

HOME MISSIONS

April, 1969

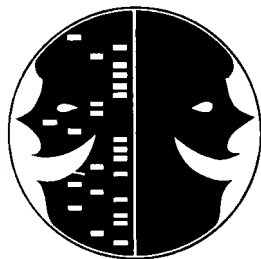


PUERTO RICO

EDITORIALS

by Walker L. Knight

Technocrat or Man



An insatiable desire to be more than human appears to be basic to man's nature. From the earliest account, he pridefully desires Godlike knowledge of good and evil, and from that fallen moment his quest is a restless search for a further extension of his senses and a pushing back of his limitations.

Through history we see him picking up a stick to reach the fruit beyond his grasp. He carves out the wheel and moves into the industrial age. He creates a bow with which to propel his arrow and the world wars follow. He draws pictures to aid his memory, and history begins. He creates the lever and fulcrum and moves the mountains. He lights a fire and warms the city. He develops the telescope and discovers a way to the moon.

What a creation we have in man—still in search of Godlike powers:

- through writing and the printing press he seeks to remember all things
- through radio he seeks to speak and to hear anything from anywhere
- through TV and global satellites he monitors the world, gaining the ability to see all things, to show himself to all people
- through jets and the promise of even faster transportation he races the moon around the earth, and strives for the ability to be anywhere at any moment
- through the computer he thinks of all things past and present, and projects his existence into the future
- through the harnessing of nuclear power he becomes all powerful, able to destroy all life, if not eventually the earth itself.

Is he still a man? He is gaining a measure of omnipotence, of omniscience and of omnipresence. Will he soon see all things, hear all things, be anywhere, and possess all power and all knowledge, even the secret of life itself?

Call him Man? Are these not the attributes of God? When primitive man

spoke of God, he hardly conceived of greater knowledge, vision, power or ability—his God was but a man with these attributes.

Was it a realization of what has taken place in this extension of man's senses, this pushing out of his limitations, which led Bonhoeffer to write of "a world come of age"? For man can now explain most of the world and he can do things without resorting to God.

Peter Ustinov, in *The Center Magazine*, writes: "The world used to be a place of unanswered questions, and consequently a place of poetry. Man stood under an infinity of sky, minute, naked to his enemies and to the elements, believing in the gods, or in God, who represented the colossal question mark of his existence, and asking why in words and music and dance. Soon the world will be a place of answers without questions. Already the most sophisticated computers show us with answers to questions so complicated that only another computer can ask them. Without questions, there is no music, no dance: there are no words. A world without questions is the death knell of God, ultimately of Man."

Ustinov is not the first to say that God is dead or is expected to die, and many claim Bonhoeffer for their cause, since he wrote, "God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him." They emphasize the wrong portion of this statement. The emphasis should be

upon how we live, not upon the absence of God. This is what wise parents teach their children: how to live responsibly without the direction of either parent.

There is reason for pessimism, for many see with Lewis Mumford that the western world is caught up in a technological dynamism which is profoundly hostile to life. This generation lives at a hinge of history, which will decide whether or not we push toward a greater extension of our senses, to the neglect of more humane characteristics.

Ustinov makes a major point in that we have "technical achievements, technical achievements galore, but then these are but the instruments with which to diffuse the message, not the message itself."

Roger Shinn said: "The peculiar problem of our age is that the same achievements that have led man to exult in his own powers have also threatened his personal being and integrity." It is a paradox that as we seek to be more than human technologically we often become less than human morally and spiritually. Even now a Harvard scientist is asking other scientists to strike in protest of the misuse of technology.

Have we not overlooked something significant? When man thinks and speaks of God, in his finiteness he uses the terms of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, of immanence of transcendence. But in what terms does God reveal himself? What does God say of God?

Why have we limited our quest to be Godlike to those qualities that man ascribes to God and not to those qualities which God gives to himself? What does Christ in his humanity show us? Did he not characterize God as "Father"—a father who loves, for whom is love? Did he not give us the example of servanthood, choosing the path of suffering in faithfulness to God's will? Let us search for Godlike qualities of the spirit and character and we may achieve not deity, but authentic humanity. ■

THE EXECUTIVE'S WORD

By Arthur B. Rutledge
Executive Secretary-Treasurer, HMB

The Cadence of the Universe

It was more than ten years ago that I talked with the man as we sat side by side on the railroad train, but I've been unable to forget his words. As I tried to nudge him into conversation about religion he stated with feeling, "I abhor the thought of death." I tried to share with him my faith that in Christ we have the one adequate answer to death.

There may be thousands among us today who share this man's viewpoint. All the while almost a thousand people are killed every week on our streets and highways, hundreds are killed in Vietnam, and other thousands die of cancer or other diseases.

It is urgent that we who are followers of Christ, who accept the command to love our neighbors, shall do everything possible to right injustice, to oppose discrimination, to eliminate prejudice, to combat hunger and disease, to fight poverty and its causes, and to help our fellowmen in their daily struggles. Jesus helped men in their daily plights. He commended those who showed mercy toward their fellowmen. He taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth . . ."

In our commendable concern for the social problems of our times it may be that we forget the universal human experience of death. It is possible to dwell upon death so that we become apathetic in life. It is possible, on the other hand, to ignore the reality of death so that we fail to see life in its totality and thus limit our lives.

Easter reminds us that death does not have the last word: the last word is life. When Jesus rose triumphantly from Joseph's tomb, he flung open the door of new life to everyone who would walk with him on earth. Because of him we need not fear death. We need not hesitate to think of death. Death is real, but it is not final for those who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ. Those who reject Christ will fear death, but those who put their trust in him may look to death

as a doorway to still greater things.

Death can be a healthy discipline. Its frequent invasion of our experience reminds us of our mortality. We recognize that however strong we may be otherwise, we do not have the power to extend life forever. Physicians may perform successful heart transplants, and for this we are thankful; but sooner or later even the recipient of the transplant must die. We may orbit the moon millions of miles away, but sooner or later even astronauts will take their final steps on earth. Death is a traumatic reminder that while we can control many currents of human experience, there is an ultimate beyond our control. We are only human. Earthly life is short. Death says to us that we need to catch step with the cadence of the universe.

With God who has given us life and who directs all things. The reality of death reminds us that what we do for God and for man we must do quickly.

For the Christian death is a departure. It is a leaving of this life to move into the fuller, richer life which follows. It is the entrance to an endless life of fellowship and service with our heavenly Father. The poignant cry of the patriarch Job has found answer in Jesus Christ. He cried: "If a man die shall he live?" Jesus declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also. . . . I am the resurrection and the life: he that liveth and believeth in me, though he should die, yet shall he live." We know that our Redeemer lives, and therefore we too shall live. The apostle Paul, imprisoned in Rome, could write: "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23).

Easter Sunday, and every Sunday of the year for that matter, is a recognition that Jesus Christ, following his death on our behalf, rose from the grave. Christ is the center of our faith, and his resurrection is "the center of the center."

The theme of the Crusade of the Americas, "Christ, the Only Hope," points to him as our one hope for life and spiritual strength. With the apostle

Peter we too may ask, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Christ is our hope for victory over death, and he is our hope and our help in daily living. Many church crusades in the Crusade of the Americas already have been conducted. Many lie before us during the month of April, and some still later, both in our country and elsewhere in the Americas. It is our prayer that the crusades will be divinely blessed in realizing the threefold objective of the entire crusade: renewal within the churches, the conversion of thousands previously without Christ, and the strengthening of the moral and spiritual life of the nations represented in the crusade.

But the witness to Christ must continue beyond the crusade through personal witness, church missions actions directed toward Christian ministry and witness, and the work of missionaries. Over 2,300 home missionaries, serving in all fifty states, plus Puerto Rico and Panama, share their faith by loving deed and clear word. Every home missions effort—whether in establishing a new mission or church, in serving among minority peoples, or in working among the disadvantaged in inner-city fields—seeks to persuade people to accept and follow our living Lord, Jesus Christ.

All about us are people who are afraid of death, some so afraid that they won't attend funerals and won't talk about death. How they need the message of life, in order to be their best today and to be ready for the unseen tomorrow! One of the renowned preachers of another generation urged his fellow ministers to "preach as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men."

Amid the confusion of our day we have a clear word to offer: Christ has conquered death and has brought an abundant and eternal life to all who will receive him. Men need this message at Eastertime and every day of the year. ■

PUERTO RICO

Photos by Don Rutledge



SAN JUAN'S SKYLINE, shown here with the Puerto Rican capitol in the foreground, is dominated by condominiums—apartments that are

purchased rather than rented. This is a recent phenomenon sparked by San Juan's sprawl and the interest of people to live close to work.

Low cumulus, boils steadily over Puerto Rico, frequently obscuring the damp-green mountain tops and creating the illusion the island has a billowing ceiling that could be touched from the top of a San Juan hotel.

From the air, Puerto Rico looks for sure as if it were made in never-never land. Abrupt outcroppings of little mountains look like miniature Grand Tetons with grass on them, and form intricate patterns with just the right amount of white houses and palm trees. In the higher mountain ranges, cattle graze in meadows so isolated that surely

ly they must have been created there.

The cities are white, with just touches of soft pastels. On the ground in the largest—San Juan—miniskirts, traffic jams and merchants who can afford to be unfriendly are sure signs that business is better than ever.

In charming contrast, the three or four major cities seem literally to convulse with commerce, while in the isolated interior peasants peddle bananas from the backs of oxen and breed game cocks for sport.

'Spellbinding!' In fact, the island is so enchanting that reflections of paradise surely cause a run on the cliché bank.

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SUGAR CANE is still the dominant agricultural activity, along with coffee, pineapple and papaya. These cane cutters are working a field near Mayaguez, on the western end of the island.



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every visitor's mind. Their sensitivity, drained from initial attempts to calculate how breath-taking everything really is, most proceed directly to the pine tables, beaches and rain forests and miss discovering the cultural dilemma, political struggle and economic conflict that make Puerto Rico unique.

Spanish by heritage and American by circumstance, the little island appears, on closer analysis, to be stricken with cultural schizophrenia.

Struggling between nationhood and statehood in that rootless dimension of U.S. federalism called a commonwealth, Puerto Rican politicians are trying to forge an identity that will protect both the remnants of a diminishing native culture and a fruitful partnership with Uncle Sam.

The political status of the island is uncertain. Its two-and-a-half million residents have been free to guide their own destiny only since 1952, when the U.S. government and Puerto Rican leaders established the commonwealth government. Under this arrangement, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and receive standard government benefits such as aid to education, welfare and military protection.

Puerto Rico's government is organized much the same way a state government is—a legislature with both a house and a senate, and a governor as chief executive—and enjoys the same measure of autonomy. As economic incentive, Puerto Ricans pay no federal taxes and consequently do not vote in federal elections. (The lack of a vote

is the rallying point for Puerto Rico's anti-war dissidents, who call the draft in Puerto Rico a "blood tax without representation.")

A permanent commonwealth status is a definite possibility, but the cause of statehood was advanced considerably in 1968 with the election of a pro-statehood administration to the governor's suite in San Juan.

But even as the unique political struggle appears to be narrowing to those two alternatives, a sense of urgency is growing for preserving the native language and culture, a cause fed primarily by a vociferous minority of independents who desire a complete break from the U.S. and the establishing of an independent republic.

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THE ISOLATED interior of the island is mostly rolling hills and mountain ranges where men still peddle fruit from the backs of oxen and breed gamecocks for sport. This scene is near Cayey, directly south of San Juan.

TOURISTS SCRAMBLE for cover as a hard—but always brief—tropical shower blows in from the ocean at San Juan's hotel row, a scene that could just as easily be representative of Miami Beach. The customary defense against the wind-cooled showers is simply to wait.



RAPHAEL AYAL and his family live in a mountainside section overlooking Ponce called Clausels, where between 15 and 20 percent of the people are unemployed. Raphael raises pigs and chickens in his steep yard. This family is fortunate to live adjacent to the pathway water faucet that serves a number of homes on the hillside. There is no plumbing.



Said General Archives Director Rodriguez Morales, a passionate "independentist."

"Statehood will become inevitable only if the people surrender their culture and personality. Statehood means assimilation, as U.S. history bears out. The U.S. is said to be a melting pot, and this is true. What goes in melts and becomes something else."

Although Morales' political philosophy of independence is shared mostly by a minority of intellectuals and students, he does articulate what seems to be a growing concern by many Puerto Rican leaders not to be completely overwhelmed by the inevitably well-intentioned but insensitive American influence.

The matter of language is an example. In 1898, when the U.S. occupied the land as spoils from the Spanish American War, English was declared to be the official language and suddenly Puerto Rican children found themselves in classrooms where English was the language of instruction. This finally was corrected in 1948, when Spanish was restored as the language of instruction and English was retained as a required course.

U.S. influence even has had its effect on religion in Puerto Rico, which is predominately Catholic due to 300 years in the Spanish domain.

The Vatican appointed North American bishops to Puerto Rico up until the days of Pope John XXIII, when, according to Morales, it took a public campaign to correct the situation. Now Puerto Rican natives are named to the bishop's post.

Spanish still is the language of the island, and is likely to remain so even if statehood comes, although English is used in higher education and English-language signs mark most businesses in the urban areas. After 71 years of U.S. rule, Puerto Ricans still speak Spanish and still use Hispanic cultural terms.

Even so, the tension from the clash is real, and could be more damaging today had not the U.S. abruptly began improving its relationship to Puerto Rico in the days of the New Deal.

"Our relations with the U.S. are now at a level where the U.S. recognizes our traditional identity as a people apart from the U.S.," a Puerto Rican state department official said. "There is

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more a climate of mutual understanding. The first 30 years of U.S. rule amounted to one-sided exploitation, with U.S. monopolies operating large landholdings."

It was early in the 1940s before the U.S.-appointed administration in Puerto Rico enforced its own regulation, which limited corporations to a maximum of 500 acres. The corporations were forced to dispose of the land, but not without asking and getting the going market rate.

Even then, it was evident that agriculture could not sustain the population of nearly two million. Only 25 percent of the island's 3,500 square miles is arable land—mostly coastal plains and small valleys. The rest is mountain range.

One of the first priority moves of the government of Luis Muñoz Marín—the "father of the commonwealth"—was to establish government-owned industries to prove it could be done, and then relinquish the factories to private enterprise.

A tax incentive plan begun then is still working. Manufacturing today provides about 25 percent of the Gross National Product of Puerto Rico, and agriculture only six to eight percent—a reversal of the figures in 1930. (Tourism, even though San Juan visitors get the impression tourism is the No. 1 business, accounts for only about six percent of the GNP.)

While the incredible economic boom is evident in the urbanization and high-rise construction, harsher realities persist.

Puerto Rico perhaps is more overpopulated than any country in Latin America, with nearly 800 people per square mile and a net rate of population increase that will double the 2.7 million population in 30 years. Poverty, of course, is the most evident result. Ramshackle housing lines the government-owned land along rivers and creeks in every urban area, housing what one sociologist termed "a culture of poverty" characterized by a matriarchal society, malnutrition and joblessness.

The crime rate in San Juan—with heavy doses of prostitution and drugs—is equivalent to that of New York City and second only to that of Los Angeles, in terms of crimes per 100,000 population.

Unemployment runs about 12 percent, more than double the U.S. average. And illiteracy is quoted in one source as afflicting as much as 20 percent of the population.

Important to an understanding of Puerto Rico's character, however, is the fact that only a few years ago,

illiteracy was the mark of more than 80 percent of the population, hunger was rampant, wages were incredibly low and the economy was entirely dependant on the U.S. In a movement that has put bread, land and liberty ahead of politics, the Puerto Rican people have initiated revolutionary change and so far have endured it without violent civil disobedience or fanatic nationalism.

The lack of violence usually is attributed to the natural affability of Puerto Ricans. But the fact that Puerto Rico's jolting change of pace in politics and economy has not triggered violence probably is due in part at least to U.S. action 30 years ago to head off development of an oppressive wealthy land class and U.S. monopoly of agriculture.

Despite the record economy, and the vast improvement in employment opportunity, the net outmigration continues to be about 30,000 annually. Most of the immigrants go to the states and many never get past that infamous "stepping-stone," Spanish Harlem. A report on that situation next month.

SPIRITUALISTS abound in Puerto Rico, especially in rural areas. They

hold seances to communicate with the spirits of the dead and prescribe for physical ills a variety of roots and herbs that can be purchased in most marketplaces. The beads and array of religious paraphernalia also are used by believers in spiritism.



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MISSIONS IN PUERTO RICO

Forging a Noninterventionist Policy

by Dallas M. Lee

Apparently, the tempting shortcut in missions is to bank heavily on "expert" missionaries and bright new church buildings.

Southern Baptists in Puerto Rico are striving to do just the opposite, seeking indigenous forms of Christian witness that are as free as possible from the intervention of stateside missionaries and dependence on denominational dollars.

Although the struggle for indigenous outreach seems so far to have overlooked opportunities for ministries in areas of staggering poverty and illiteracy, Baptists in Puerto Rico do stand to make a major contribution to the current rethinking of church and mission.

Said Milton Leach, superintendent of Southern Baptist work on the island:

"The predominate idea has been that if you want to start a work fast, you send in a seminary-trained man and build an attractive building. But the result of this in many cases has been perpetual mission handouts."

Stressing the use of laymen in home fellowships and playing down U.S.-style church organization, Leach and the three regional missionaries under him are trying to establish worship and outreach situations for which Puerto Rican Christians themselves can provide leadership.

In the predominately Catholic society, the Pentecostal Church of God churches seem to thrive on an indigenous philosophy of work, while mainline denominations appear to be losing stamina.

From 1951 to 1966, for example, Pentecostal Churches of God established 77 new congregations, at least six times the number established by most

Moore
"The Holy Spirit must be the ultimate teacher."



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other denominations. American Baptists, by comparison, who have been at work in Puerto Rico since the turn of the century, started 10 new congregations during this period, bringing their total to 56.

Southern Baptists started only two congregations during this time, and since then have made at least beginnings in the coastal urban areas of San Juan, Arecibo, Mayaguez and Ponce. Now they are struggling to develop an indigenous strategy that will allow them to penetrate the isolated communities of the interior as well as to meet the increasing coastal urbanization head on.

As the term indigenous implies, the courses of action will be determined and shaped by specific local needs and by the local leadership.

For the missionary, then, the task is to discern potential leadership in new Christians and to help without hindering, to suggest without imposing. The struggle in this new role is not without variation among the three regional missionaries.

Donald Moore, regional missionary in the southwest section of Puerto Rico, for example, works in what could be called a strictly noninstitutional context.

Rather than seeking to start new missions and churches, he works one-to-one Bible study in an effort to train lay leadership and initiate Bible study fellowship groups. Visible results are slow to come by.

This alternative is slower at first, but the ultimate aim of continued development will be more effective," Moore says.

"I feel an urgency in developing new and extensions of the church that are not dependent on money. The aim is not to create congregations, but non-institutionalized."

One of Moore's students is Gregorio Ayala, a publico (public car) driver

who lives in a barrio called Piedras Blancas that stretches alongside a riverbed in Ponce. Ayala, who is a member of the Spanish congregation of the Ponce Baptist Church, leads a Bible fellowship in his garage on Wednesday nights and Moore meets with him on Monday evenings to discuss his material.

On a Monday evening in February, Moore entered the old but neat frame house built on stilts and visited with Ayala. After about 30 minutes, the man picked up his worn paperback copy of the New Testament and began searching through it.

In Spanish, he said to Moore: "I remember reading about the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears. But," he added with a frown, "I cannot find it now."

Moore leafed through his own testament, helped find the passage in Luke, and then both men read silently for several minutes—the frogs on the riverbank and the dogs in the trim, middle-class yards across the river clamoring

Leach
The struggle for indigenous forms of witness



in the background.

Ayala finally made a statement on his reaction to the passage and a discussion began, Moore explained it later:

"I don't try to do all of the talking. If he selects the passage and then offers his own ideas, it creates independent thought and understanding. I just ask him questions to draw out his thoughts and occasionally offer my own interpretation."

On Wednesday night, then, Ayala directed the study in his garage and discussed the passage with the confidence of knowing that he had bounced his ideas off a man with formal Bible training (Moore has a doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary based on a study of Protestant evangelical development in Puerto Rico). Moore purposely was absent, as he usually is every three or four weeks, in order to give the layman an increasing understanding that he is in charge, not the missionary.

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Casteel
"We ought to do
whatever is necessary
to win them."

Missionary Albert Casteel, in the northern sector, works in a pattern that could be defined as institutional.

He can count up visible results from his efforts of two-and-a-half years. He started from scratch in Arecibo, a city of about 70,000, with only a few names of people who were visited in the Texas Baptist-sponsored New Life Crusade in 1966.

The First Baptist Church is the result of his initial work, with nearly 80 resident members and about 65 other members in five mission congregations (one of which is the sole Southern Baptist mission in the interior).

Four laymen are licensed to preach in the missions, three of them baptized by Casteel. He is not, however, as concerned with whether or not the work is indigenous as he is with evangelism and Baptist doctrine.

"My philosophy of missions is that we can win people anywhere," he said. "I think we ought to do whatever is necessary to win them. If they can support themselves, fine. But if they can't, then we should use mission money to help them."

Casteel tends to be concerned with instructing lay leaders and other new converts in Baptist doctrine, whereas Moore takes a loose approach, stating: "The Holy Spirit must be the ultimate teacher, not the missionary."

Somewhere in between these two philosophies of work falls the giant (6'8", 250-plus) E. McKinney "Mack" Adams, in the western sector. In Spanish heavy with stateside drawl, he works in one-to-one Bible study situations and home fellowships, as well as stressing more formal doctrinal training and the establishment of new missions.

Working with the pastor of the Balboa Baptist Church in Mayaguez, Adams has established a formal routine of weekly classes for training of lay leadership. Currently, he teaches *The Church Organized and Functioning* for 45 minutes, and then breaks for the pastor—Carlos Cortes—to teach for 45 minutes on the life of Christ.

Most of the students who attend these formal classes, which run for three months at a time, either already are preaching or teaching in mission stations or they are preparing to.

Adams considers it important for the missions or home fellowships to be tied

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with the two strong churches in his area—the Balboa Church and the Borinquen Baptist Church in Aguadilla. The English-speaking congregation composed primarily of Ramey Air Force base officers and enlisted men.

"I wonder sometimes if it is not a mistake to say we are not going to use church buildings, and take laymen with little or no doctrine and send them out to preach or teach as soon as they are converted," Adams said.

"On the other hand, just because our church organization works in the states does not mean it will work in Puerto Rico."

He offered the example of one mission that pays \$100 a month to rent a meeting place for Sunday evening worship. The people who attend are so scattered that Adams himself spends four hours every Sunday transporting them.

"It could be," he said, "that the work would be more valuable if the people who attend the mission would work out of their homes. I believe we could reach three times as many people as before."

"This is a case where the institutional approach did not work. But if it will somewhere else, we ought to do it."

To Adams, the ideal arrangement in a field as new as Puerto Rico to Southern Baptists (work began in 1964), would be to bring five trained pastors into an area about the size of his region, and let them concentrate on training laymen to serve in mission points until leadership developed.

Adams and Bill Coffman, former missionary to the Dominican Republic and now pastor of the Borinquen church, are working now on establishing a Bible institute. They intend to use the Borinquen church facilities and establish a five-hour-a-day, four-day-a-week Bible and language curriculum. Adams, Coffman and Cortes initially will provide the teaching staff.

The institute will be no substitute for lay training classes—"It is intended for those who feel called into the ministry," Coffman said.

The idea will be on-the-job training. One advantage to being able to train pastors here, rather than helping them go to the Bible Institute in San Antonio, Texas, is that we can use them while they are studying."

Whatever the approach, Leach is convinced with eventually having Puerto Rican pastors in the Spanish-speaking congregations. Right now, there are five Puerto Rican pastors and three Cuban pastors included in the leadership for 12 Spanish-speaking churches and missions.

There are seven other preaching



Adams
"Is it a mistake to use laymen
with no doctrine?"

stations among Spanish-speaking; among English-speaking, there are four churches and one mission.)

For meeting places, houses and rented commercial space seem to dominate. It would seem that on a tropical island, a congregation could get by with the scantiest of structures—even a concrete block floor and a roof.

But as Leach said, "Statewide denominations have set precedent by pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into buildings and have almost ruined the possibility of satisfaction with cheap structures."

Regardless of precedent, however, Southern Baptists on the island are committed to methods of evangelism and ministry that do not require large financial investment or specialists.

"It has happened time and again that dollars have stifled initiative," said Gerald Palmer, secretary of the Department of Language Missions for the Home Mission Board. "The concept of Christian social ministries too needs to be spread naturally, without imposed structure or an emphasis that would make ministry something specialized."

Due to the Puerto Ricans' unique emphasis on fellowship, Palmer said, more response to personal needs probably is carried on than is obvious on the surface.

More departments of the Home Mission Board now are exploring possibilities of service in Puerto Rico. The English-speaking work has just been transferred to the Department of Pi-

oneer Missions, and the Department of Christian Social Ministries is now consulting with the language and pioneer departments on the development of ministries.

Quietly and solidly, the philosophy of indigenous work seems to be working its way through the season of planting. Leach's office in San Juan receives 10 to 12 letters daily in response to broadcasts of the Spanish Baptist Hour and a semireligious magazine sold on the newsstands published by the Baptist Publishing House in El Paso.

And Puerto Rican laymen and pastors are being trained to assume leadership in the small but growing number of churches, missions and teaching stations. Most of the congregations are quick to start missions or fellowships as soon as they reach a degree of strength.

"Over 125 people is considered large, and we don't encourage any congregation to get any larger," Leach said. "Where they are large enough to pay a pastor, buy their own literature and contribute to missions, we encourage them to start a mission."

"When a group is small, anywhere from five to 15 people get involved. When a group reaches 300, the same small number still carries the burden of leadership, so the ratio of leaders to members is lower. Two churches of 100 can do more than one of 200—they will reach two different communities and contact more people."

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As if exiled, the community of poverty known as La Perla lies outside the walled city of Old San Juan, steaming with the lives of 3,400 people and generally ignored by the religious institutions on the other side of the wall. The Salvation Army, the Office of Economic Opportunity and Southern Baptists have the only sustained ministries in the area, which stretches haphazardly but compactly for less than a mile along the furious oceanfront (see photo at left). As a result of the 1966 Texas Baptist-sponsored New Life Crusade, the Nazareth Baptist Church of San Juan continues a Sunday afternoon Sunday School mission in La Perla, which means, paradoxically, "the pearl." Sixteen-year-old Paul Leach, shown at left, is one of the volunteers. He said his first reaction more than a year ago was closer to revulsion and fear than love. "The first time I went, there was a man who reportedly had stabbed his wife to death the week before. I could smell liquor on his breath and see marks on his arms from taking drugs, and I was shocked." Most important, however, Paul continued to respond to his impulse to go to La Perla, and now he doesn't have to say anything about how his own attitudes have changed—it is visibly evident when he gets out of his car every Sunday and flushes with a grin as the children stream into the street yelling, "Pablito, Pablito!"





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One of the tiny houses in La Perla has a sign over the door that reads: "Viva tu vida"—live your own life—a sort of live-and-let-live slogan. Recently, however, not long after Eusebio Rodriguez, pastor of the Nazareth Baptist church, visited in the home and gave the family a Bible, the sign was changed to read: "Viva tu vida con Dios"—live your life with God. Rodriguez, shown above at left with his wife and two La Perla mothers, regularly distributes tracts and Scriptures in the community. In the last two years, through personal work and the Sunday School mission—he has reported more than 300 professions of faith in the highly transitional community, although no congregation has been started. So far, the Sunday afternoon ministry has been limited only to Bible study, with usually six or seven adults (above right) and 25 or so children, shown singing at left. Joblessness, illiteracy and tense family problems persist, and as the silhouette picture at right shows, life goes on in La Perla while the Word of God is celebrated inside the community center.

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The Cross is for Real, Man

by Henlee Barnette
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Driving along the highway there loomed before me a large cross in concrete near a dangerous curve. Inscribed across and up and down the beams were the words: "Get Right with God." Someone had changed the R in Right to an F. Inadvertently the prankster had revealed a truth. Through the centuries men have been doing battle with God about his cross. To the Jews (the religious) it was a stumbling block; to the Greeks (the intellectuals) it was foolishness; to the church at times it has been a sentimental symbol; and to some theologians it has been a mere appendix to a theological system. Today accent on the cross is only faintly heard in preaching for fear of offending "man come of age."

THE REALITY OF THE CROSS

Softpeddling the cross in Christianity has resulted in a lost sense of its reality and relevance in contemporary life. Now it is accorded about the same respect we give to the American flag and the national anthem. Due to our shallow acceptance of the cross, it has become a harmless symbol rather than a sacrificial way of life. We have domesticated the cross, making it an ornament for the altar of the church, a pendant for the lady's neck, the end of a steeple and a must on letterheads for denominational agencies, instead of a principle of life and death.

The church has tended to lift the cross out of the affairs of life and to place it in the realm of theological debate. In the history of the church, at least a dozen theories about the meaning of the death of Christ have been spun by theologians—ranging from the substitutionary view to the moral influence theory. All of them contain a degree of truth, but not the whole truth.

Yet there are those ecclesiastics who insist that their own views of the atonement are the only orthodox ones. They pontificate loudly and long about the cross but never feel the pain of it. Thus the cross has become a doctrine to be debated rather than a discipline to be practiced.

The conscience of the church has been narcotized to the pain of the cross by the drug of overfamiliarity. W. E. Sangster relates that at a public meeting a clergyman clothed in a red and black velvet robe with a gold cross suspended from a large watch chain sat unimpressed with the speaker's address. This minister took the cross from his chain of gold and during the whole affair cleaned his fingernails with its corners (cited by Frederick B. Speakman, *Love Is Something You Do*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1959, pp. 45-46). This is one of the great perils of the Christian: overfamiliarity with things divine. And this has been the fate of the cross in the church today.

The cross is for real, man. The atonement was an existential act, an event in which the love of God for sinful man was not merely declared but *done* on a Roman cross. Back of the symbol of the cross was the mighty act of God for the redemption of the world. There is a scandal about all of this, but the modern mind is not scandalized because it does not take the cross seriously. Per-

We want the resurrection without the crucifixion and its moral responsibilities.

haps its offense to man could be recovered if the phrase "Christ electrocuted" were used. This is one way we put criminals to death in our day. But who would stand for a model electric chair to be substituted for the cross on the altar or on the steeple of a church?

The cross was a "happening." It was planted on this earth, not suspended in the sky. Says George McLeod:

Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves, on the town garbage heap, on the crossroad so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek . . . at the place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble (George McLeod, *Only One Way*, *Church Prospect*, Glasgow: The Iona Community, third edition, 1961, p. 38).

Jesus was murdered by men filled with hate, fear and prejudice. It was a dirty and cruel affair right down here on earth by "good" people like us. Richard Jeffries tells of a little boy who was looking at a picture of the Crucifixion in a book. The Crucifixion hurt his feelings very much: the cruel nails, the unfeeling spear. He looked at the picture for a long time and then turned the page, saying: "If God had been there, he would not have let them do it" (Bevis, *The Story of a Boy*, London: Sampson Low and Co., 1882). But God was there! God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19). This truth is illustrated in a painting in a church. At first glance it appears to be only another picture of the crucifixion; but a closer inspection shows that there is a shadowy figure behind that of Jesus. The nail that pierces the hand of Jesus goes through to the hand of God. The spear thrust into the side of Jesus penetrates the side of God (George Buttrick, *Jesus*, at

Home Preaching, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941, pp. 206-71).

The cross goes deeper than words and symbols. No one ever spoke like Christ. His words were authoritative, lovely and profound. Yet we are not redeemed by what he said but by what he did. His words have meaning because they have their origin in the act of self-sacrifice on the cross. This is the *differentia* of the Christian faith. A Christianity without a cross is a nought, a zero, devoid of reality and the grace of God. This is the insight that inspired George Bennard to write "The Old Rugged Cross." "I was praying," says Bennard, "for a full understanding of the cross, and its plan in Christianity." But it was not until he saw that Christ was inseparable from the cross and more than a symbol that the idea of the song came to him. Then, he declared, "It was like seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form, and act out the meaning of redemption" (W. J. Reynolds, *Hymns of Faith*, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964, p. 154).

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

The crucifixion is the central motif of the Christian faith. It is the heart not the hinterland of Christianity. "Christ crucified" is the *leitmotif* of preaching in the primitive church. Paul declared: "For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). He further declared: "God forbid that I should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14). For Paul the cross is the "wisdom of God" in a world of futility. It is true that the early Christians proclaimed the living Lord. But they were aware of the fact that the

way to the empty tomb was the way of the cross. Without the crucifixion there would have been no resurrection. Without the sacrifice of Christ on the cross there would have been no salvation. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Centrality of the cross means something more than the place of the cross in a theological system. It means that the cross lies at the very core of one's life and action; thus, it is the key to the meaning of Christianity. All musical instruments are tuned by A on the piano keyboard. Just so the life of the disciple of Christ must vibrate in its whole being with the reality of the cross. Hence, the Christian life is a response to the love of God supremely revealed in Christ's death on Calvary. Christ crucified is the authority, guiding principle, power and goal of Christian existence.

After listening to a lecture in a university on the goals of young people in another country, I turned to a student next to me and asked what the students in this university lived for. Reply: "They have nothing to hook into and so they engage in introspection to find reality within themselves." In the midst of revolutionary social change, man finds it difficult to discover anything to "hook into" so as to preserve his self-identity and a sense of meaning amidst

To take up the cross means simply to be obedient to Christ even though it leads to suffering and death.

the chaos of a changing world. The cross is a constant in a changing world to which one can cling and find purpose for his life.

THE MORALITY OF THE CROSS

The cross is the creative center of Christian character and conduct. Its ethical dimension extends beyond personal piety to public relations. It is not enough to say that the cross has to do only with individual morality. Men do not live in a social vacuum, but in relation to one another and to institutions. The personal life is bound up in a web of social relations in which one lives and moves and has his being. He acts and reacts upon these relationships. As a new being in Christ, the individual relates himself in terms of cross-love to all other beings for their transformation.

The ethic of the cross is more than a moral principle to be "applied" to social problems. Rather it is a personal response to the saving act of God in the crucified Christ. It is this radical encounter that is the source and spring of all Christian moral action. In short, Christianity is living out the cross in the commonplace in the freedom of the Spirit.

Thus, the Christian ethic is not an application of moral principles to social problems; rather, redeemed men in possession of God's love work out from this reality seeking, in the power of the Spirit, to relate that which has been bestowed upon them. This is ethics at a deeper level than that of an "applied Christianity" at a safe distance from the office of a professor of religion or a denominational leader. Too often we engage in pious palaver about applying Christianity to the messy issues of society knowing all the time that we

continued

can at the close of day safely retreat to the quiet of our homes in suburbia. And all too frequently our moral judgments on the forces of evil are never seen as judgments upon our own uninvolved selves.

Jesus clearly grounded Christian ethics in the cross. He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). To take up the cross means simply to be obedient to Christ even though it leads to suffering and death. This is the Christian's calling. Peter spells out this fact: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should walk in his steps" (1 Peter 2:2). Translated into everyday terms this means the practice of longsuffering, forgiveness, reconciliation, sacrificial service to one's neighbor and a readiness to be faithful unto death of the cross.

Christian morality, then, grounded in the grace of God and effected in the crucifixion of Christ, stands in judgment upon every individual and institution. The morality of the world operates at the horizontal level and is blind to the vertical ethic of grace. The conjunction of these two dimensions makes the cross which alone can transform the world.

CRUCIFIXION CAUSES

Society is filled with crucifixion causes. Space permits relating the meaning of the cross-ethic to only two crucial issues plaguing us today: poverty and racism.

THE CROSS AND POVERTY. In the light of cross-love, any economic system—capitalist or socialist—which prevents man, made in the image of God, from achieving dignity and decency must be challenged by the church. An economic system must be judged on the basis of its contribution to the redemption and humanization of man. By humanization is meant the fullest possible development of personhood in terms of the necessities of life which make for normal health and welfare. By this standard our nation stands in judgment. Ours is the richest nation in the world and yet a large segment are numbered among the poor. Millions are unemployable due to age, illness and a lack of skills to work in a technological society.

Positive steps must be taken to correct the economic pathology of this country. Among these the following proposals should be explored: (1) jobs and job training provided by the government and the private sector for every able bodied person who wants

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to work; (2) a guaranteed annual income for every family and individual sufficient for a decent existence (this would make it possible to discard most of our inefficient and inadequate welfare systems) and (3) constant improvement of health services and educational facilities for all citizens.

All of these steps to improve the economic lot of the poor can be done once they are given their proper priority. If the billions we spend on the tragic war in Vietnam were diverted to meet human needs at home, they would provide an adequate living for all the people. If the billions we spend on the exploration of space were used in a constructive program, poverty could be reduced to a minimum and the slums of our cities could be wiped out. There is an irony in spending billions of dollars to put man on the moon and pennies to put a man on his feet economically.

The judgment of the cross applies to our affluent and apathetically comfortable society in which the majority enjoys the luxury of gadgets and an abundance of goods. We are caught up in an "orgy of consumerism" egged on by deceptive advertising, and there are millions of frustrated people who cannot share in American affluency because they are poor. A practical way to get at this problem is a realistic tax on economic opulence with the necessities of life exempted (Joseph Fletcher, *Moral Responsibility*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967, pp. 199-202). Monies from such a tax could be applied to the business of providing jobs, an annual guaranteed income and equalized health and educational services for everyone.

THE CROSS AND RACISM. In human relations our society is sick unto death,

and racism—both white and black—is the deadly virus. According to the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders our nation is moving toward two societies, one black and one white—separate and unequal. The authors conclude that white racism is essentially responsible for this situation. (*Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, New York: Bantam Books, 1968, p. 11). Blacks have been relegated to the ghetto. They have been shut out from the salubrious sections of the community by restrictive covenants, laws of segregation, and exploited in terms of high rents and high prices for goods. In their frustration, the blacks in the ghettos have rioted, looted, and burned their own communities. Now some of them are demanding black separation as the one hope of getting a piece of the economic action.

The walls of hostility which compress the poor, black and white, in the ghetto are created, maintained and condoned by whites. The building of walls of segregation and discrimination around certain human beings is a contradiction to God's will for community. God's plan of the ages is to unite all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). But man builds walls of separation which pervert the purpose of God. Christ came to break down these walls of separation. Through the blood of his cross, Jesus broke down the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, removed the laws and ordinances dividing men from God and from one another, to form "one new humanity" (Eph. 2:11-22). It is the mission of the church to participate in God's purpose of tearing down the walls of hostility and the achieving of the one new humanity under the lordship of Christ (Eph. 2:20).

To participate in God's reconciling ministry in human relations can be costly. Both clergy and laity who are to be Christian in relation to certain minority groups may suffer persecution and the pain of the cross. There are many letters in my files from pastors who have preached their convictions on the race issue. These men of God relate how they were dismissed from their parishes when they dared to say that all Christians are God's children and that no church should bar a person from its fellowship solely on the grounds of pigmentation of skin. An excerpt from one of these letters received recently illustrates the courage of a young pastor who was dismissed from a Southern Baptist church for taking a Christian stand on the race issue.

In the light of cross-love, any system which prevents man from achieving dignity and decency must be challenged by the church.

I have counted the cost for my convictions and the price is quite high, but I would much rather pay the price than to be unfair to my conscience and untrue to my calling. Our inconsistencies are going to catch up with us very soon, if not already. It has been fairly easy for us to love "if" one is white, educated, influential or has status, but we have not been given these conditions for love in a Christian way.

Where will this young pastor go now that he, and many others like him, has been "fired" from his charge? He will have to depend upon God and a few sympathetic friends to help him get before another church. There should be some agency in the Convention to give support to these prophetic ministers until they can get located in another parish.

THE CROSS IN THE CHURCH: SHAPE AND STRATEGY

If the church is to be relevant today it must take on the form of a suffering servant, Christ—who took on the form of a servant, challenged the establishment and suffered death on the cross—is the model of the church. Some churches take the form of the cross architecturally in terms of their buildings. But all churches must take the shape of the cross spiritually. Even Christ came not to be served but serve and to give his life so that church follow the example of her Lord.

The church is to be not only a suffering servant in relation to the world, but also its moral guide. How is it to carry out this role? This is to be done not as a political party, but

through a cross-conscious laity. Christian individuals are politicians not churches. Churches do not possess the technical knowledge and skills to deal with the complex economic, political and social problems which plague us. But the church does possess the gospel norms by which all systems are to be judged and transformed. It is the task of the church to provide men with ethical principles and to inspire them to act in terms of these principles in the decision making process where they serve. The church in diaspora is the same church in the sanctuary on the Lord's day. Through a dispersed laity the church "fans out" into every realm of society. It is here that the laity must make decisions in the light of cross-love for the transformation of society.

Without cross power the church will be impotent to change power structures which oppress people and deny them full personhood. On all sides we hear the cry of black power, white power, soul power, green power and flower power as the solutions to society's ills. But the solution lies deeper than slogans. Cross power alone can change this world. We cannot have a Christian society without Christians or a brotherhood of men without brothers. The cross makes men Christlike. Christlike men are motivated by love and cross-bearing is love laying down its life for others. Christlikeness is love laid down in the service of God and neighbor.

Cross-power which produces Christlikeness is also the power which enables the church to meet the challenge of evil power. This truth was impressed upon me when I visited a Baptist church in an Iron Curtain country. My companion was an American, a senator from a midwestern state. We almost never found the church because all of those permitted to be open were in the back alleys of the slums. After greeting the little band of Baptists, the senator turned to their pastor and in a chiding manner asked him what the church could do to meet the overwhelming challenge of a mighty communist regime. Without a word the pastor pointed to a stained glass window portraying the crucified Christ. Inscribed thereon were the words: "We preach Christ and him crucified." This answer was so much pious talk to the senator until he discovered that in order to unite with that church he would have to state that he was ready to follow Christ and to die.

Such is the spirit of sacrificial commitment which the church must recover, if she is to survive and to serve

Too often we engage in pious palaver about applying Christianity to the messy issues of society knowing all the time we can safely retreat to our homes.

her Lord in this secular age. A crossless church is a powerless church when faced with the dehumanizing forces in our time. But we want the resurrection without the crucifixion and its moral responsibilities. We want cheap grace, a grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system; we want a cheap covering for our sins without repentance, faith and a cross. We want a new religion and morality without self-identification with the crucifixion. In the 1800's a Mr. Lepeaux introduced a new religion which he thought was an improvement over Christianity. It failed to gain supporters. He asked Talleyrand, a French statesman, what to do about it. After a moment of reflection he said: "There is one plan you might at least try. I should recommend that you be crucified and to rise again the third day." (C. H. Robinson, "Talleyrand's Advice," in John Baillie's *A Diary of Readings*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, Day 76).

The closing scene of Marc Connelly's great play, *Green Pastures*, depicts the crucifixion of our Lord. A voice is heard in the distance: "Oh, look at him! Oh, look, dey goin' to make him carry it up dat high hill! Dey goin' to nail him to it! Oh, dat's a terrible burden for one man to carry." (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1929, p. 173). By hearing this "terrible burden," Jesus disarmed the powers of evil and displayed them as his trophies, when he triumphed over them in the cross (Col. 2:14). The way-of-the-cross Christian shares in this victory. For by faith the cross adds to the personal life what it looks like against the sky on Calvary—a plus mark, and this plus can make the difference between defeat and victory. God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Miss Mildred McWhorter, director of Union Association's two mission centers remembers numerous encounters with persons searching for God. Hear one in her own words.

"Mr. and Mrs. Huerta, parents of 14 children, recently began attending activities at the Houston Baptist Mission Center. They were first invited to the Family Fellowship by a new Christian in the New Believer's Class. At the close of a recent fellowship meeting, Huerta remained to ask the missionary if she would teach him, his wife and sister-in-law to read English.

"The three came each Friday morning for several weeks. Progress was normal as the missionary taught them by using the Laubach method. One day, while studying the parable of the sower, Huerta said: 'What kind of ground am I?' The missionary carefully explained the parable and told what Christ meant to her. Then Huerta looked at his wife and said, 'Juana, do you think we should tell her we were not really trying to learn to read, as much as we were seeking to know how to become Christians. We've never seemed to know the peace and assurance that you folks always tell us about in the daily clubs and fellowships.'

"Juana listened but said very little,

until the missionary said, 'Don't you want to ask God to forgive you and become your Saviour?' Then Juana said: 'I've never talked to God and really don't know how. Would you show me how?' They then talked as if God were sitting right there and Mr. and Mrs. Huerta trusted Christ.

"When both had prayed, their sister-in-law raised her head and said, 'I'm confused now more than ever. I thought I had been a Christian since my mother had me baptized when I was a baby, but now I'm not sure about anything.' "Two days later, as Mr. and Mrs. Huerta were being baptized in Houston's Trinity Baptist Church, Mrs. Torres, the sister-in-law, decided she could not depend upon what her well-meaning mother had done for her while she was a baby. She realized her decision for Christ must be her own, embodying nothing less than the total commitment of herself.

"And the Huertas continue to progress in their reading program, with their primary objective already realized. They sought help to read, but their deeper search was for Christ, and they found him. Indeed, they found both."

In cooperation with state conventions and local associations, the Home Mission Board provides program assistance to approximately 150 associations conducting various ministries relating to youth and family service. Earlier, ministries of this sort were limited to

juvenile rehabilitation. Experience has resulted in the broader approach—the several ministries—which deals with related problems and needs.

Dan Elsom of San Antonio is one whose responsibilities include all areas of youth and family services. In an effort to stem the tide of juvenile delinquency in that city, Dan tries to reach the family for Christ, thus providing a better chance for the children. In encouraging churches to use their facilities for day care services, he reported that one church had baptized 50 of the parents from the neighborhood. When adult evangelism is the number one evangelistic concern of our denomination, it appears this approach has something to recommend.

Dan recently listed the three greatest needs which a youth worker has as he tries to help young people who are in trouble. He says: (1) "We need foster homes for older children. When a boy or girl reaches 16 or 17, it is almost impossible to find an institution or a family that will care for them. Most are not mature enough to survive in our complex society without help.

(2) "We need adults who will go and make friends with the delinquent boy or girl, someone who will share their life with them, someone who will get close enough to the child to let him find out what life is all about. We call these people sponsors.

(3) "Then we need counselors to help parents who are seeking guidance. Most parents who are having serious problems with a child want help. Many times they are unable to find an one who will help."

Chaplains Prayer Calendar

MAY 1: Charles B. Prewitt, Okla., Air Force; Malcolm H. Roberts, Mo., Navy. MAY 2: Oscar L. Gibson, Okla., hospital. MAY 3: William M. McGraw Jr., Ala. Perce; Harold W. Runnels, Tex. MAY 4: Ralph A. Goff, Okla., Army; George E. Ormsbee, Mo., Army. MAY 5: Donald G. Boudling, Okla., Army; Joseph H. Coggins, N.C., Air Force; Thiessen, Ore., hospital; Franklin LeDittmar, Okla., institutional. MAY 6: James L. Burck, Ky., institutional; James H. McKinney, Ga., Army. MAY 7: Clarence H. Roland, Ga., Army. MAY 9: John H. Hunter, Ark., hospital; George V. Deaderler Jr., Ga., Air Force. MAY 10: James D. Bruns, Mo., Army; George W. Miller, Fla., hospital.

MAY 11: George R. McHorse, Tex., Navy; Stafford G. Rogers, La., hospital. MAY 12: William C. Fuller, N.C., Navy. MAY 14: Donald H. Cabanis, Ga., hospital; Richard M. Graham, Va., institutional. MAY 15: Dwane R. Campbell Sr., Ga., Army; James E. Lockhart, Mo., hospital; Lawrence E. Saul, Miss., Air Force; Joseph E. Wilson, La., Army. MAY 16: Clark O. Hitt, Tex., hospital. MAY 17: Jack R. Milligan, Tex., Army; Thomas B. Respass Jr., N.C., Navy; J.T. Shipman, Tex., Navy. MAY 18: Jack Wendell Roberts, Fla., Navy. MAY 19: James F. Kirstein, N.C., Navy; Thomas M. Richardson, Ala., Army; William R. Swenson, Minn., Navy. MAY 20: James Alfred Stanford, N.C., Army; James M. Rigler, Mo., Navy.

MAY 22: Walter E. Sanders, N.C., hospital. MAY 23: Bruce D. Anderson, N.Y., Army; Joseph R. Frazier, N.Y., Navy; William A. Massey Jr., La., institutional; Howard D. White, Ark., Army; Felix J. Williams, La., hospital; Howard Parrshall, La., hospital. MAY 24: Arthur J. Estes, La., Army; Ronald L. Mallow, Okla., Navy; Roy V. Thornberry Jr., N.C., Navy; Leon Stonewall Jackson Jr., N.C., Navy.

MAY 25: Mark W. Fairless, Tenn., Air Force; Albert V. Clark, Miss., Army; James L. Juhon, Ga., Army. MAY 26: James L. Hays, Ark., Air Force. MAY 27: George H. Clayton, Tex., Air Force; William Sloan, Ga., Army. MAY 28: Wilbur May, Ala., Navy; Kevin L. Carson, Tex., Navy; Hubert Garrell, Army; Joe F. Luck, Tex., hospital; Fred E. Waters, Tex., Navy; Larry H. Tenn, Navy. MAY 29: William H. Ohio, Air Force. MAY 30: John H. Va., Navy; Richmond H. Hilton, Army. MAY 31: Milton A. Anderson, Tenn., Army; Robert A. Long, N.C., Army.

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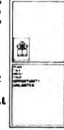
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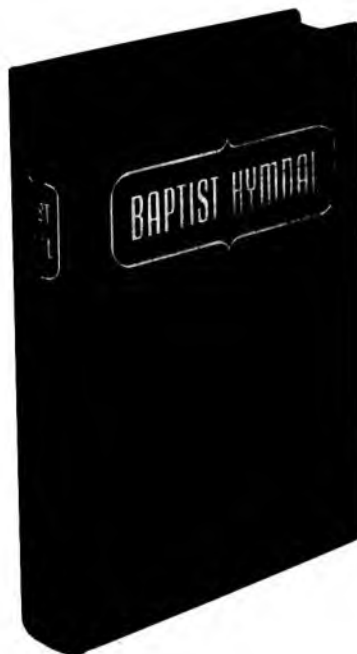
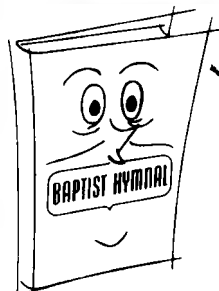
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Divided We Stand, United We Fall

by George F. Lee
Columbia, Miss.

The occasional withdrawal of a church from the Southern Baptist Convention and recent refusals to seat messengers at associational and state convention meetings appropriately demand anew our consideration of unity. Upon what foundation are Baptists and their churches to experience association and unity?

From the historical perspective we recognize that the first disciples were not united doctrinally. They were related by a common interest in the person of Jesus Christ. Where differences arose in their fellowship and ambitious spirits competed for rank and honor, the final point for continued unity was Christ himself.

Paul challenged the church members of Corinth to find agreement in Christ. Divisions had developed among them as they focused attention upon themselves and their earthly leaders.

There is no division among men in heaven where people of all nations, tribes and languages are of one accord. In Rev. 7:9-15, several factors upon which unity is experienced are mentioned. First, they are standing before the throne and the Lamb; therefore, they acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Lord of their lives. Second, they have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, they are united in Christlikeness.

No indication has been mentioned as far of unity based on technical elements regarding doctrine, external or authorized ecclesiastical official, proper association with the apostolic religious institution, race or nationality. These factors, however, are intimately involved in how people have lived through Christian history. When professing Christians cannot experience fellowship and oneness, there is reason to question their relationship with Christ. This is no assumed conclusion that these are not Christians, but it is certainly reason to question the degree to which their interests are centered in Jesus Christ.

We agree that our premise for

harmonious relationships is centered in Christ personally, then what in Christ unites his followers? That Christ is the only Saviour and Lord is naturally a basis for unity. In Christ, too, we see revealed the purpose of man being created, as all the children of God are predestined to his likeness. A source of unity in Christ is his personal capacity to unconditionally love everyone. And, Christ is the source of truth.

Possibly the point of separating comes with the question of "what is truth?" Countless people claim Christ but differ as to the truth in Christ. There is also a differing over priorities to be accorded each tenet of truth and over the degree of emphasis to be placed upon various truths in religious activity.

An examination of many churches reveals that basic doctrines are the same, but different doctrines are given priority or emphasis. Thus one group, for example, emphasizes the vestal manifestations of the Holy Spirit while another emphasizes reverence and discipline. Divisions have come at the point of tending to make truth an end in itself as though man was made for the benefit of truth rather than truth existing inherently for the benefit of man.

Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth is a means to an end that a man may be free in keeping with the purpose for which God created mankind. The more true freedom a person experiences, the more completely he has experienced the purpose for which truth has been revealed. Truth *per se* is not the foundation for Christian unity, but rather Christ who is the source of truth. To believe that truth or doctrine is the basis for unity is to be dangerously near gnosticism, bibliolatry, idolatry or humanism.

To be sure, man must worship God in spirit and truth. Truth, however, is not the object of worship. And one does not have to be knowledgeable of all truth before he can worship God. One may worship God in belief while simultaneously pleading to God for help re-

continued



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Divided We Stand

Continued from page 27

garding his unbelief. One truth a man knows and confesses can lead him to an acceptable relationship with God.

It is within the freedom inherent in truth that followers of Christ can find acceptable tolerances for unity. While for many Baptists fellowship has been based upon the doctrine that the truth in Christ makes men free, Baptists historically have come as near as any sect or denomination to building a fellowship upon the actual freedom that men experience in Christ. The project of this has shaped the distinguishing features of Baptist life and doctrine. Some evidences of freedom in Christ providing the foundation of Baptist unity are seen in the following:

Congregational government. Recognizing the equal rights of men to approach God, in whom there is no partiality, Baptists have maintained that congregational government best expresses the freedom of the believer. Congregational government, therefore, proclaims the responsibility of each Christian to acknowledge personally the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Priesthood of believers. Baptists have rejected the ecclesiastical structure which grants authority and rank among Christians. The freedom of each believer to minister in the name of God and to have a hearing with God questions the ability of any person to have spiritual authority over another. When the disciples of Jesus sought appointment to positions of authority, he declared that such thinking has no place in Christianity. He revealed that greatness is not the power of authority, but the quality of life that allows a man to minister to others.

Participation in worship. Being spectators in worship is contrary to Baptist thinking historically. Because each follower of Christ is free, he does not have to be passive in worship but can pray directly to God and search the Scriptures for himself. He does not have to parrot the creeds of others. He does not have to listen to professionals sing praises to God on his behalf, but he can sing acceptably to God from his own heart. Attempting to keep laymen in line, some ecclesiastical authorities historically have denied laity the privilege of reading the Scriptures. Claiming the prerogative to interpret the Scriptures, they have in fact denied the teaching that the truth in Christ makes men free. Truth for these authorities enslaves men to what they believe is inerrant. They dare not let man experience true freedom for fear of losing

ecclesiastical advantages and the safeguards for their institution. And men even attempt to manipulate people through strategic procedures in congregationally governed churches to get the same advantages and safeguards.

Personal evangelism. Southern Baptists have been champions for the cause of personal evangelism and this feature has united them most strongly. It directly relates to the concept of freedom. Each one must personally accept Christ for himself to be the Saviour and each one can for himself. At this point Southern Baptists have parted from those who say that a man is not free to accept or reject Christ for himself and have been united in their freedom to personally influence others to receive Christ.

Denominational relationships. Many churches originally were hesitant to be affiliated with organizational programs beyond the local church for fear of forfeiting their freedom. Consequently the constitutions of some associations and state conventions have disclaimed expressly any authority over the local churches. To assure the autonomy of the churches, these agencies have been organized as autonomous bodies so that local churches are not responsible or

bound by their actions. Protection also is provided in this autonomous relationship for the interest of all the churches in that no one church can control or dictate the actions of an association or convention.

The Lord's supper. To the Corinthian church Paul said, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." While Paul expressly denounced activities that were contrary to the spirit of Christ in the Corinthian church, he left the decision of participation in the supper to the individual. He did not say that the church or officials had the authority to decide the eligibility of "Christians" to partake of the Lord's Supper. And the practice in Baptist churches of involving all in partaking of both eating and drinking the supper is based upon this concept of freedom in Christ.

Believer's baptism. Baptists historically have not held to immersion as the only acceptable mode of baptism. They were not distinguished because of the mode of baptism, but because of their insistence on believer's baptism. Infant baptism was considered a rejection of man's freedom to accept or reject salvation. Believer's baptism acknowledged man's freedom as a Christian to bear witness to his salvation. While the New

Testament mode of baptism has been interpreted correctly as immersion since about 1640 for Baptists, the mode was not the foundation for unity. And to emphasize the mode of baptism today as a test of fellowship is a departure from the foundation upon which Baptists have been united historically. Baptists have separated from other groups over the question of freedom. If the mode of baptism is the point now over which Baptists will separate themselves, then Baptists are inherently becoming more like the groups which they historically have rejected. The basis for unity has been our freedom in Christ and not conformity to externals and ritual.

If Baptists take advantage of their historic moorings for unity, they will discover anew motivation for effective Christian living, meaningful evangelism, true worship of God and harmonious association in Christian ministries. While differing in many ways we acknowledge with Paul in Romans 14 that we accept one another, not on the basis of conformity, but because Christ is Lord for each person. And each person must, concerning himself, give an account unto God. Let us live in freedom as proof that we have accepted truth in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. United on any other foundation we shall fall.



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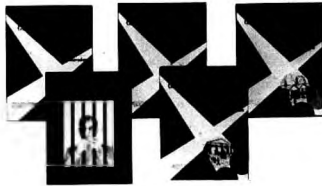
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Missionary Appointees

1. **Floyd Tidsworth Jr.** of Cedarville, Ark., is serving with the Department of Pioneer Missions as pastor of Fairlawn Baptist Chapel in Washington, W. Va., and as missionary to the upper Ohio valley area of West Virginia. A graduate of the University of (Fayetteville) Arkansas and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, he is former pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Pikeville, Ky. He also has served as pastor of churches in Arkansas and Kentucky. His birthday is Sept. 20.

2. **John Haywood Cross** of Haynes, Ark., is serving as teacher-missionary in work with National Baptists in Montgomery, Ala. The former pastor of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, he is a graduate of (Richmond) Virginia Union University. He also was a chaplain's assistant while serving with the U.S. Army and a supervisor of boys at Manover (Va.) Industrial School. He has been pastor of two Virginia churches. His birthday is Jan. 27.

Mrs. **Gloria Ann Singleton** of Mansfield, La., is serving with her husband in directing activities at the Baptist center in El Paso, Tex. She is a former secretary to Valley View Baptist Church in El Paso. Her birthday is Jan. 10.

Raymond Harvey Singleton of H. de Grace, Md., is serving as direc-

tor of activities at the Baptist center in El Paso. A former pastor to Highland Home Baptist Church in Rotan, Tex., he is a graduate of (El Paso) Texas Western College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. His birthday is July 28.

5. **Bob W. Brackney** of Belen, N.M., is serving as director of Christian social ministries for the Keystone Association in Camp Hill, Pa. He was pastor of South Hills Baptist Church in State College, Pa. and also served on the Religious Affairs staff at Pennsylvania State University. A graduate of Eastern (Portales) New Mexico University, (University Park) Pennsylvania State University and Southwestern Seminary, he has served as pastor of several churches in Texas and New Mexico. His birthday is July 26.

6. Mrs. **Jo Alice Brackney** of Portales, N.M., is assisting her husband in directing Christian social ministries for the Keystone Association in Camp Hill. She also attended Eastern New Mexico University and Southwestern Seminary. Her birthday is June 17.

(Most of these missionaries are appointed jointly by the HMB and the state convention where they serve, and/or other Baptist groups)

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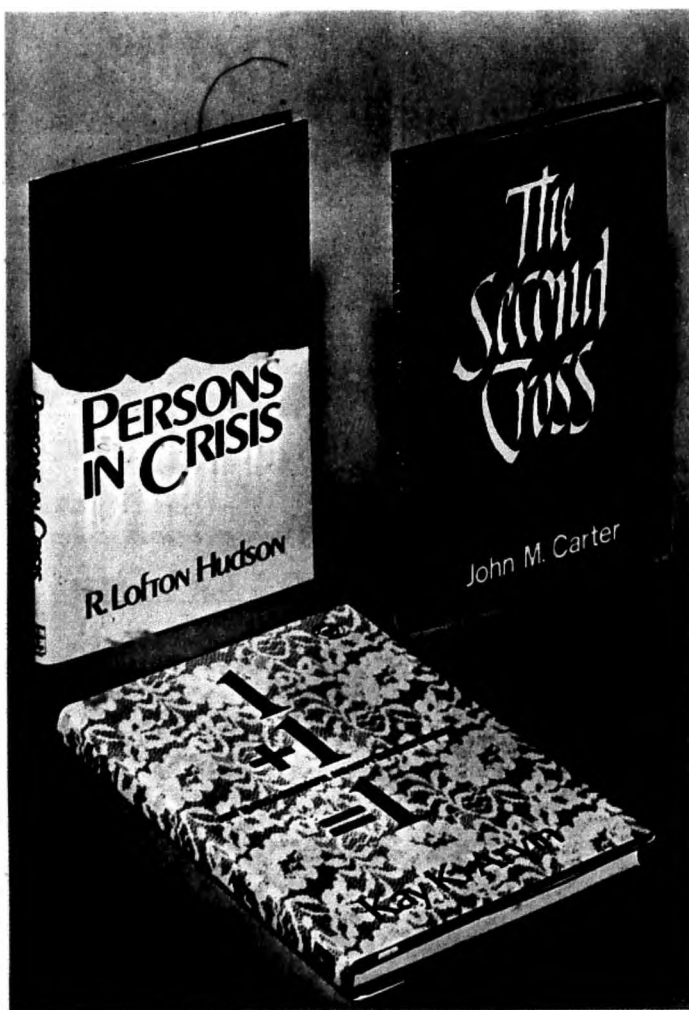
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