Bailey black—black! I just want you to be consistent. If you are a bigot, fine. I fought a war to give you the right to be a bigot.

Ain't this a beautiful country! Why, that's right. You can even join the bigots club if you want to. But to show you how inconsistent some people are, after the Dinah Shore Show, this same lady come walking out of the dressing room with a fur piece around her neck with a little weasel-like face on it. She had her glasses on a stick looking down her pious nose at me. She done blasted me for wearing a pair of lizard boots and I'll bet the Greyhound bus didn't run over that thing she was wearing! I'm a Christian. I said, "Darlin', let me tell you one thing 'fore I go. I don't hate nobody and I'm from Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi, and I was saved in an ole Baptist Church at age thirteen. I'm a deep-water Baptist. I got a Christian home where love is and I wouldn't embarrass you for nothing in the world; but before I leave to go back to my respective place of abode,

I want you to know that you have proven to me beyond any reasonable doubt, that you are educated beyond your intelligence."

They carried me to the airport and on the way to the airport I saw a bunch of folks toting plaques. I said, "What's that going on over there?" They said, "They're demonstrating. There's a fellow out in Utah wants to die and they say he don't have the right to die." I said, "Well, I'm kinda mixed up on this. They done confused me on this thing." I'm mixed up on the ERA Amendment. Usually when the United States Congress passes something overwhelmingly, I just kind of go with them. I'm just that liberal. I think they've got enough sense to do it. But it is very obvious that they never meet as a group 'cause I hear a senator or United States congressman talking about big government and how we gonna change it. We need to get back up there and we gonna do something about it; and every one of them as individuals say they are for things; but it's obvious that they never meet as a group or they would vote occasionally. They ain't changed nothing yet. So I'm confused.

Our folks get too mad. They're too emotional. I was watching a news broadcast in South Carolina last night and a lady spit on a fellow and said, "You're going to hell if you help vote this in!" I have somewhat lost a bunch of liquor elections in my time. One of my fine Baptist preacher buddies that I love and would die for, who had finished the fourth grade, whose zeal for right run ahead of his knowledge of the word of God, would preach that you're going to hell if you drink whiskey; and we'd lose that election every time. I wish the Bible did say that. I wish it said that you would go to hell if you drank whiskey; but it does say that if you drink whiskey and somebody sees you drinking it and then they try to drink it and they can't handle it, it's your fault. It says that. So that's reason enough for me not to drink it. Even if I wasn't a Christian, I wouldn't drink whiskey. One out of eleven, my son tells me who had to teach a course in health the other day, of the social drinkers have a problem with it. What if you had a horse that threw one out of eleven children that you knew was gonna ride the horse? You wouldn't let them ride it, especially if it was your grandchildren! I don't show my grandson's picture in public because he's so far superior to most other kids it would make you feel bad. What if you had a dog that you knew statistics has proven was gonna bite one out of eleven folks that come to the door? You would get rid of the dog. I want to be perfectly honest, if I could select the fellow that he bit, I might keep him! Yeh!

So I said, "I am kinda confused on this cruel and unusual punishment. Stop this limousine." I spooled the window down and there was a fellow that had the teeth around a chain—a washer—and one of them had something that looked like part of a hog's tooth or something that was hanging there. I said, "Sir, what are you all doing?" He said, "We're opposing cruel and unusual punishment." I said, "What does this mean?" He said, "It means that the penalty for crime does not deter crime." I said, "Fellow, I'm simple. I majored in agriculture 'cause I couldn't work no mathematics. Tell me what you said. Are you saying that the punishment for crime won't keep a fellow from committing no crime?" He said, "That's exactly

what we said." I said, "It is obvious that you ain't never stole no teacake from my mama and got caught."

He said, "Pardon?" I come in on the school bus one evening and went and changed into my other pair of overalls and went by the safe and stole two big teacakes. They was pretty teacakes, great, big, yellow ones. Mama done sprinkled sugar on 'em. Mama said, "Jerry, did you steal any teacakes?" I said, "No, ma'am." About two hours later she caught me sitting on my cotton sack eating them teacakes. And when my mama got through with me, never, ever have I ever stole another teacake! I don't even eat a cookie of no kind now that I don't call Mama and check and see if it is all right!

You all done asked me to tell you what my priorities are. I hope everybody done that. If they didn't, don't invite them back. Everybody ought to be for something. My priorities are that hell is hot, heaven is wonderful. Them that know Jesus are going to miss hell and hit heaven. Don't complicate it. One of the greatest menaces in America today is folks complicating simple things. Ain't nothing complicated about it.

You know folks that complicate simple things? You know, I don't have no worldly ambitions, but I told my wife if I made enough money, I was going to buy one of them Rolex watches—a Rolex Oyster. I seen them in the Delta magazine on the airlines. They cost a bunch of money and they're made out of gold. When my first album sold a million dollars worth in two months, I went to the jewelry store! I said, "I want to see some of them Rolex Oysters." And the fellow laid them out there on a velvet rag and took a little brush and a lady was whopping the dust off of them while I looked at them. I said, "Sir, ain't none of these expensive watches got no numbers on the front?" He said, "Our beautiful, exquisite, best timepieces made in America have Roman numerals." I said, "I didn't grow up in Rome." And I said, "Every time I see a watch with them Roman numerals on it, I get mad. I ain't about to wake up in the middle of the night in some motel room and count off to see what time it is! If you all will put a dollar Sears Roebuck face on this watch, I'll buy it. I don't want the day of the week on it. If I don't know that I'll look on the front of a newspaper and see what day it is. If I don't know what day of the month it is, I'll ask somebody. February would just kill me. I never would work out them twenty-eight days." I stand before you holding in my hand the only Rolex Oyster ever made with numbers on the front!

Don't complicate nothing! So my priorities very simply are that Jesus makes a difference in my life. What difference does Jesus make? I was at a football game years ago. My son is the extra point kicker. The ball goes off the end of his foot. He shanks it and he misses it. We got them 27-0 in place of 28-0. It is late in the ballgame. A man gets up about ten rows down and yells, "You knucklehead! You idiot! Can't you kick an extra point?" My wife's hand went over on my leg and she said, "Now Jerry, everything's all right. He ain't hurting Ray." I got up, I walked down there, and I said, "Fella, the score is 27-0. How come you calling that young man a knucklehead because he missed an extra point in the rain because the center was bad?" He said, "Well,

I lost my points. I was given some points and if he had kicked that extra point, I would'a made \$100." I said, "Fella, listen, it is bad enough to bet on a dog or a horse, but you bet on a young 'un, and he's my young 'un; but I want you to know when you leave here tonight, and I want you to tell everybody you see tomorrow, that Jerry Clower, a fertilizer salesman from Mississippi Chemical Corporation, and a deep-water Baptist, would have caught you in the Adam's apple, and he would have whupped you and he would have drug you around that track in front of all them people except for the difference Jesus Christ makes in his life. I think you all ought to look into these benefits that Jesus gives you, because I would be in a hospital if it wasn't for Jesus making a difference in Jerry Clower's life. But when I've done the ultimate, when I've tempted him beyond all temptation of criticizing his only man-child, he wanted to whip me bad. But Jesus Christ had a priority in his life." The next morning, the Hederman Press would have delighted to have read, "Man Who Works for Owen Cooper Gets in Fist-fight at Ballgame." And all the other papers would have picked it up and I didn't want to embarrass him.

I'm sitting backstage in show business. My name is on the marquee and in walks one of them ladies what has her dress split plumb up to her hocks. When she turns around, well, it's just too cotton-picking low in the back, too. Then she says, "Jerry, our President said he lusted after other women." I said, "Darlin', any full-grown, American, red-blooded male that says he ain't never been tempted by a lady such as you is a bald-faced liar; but lady, I have a priority in my life and that priority is Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ gave me a beautiful romantic, sweet, loving way to satisfy the craving you throw on me and the craving you throw on me, dear lady, is not to want none of you, but to hurry home to Mama." And I said, "For your information, that is what Brother Carter was trying to say but he ain't as cultured as me."

Back in the late 1950s, every time I would go to a meeting, they would say, "Jerry, you're a fine Baptist layman, you're a fertilizer salesman, and you love Jesus. We need to do something about Foy Valentine. Every time I pick up a paper, I see where he is trying to ram them niggers down our throat." And I said, "Why that sorry scoundrell! We deep-water Baptists—51 percent of us—can run him off. Let's just have us a meeting." And that was about all I heard. Nobody was telling me about how they were trying to get anybody saved or how they were trying to get folks in the church. They were just telling me what system they had to keep some folks out. My Christian convictions started pricking my conscience, and I started before God trying to put my priorities straight. What I was believing about other people happened to be the wrong belief according to the Word of God. I had to do something about it. So I went to Owen Cooper, and I said, "Mr. Cooper, my heart ain't right about this Foy Valentine fellow. I don't like him none. But, you know, Uncle Versie Ledbetter and my grandpa told me to always look a fellow in the eye and make for sure you had your facts before you culled him." I said, "I remember culling chickens just by looking at them. I went to Mississippi State University and found out how to put your fingers and where to put them and

you can tell whether that hen is laying every time. We culled a lot of hens, and put them in chicken pie that was laying two eggs a day. We judged them without the facts." I said, "You reckon you can get to that Foy Valentine? I can't call him. They're liable to burn my house. But I want to look him in the eye. I want to tell him that I am a grown adult man. I ain't scared of him." Mr. Cooper called him. We wrote letters to Baptist churches all over Mississippi and Foy Valentine agreed to face us at Mississippi College, but they kept it a secret from all of their board members that old Foy was coming. It was separation of church and state that they was all against. So Foy showed up and there was about forty of us.

First thing he done was to say, "Out in East Texas when I used to put salt on that middlin' meat at hog killing . . ." and I said, "Mr. Cooper, he's one of us!" I said, "Fellow, tell me what you believe about them blacks." He said, "If a fellow is born again, whether he is black or white, he happens to enter into the kingdom of God, and that's the way the Lord's got it set up and if you don't like it, that's tough. There ain't nothing you can do about it." I said, "Why, I believe that, too." And 99.44 percent of all of the stuff I heard about old Foy was a lie. But I'm glad he was a born again Christian too 'cause I would have stoppped me on a gun and I would have stalked some of 'em. Yeah, I woulda drawn on 'em in the middle of the street. I've seen them do it for less in Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi. In fact, the East Fork community would be bigger than Chicago if we hadn't shot and killed so many folks. So there are priorities in my life.

Owen Cooper hired a black field representative. I said, "Mr. Cooper, I done grown enough that I can supervise that fellow. I supervise all the white ones." But I found out in two days that the black field representative had more sense than I did. I even found out when I asked him about his Christian convictions that his wife had been in Whitfield, a mental institution, for twenty-six years, and he had been faithful to her every day of his life. I said, "Oh my God, Lord, please don't put this temptation on me." Every weekend, Benjamin H. Cooper, from Lexington, Mississippi who had done work on his graduate degree, would drive to Whitfield to see his wife. I learned to love him. When them field men was gonna have a steak at Jerry Clower's house, he come. Some folks didn't like it. They'd say, "Jerry done fed a nigger over there at his home." But that's all right. See, my priorities are that the Lord God has done showed me that I ain't got to be responsible for them, and one of these days you will stand before God. I told them folks that told me how sorry I was for loving born-again folks regardless what color they were, I said, "You gonna stand before God, and I hope you improve your explanation of how you feel, because if you don't, when you stand before God, I hope I'm there to see you try to get by with it."

## PRIORITIES AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

Clyde E. Fant, Jr.

Once upon a time there was a Baptist centipede, and he met on his way a Christian Life cricket, and the Christian Life cricket said to him, "Which leg do you move first?" The Baptist centipede said, "Why,

that's easy, I just move my right front foreleg first." Whereupon the Christian Life cricket said, "Which do you move second?" "Oh," replied the Baptist centipede, "then right after I move my right front foreleg, I move my second leg on the right—or do I move my third leg on the left?" By which time the Baptist centipede, having studied priorities, found himself absolutely paralyzed, not knowing which leg he had been moving first.

Perhaps by this point in the conference, having heard about so many worthy things, you may resemble the Baptist centipede. You know that you have been walking a bit, but you're not quite sure which foot you've been putting in front of the other. And having had the question raised at this point, you may not be sure whether you are now more able to go on walking with all the information of needs, or less.

The question is still that of priorities, and what can I say to you of Christian faith and priority that you do not already know? Shall I tell you about the lawyer who came to Jesus inquiring of him about priorities? "Which is the first and greatest commandment?" he asked. Shall I remind you of the answer of our Lord? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Shall I remind you that he even gave the second priority, "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39)? Or shall I correct the frequent error that we hear, "God first, others second, me last", when Jesus made it plain that loving ourselves is essential to loving our neighbor also?

Or shall I remind us again that, in case of conflict of interest, we are to serve God rather than man? As John and Peter said, "I will let you choose which is best for us to do, whether we shall hearken unto you or unto God" (Acts 4:19). Or shall I suggest that perhaps we need to redirect our ego drives by reminding ourselves again that the one who would be greatest among you must be the servant of all, or that the service of man is inextricably bound up in the means by which we serve God, and that it is not possible that we shall fulfill the first priority of life unless we are involved with the second? As Jesus said, "If you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

Well, it is all there already in the Bible. It is simple enough, and all of you know all of that already, don't you? So I will not waste our time preaching good sermons already heard.

What then is our problem? Is it that we lack information? Yes, sometimes it is. We don't know what we can do about it. At times it is information. I wonder if more often, other than being a problem of information, it is not that problem which Kierkegaard expressed after the death of his mother, three of his sisters, and two of his brothers in rapid succession, and in anticipating his own early death which, by the way, happened. (He died at the age of forty-two—exactly my age.) He asked the question: "What I really need to get clear is what I must do, not what I must know. What matters is to find a purpose, to see what really is God's will, what I shall do. The crucial thing is to find the truth for me."

Well and good then. We will all accept the Lordship of Christ, the brotherhood of the neighbor, the servant-

hood of self—but then what, then where, and even more, then when?

It seems to me that in all the scriptures which I have reviewed for you today there are two great elements in common concerning priorities. *First, resolving priorities inevitably requires vision.* What must I do and what is God's will for me? Most of the world is struggling along with no light at all. In his poem, "Limited," Carl Sandburg described the limited vision of many people when he wrote, "I am riding on a limited express, one of the crack trains in the nation. Hurting across the prairie into blue haze and dark air go fifteen all-steel coaches holding a thousand people. All the coaches shall be scrap and rust and all the men and women laughing in the diners and sleeping in the berths shall pass to ashes. I ask a man in the smoker where he is going, and he Answers, 'Omaha.'"

Where are you going, world? Omaha? Where are you going? Hopefully, for most of us in Christ, our vision is a bit broader than Omaha, but if I had to tell you the truth this morning, I would have to tell you that, even as a pastor of a Baptist church, at times my vision doesn't even get to Omaha. I ask myself, what is worth doing? That's what I need. I need a vision of what is worth doing. We are all afraid, or if we aren't we ought to be, of wasting our lives in the mundane and the insignificant. You talk about your life and you tell me what you do on Monday morning, Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning, and Friday morning. You tell me if the plague of your existence isn't the persistent feeling that you are doing nothing and that you have a vision of little.

I read the other day about a man who was arrested in one of those perennial attempts to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. A man named Tabor Edison, a native of Hungary, took a 1300 pound steel propane barrel, sealed himself up in it and attempted to go over the falls. Luckily for him the barrel lodged in the rocks about 200 yards from the edge of the falls. They came down with a helicopter and managed to pull him out. Now the charge they arrested him on was very interesting. There is no law against someone going over Niagara Falls in a barrel, so they charged him with a park ordinance, "forbidding any act which serves no earthly purpose." If they ever begin enforcing that, all of us are going to be arrested!

The agony of our existence as men and women committed to Christ is what am I doing now that serves any earthly purpose? Even more difficult than that question, though, is not what I *shall* do (because most of us really realize, even though we become so discouraged at times, that the things we do in the name of Christ have their values); but the big issue is what shall I *not* do. To choose one career is not to choose another.

I had a high school English teacher who said, "Be very careful whichever book you read, because to read that book is to choose not to read another book." I thought that was the craziest thing I ever heard, until I realized that she was telling me the truth. Whatever time I spent in reading that book, I had automatically chosen not to use in reading another book. To choose the career you have chosen, to choose the act and the place you have chosen, is to choose that you are not going to do something else. And that's the

plague of it, isn't it? What am I to do, what am I to say, what am I not to do.

The pain is in what I must omit in my life. You know what the temptation was for Faust don't you? No, you likely don't. The temptation of Faust was not to go hopscotching around the countryside, seeing how many beds he could crawl in and out of, or what he could do in sumptuous pleasures. The temptation of Faust was to experience everything, to know everything, in fact, to become God.

Now, this is the temptation that requires the vision in Christian ministry. Our temptation is set by the very vision that calls us forth. We cast our eyes upon the Christ, and we say, "Oh, God, there is so much to do and so little time to do it in and I'm so restless doing this because I could be doing that. God knows that I can't be here and there at the same time, and it is driving me crazy because it is pulling me apart in a thousand directions. Give me a vision of yourself."

He answers our prayers as he stands before us in the doorway of a Galilean home. We see his tired hands in the evening stretching out toward Simon and beckoning in fatigue as the crowds huddle outside the door to be healed. He says, "Simon, close the door." There is the moment not recorded in the gospel that must inevitably be true. There must have been that moment when he said, "I cannot lay my hands upon one more, I cannot. I must go, I must go." His agony was not the agony of being called into the crowd to heal. His agony was when he had to take himself away from that in order that he might do something else.

You see what Christ mastered that we have not mastered yet is his wonderful focus of life. He always seemed to discern that which was central from that which was marginal, and for each one of us that will be different. Stephen Neil has a book called *Jesus Through Many Eyes*. As you gaze upon the vision of Christ, he calls you forth into ministry here or here or here, in this corner of the field or that, and he knows that you can never be more than one person in one place at one time.

*But besides vision, there is also required of us decision.* Likely, there is no one here who has not had a vision of the Christ. Your vision is not my vision, but your problem is my problem. That is the terrible decision, what shall I do with the vision which Christ has given me? What shall our church do? We cannot do every ministry. What shall *we* do? What shall our denomination do? How shall we spend our resources? What shall I do with my own personal life, and what shall I urge others to do?

After I had gone to pastor a church in a small university town, I began to keep a little journal for myself, little rambling notes. On April 1—appropriately enough, April Fools Day—in 1964, I penned these words: "Today I am trying to decide whether I should go home and tend my tomato vines or whether I should stay here in the study and finish reading Dostoevski's legend of *The Grand Inquisitor*." Then I wrote, "I might well ask that question, for to answer that question would be to unlock the riddle of life." It is not easy for any one of us to know how to resolve the question of the expenditure of life.

I've got a cousin who ran away to join the circus. The only catch is, he ran away at the age of forty-five!

A few weeks ago I got a clipping from my mother, and she said, "You're not going to believe Don did this, but I thought you might want to see it." Well, here on the feature page of the *Shreveport Times* is a full length picture of my cousin, his wife and kids, and they are happy and smiling, and he has run off to become a cook for some little traveling circus. He was a geologist. Now the only difference between my cousin and myself is that I joined the circus a long time ago! The only real difference may be that I know it, but I don't think he ever did.

The frustration of people with vocations and professions today is at epidemic proportions. Everybody is doing something else, and it may be that's what God wants us to do. I think we are all like Tolstoi said he was as a child when he went out and stood by that ravine, which now is just beside the grave where they laid him, looking for the green stick upon which was carved the secret of eternal happiness. No matter where we look, we never quite find it. Ultimately the question of priorities resolves itself quite simply into a question of decisions about time and involvement.

What am I going to do with my time? It's not really money; the most valuable thing we have, and indeed, the only thing we really have, is time. What am I going to do with my time? I hope you live differently from me, because half the time I work so hard that I am in agony and the other half of the time I am in agony because I am not working that hard. So I wonder how I am to be delivered from this. How do I order my priorities in my life?

Time, we might easily say, is divided into three pieces—past, present, and future. But that means nothing to us whatsoever. Let me say it this way: Time is divided into memory, moment, and imagination. I have no experience with the past; it is utterly impossible for me to have any experience with the past. I can't go there, except in memory. Nor can I enter the future; that is also impossible, except in imagination. The only thing I am left with is the tyranny of the moment. I find myself struggling to know what I am to do with this moment.

Rudolph Bultmann, who is not your average tent evangelist, wrote: "Genuine freedom is not subjective arbitrariness. It is freedom in obedience. Genuine freedom is freedom from the motivation of the moment. It is freedom which withstands the clamor and pressure of momentary relations." And he reminds us that this idea of freedom as constituted by law was known to both the Greeks and in early Christianity, but in modern times "this conception vanished and was replaced by the illusory idea of freedom as subjective arbitrariness which does not acknowledge a norm—a law from beyond. There ensues a relativism which does not acknowledge absolute ethical demands and absolute truth. The end of this development is nihilism."

It is true in every life and in every pursuit. Until I have the vision of Christ, I am not liberated from the momentary pressures of the moment, which is the only reason you can say "no" and go home and it is also the only reason you can say "yes" to something which needs affirming and know why you are affirming it.

Likewise, Christ delivers me from the tyranny of memory. All those times, you know, that you tried and you failed, all those times that you said of yourself,

"I can't do this," when you said, "Because of the kind of person I am and the set of parents I had, the environment that I grew up in, and the fact that nobody ever gave me a chance, nobody cultivated me, nobody forged their life into mine, nobody told me what they knew, nobody ever showed me the way, and every time I tried I made a mess of it, and because of that I am going to let somebody else get out there, I'm not going to." Christ delivers us from the tyranny of memory, and he gives me the freedom from my own guilt to be able to try again.

He delivers me also from idle imagination, when I run ahead with these dreams that go nowhere, but he also gives me a substantial hope; so that perhaps, like Paul, I build castles in Spain that I never occupy. But at least I know where he wants the castles built, whether I ever occupy them or not.

It takes one other thing, too. It not only takes the commitment of my time, but it also takes my decision to involve myself *somewhere*. I'll tell you what I think our greatest danger is: if you will pardon my saying so this late in the conference. I don't think our biggest problem is deciding what is number one for us to do and number two, three, four, and five. I don't think that. I think we will never do it and I think it is a waste of time. If you mean by that, deciding whether or not world hunger will take priority over racial turmoil and that kind of thing, that to me is an utter waste of time, obviously.

I think the question really is whether we are going to become involved in *anything* or not. Or whether we are going to lapse into the fatigue and utter cynicism that comes from people who have done a bit of something and have become disillusioned, who decide that the fight isn't worth it anyway and who become jaded and cynical. That is the one thing my Lord Jesus Christ never had happen to him and that I pray every day that God will deliver me from.

I feel its dry rot in me already. I might call it "paper tea religion." Kierkegaard described the religion of people who come and sit in church and listen to the secondhand experiences of others. He said that is like making a cup of tea out of bits of paper that once lay in a drawer beside another piece of paper which once was used to wrap a few dried tea leaves which had already been used to make tea three times before.

That which I preach to my congregation and that which I preach to myself is: Do something. My daddy used to say to me all the time: "Do something, even if it's wrong." I never did really understand what he meant until recently. Do something; commit yourself.

Yet we say as we try to do something, "But God, when I try to do these things, am I doing them for myself or for you? Do I want more people in Sunday School to study the Bible or to gratify my ego? Do I really want to see the kingdom built or do I want to see my own religious-political empire extended?" (Let the one among us who is without sin cast the first rock.) Or we say, "Am I too bold here, am I too abrasive? Or am I too timid, or should I not say as

much as I've already said?" That's our problem. So I'm going to have to just say to you at the end of this conference on priorities, you've got to learn to live with the ambiguities of it. You're never going to know, never, not for yourself, much less for the kingdom. In the *Shoes of the Fisherman*, when the peasant who has been elevated to the chair of St. Peter, once a Russian prisoner, agonizes over his new burdens, he questions the aged Roman cardinal who had once opposed him. "Tell me, now tell me, how will I know whether what I do is of God or myself?" "You will never know," he replied. "It is your cross. It is the cross you have assumed."

But if I take you to stand in the garden, you will find our Elder Brother also on his knees in prayer, and what is he saying? He is asking precisely what you have asked of me and what I am now asking of you. "Is this the time? Is this the place? Is this the action? Is this the way?"

And it is silent there. It is silent, so far as I know, except for a certainty that comes with the gathering of the forces on the outside and the steady pressures that move him relentlessly on the inside; with the insight from the prayer that begins by saying, "If it be thy will, let this cup pass from me," and the second prayer that changes, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, thy will be done." So he walked by faith as he carried his cross and he died upon it. Are we really going to ask more than that?

We will all struggle all of our lives to hold reality and religious truth together, and it will not be easy. We will wrestle with reality all of our lives. It is like Jacob wrestling with the angel at Jabbok's ford. As they wrestle all through the night, Jacob persists until at last the dawn is breaking and the angel cries out, "Let me go, for the day is breaking."

That is my experience so often as I try to deal with the realities of life, the practical grit of life under my fingers, as I try to hold on to the vision in the daylight and also try to make practical decisions. Even as I grapple with this, I seem to feel the spiritual things wanting to flee from me as the day breaks, as the practical realities of life begin and then I don't know any more whether I can see the vision, the shadowy vision of the Christ in it or not. But perhaps the prayer of Unamuno may speak to us again: "May God deny you peace but give you glory."

There is a scripture in London done by Loreda Taft. It is a group of persons from an almshouse. They are blind. They are insane. They are impoverished. And they are lost. They have lost their way in the foggy streets of London. They do not know which way to turn. They cannot find that warm place where they have been. In the sculpture, the figures are turned every way, some turned this way in confusion, some turned that way in confusion, everyone looking in a different direction. But at the front of the group of figures there is a mother who is holding up her little child, and the child is the only one of the group that is both sane and sighted, and the child alone has a smile on its face, and the child is pointing out the way.

Even so, Lord Jesus.





THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION  
of the SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
460 James Robertson Boulevard  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219